

Assessment System as a Tool for Improving the Efficiency of Public Administration (SAI Kazakhstan)

The key direction of the administrative reform carried out in the Republic of Kazakhstan in the second half of the 2000s was the introduction of "Good Governance" practices based on the rule of law and respect for the rights of citizens, strengthening democracy and ensuring transparency in public administration.

In his Address to the People of Kazakhstan in 2007, the Head of State set the task of accelerating the implementation of administrative reform, taking into account international practice, by building a new model of public administration based on the principles of corporate governance, efficiency, transparency and accountability to society.

The measures taken within the framework of the administrative reform were embodied in the Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 273 of January 13, 2007 "On measures to modernize the public administration system of the Republic of Kazakhstan", where a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of the activities of state bodies is defined as one of the elements of an effective public administration system.

Thus, in 2010, in order to increase the efficiency of state bodies in the implementation of their assigned tasks and functions, Presidential Decree No. 954 approved a system for annual assessment of the effectiveness of the central state and local executive bodies of regions, cities of republican significance, and the capital. A number of approaches used in international practice (based on the existing assessment systems of Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, South Korea and other countries) have been adapted to the realities of Kazakhstan and included in the assessment methods. At the same time, important aspects of these methods were developed in direct connection with the peculiarities of the local public administration system, which made our assessment system to a certain extent unique.

Over the ten (10) years of its existence, the assessment of the effectiveness of the activities of state bodies has taken place as an integral system. The rights and obligations of its participants are defined: the evaluated state bodies, the bodies authorized for assessment, and the coordinating bodies. The methodology for the blocks and areas of assessment has been developed and is constantly being improved. Every year, a schedule of assessment activities is formed, and all the key procedures have been developed: from the collection of reporting information of the evaluated state bodies and the preparation of preliminary conclusions to the development of recommendations and monitoring of their implementation.

The list of evaluated state bodies is regularly updated taking into account the reorganization of old and the creation of new agencies and ministries. So, in 2010, a pilot assessment of three state bodies was carried out: the Agency for the Regulation of Natural Monopolies, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population and the Akimat (local administration) of the Akmola region. After the pilot assessment, the methodology and assessment procedures were finalized, forty (40) state bodies were evaluated in 2011. In order to improve interaction with the population in 2017, the Assessment System included state law enforcement agencies (the Prosecutor General's Office) and the Power Unit (Ministry of Defense), as well as the Department for Ensuring the Activities of the Courts under the Supreme Court. Taking into account the latest changes in the structure of the state apparatus in 2021, the assessment will cover 25 central state bodies and local executive bodies of regions and cities of republican significance.

At the moment, the System provides two types of assessment: performance assessment and operational assessment.

Performance Assessment

The performance assessment was introduced only in 2020, it focuses on the analysis of the performance of public authorities on key indicators aimed at increasing incomes and improving the quality of life of the population. So, for each central state body, a unique set of statistical and survey indicators is approved, according to which the degree of improvement/deterioration in the development of the supervised sphere over the past 3 years is calculated. While the performance index of local

executive bodies of regions and cities of republican significance due to the unified functions is calculated on the basis of a single set of indicators (41 statistical and 9 survey indicators). Also, in order to determine the progress of Kazakhstan against the background of the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the results of Kazakhstan are compared with the average values of the OECD countries for 25 socio-economic indicators. The performance assessment conducted in 2020 in a pilot mode allowed us to identify risk areas – areas where there is a certain regression in development.

Assessment Sub type	Short Description
Government Performance Index	CGB: according to a unique set of indicators for each (a total of 148 statistical and 19 survey indicators)
	LEB: for a single set of indicators (41 statistical and 9 survey indicators)
RK National Progress Index	Relative to OECD countries (according to 25 socio-economic indicators)
	Relative to the base year (2016) (for 25 socio-economic indicators)

Operational Assessment

The operational Assessment, in turn, focuses on the current activities of government agencies in key areas, combined in three blocks: "Achieving goals", "Interaction with individuals and legal entities" and "Organizational development".

The first block evaluates the achievement of strategic goals, the effectiveness of the use of allocated budget funds, as well as the relationship of the budget with the goals at the central level and financial discipline at the local level. Special attention is paid to the quality of strategic and budget planning: in addition to achieving goals and indicators, over-fulfillment and adjustment of planned values of indicators and the dynamics of their actual implementation are taken into account.

In addition, since 2019, it is estimated to ensure the availability of budget information through the placement of the Civil Budget, and the involvement of the public in the formation of the

budget with the help of the "budget of popular participation".

