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**«MANAGEMENT MODELS IN THE ERA OF EUROPEAN REFORMS:
THEORY, PRACTICE, INTEGRATION»**

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REFORM OF DECENTRALIZATION IN UKRAINE (THROUGH THE LENS OF RURAL AREAS)

The decentralization reform is aimed at transferring powers, resources and responsibilities from central authorities to local self-government bodies. The goal is to bring administrative services closer to the citizen and stimulate the development of territories.

In order for public administration to become truly high-quality at the level of each resident, it is necessary to implement the technology of "internal decentralization"; introduce the technology of "microbudgeting", where a certain percentage of taxes collected in the village is automatically assigned to the needs of this village without the need to "ask" for money at the community center each time; empower village elders or specialists in villages with the powers of administrators of the Central Administrative Service Center (issuing certificates, registering civil status acts, etc.). This will turn the village headman into a full-fledged service hub. Based on the analysis of the current model of decentralization in Ukraine, I come to the conclusion that the reform requires not abolition, but significant "repair" at the grassroots level "villages and village headman.

My vision is based on the belief that the true effectiveness of public administration is measured not by numbers in regional reports, but by the speed of solving the problem of a specific resident in a remote village.

Key aspects of my author's position:

1. Returning the subjectivity of the village. The modern model has led to a certain "centralization within the communities", where resources and attention are concentrated in the center of the ATC. I believe that the management technology should be changed in favor of the financial autonomy of the village elders. Leaving a certain percentage of taxes (in particular, personal income tax) directly "on the ground" will allow the community to independently solve urgent issues "from replacing a light bulb in a street lamp to minor road repairs" without the need to "bow down" to the head of the community every time. This strengthens trust in the authorities and stimulates local initiative.

2. The village elder as a service manager, not just a "courier". The technology for providing administrative services should be decentralized as much as possible. I am convinced that the village headman or an authorized specialist in each village should have the authority of the ASC administrator. A person in a village should not spend a day traveling to the community center for a certificate. The authorities should be at arm's length, and digitalization should work to ensure that the service comes to the citizen, and not vice versa.

3. Transparency and predictability. Public administration in communities should be based on clear algorithms for distributing funds for communal and repair work. Villages should have their own predicted development plan, and not depend on the loyalty of the ATC leadership to one or another headman.

4. The headman as a leader and defender. The future of rural areas depends on whether the headman becomes a real representative of the interests of residents, endowed with powers and resources. This is not just a position - it is an institution of "rapid response" of the state machine.

The effectiveness of decentralization will be complete only when we move from "decentralization on paper" to internal decentralization in reality. Public administration technologies should serve as a tool to overcome the distance between the government and the people. Only by providing real power and financial resources to villages will we be able to preserve their viability and ensure a high quality of life for every citizen, regardless of their place of residence.

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EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE IN MANAGING RECREATIONAL RESOURCES TO REDUCE PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS

The European experience in the management of recreational resources demonstrates a gradual transition from the purely economic exploitation of natural areas toward their integration into the system of public mental health provision. Under contemporary conditions, recreational resources are increasingly regarded as an important instrument for reducing psychological stress, preventing stress-related disorders, and improving overall quality of life.

In the countries of the European Union, a policy approach has emerged whereby recreation is considered an integral component of public health policy. Considerable attention is devoted to the development of so-called nature-based solutions, which involve the active use of natural environments to restore individuals' psycho-emotional well-being. One of the key directions in this context is the development of urban green infrastructure. In most European cities, the principle of accessibility to green spaces is implemented, ensuring that parks, squares, and forested areas are available within walking distance for residents.

In Latvia, recreational activities have expanded significantly, particularly with a notable increase in outdoor recreation following the COVID-19 pandemic. Forests, in particular, have been recognized as essential green spaces for leisure, while walking has become one of the most popular forms of recreational activity. The pandemic has also reshaped recreational habits, leading to increased visitation of natural areas such as forests, with walking emerging as the most widespread form of outdoor recreation in Latvia [1].

Sweden offers numerous urban recreational projects that often combine nature and culture. Examples include the House of Diverse Activities in Gällivare, which integrates sports, active recreation, and cultural activities within a single space. Additionally, Stockholm provides opportunities for kayaking tours around its archipelago and access to Tyresta National Park.

Finland actively promotes "forest therapy" as part of its national mental health policy. Spending time in forests, including walking and

meditation in natural settings, is considered an important tool for stress prevention and psychological recovery.

Many countries, particularly those with well-developed tourism infrastructure, emphasize the importance of a balanced approach to the development of the recreational sector. Such an approach aims to reconcile the interests of tourists and local communities while preserving the natural environment. In international practice, significant attention is given to the promotion of environmentally responsible tourism, which minimizes environmental impact and contributes to the conservation of biodiversity. This approach is regarded as a priority direction in many countries worldwide [2].

In numerous foreign countries, recreational activities are widely utilized as an effective instrument for reducing psychological stress, improving mental health, and facilitating social adaptation of the population, particularly in times of crisis or during post-war recovery.

Thus, the European experience demonstrates that effective management of recreational resources is an important instrument for reducing psychological stress among the population. Its key components include the accessibility of natural environments, integration with public health policy, the development of sustainable tourism, and the use of recreation as a means of psycho-emotional recovery.

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PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF DEVELOPMENT OF DECENTRALIZATION REFORM IN UKRAINE

The decentralization reform, initiated after the Revolution of Dignity, constitutes one of the key transformations of the public administration system in Ukraine. Its primary objective has been the establishment of an effective system of local self-government capable of independently addressing issues of territorial development.

The decentralization reform in Ukraine has become one of the most large-scale and successful institutional reforms of the independence period. Its core aim has been the transfer of powers, financial resources, and responsibilities from central government authorities to local self-government bodies.

During the implementation of the reform, significant results have been achieved: capable territorial communities have been established, their financial capacities have been expanded, and the level of autonomy of local authorities has increased. At the same time, a number of challenges has accompanied the decentralization process.

Among the key challenges is the uneven development of communities, differing resource capacities of territories. A significant issue remains the insufficient level of professional training of local personnel, which affects the quality of managerial decision-making. Additionally, there is a continued financial dependence of some communities on state transfers, along with limited own-source revenues. Corruption risks at the local level also remain an important concern, necessitating the strengthening of oversight and transparency mechanisms.

A particularly significant impact on the course of the reform has been exerted by the full-scale aggression of Russia against Ukraine, which has led to the destruction of infrastructure, population displacement, and a decline in the economic potential of many communities.

Despite these challenges, the reform demonstrates considerable prospects for further development. An important direction is the enhancement of the institutional capacity of local self-government bodies through professional training and the implementation of

modern management practices. In the context of European integration processes and cooperation with the European Union, new opportunities are emerging for attracting investment and fostering territorial development.

As a result of the reform's implementation, capable territorial communities have been formed, endowed with expanded budgetary powers and the ability to independently determine local development priorities. Financial independence of communities has increased, the quality of administrative and social service provision has improved, and citizen participation in local decision-making has intensified.

An additional impetus will be provided by the post-war reconstruction of the country, in which communities will play a key role. Another important success factor is the development of digital governance tools, particularly through the use of services such as Diia, which contribute to enhanced transparency and more effective interaction between authorities and citizens.

Overall, decentralization has contributed to strengthening democratic processes, improving governance efficiency, and bringing Ukraine closer to European standards of public administration. The further success of the reform depends on the completion of its legislative framework, the institutional strengthening of communities, and the integration of decentralization principles into the process of post-war recovery.

Thus, the future development of decentralization reform in Ukraine depends on overcoming existing challenges, enhancing the capacity of territorial communities, and ensuring a sustainable balance between local autonomy and state regulation.

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**FOREIGN EXPERIENCE OF PERSONNEL POLICY IN PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION AND POSSIBILITIES OF ITS ADAPTATION IN
UKRAINE**

The international experience of human resource policy in public administration constitutes a valuable source of ideas and practical solutions for countries undergoing civil service reform, particularly for Ukraine. In most developed democratic states, HR policy is not viewed as a merely auxiliary administrative tool but rather as a strategic resource that directly affects the quality of governance, public trust in government, and the effectiveness of public policy implementation. Consequently, attention is paid not only to formal recruitment procedures but also to the development of human capital, the formation of managerial competencies, ethical standards, and a culture of public service.

