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European Neighbourhood East countries have been actively engaged in improving service delivery for citizens and businesses for some time. Some have opted for flagship initiatives (often with large-scale, one-stop shop solutions), some for digitalisation of services, while some have taken an incremental approach towards the service delivery modernisation process. This comparative report outlines the state of play in the design and delivery of public administrative services in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Public administrative services cover the vast array of interactions with (and within) government: making enquiries, applications, registrations and payments, and receiving information, documentation, decisions and funds. These contacts allow service users (citizens, businesses and non-governmental organisations) to exercise rights, access entitlements, execute obligations and achieve ambitions. Besides the description and analysis of the general service delivery framework(s), institutional set-up and practical implementation, the report presents a comparative analysis of a set of life events and highlights inspiring practices from the different countries.

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Service Design and Delivery in the European Neighbourhood Policy East Region

SIGMA Paper No. 64

A comparative report on designing and delivering administrative services in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine

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List of abbreviations

ARM	Armenia
ASAN	Azerbaijan Service and Assessment Network (Azerbaijan)
ASC	Administrative Service Centre (Ukraine)
AZE	Azerbaijan
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
CBE	Crossroads Bank for Enterprises (Belgium)
CC	Community Centre (Georgia)
CMU	Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine
DGA	Digital Governance Agency (Georgia)
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EIF	European Interoperability Framework
EGA	Electronic Governance Agency (Moldova)
EKENG	E-Governance Infrastructure Implementation Agency (Armenia)
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EU	European Union
GEO	Georgia
GIP	Government Interoperability Platform (Armenia)
ICT	Information and communication technologies
IS	Information system
LEPL	Legal Entity of Public Law
LSG	Local self-government
MLD	Moldova
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MinDigit	Ministry of Digital Transformation
NAG	National Archive of Georgia
NAPR	National Agency of Public Registry (Georgia)
NBE	National Bureau of Enforcement (Georgia)
NELE	Non-Entrepreneurial Legal Entity (Georgia)
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAR	Public administration reform
PM	Prime minister
PSA	Public Services Agency (Moldova)
PSDA	Public Service Development Agency (Georgia)
PSH	Public Service Hall (Georgia)
QES	Qualified electronic signature
SAPSSI	State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations (Azerbaijan)
SIGMA	Support for Improvement in Governance and Management
SSOT	Single source of truth
UKR	Ukraine
USC	United Service Centre (Georgia)

Glossary of key terms

Administrative service	An umbrella term for provision/transfer of information or finance involving the public administration, including enquiries, applications, notifications, documentation, registrations, declarations, decisions, permissions, rejections, certifications, licensing, payments and receipts of funds
Base registry	An authentic and trusted source of fundamental information, especially relating to citizens or businesses, held by government-appointed public administrations or organisations, which can be digitally (re)used by others
Decentralisation	Transfer of rights, responsibilities and/or resources from a higher to a lower level of elected government (e.g. from central government to local self-government)
De-concentration	Transfer of responsibilities and/or resources within state administrations from national to sub-national levels (e.g. from a central ministry or agency to branch offices at the regional, provincial, district or county level), while accountability remains at the centre
Electronic and digital government	E-government involves replacing paper-based with computer-based systems, automating internal processes and moving interactions online. Digital government involves harnessing the power of technology and data to enhance public administration (structures, culture, capabilities, processes), and design and deliver services to better meet the needs of citizens, businesses and other organisations, whether online or offline.
Electronic and digital services	E-services are administrative services that are produced, provided and/or consumed electronically, which can be as simple as a webpage or a scanned document (PDF) that is print-ready but not necessarily machine-readable. Digital services are e-services that can be easily transmitted, combined and modified across information systems.
Electronic and digital signature	E-signatures are electronic signatures that verify documentation. Digital signatures authenticate and validate the verification digitally, and secure the document at the time of signature, so if it is modified later, the signature will no longer be valid.
Interoperability	The ability of organisations to interact towards mutually beneficial goals, involving the sharing of information and knowledge between these organisations, through the business processes they support, by the exchange of data between their ICT systems
Multi-channel and omni-channel	Multi-channel means that users can access public administrative services through many entry points, such as websites, physical offices, self-service kiosks and call centres. As these modes often operate as 'silos', independently of each other, the concept of omni-channel connects these modes, so that it does not matter which channel is chosen initially, allowing the user to switch between them to access the service they want seamlessly and with consistent quality.
One-stop shop	A single channel through which users can access multiple services, find all the information they need and conduct all their transactions (applications, registrations, payments, etc.) in one place