Interaction with the population is evaluated through the quality of public services and consideration of incoming requests, as well as the degree of openness of the state body. In particular, the assessment of the quality of public services takes into account compliance with deadlines and lists of documents for their provision, public satisfaction with their quality and automation of the provision processes. Regarding the consideration of appeals, the timeliness of providing responses to complaints and applications of citizens and legal entities, the quality of resolving appeals at the initial admission to state bodies is evaluated. The subject of the analysis in the framework of the direction "Openness of the state body" is the work on the portals of "Open Government", including timely filling in the necessary data and responding to requests, comments and suggestions of users.

The assessment of the third block focuses on the internal processes of state bodies: the quality of personnel management and the effectiveness of the use of information technologies. The assessment of personnel management takes into account the satisfaction of civil servants with working conditions (survey), net turnover of personnel, compliance with the principles of meritocracy and gender equality. As part of the assessment of the use of information technologies, the work of state bodies on automating functions, integrating information systems, filling the architectural portal with information about information resources, as well as ensuring the relevance of the data contained in them is analyzed.

The assessment methods are dynamic and adapt to the current tasks of government agencies. For example, new criteria or indicators may be included in the assessment methodology to comprehensively monitor the progress of reforms

or to address current challenges. For example, in order to implement the Concept of Family and Gender Policy, an indicator on compliance with the principles of gender equality in managerial appointments is included in the personnel management assessment. Also, in order to encourage akimats to involve the population in the formation of the local budget, bonus points are provided for the introduction of new budgeting practices ("budget of popular participation") from 2019. Another example is the inclusion in the 2017 assessment of public services of the criterion for expanding the Register to track the work to identify "hidden" services assigned to public authorities based on the results of the assessment for 2016.

Thus, the assessment criteria and indicators are constantly adjusted in accordance with the current tasks of state bodies and "accompany" the implementation of key reforms..

Block "Achievement of Goals"

Directions	Criteria
Strategic Component	Achieving the goals of strategic plans and territorial development programs
Budgetary Component	Efficiency of execution of budget programs
	The relationship between the goals of strategic plans and budget programs
	Achieving direct results of budgetary development programs
	No violations of budgetary and other legislation
	Quality and content of the Citizens Budget publication
	Using new budgeting practices

Block "Interaction of a State Body with Individuals and Legal Entities"

Directions	Criteria
The Quality of the Provision of Public Services	Satisfaction of service recipients with the quality of the provision of public services
	Ensuring the quality of the provision of public services
	Automation of public services
Quality of Handling Complaints and Applications	Compliance with the terms of consideration of complaints and applications
	The proportion of complaints and applications recognized as justified by a court decision
	Consideration of repeated substantiated complaints and applications
	Internal control over the quality of consideration of complaints and applications

Openness of the State Body	Filling the official Internet resource
	Opendata
	Openbudget
	OpenLSI
	Opendialogue
Block "Organizational Development of a State Body"	
Directions	Criteria
Personnel Management	Personnel potential of the state body
	LabourOrganization
	Meritocracyandorganizationalculture
Application of Information Technology	Fillingthearchitecturalportal
	Integration of information systems (CGB) / Implementation of Smart Cities Initiatives (LEB)
	Relevance of information contained in information systems and databases
	Availability of unused information systems and databases
	Automation of functions of government agencies
	Share of local content in information systems

System of Operational Assessment Bodies

The assessment of the directions is carried out by the authorized bodies responsible for the development of the relevant areas of activity. For example, the assessment of the effectiveness of the use of budget funds is carried out by the Ministry of Finance, the authorized body for budget execution, the use of information technologies is evaluated by the Ministry of Digital Development, Innovation and Aerospace Industry, the responsible body for informatization.

The activities of the bodies authorized for assessment are analyzed by the Office of the Prime Minister, and the activities of the central state bodies directly subordinate and accountable to the President are evaluated by the Presidential Administration.

Also, the Presidential Administration provides general management of the assessment process, while the methodological coordination of the activities of the bodies authorized for assessment

is provided by the Accounts Committee for Monitoring the Implementation of the Republican Budget.

The final conclusions on the results of the operational assessment are formed by the Assessment Commission chaired by the Head of the Presidential Administration.

Operational Assessment Stages

At the end of the assessment period, the bodies authorized for assessment collect and process the reporting information of state bodies. The state bodies identified on the basis of the risk management system are checked for the completeness and reliability of the data provided. Further, the bodies authorized for assessment prepare initial conclusions on the results of the assessment in the areas, and the evaluated state bodies can appeal them by sending objections with supporting materials.