In European Union countries, public sector HR policy is grounded in the principles of professionalism, political neutrality, transparency, and accountability. For example, in Germany, the civil service has traditionally been based on a career model, in which a public servant follows a clearly structured path of professional advancement. Considerable emphasis is placed on professional training, specialized education for civil servants, and continuous professional development. At the same time, performance evaluation systems are oriented not only toward the formal fulfillment of duties but also toward the achievement of the strategic objectives of public institutions. For Ukraine, this experience is particularly relevant given the need to establish a stable and professional civil service, where career advancement is based on competence rather than political or personal factors [1].

France demonstrates a different, yet equally illustrative, approach to HR policy in public administration. Specialized institutions for the training of public administrators play a crucial role in shaping the country's administrative elite. The French model combines high requirements for knowledge, analytical capacity, and leadership qualities with a clearly structured system of recruitment and career advancement. For Ukraine, adapting this experience may involve

strengthening the role of specialized training programs for public sector leaders, developing the institution of public leadership, and implementing competitive selection mechanisms that assess not only formal knowledge but also managerial potential.

The experience of Scandinavian countries, particularly Sweden and Denmark, is characterized by an emphasis on trust, openness, and decentralization of HR decisions. HR policy in these countries is built on minimizing bureaucratic procedures and maximizing employee involvement in decision-making processes. Flexible forms of employment, work-life balance, and a culture of continuous dialogue between management and staff also play a significant role. For Ukraine, this approach is especially relevant in the context of decentralization and local government reform, where it is important to build motivated teams at the local level and ensure their capacity to effectively implement newly delegated powers [1].

The adaptation of international HR policy experience in Ukraine should take into account the national context, institutional capacities, and current challenges related to the security situation and post-war recovery. This is not about the mechanical borrowing of models but rather the selective adoption of the most relevant elements: transparent competitive procedures, a competency-based approach, effective systems of training and motivation, the digitalization of HR processes, and the development of an ethical culture in public service. Equally important are the development of a talent pool, the attraction of young people to public service, and the creation of conditions conducive to the return of professionals who have gained experience abroad [2].

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THE ROLE OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIPS IN ENSURING SUSTAINABLE TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

Ensuring sustainable development of territorial communities under contemporary conditions is impossible without active public participation and the development of partnership relations among local self-government bodies, the business sector, and civil society.

Within the framework of public governance, public participation and partnerships are regarded as key instruments of democratic governance that enhance the effectiveness of managerial decisions, strengthen their social legitimacy, and orient them toward the long-term developmental needs of territories.

Public participation in the management of sustainable territorial development involves engaging community residents in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of policy decisions. This approach is grounded in the principles of openness, transparency, and accountability of public authorities, as well as in recognizing the community as an active субъект of public governance. Public involvement enables the consideration of local needs and interests, thereby improving the quality of decision-making and fostering trust in local self-government institutions [1].

In the context of decentralization, public participation acquires particular importance, as the transfer of powers to the local level is accompanied by increased responsibility of communities for their own development. Mechanisms for citizen engagement-such as public hearings, public consultations, local initiatives, and e-democracy tools-contribute to enhancing the inclusiveness of governance and ensure the implementation of the principle of participation, which is fundamental to the concept of sustainable development.

At the same time, public participation in the sphere of sustainable development performs not only a consultative but also a supervisory function. Civil society organizations and initiative groups may monitor the implementation of development programs, oversee the use of budgetary funds, and contribute to increasing the accountability of public authorities. Such interaction creates preconditions for reducing

corruption risks and fostering a culture of shared responsibility for community development outcomes.

Alongside public participation, partnerships-particularly cross-sectoral and public-private partnerships-play an important role in ensuring sustainable territorial development. The partnership approach in public governance involves pooling the resources, knowledge, and competencies of various stakeholders in order to achieve common development goals.

For territorial communities, this creates opportunities to attract additional financial resources, innovative solutions, and managerial expertise, which is especially important under conditions of limited local budgets.

Public-private partnership is considered an effective mechanism for the implementation of infrastructure, social, and environmental projects aimed at ensuring sustainable development. The involvement of the business sector in addressing local development issues contributes to increasing the investment attractiveness of territories, job creation, and the development of entrepreneurship. At the same time, in order to achieve sustainable outcomes, such partnerships must be based on clear rules, transparent procedures, and mutual accountability of the parties involved.

An important aspect of partnership development is the cooperation between local self-government bodies, civil society, and charitable organizations, which play a significant role in implementing social and environmental initiatives. Such collaboration enables more effective responses to challenges related to social integration, support for vulnerable population groups, and the development of education, culture, and environmental protection.

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MODELS FOR IMPROVING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM

The concept of the «User Story» instrument aims to create a concise and user-centered description of a function or service, focusing on its practical application from the perspective of the end user. This approach originates from agile software development methodologies, such as Agile and Scrum, and is increasingly being implemented in the field of public administration. Its primary objective is to shift the focus of reformers from the question “what needs to be done” to “what value is created.” Instead of emphasizing technical processes (e.g., the establishment of a unified registry), this approach prioritizes the end-user outcome (e.g., enabling citizens to obtain certificates without queues).

Prioritization through User Stories. User Stories not only facilitate the description of individual functions but also serve as a tool for ranking tasks according to their level of importance. Priorities are determined based on several criteria:

- Scale of coverage – an assessment of the number of users affected by a particular function. For example, the need for a digital vehicle registration certificate has a higher priority among drivers than services designed for yacht owners, due to the broader target audience.
- Level of difficulty of the current process – an analysis of existing user challenges, such as corruption, procedural complexity, or degrading experiences. For instance, the introduction of a simplified procedure for obtaining veteran status may be prioritized due to the high level of dysfunction in the current system.
- Social and economic impact – an evaluation of the effect of implementing a function on public finances and social processes. The optimization of online tax payments enhances transparency in economic activity and reduces time and resource expenditures.
- Political feasibility and speed of implementation – an assessment of the potential for rapid implementation to demonstrate tangible reform outcomes (so-called “quick wins”).

Practical application in Ukraine. A prominent example of the successful application of the User Story approach is the work of the

Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine and the “Diia” platform, which reimagines traditional administrative processes to improve citizen convenience.

The Force Field Analysis model posits that any current state (or “equilibrium”) is the result of a balance between two opposing groups of factors:

- Driving forces – factors that support transformation and push the system toward a desired future state.

- Restraining forces – factors that resist change and seek to preserve the status quo.

Combining both approaches: this option is considered the most realistic and effective. An important nuance, as emphasized by Kurt Lewin, is that reducing restraining forces is often more effective than strengthening driving forces. The rationale lies in the fact that simply “pushing” for change implementation may provoke increased resistance, thereby generating heightened tension within the system. In contrast, removing barriers and reducing resistance allows the process of change to proceed more smoothly and with less conflict.

The implementation of public administration reform is a long-term process that requires a combination of visible short-term results for society and deep structural transformations to ensure the irreversibility of change.

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EFFECTIVE INTERACTION BETWEEN PUBLIC AUTHORITY BODIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY INSTITUTIONS

In the contemporary context of democratization, decentralization of power, digitalization, and European integration in Ukraine—which are transforming the system of public administration—the issue of establishing effective information and communication interaction between public authorities and civil society organizations has become particularly relevant. The shift in the public administration paradigm from a command-oriented to a service-oriented model entails the creation of open, transparent, and accountable communication mechanisms that ensure effective citizen participation in the formulation and implementation of public policy.

Communication policy, as a continuous activity of managing power relations, concerns the allocation of communication resources, including information, conditions, factors, methods, and means of dissemination. To enhance the effectiveness of institutional functions, it is necessary to establish a holistic approach to communication activities and to promote a more objective understanding of the significance and application of specific communication tools [1].

Unfortunately, the communication system in Ukraine is not only insufficiently developed but also lacks adequate financial support, which hinders its development at the required pace. Moreover, a shortage of qualified personnel, the absence of appropriate laws, regulations, and guidelines, as well as the lack of clearly defined tasks and methods, further impede its progress. Addressing these challenges would enable the creation of an effective communication system and the achievement of the primary goal of public relations services within public authorities: increasing public trust in civil servants and officials. At the current stage of public administration development in Ukraine, issues related to the implementation of effective strategies for promoting state-building processes and the study of innovative models of public governance are becoming increasingly prominent.

There are several unresolved issues that are critical for establishing *повноцен* interaction between public authorities and civil society institutions. These include:

- the creation of an effective and operational system for monitoring citizens' demands for specific public policy decisions;
- the introduction of unified standards of interaction between public authorities and citizens, applicable to all state and local government bodies;
- the regulation of the activities of press services within state and local authorities;
- the identification of key issues subject to mandatory public opinion surveys;
- the regulation of procedures for monitoring and analyzing citizens' responses to the activities of civil servants and public officials as a whole.

Transparency in the activities of state and local authorities, the implementation of e-government tools, systematic monitoring of public opinion, and the establishment of two-way information exchange contribute to increasing the level of trust in government and strengthening democratic institutions. At the same time, the identified challenges—insufficient regulatory support, limited financial resources, кадровий deficit, and the absence of unified communication standards—require comprehensive solutions at the state level.

An effective communication policy should be based on the principles of openness, accessibility, reliability, consistency, and citizen-orientedness. Only through the integration of modern information and communication technologies with clearly defined organizational mechanisms of interaction is it possible to ensure the sustainable development of public administration.

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INTERNATIONAL PRACTICES IN PUBLIC INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT: EVIDENCE FROM EU COUNTRIES

Historically, governments in many countries have long actively utilized various forms of private capital involvement in the implementation of socially significant projects. In particular, public-private partnerships (PPPs) ensure synergy between public institutions and the private sector in achieving common socio-economic development goals, primarily in the medium and long term.

Despite the fact that PPPs enable the mobilization of additional financial resources to accelerate the implementation of infrastructure projects, such involvement is not unlimited and should not be perceived as “free financing.” The participation of a private partner effectively implies that the state incurs certain financial obligations that must be fulfilled in the medium or long term. Excessive accumulation of such obligations, without improving the efficiency of public investment management, may generate additional fiscal risks and complicate debt servicing [1].

Taking into account the experience of these countries, it is advisable to apply a two-stage evaluation structure:

1. decision to proceed with project preparation;
2. decision to implement the project.

In addition, an important element is the conduct of independent reviews of project appraisals, particularly for large-scale or fiscally risky projects. Independent expertise helps to mitigate the effect of “optimism bias” – where costs are underestimated and benefits are overestimated – and provides a more objective basis for decision-making.

Equally important for effective governance is transparent accounting and budgeting of PPP projects, as well as the establishment of clear limits on government commitments. Although universal accounting standards for PPP projects are not yet fully established, several European countries, particularly EU Member States, are gradually implementing relevant rules in line with the recommendations of Eurostat, the IMF, and the OECD. Transparent disclosure of capital expenditures, future payment obligations, and

potential risks in budget reporting is a key prerequisite for accountability and fiscal sustainability [2].

Countries with well-developed PPP practices, such as the United Kingdom and Australia, have established standardized approaches to project evaluation. In the United Kingdom, the so-called “Green Book” sets out unified principles for the appraisal and selection of both public and partnership projects. In Australia, the Government of New South Wales has developed a two-tier evaluation model, which involves, first, an investment decision based on cost-benefit analysis (CBA), followed by the selection of the financing method through Value for Money (VfM) analysis.

Thus, the experience of European Union countries demonstrates that effective public investment management is grounded in the principles of transparency, strategic planning, performance orientation, and accountability. The implementation of unified standards for investment project appraisal, medium-term budgeting, and independent monitoring plays a crucial role. The adoption of these approaches in national practice will contribute to improving the efficiency of public expenditures, strengthening fiscal sustainability, and aligning Ukraine’s public investment management system with European standards.

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EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE IN REFORMING THE SYSTEM OF CULTURAL SERVICE PROVISION TO THE POPULATION

Reforming the cultural sector is a global trend, as culture is increasingly perceived not only as a social and humanitarian component, but also as a driver of economic development, a tool for international communication, and a factor in the sustainable development of communities.

Reforming the system of cultural service provision is one of the key components of modern state development. The accessibility of cultural resources affects social integration, educational development, the creative potential of citizens, and the formation of cultural identity. In European Union countries, cultural sector reform has become a policy priority over the past decades, driven by the need to ensure a balanced combination of state regulation, local community participation, and private sector engagement. Studying European experience makes it possible to identify effective practices that can be adapted in Ukraine to improve the quality and accessibility of cultural services [1].

The European Union is considered one of the most progressive regions in terms of cultural policy. Reforms in EU countries are based on principles of accessibility, digitalization, multifunctionality, and the development of the creative economy. The European cultural model emphasizes people, communities, and innovation. Key principles include:

- Funding and partnership. EU countries demonstrate a combination of public funding, grants, project-based subsidies, and private investment. This approach increases the scope and quality of services while reducing dependence on limited public budgets.
- Decentralized management. Delegating authority to local levels allows cultural programs to be adapted to regional specifics, stimulates local initiatives, and ensures more efficient use of resources.
- Digitalization and innovation. The implementation of electronic libraries, online museums, virtual tours, and interactive educational platforms significantly expands citizens' access to cultural resources, especially in remote areas.

- Inclusiveness and citizen participation. EU governments actively implement policies aimed at involving diverse population groups (children, people with disabilities, older adults) in cultural life and encourage community participation in the design and implementation of cultural programs.

- Standardization and performance evaluation. In some countries (e.g., the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands), methodologies for assessing the social and economic impact of cultural projects are applied, enhancing the efficiency of public spending and ensuring accountability to the public.

Research demonstrates that effective reform of cultural service systems in Europe is based on the principles of transparency, partnership, decentralization, and innovation. Adapting these approaches in Ukraine will increase accessibility and quality of cultural services, optimize the use of budgetary resources, and promote the development of cultural infrastructure in line with European standards.

Therefore, the reform of the system for providing cultural services to the population is not limited to the reconstruction of facilities or the implementation of new programs. It involves creating a new cultural ecosystem that serves the public, fosters community development, and ensures inclusiveness, openness, innovation, and alignment with European standards. Its successful implementation can not only enhance the quality of cultural life but also position culture as a key factor in Ukraine's sustainable development.

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REENGINEERING OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES WITHIN THE E-GOVERNMENT SYSTEM

In the field of public administration, reengineering is gradually being adapted to the specific characteristics of the public sector, where performance is assessed not only through economic indicators but also in terms of public value, transparency, and the level of citizen satisfaction [1]. Unlike the private sector, processes of change in public administration are complicated by regulatory constraints, political factors, and institutional inertia.

In this context, the reengineering of administrative services entails a comprehensive restructuring of service delivery procedures by public authorities—from the registration of requests and document processing to the issuance of final outputs (certificates, permits, etc.)—with due consideration of user interests, digital capabilities, and principles of openness.

Reengineering in the domain of e-government should not be reduced to the mere automation of outdated procedures. Its primary objective is to rethink the very logic of service organization: to reduce the number of stages, eliminate redundancies, integrate services across different sectors, and ensure that processes are transparent and максимально user-friendly for citizens.

Reengineering in the public sector requires a clearly defined algorithm of actions. The key stages of implementation include:

- analysis of existing processes, involving the identification of inefficiencies, duplications, and bottlenecks in the execution of managerial functions;
- design of a new public administration model, consisting in the development of optimized processes that take into account IT capabilities and user feedback;
- digitalization, based on the implementation of software, services, and information systems supporting the functioning of public service delivery;
- testing, monitoring, and continuous improvement of the e-government system, including performance evaluation of the new model, data collection, and subsequent adjustments.

One example of the implementation of such approaches is the Diia system in Ukraine, which has not only moved many services online but has also partially reengineered the procedures themselves—for instance, through the automated provision of certificates or services without the involvement of officials. At the same time, not all processes have undergone full transformation, and in many cases a “paper-based logic” persists, merely translated into electronic form.

As a result of implementing reengineering tools, new processes are formed that differ substantially from traditional ones. Their key characteristics include reintegration or horizontal compression (combining several separate operations into one); vertical compression (delegating certain managerial powers to executors for autonomous decision-making); parallel execution of previously sequential actions; reduction in the number of checks and control interventions; minimization of approvals; and the introduction of flexible combinations of centralized and decentralized approaches [2].

The implementation of reengineering tools for administrative services within the e-government system enables not merely the automation of existing procedures but the comprehensive modernization of processes, taking into account citizens’ needs as well as the principles of efficiency, transparency, and accessibility.

Reengineering of administrative services in conjunction with e-government is not a one-time initiative, but a continuous process of adaptation and improvement of public services within a dynamic environment. The successful transformation of administrative services requires not only technological resources but also strategic governance, political will, and the continuous engagement of users in reform processes.