Based on the results of the appeal, the final conclusions on the blocks are formed, which are sent to the evaluated state bodies and the Accounting Committee, and then to the Presidential Administration. The key results of the assessment and the system conclusions on the activities of state bodies are reflected in the expert opinions of the Assessment Commission, after which the results of the assessment are submitted to the Head of State.

After each operational assessment cycle, the execution of orders and recommendations is monitored, and the assessment results are publicly available.

Operational Assessment Results and Achievements

As a result of the annual analysis of the operational activities of state bodies, the development of specific recommendations to eliminate problematic issues and monitor their implementation, the assessment has become an effective tool for improving the system of public administration. Thus, thanks to the motivation embedded in the assessment system, the indicators in all key areas of activity of state bodies have improved.

For example, based on the results of the assessment of the effectiveness of the provision of public services in 2010, the country's leadership was instructed to study the feasibility of developing the law "On Public Services", to determine the authorized bodies for the development of the sphere and control over the quality of services provided, which marked the beginning of systematic work on building the regulatory framework for state regulation of this sphere. In the period from 2010 to 2019, as a result of standardization and strengthening of measures for internal and external quality control, the number of violations of the deadlines for the

provision of public services decreased by 250 times (from 494.6 thousand to 2 thousand). Optimization and automation of service delivery processes has provided a fivefold increase in the share of public services available in electronic form (from 16% to 80% of services on the Register). The improvement of this direction is also reflected in the UN E-Government Development Index, in which Kazakhstan rose from 46th place in 2010 to 29th place in 2020, while the "Online Services" component saw a constant increase in the index (from 0.53 in 2010 to 0.92 in 2020).

The transparency assessment, introduced for the first time in 2017, aimed at increasing the authority and transparency of the activities of state bodies, allowed us to systematize the work on maintaining the components of the Open Government portal. The measures taken made it possible to increase the importance of the Open Government portal as a tool for interacting with the state and involving the population in the decision-making process. So, from 2016 to 2019, the number of user requests to the first heads of state bodies on the Open Dialogue portal increased almost 3 times (from 17 thousand). The number of comments on the draft budget programs on the Open Budgets portal (from 50 to 2.3 thousand) and on the draft NPA on the Open NPA portal (from 6.5 thousand in 2017 to 14.8 thousand in 2019) has significantly increased. Accordingly, Kazakhstan's position in the UN e-Participation Index has significantly improved from 67th place in 2016 to 26th place in 2020. At the same time, the work on ensuring the openness of budget processes requires further strengthening. Thus, despite the improvement in the indicator in 2019 (58 points) compared to 2015 (51 points), in the Review of Budget Openness (International Budget Partnership) for 2019, the degree of transparency of budget processes in Kazakhstan is assessed as "unsatisfactory".

As part of the assessment of the quality of personnel management, it was practically possible to eliminate the problem of overtime work of civil servants. In response to the recommendations made as a result of the assessment, effective mechanisms for managing working time have been implemented, including the Access Control and Accounting System (Access Control System) and the "Forced Shutdown" program for automatically shutting down computers after working hours. As a result of the measures taken, the share of civil servants reporting permanent overwork decreased from 50-60% in 2016 to 10-15% in 2019.

The assessment of the use of information technologies accompanied the activities of state bodies on the transition to electronic document management, as well as on the automation of functions and integration of information systems with the centralized system of Public Service Centers (PSCs) and the gateway of "electronic government", which provided an accelerated transfer of public services to the provision through PSCs and a web portal egov.kz. On the basis of the proposals based on the results of the assessment, a Plan for the integration of information systems of

state bodies for 2018-2022 was developed, by the end of 2019, 86% of the planned integrations were carried out.

Together, the above-mentioned and other positive results of the activities of state bodies have contributed to improving the efficiency of public administration in Kazakhstan. Thus, for the period 2010-2019, Kazakhstan's indicators on the indicator "Government Effectiveness" of the World Bank's Global indicators of public administration improved from 42.2 to 57.7 (percentile).

Thus, the annual assessment system has become an effective tool for monitoring and stimulating the work of state bodies. It is a set of measures aimed at determining the effectiveness of the processes of activity in state bodies and achieving concrete results in the implementation of strategic goals and objectives. The assessment allows us to form a comprehensive vision of the situation in many areas of the state apparatus and plays a crucial role in supporting key public administration reforms.