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DIGITAL GOVERNANCE (E-GOVERNANCE) AS A FACTOR IN REFORM EFFECTIVENESS

Digital governance, or e-governance, is a modern form of public administration based on the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to enhance the efficiency, transparency, and openness of public authorities [1]. It involves not only the automation of processes but also the creation of mechanisms for online interaction between the state, citizens, and businesses, which simplifies access to public services and contributes to the more effective functioning of public institutions. This approach is important in the context of the digital transformation of society and is a key element of public administration reforms. The implementation of e-governance helps reduce bureaucratic barriers, increase procedural transparency, and create a more open informational environment between government and society.

One of the main advantages of digital governance is increased transparency and the fight against corruption. Automated systems for interaction between the state and citizens reduce direct contact, which lowers the risk of corruption. Online services provide a fixed sequence of actions for obtaining services, limiting informal practices and promoting standardization of procedures.

Digital governance also increases the accessibility and efficiency of public service delivery. Users can access the necessary services at a convenient time without the need to visit public institutions in person, which saves time and resources for both citizens and civil servants. Electronic service provision optimizes budget expenditures and enables the government to respond more quickly to the needs of the population.

An example of digital governance implementation is Ukraine's Diia platform, which has become the central element of digital interaction between citizens and the state. This system combines a mobile application and an online portal that provide access to dozens of digital documents and more than a hundred public services for citizens and businesses. Through Diia, Ukrainians can obtain official certificates, register businesses, access support services, and submit

applications online, significantly simplifying access to public services and reducing waiting times [2]. The effectiveness of digital governance is also confirmed by economic indicators: the Diia platform has generated substantial savings for citizens and the state, amounting to hundreds of billions of hryvnias due to reduced administrative costs and simplified procedures [3].

The development of electronic public services in Ukraine includes not only basic administrative services but also large-scale state programs such as eRecovery, eOselia, eBook, School Package, National Cashback, and eRobota. Important components are also the electronic cabinets of the State Tax Service, the Pension Fund of Ukraine, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which provide remote access to administrative services. During wartime, digital services have become critically important for the provision of social benefits, registration of damaged property, and support for internally displaced persons, highlighting the transformative nature of public administration [4].

Ukraine's experience in e-governance is closely connected with EU support. Projects such as DT4UA modernize key digital services, harmonize electronic trust services, and integrate electronic identification systems. The EU supports initiatives aimed at upgrading infrastructure, improving managerial skills, and strengthening trust in government services. This contributes to the development of digital competencies and the alignment of national solutions with European standards [4, 5].

At the same time, digital governance faces several challenges, including ensuring cybersecurity, guaranteeing equal access for all population groups, and adapting legislation to new technological realities and the requirements of European integration. The development of appropriate legal and technical standards is essential to ensure data protection and the accessibility of electronic services for persons with diverse needs.

Overall, digital governance serves as an important factor in the effectiveness of public administration reforms by ensuring transparent and efficient service delivery. It contributes to strengthening trust between citizens and the state, implementing European standards in national public administration practice, and creating more adaptive and accessible services for society as a whole.

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DIGITAL GOVERNANCE AND E-SERVICES: BULGARIA'S SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING E-GOVERNMENT

The theoretical framework of digital transformation in public administration. In the era of rapid technological advancement, digital governance has evolved from a secondary administrative tool into the cornerstone of modern public management. Within the context of European integration, e-government represents a fundamental shift in the relationship between the state and its citizens. It is defined not merely as the digitization of existing bureaucratic processes, but as a comprehensive reimagining of service delivery based on transparency, efficiency, and accessibility [5]. For Bulgaria, as an EU member state, the development of a robust digital infrastructure is essential for aligning with the Digital Single Market strategy. This transformation aims to reduce administrative burdens, minimize corruption risks, and foster a more inclusive society.

Strategic milestones and successes in Bulgaria's e-government journey. Bulgaria has achieved significant milestones in establishing a coherent digital governance framework. A pivotal success was the creation of the Ministry of Electronic Governance, which provided a centralized platform for coordinating digital policies across various sectors. One of the most tangible successes is the implementation of the "Single Entry Point" for administrative services, which allows citizens and businesses to access over 400 services online [2]. Furthermore, the adoption of the Electronic Identification Act has been a critical enabler, providing the legal basis for secure digital signatures and authentication [3]. Bulgaria's progress in opening government data portals has also stimulated innovation within the IT sector, allowing private developers to create social and commercial applications based on real-time public data.

Structural challenges and implementation barriers. Despite these notable achievements, the path to full digital integration in Bulgaria is marked by several complex challenges. Interoperability remains the most significant technical hurdle; many state registries were built on legacy systems that do not communicate effectively with one another [2]. Furthermore, according to the Digital Economy and Society Index

(DESI), Bulgaria still faces a discrepancy in digital literacy and infrastructure quality between urban centers and more remote rural regions [4]. Cybersecurity also demands constant vigilance. As the state centralizes vast amounts of personal and administrative data, the risk of sophisticated cyberattacks grows, requiring continuous investment in defense mechanisms and strict adherence to the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The influence of civil society and academic expertise. The role of civil society and academic institutions is paramount in addressing these challenges. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and professional IT associations in Bulgaria act as both critics and partners, conducting independent audits of e-service usability and advocating for the rights of digitally marginalized groups. Public expertise helps the government identify "bottlenecks" in legislation [5]. Academic centers contribute by providing the necessary research and training the next generation of public administrators who must be proficient in digital management models. This synergy between the state, academia, and civil society ensures that e-government reforms are not just technically sound but also socially responsive and ethically grounded.

Conclusion: future prospects for a digital Bulgaria. In conclusion, Bulgaria's experience in implementing e-government highlights a transition toward a more resilient and transparent administrative model. While technical and social barriers persist, the strategic alignment with European standards provides a clear roadmap for future development. The shift toward a "digital-first" public administration is irreversible and essential for Bulgaria's competitiveness in the global economy. By continuing to prioritize interoperability, cybersecurity, and digital inclusion, Bulgaria can move toward a fully integrated digital state that serves as an efficient bridge between the government and its people.

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PUBLIC SERVICE REFORMS: MODERNIZATION OF EDUCATION, HEALTHCARE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Public service reforms play a crucial role in the development of modern democratic states. In the context of globalization, digitalization and increasing social demands, governments are forced to modernize key public sectors in order to ensure efficiency, transparency and accessibility of services. Education, healthcare and local government are among the most important areas of public service reform, as they directly affect the quality of life of citizens and the sustainable development of society.

Modernization of education is one of the central priorities of public service reforms. Education systems today must respond to rapid technological changes, labor market demands and social challenges. One of the main directions of educational reform is the introduction of digital technologies into the learning process. Online platforms, electronic textbooks and distance learning tools make education more accessible and flexible, especially for students in remote regions. At the same time, digitalization requires the development of digital skills among teachers and students, as well as investments in infrastructure.

Another important aspect of educational modernization is the shift from traditional teaching methods to student-centered learning. This approach focuses on critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving skills rather than memorization. Reforms also emphasize lifelong learning, which allows individuals to continuously improve their qualifications and adapt to changes in the labor market. However, challenges remain, including unequal access to quality education, insufficient funding and resistance to change within educational institutions [1].

Healthcare reform is another key component of public service modernization. The main goal of healthcare reforms is to ensure universal access to high-quality medical services while maintaining financial sustainability. One of the major trends in healthcare modernization is the transition from hospital-centered care to primary and preventive healthcare. This approach helps to reduce costs and

improve public health outcomes by focusing on early diagnosis and disease prevention.

Digital health technologies also play a significant role in healthcare reforms. Electronic health records, telemedicine and digital appointment systems improve the efficiency of healthcare delivery and reduce bureaucratic barriers. Patients gain better access to medical information, while healthcare providers can coordinate care more effectively. Nevertheless, the implementation of digital solutions raises concerns about data protection, cybersecurity and the digital divide between different population groups.

In addition, healthcare reforms often involve changes in financing and management systems. The introduction of insurance-based models, performance-based funding and increased autonomy of healthcare institutions aims to improve efficiency and accountability. At the same time, reforms must address social equity issues to ensure that vulnerable groups are not excluded from essential medical services.

Modernization of local government is closely linked to the principles of decentralization and good governance. Local government reforms aim to transfer more powers and resources to local authorities, enabling them to respond more effectively to the needs of local communities. Decentralization promotes citizen participation, transparency and accountability, as decisions are made closer to the people they affect.

One of the key elements of local government modernization is administrative reform. This includes reducing excessive bureaucracy, improving public service delivery and introducing e-governance tools. Digital platforms allow citizens to access public services online, submit applications and communicate with local authorities more easily. Such innovations increase trust in government and reduce corruption risks.

Financial decentralization is also essential for successful local government reform. Local authorities need sufficient financial resources and autonomy to implement development projects and provide public services. However, challenges such as unequal regional development, lack of qualified personnel and limited institutional capacity can hinder the effectiveness of local governance reforms.

In conclusion, public service reforms in education, healthcare and local government are essential for building effective, inclusive and

sustainable societies. Modernization in these sectors enhances service quality, increases transparency and strengthens public trust in government institutions. At the same time, successful reform implementation requires political will, adequate funding, stakeholder engagement and continuous evaluation. Despite existing challenges, public service reforms remain a key instrument for improving the well-being of citizens and ensuring long-term social and economic development.

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PUBLIC SERVICE REFORMS AS A TOOL FOR IMPROVING EDUCATION

Education is one of the key areas of public policy that directly influences the socio-economic development of the state, the formation of human capital, and a country's competitiveness in the context of globalization. In modern transformational processes, the role of the public service in shaping and implementing state education policy becomes particularly significant. As noted in academic research, public governance of education encompasses the implementation of strategic measures at the national, regional, and local levels and presupposes a combination of state regulation with self-governance mechanisms.

Public service reform is aimed at increasing the efficiency of governance, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to citizens' needs. In the field of education, these reforms serve as an important tool for modernizing management processes, improving the quality of educational services, and adapting education systems to European standards.

Contemporary public service reforms envisage the transformation of traditional administrative and hierarchical models toward result-oriented and service-based governance. The system of public authorities in the field of education performs prognostic and goal-setting, coordinating, informational, and controlling functions that ensure the sustainable development of the education sector [1].

An important element of the reforms is the professionalization of civil servants and the enhancement of their managerial competencies. Research indicates that increased transparency and accountability of educational processes are among the key factors for the successful implementation of reforms, especially in the context of decentralization of power [2]. The availability of well-trained managerial personnel enables the effective implementation of changes and the achievement of strategic objectives of state education policy.

The experience of European countries demonstrates that effective public service reforms are a prerequisite for improving the quality of education. In post-communist countries of the European Union, particularly Estonia, Poland, and the Czech Republic, innovative approaches to education governance have been implemented,

including the digitalization of administrative processes, decentralization of management, and modernization of educational programs in accordance with labor market needs.

A comparative analysis of international educational studies (including PISA results) indicates that in countries with well-developed systems of public governance in education, students' academic achievement levels are, on average, 5–8 points higher than in countries where reforms are fragmented [3]. This confirms the close relationship between the quality of the public service and the effectiveness of education systems.

In Ukraine, public service reform is taking place in the context of decentralization and European integration. The transfer of powers to local self-government bodies is aimed at increasing the autonomy of educational institutions, improving management efficiency, and addressing the needs of territorial communities [2].

At the same time, decentralization requires adequate staffing and the development of managerial competencies at the local level. Insufficient institutional capacity may reduce the effectiveness of reforms, which necessitates further improvement of the public service system as a key mechanism for implementing education policy.

Transparency and digitalization are among the priority directions of modern public service reforms. The introduction of digital governance tools contributes to reducing corruption risks, increasing public trust in state institutions, and optimizing administrative processes [2].

European experience, presented on the Eurydice platform, demonstrates a comprehensive approach to education reform using the example of Turkey.

According to the Twelfth Development Plan (2024–2028), the national education strategy includes 67 measures and 102 specific actions aimed at ensuring equal access to quality education, developing digital infrastructure, inclusive education, and the professional development of teaching and managerial staff [4].

This approach confirms that an effective public service combines strategic planning, digitalization, and citizen-oriented governance, which is a necessary condition for the sustainable development of the education system.

Public service reforms are an important instrument for improving the education system. They ensure the modernization of governance, enhance the quality of educational services, and facilitate the adaptation of education systems to contemporary socio-economic challenges. European experience proves the effectiveness of decentralization, professionalization of the public service, and the implementation of digital and inclusive approaches. For Ukraine, further improvement of the public service in the field of education is a necessary condition for sustainable development and integration into the European education area.

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MODERNIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICE IN UKRAINE THROUGH THE PRISM OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND THE EXPERIENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

Public service in Ukraine is currently undergoing a period of profound transformation, driven by a complex set of internal and external challenges. Key among these are the process of European integration, the consequences of the full-scale war, and the urgent need to modernize management practices. In this context, issues of enhancing the quality of educational services, ensuring the accessibility and efficiency of the healthcare system, and strengthening the role of local government as a foundation for democratic governance and sustainable development of territorial communities are particularly relevant [1].

In EU countries, public service reforms include the modernization of administrative processes, the implementation of digital technologies, the development of human capital, and the expansion of local government powers. Bulgaria, as an EU member state, implements systemic public administration reforms with active institutional and financial support from the EU. These reforms aim to improve the quality of public services, reduce administrative barriers, and enhance transparency in the interaction between the state and its citizens, making the Bulgarian experience highly relevant for Ukraine in the context of adapting European governance standards [2].

Improving education in Ukraine through European integration involves the modernization of schools (New Ukrainian School) and financial support from the EU (e.g., 20 million euros from Finland for the 2026 - 2029 reform period). Key focus areas include enhancing the quality of teaching, teacher training, digitalization, and integration into the European education area [3].

Healthcare reform in Bulgaria was primarily focused on the reorganization of primary health care, which improved the accessibility of medical services, optimized the workload of medical facilities, and improved public health indicators. The Bulgarian experience demonstrates that the effectiveness of healthcare reforms largely

depends on the combination of institutional changes, adequate financing, and effective state regulation.

A crucial component of the European model of public administration is the development of local government through fiscal and administrative decentralization. In Bulgaria, as in other EU countries, reforms involved expanding the powers of local authorities, strengthening their financial autonomy, and increasing managerial capacity. This allowed local communities to respond more effectively to the needs of the population and ensure the provision of higher-quality public services, which is especially important for Ukraine in the context of its ongoing decentralization reform [4].

The European and Bulgarian experience highlights that public service modernization is a long-term commitment requiring synchronized reforms in education, health, and local governance. For Ukraine, the key tasks remain the development of professional competencies of public servants, the alignment of reforms with European quality standards, ensuring the financial sustainability of social sectors, and deepening the decentralization of power. The successful implementation of these tasks requires strategic vision, institutional capacity, and the adaptation of international practices to the national context.

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DIGITAL GOVERNANCE (E-GOVERNANCE) AS A FACTOR IN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF REFORMS

Digital governance has gradually become a defining element of contemporary public sector reform agendas. In response to growing societal expectations and technological development, governments are increasingly integrating digital tools into administrative systems. Unlike conventional reforms focused mainly on organizational restructuring, e-governance introduces changes that influence how public institutions operate, coordinate, and interact with citizens.

One of the primary ways in which digital governance contributes to reform effectiveness is through enhanced transparency. Digital infrastructures enable broader public access to administrative information and create opportunities for monitoring governmental actions. By limiting informal procedures and reducing discretionary decision-making, electronic platforms contribute to more predictable and rule-based governance. As noted by Maharani, Kusuma, and Nabiilah [2], the institutionalization of digital governance mechanisms supports legal compliance and diminishes the space for non-transparent administrative practices. Consequently, transparency becomes an operational characteristic rather than a symbolic commitment.

Beyond transparency, digital governance significantly affects administrative efficiency. The replacement of paper-based procedures with electronic systems shortens processing times, lowers operational costs, and minimizes procedural errors. According to Antonova and Mokhova [1], digital transformation enables public institutions to reconsider internal workflows and improve coordination across administrative units. For reform-oriented states, this is particularly important, as fragmented institutional arrangements often hinder consistent policy implementation.

Digital governance also contributes to strengthening accountability and public trust. The expansion of online public services, open data initiatives, and digital feedback tools increases opportunities for citizen involvement and oversight. Yusifbayli emphasizes that evaluating e-governance solely through technical indicators is

insufficient; its broader societal impact, including citizen engagement and confidence in public institutions, must also be considered. Through these channels, digital governance enhances the legitimacy of reform processes. [3]

At the same time, digital governance cannot be regarded as a universal remedy for administrative shortcomings. Its effectiveness depends on institutional readiness, regulatory frameworks, and the digital competencies of both public servants and citizens. In the absence of these factors, digital solutions risk replicating existing inefficiencies in electronic form. Therefore, digital governance should be implemented as part of a comprehensive reform strategy that combines technological innovation with institutional development and inclusive policy design.

Digital governance plays a decisive role in increasing the effectiveness of public administration reforms. By embedding transparency, improving administrative efficiency, and expanding accountability mechanisms, e-governance strengthens public trust and supports sustainable reform outcomes. However, its impact is contingent upon supportive institutional conditions and strategic integration into broader reform frameworks. When these requirements are met, digital governance functions not only as a technological tool but also as a catalyst for long-term governance transformation.

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Arseniy Bashlak

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORMS IN EU COUNTRIES: EXPERIENCE AND LESSONS FOR UKRAINE

Ukraine wants to join the EU, so effective negotiation skills alone are not enough. For this, it is important to have a clear leader who will establish internal power in Ukraine and carry out several significant reforms in the field of public administration.

Looking at the experience of countries that have recently joined the EU, Ukraine needs to ensure clear interaction between authorities and communicate openly and transparently with its own public [1].

Currently, Ukraine has a centralized model for managing the negotiation process, which provides several significant advantages, but does not ensure long-term effectiveness [1].

Today, Ukraine has grounds for further success in this direction, because our country is supported by the public and international partners provide a lot of assistance [1].

Mechanisms for integrating European management standards into national systems

Nowadays, communities play a key role in the country's reconstruction, since the state does not have a single common standard [2].

However, very often communities fail to perform their work qualitatively. This is facilitated by the active destruction of infrastructure, personnel crises, unstable security situations. Due to these challenges, Ukraine is forced to integrate some European standards of public administration [2].

For example, to integrate the principles of subsidiarity and transparency to complete the decentralization reform and the obligation of local authorities to report to communities through open meetings, respectively. A large number of people are confident that the correct interpretation of these principles by Ukraine will allow it to increase the efficiency of local government [2].

Digital governance (e-governance) as a factor in the effectiveness of reforms

E-government is an important indicator of economic development, as it characterizes the phenomenon when public

administration bodies show transparency and openness in their activities [3].

E-government enables businesses to effectively interact with government bodies, in particular, it simplifies the implementation of administrative procedures [3].

EU member states have been providing electronic public services for quite a long time and involving citizens in making certain political decisions [3].

In Ukraine, e-government has a strong impact on the economy and increases the efficiency of public service provision. E-government stimulates the development of the digital economy, which has made a quantum leap in development in Ukraine in recent years [3].

In general, e-government in Ukraine meets the requirements of international practice, which increases Ukraine's chances of joining the European Union as soon as possible.

Anti-corruption policy and institutional changes: lessons from Bulgaria for candidate countries

Bulgaria began to significantly slow down the pace of reforms after joining the European Union in 2007, as the main goal had already been achieved [4].

The EU supervised Bulgaria for more than 10 years after accession, because the country's institutions lacked the necessary stability to control the situation [4].

Bulgaria has made several attempts to establish anti-corruption commissions, but they were highly dependent on politics, which is why their activities were criticized [4].

The country recently held anti-corruption protests, as a result of which the President of Bulgaria resigned. This shows that only public pressure leads to serious changes.

Candidate countries for EU accession should learn certain lessons from Bulgaria's experience. Their reforms should not be implemented only for the sake of reporting to the European Commission, and anti-corruption mechanisms should be enshrined at the constitutional level.

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CORE FUNCTIONS OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Business management is a key prerequisite for the effective functioning of an enterprise in a competitive and volatile market environment. Its goal is to ensure the sustainable development of the company, the rational use of resources, and the achievement of strategic and operational targets. It represents the purposeful influence of management on the enterprise's activities, aimed at resource optimization, increasing competitiveness, and achieving economic results [1].

Management functions reflect the essence of the management process and ensure the transformation of corporate resources into final performance results.

Planning is the fundamental function of business management, involving the definition of organizational goals and the ways to achieve them. It covers strategic, tactical, and operational levels, including environmental scanning, assessment of internal capabilities, and the formulation of objectives according to SMART principles.

Organizing is aimed at developing an effective organizational structure, distributing authority and responsibility, and establishing interaction between departments through the creation of appropriate business processes and communications.

Motivation ensures that employees are incentivized toward productive labor and the achievement of company goals, taking their individual needs into account.

Control consists of verifying plan execution, identifying deviations, and taking corrective actions. It can be preliminary, concurrent, or feedback-based (final) and is grounded in the use of key performance indicators (KPIs).

Coordination ensures the consistency of actions among departments and employees, the synchronization of tasks, and the efficient use of resources.

Regulation involves the real-time adjustment of enterprise activities in response to identified deviations or changes in the external environment.

Consequently, the combination of these management functions forms an integrated system that ensures the effective operation and development of business activities.

A key feature of these functions is their systemic nature and interdependence. No single function can be effectively implemented in isolation. They form a closed management cycle where the outputs of one function serve as inputs for another. Planning is impossible without analyzing control results, organizing requires coordination, motivation necessitates feedback through control, and regulation is based on information obtained during performance monitoring.

In today's environment of globalization, digitalization, and increasing business uncertainty, the importance of professional business management only continues to grow. Enterprises that systematically implement all management functions demonstrate higher competitiveness, resilience to crises, and a capacity for innovative development. At the same time, it is vital to understand that management effectiveness depends not only on grasping each function individually but also on the management's ability to integrate them into a unified system adapted to the specifics of a particular enterprise, its industry, and its strategic priorities.

Thus, a deep understanding and professional implementation of all management functions is a necessary condition for successful entrepreneurial activity, the rational use of resources, and the long-term sustainable development of the business.

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DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF UKRAINE'S ECONOMY: SECTORAL DISPARITIES AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The digitalization of Ukrainian enterprises is characterized by significant unevenness, driven by business scale and industry-specific factors. Assessments of digital maturity reveal a profound imbalance: while large businesses demonstrate a high level of readiness - with 78,5% of companies having a digital strategy and 85,2% utilizing cloud services - in the small (micro) enterprise segment, these figures stand at only 12,4% and 25,8%, respectively. This substantial gap in technology integration directly impacts the depth of operational process modernization and underscores the critical need for targeted digital development support specifically for small businesses [2].

Beyond the scale of operations, the level of digital maturity varies significantly depending on the sector. The most intensive adoption of digital tools is observed in the IT industry, the financial sector, and telecommunications. Conversely, enterprises in basic, traditional sectors of the economy, particularly agriculture and construction, lag significantly in the utilization of modern digital technologies and solutions. An analysis of digital investment indicates a priority toward technological upgrades: 35,2% of resources are directed toward production automation, and 28,4% toward the development of digital platforms. At the same time, the critically low share of investment in staff competency development (8,5%) creates risks for the effective mastery of implemented technologies. The systemic use of information and communication networks has become the foundation of modern progress, stimulating globalization and mobility. However, international experience demonstrates significant digital inequality: while approximately 75% of the population in Europe and Central Asia has internet access, in other regions, this figure barely reaches half. Even within the EU, there is a substantial gap between digitalization leaders, such as Denmark or Germany, and countries with moderate development rates, such as Czechia or Italy [1].

A vital component of today's global digital economy is e-commerce, which simplifies trade processes, shortens interaction chains between producers and consumers, and optimizes buying and

selling. The world's largest e-commerce markets are concentrated in China, the USA, the UK, Japan, and Germany. According to UNCTAD data, digital transformation has turned cross-border data exchange into a strategic resource for the global economy. Between 2005 and 2022, the share of global internet users rose from 15,6% to 66,3%, covering approximately 5,3 billion people. However, access remains uneven: in low-income countries, only one in four residents uses the network. Parallel to the technological transition from the cyber-physical systems of "Industry 4.0" to the human-centric and environmentally responsible "Industry 5.0," the financial scale of digitalization is growing rapidly. According to Boston Consulting Group forecasts, by 2035, the global digital economy could reach \$16 trillion, with the G20 sector accounting for approximately €3,2 trillion [3].

The digital transformation of Ukraine's economy and society aims to create conditions for developing demand and incentives for using digital solutions in industry, business, and the social sphere. Information and communication technologies form the core of the digital economy, while data serves as a strategic resource for further development. The degree of digitalization is determined by three key indicators: internet accessibility, the level of business technology adoption, and the prevalence of e-governance.

Ukraine shows positive dynamics in network coverage: at the beginning of 2025, the number of users reached 31,5 million (82,4% of the population), a 3,2% increase over the previous year. In the business environment, innovation integration remains moderate — cloud services are used by 27,7% of enterprises, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) by 22,4%, indicating certain resource constraints. Meanwhile, demand for digital interaction with the state is growing: as early as 2022, 63% of adult citizens used at least one electronic service [2].

Conceptually, the development of Ukraine's digital economy is aimed at transforming traditional models into high-tech value-creation mechanisms. Digitalization involves forming a unified cyber-physical space and modernizing all sectors of life. Key principles of this process, enshrined in national strategies, are based on ensuring equal access to services, stimulating economic growth, integrating into the global digital space, and guaranteeing cybersecurity under active state leadership.

The integration of Artificial Intelligence into Ukrainian business at a level of 22,4% demonstrates rapid adaptation to global trends, even slightly outpacing the European Union average, which fluctuated between 8–12% for the mass market in 2023–2024. However, a direct comparison reveals a qualitative difference: in the EU, AI implementation is often driven by systemic investments in industrial automation and Big Data analytics, whereas in Ukraine, solutions for communication, marketing, and the service sector dominate. The main barriers for both markets remain the shortage of qualified personnel and issues regarding ethics and data security; however, European companies have better access to preferential financing for digital transformations. In Ukraine, the primary drivers are private sector flexibility and the active growth of the IT industry, creating the potential to further bridge the technological gap with the leading countries of the digital world.

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ANALYSIS OF PREREQUISITES AND DEVELOPMENT TRENDS OF IMPACT ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN UKRAINE

Impact entrepreneurship, often referred to as social entrepreneurship, represents a progressive economic segment in which classical business mechanisms are subordinated to the goal of generating positive social or environmental change[1]. Against the backdrop of contemporary global crises and the worldwide shift toward sustainable development, this field is becoming increasingly significant, which necessitates a thorough study of the factors that stimulate or hinder its development, as well as an analysis of the key vectors of its expansion specifically within the Ukrainian context. Today, this sector - where financial success is inseparable from a concrete and measurable beneficial effect for communities or the environment-is gradually becoming an organic component of the national economy. Such integration primarily occurs due to fundamental changes in societal priorities, growing attention to the principles of environmental awareness, and the active development of a culture of corporate responsibility within the business sector.

The key prerequisites for the development of impact entrepreneurship include the evolution of social needs in the context of wartime challenges and humanitarian crises; the intensification of civil society activities and volunteer initiatives; the increasing level of economic digitalization; and the gradual formation of institutional support from the state, international organizations, and donor programs. An important factor is also the transformation of societal value orientations, particularly the growing interest in responsible consumption and ethical business practices.

The current stage of development of Ukrainian impact entrepreneurship is characterized by a significant expansion of thematic areas - from education and environmental protection to inclusion and digital innovations. A major trend has become the implementation of “green” technologies and circular economy models, accompanied by the development of transparent tools for assessing social impact. Special emphasis today is placed on recovery and reintegration projects: priority tasks include the employment of

internally displaced persons, the adaptation of veterans, and the restoration of the economic potential of de-occupied territories. At the same time, impact business is expanding beyond traditional craft production or the food sector, actively entering new high-technology and socially significant industries, which contributes to the comprehensive development of local infrastructure.

A characteristic feature is the diversification of impact entrepreneurship sectors, extending beyond traditional fields such as crafts and food production. Active development is observed in the Tech for Good [2] domain through the creation of information and technological solutions for social needs, including platforms for psychological assistance and services designed to support veterans in job searches. At the same time, the importance of circular economy projects related to waste recycling, environmentally friendly production, and energy efficiency is increasing[3]. The formation of a financial ecosystem is characterized by the growing role of donors and international organizations, since impact financing at the initial stage mainly comes from international foundations and technical assistance programs. Specialized acceleration and incubation programs are emerging from organizations such as GIZ and USAID, which not only provide funding in the form of grants and concessional loans but also offer mentoring and educational support that is critically important for scaling social impact. Finally, networking and coalition capacity are strengthening through the establishment of industry associations and platforms. This promotes more intensive interaction among impact entrepreneurs, facilitating experience exchange, advocacy of interests, and the development of common standards for social impact assessment, including the use of Social Return on Investment metrics.

Impact entrepreneurship in Ukraine possesses considerable potential for institutionalization and transformation into an important element of national economic and social resilience. The main obstacles remain the absence of specific legislative regulation and limited access to private investment capital. Prevailing trends indicate a shift of focus toward the military-social and humanitarian spheres, active technological integration, and the strengthening of the support ecosystem through international partners. Further development requires systemic actions from the state aimed at creating a favorable

legal and fiscal environment that will allow the growing social demand to be transformed into sustainable market solutions.

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RESEARCHING THE CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Consumer behavior is shaped by a complex interplay of economic, psychological, and emotional factors that dictate the decision to purchase a product. In the buying process, critical roles are played by consumer motivation and perception, age, life stage, financial status, and personal characteristics. Additionally, choice is influenced by the cultural environment, social status, reference groups, family, and social standing. Thus, consumer behavior can be defined as the totality of an individual's actions related to the acquisition of goods or services, occurring under the influence of various internal and external factors. For any seller, the primary goal is the realization of products. It is the understanding of the consumer decision-making mechanism that allows one to influence this process and guide the buyer toward the final result — making a purchase. The decision-making process for purchasing a product traditionally includes five main stages: need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior [1].

Need Recognition. This is the first stage. In its simplest form, it manifests as the consumer's realization of the difference between a desired state and the actual situation. The emergence of a need can be driven by both internal and external factors. For example, a desire to refresh a wardrobe, change style, or follow seasonal fashion trends can serve as an internal stimulus for purchasing new jeans. Simultaneously, an external nudge could be the publication of new brand collections on social media, which captures the consumer's attention and motivates a purchase.

Information Search. Once a need is recognized, the individual begins to seek ways to satisfy it. Information sources may be personal or impersonal, commercial or non-commercial, as well as publicly available or based on personal experience. For instance, when choosing jeans, a consumer might visit online stores to browse models, styles, and colors. This method allows for the preliminary selection of several options, significantly easing the final choice in-store. In this case, we are looking at a publicly available, commercial, impersonal source of

information. The internal stimulus for this search is an interest in the product and the desire to find the optimal option.

Evaluation of Alternatives. At this stage, the consumer compares available options against specific criteria to narrow their choice. Such criteria may include price, quality, brand, country of origin, manufacturer and seller reputation, warranty terms, usage costs, reliability, safety, functional characteristics, convenience, and accessibility. The buyer's emotional state also plays a vital role here. For example, during a search for jeans, five models were selected, four of which did not meet the established requirements, allowing the buyer to focus on the most suitable option.

Purchase Decision. This stage involves selecting the optimal alternative or an acceptable substitute. At this point, consumer behavior is heavily influenced by situational factors such as product availability, promotions, purchase terms, or sales assistance recommendations.

Post-Purchase Behavior. The final stage includes the process of using the product and its subsequent evaluation. If the consumer's expectations are met, they feel satisfaction. The emotional perception of the result and the absence of post-purchase dissonance are of particular importance. In the considered example, the buyer received complete and reliable information regarding the product's characteristics, its advantages and potential drawbacks, as well as warranty and return conditions. Consequently, the purchase decision was deliberate and was not accompanied by post-purchase doubts [2].

Researching consumer behavior and analyzing the decision-making process allows sellers to develop additional competitive advantages and strengthen their market position. Understanding the needs and motivations of the target audience contributes to increased operational efficiency, profit growth, customer retention, improved consumer experience, and the formation of long-term relationships with buyers.

A comprehensive consideration of the factors influencing the purchase decision-making process enables companies to more effectively utilize marketing communication tools, such as targeted campaigns, to increase customer satisfaction and minimize the risk of post-purchase dissonance by ensuring product information transparency. In modern conditions, conducting marketing research

becomes a vital element of the strategic development of enterprises operating in a competitive market environment.

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THE ROLE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SERVICES MARKET

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are a key driver of the global economy and national competitiveness. A leading role in monitoring this sphere is played by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) - a specialized UN agency comprising 193 countries and approximately 900 organizations. Since 2008, the ITU has implemented the ICT Development Index (IDI) for the comparative analysis of countries' digital progress. According to the latest comprehensive calculations from 2017, Ukraine ranked 79th among 176 nations with a score of 5,62, exceeding the global average [1].

One of the main global trends in the development of the services market is the rapid increase in Internet accessibility. The global network is significantly transforming communication methods, data exchange, and the organization of economic activity, becoming the foundation of the modern information society. In 2021, the number of Internet users worldwide reached approximately 4,6 billion, indicating that more than half of the planet's population is connected to the global network. At the same time, the level of Internet access varies significantly depending on the region and the economic development of individual states.

Between 2005 and 2019, global Internet accessibility in households tripled, while in developing countries, it increased 14-fold. Despite this, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the digital divide between urban and rural areas. According to ITU forecasts, by 2025, approximately 6 billion people (75% of the world's population) will have network access; however, 2,2 billion people will still remain offline due to economic and infrastructural barriers. A key trend has been the dominance of the mobile segment: at the beginning of 2021, 92,6% of users accessed the network via smartphones, and mobile traffic exceeded 50% of the global volume, transforming consumption models for digital services and commerce [2]. Furthermore, the Internet has significantly influenced the transformation of global trade: in 2020, the volume of global retail sales through e-commerce exceeded

\$4,2 trillion, becoming a significant factor in the development of the services market [3].

Alongside this, the development of the services market is closely linked to the increasing volume of IT services. According to analytical estimates, the global IT services market is valued at approximately \$1218,6 billion in 2024, with a projected growth to about \$2289,3 billion by 2033. This indicates a stable trend of rising demand for digital services across various economic sectors. The leading directions for ICT implementation worldwide are technologies that directly define the modern services market, including: Artificial Intelligence (AI); Internet of Things (IoT); Big Data analytics; Cloud computing; Fifth-generation (5G) networks. The utilization of these technologies facilitates the automation of business processes, increases the efficiency of service delivery, and fosters new digital models of interaction between producers and consumers [3].

In addition to the positive trends of ICT proliferation, challenges related to cybersecurity, personal data protection, and information privacy are also growing. In response, developed countries are establishing legal and ethical standards for the use of digital technologies, investing in the modernization of digital infrastructure, educational programs, and personnel training, as well as stimulating innovation. The experience of foreign states demonstrates that the effective development of the services market under digitalization requires a comprehensive approach that integrates technological, economic, social, and legal aspects.

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STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND INCREASING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF THE UKRAINIAN SERVICE MARKET

The development of Ukraine's digital infrastructure is based on national strategies, international partnerships, and the implementation of global standards. A key document is the Digital Development and Innovation Strategy until 2030 (WINWIN), adopted in December 2024. It defines a model for transforming the country into a high-value-added technological economy by integrating digital solutions into industry, the agricultural sector, and medicine. The Strategy provides for the development of innovation ecosystems, including the launch of techno-clusters and venture financing, as well as the creation of a favorable legislative framework with intellectual property protection. Modernization includes updating government platforms, telecommunications, and a network of digital competence centers. During 2025–2027, within the operational plan, the focus will be on the digitalization of education, increasing the population's qualifications, and launching new services for interaction between business, science, and the state [1].

Digital network infrastructure is the foundation for access to electronic services and the establishment of a digital economy. For the stable functioning of the market, wide coverage of high-speed internet, network reliability, technological neutrality, and the investment attractiveness of the sector are critical. Key development areas include the elimination of monopolies and the laying of fiber-optic lines, the formation of a competitive environment through the implementation of 5G technology, and ensuring equitable access for new operators. Attracting private capital and international partners, combined with state programs, stimulates network rollout, while establishing quality standards and transparent tariffs guarantees the protection of user interests. The National Economic Growth Strategy emphasizes that limited network access can trigger a technological gap between urban and rural areas, hindering the overall progress of the country [2]. Communications development covers not only traditional internet networks but also innovative solutions, including testing Starlink

direct-to-cell technology aimed at providing connectivity in remote and geographically challenging regions, as well as in conflict zones [3].

Integration into the EU Digital Single Market and the harmonization of national legislation with European standards is a strategic priority for Ukraine. This ensures legal compatibility and mutual recognition of digital identities, electronic signatures, and trust services, which is critical for cross-border business processes. Active participation in the Digital Europe Programme (2021–2027) opens access to funding for projects in high-performance computing, artificial intelligence development, cloud services, and analytics. Specific focus areas include increasing the digital literacy of the population and the large-scale digital transformation of the public sector and the economy through the implementation of innovative technologies. Electronic services are a fundamental element of digital infrastructure, providing transparent and secure access to services without physical presence. A leading example is the Diia ecosystem, which consolidates over 130 government online services, including business registration, documentation, and social payments. Thanks to international partnerships, specifically the DT4UA project, Ukraine has accelerated the transition to a "digital first" model, modernizing over 150 services with improved interfaces and high performance even under martial law. A significant step in attracting investment was the launch of the uResidency service, which allows foreign entrepreneurs to register and remotely manage businesses in Ukraine, creating favorable conditions for international activity [4].

Digital services significantly optimize interaction between citizens, businesses, and the state, providing convenient online access to services without the need to visit institutions. Process automation allows for the minimization of bureaucracy, the abandonment of paper workflows, and a significant reduction in corruption risks by eliminating the human factor. This contributes to substantial savings of time and financial resources for all participants in social relations. Statistics confirm the rapid popularity of digital solutions: while about 63% of Ukrainians used state services in 2022, by 2024, the satisfaction level exceeded 84%. Thus, digitalization has become an integral part of everyday life, making government processes transparent, fast, and highly user-oriented [5].

Ukraine demonstrates impressive progress in international e-government rankings: according to the EGD index, the country rose from 102nd place in 2018 to 5th place in the world in terms of online service development. This confirms the high efficiency of the chosen digital transformation strategy. State policy is oriented toward the active implementation of innovations and scientific-technical solutions, stimulating the formation of high-tech markets and strengthening the competitiveness of the national economy. Digital technologies are fundamentally transforming finance, industry, medicine, and education, opening new segments for economic activity and creating favorable conditions for exporting domestic technological products to the global arena.

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TECHNOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE HOTEL BUSINESS: FROM AUTOMATION TO CUSTOMER CENTRICITY

Analysis shows that modern hotels still face technological gaps due to a combination of manual and automated processes, necessitating further modernization to remain competitive. Among key innovations, GDS (Global Distribution Systems) and ADS (Alternative Distribution Systems) hold a special place, as they provide a direct link between the service provider and the client. With a network of over 600,000 terminals and a reach of millions of online users, these global and alternative platforms enable instant room bookings from anywhere in the world. In the Ukrainian market, leading operators in this segment include Columbus, Classic, Fidelio, Otedis, Best Eastern, and Unirez.

Energy Management Systems (EMS) allow hotels to optimize operational costs through the automated control of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) via occupancy sensors and modern thermostats. Implementing such solutions reduces electricity costs by up to 20%, pays for itself within 12–24 months, and enhances the property's investment appeal. Meanwhile, multimedia solutions, such as remote connectivity panels and media hubs, improve the guest experience by allowing visitors to connect their own devices via HDMI, VGA, or Bluetooth. This ensures seamless HD content streaming and the ability to charge gadgets via dedicated docking stations [1].

Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) door locks are gradually replacing traditional access methods, providing a high level of security and guest convenience. Using mobile phones as digital keys eliminates the issue of lost cards and speeds up service, leading to the widespread adoption of this technology in global practice. In parallel, Back-office management systems optimize staff performance through a unified wireless network. This coordination allows housekeepers, technicians, and administrators to promptly exchange data regarding room status, maintenance needs, or cleaning schedules, while also accounting for personal guest preferences and minimizing the risk of errors.

Infrared scanners optimize housekeeping operations by detecting guest presence in the room. This minimizes inconvenience for guests, as staff can schedule cleaning specifically when the room is vacant.

Simultaneously, the active implementation of voice control systems based on Alexa, Siri, or Google Assistant allows for the automation of room interactions. Guests can manage lighting, thermostats, and climate control without physical contact with switches, which not only enhances overall comfort but also provides a barrier-free environment for individuals with visual impairments or limited mobility.

Digital transformation in the hospitality industry is not merely a trend but a critical necessity for survival in a competitive market. The implementation of comprehensive solutions — from global distribution systems (GDS/ADS) to "smart" energy management systems (EMS) and contactless access technologies — allows hotels to solve three key tasks: radically reducing operating costs, increasing security levels, and creating a personalized guest experience. The further integration of manual and automated processes through unified digital ecosystems will be the primary factor driving investment attractiveness and customer loyalty in the coming years.

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