Service user

Umbrella term covering citizens, businesses and other organisations, which are also sometimes referred to as 'customers' or 'clients', but as governments represent citizens as well as serve them, the more neutral term 'service user' is employed instead.

Executive summary

This comparative report, prepared from January 2021 to June 2022, outlines the state of play in the design and delivery of public administrative services in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine (see table at end for key facts and figures). It describes the way the systems currently function and provides observations and some summary conclusions about the potential ways forward for further improving public services and making them more user-friendly.

The case for improving public service design and delivery

Public administrative services cover the vast array of interactions with (and within) government: making enquiries, applications, registrations and payments, and receiving information, documentation, decisions and funds. These contacts allow service users (citizens, businesses and non-governmental organisations [NGOs]) to exercise rights, access entitlements, execute obligations and achieve ambitions. They enable governments to implement policies, collect revenues, spend budgets, gather data and enforce rules. Service delivery can take place face to face, by telephone, by mail, or online. Every citizen should have the right to expect good administration and good administrative behaviour from its government, at whatever level, codified in legislation.

Digitalisation can play a crucial role as a facilitator, but its true value lies in how it is applied and why. In the past, public administrations saw 'e-government' as a route to greater efficiency, by converting what was on paper into electronic form. 'Digital government', by contrast, is about embedding a culture dedicated to meeting users' needs by re-engineering processes and services. It sees technology as an enabler, not a driver, of transformation.

Setting the direction for service design and delivery

Four of the countries under review (AZE, GEO, MLD, UKR) define administrative services in their laws or strategies, while all have published lists of administrative services, which define their scope by proxy. These are consolidated in one place in three of the countries (AZE, MLD, UKR), helping the user to navigate the administrative system, and providing a springboard for simplification and digitalisation of design and delivery processes. However, it is only in Ukraine that this consolidated list currently covers all administrative services and all levels of government.

Four countries (ARM, GEO, MLD, UKR) have enshrined the right to good administration and power for citizens to seek redress in codes or laws governing administrative procedure, while all five countries state *explicitly* most or all of the principles of good service design and delivery in their legislation or their strategies.

To varying degrees of depth and detail, each country has identified its vision and priorities for service design and delivery in the coming years. Recurring themes include a common focus on the interface with service users, digitalisation as the solution to modernising service design and delivery, and an emphasis on quality (standards, assurance and assessment).

Institutional set-up

In four countries, the overall leadership of service design and delivery policy can be traced back to the centre of government, either the president (AZE) or deputy prime minister (ARM, MLD, UKR), which underlines its importance and impact on the daily lives of citizens and the smooth operation of the economy. There are hundreds, or even thousands, of public bodies in each country that are directly or indirectly involved in service provision at all levels of government within their own mandates. This raises the importance of clarity and rationality in functional assignment and accountability (who does what and when), avoiding gaps and overlaps. Strong leadership, effective multi-level governance and co-operation are essential for high-quality services.

Putting in place the infrastructure and enablers

Each country has initiated its own network of physical 'one-stop shops' as single points of contact to access multiple administrative services. Across the five countries, 1 307 such one-stop shops have been established, of which 1 042 were in Ukraine (as of 23 February 2022), offering between 26 and 598 services each.

The physical network is typically complemented by online one-stop shops, which offer flexibility in reaching service users anytime and anywhere (subject to Internet access, and users' willingness and capacity). Every ENP East country has a web portal at the national level that acts as a digital window for between 72 and over 700 e-services. In Azerbaijan, three portals are currently being merged into a super-portal. It should be noted, however, that the existence of an e-service on a website does not guarantee its quality, and a wide spectrum of service maturity persists, from simple information provision (e.g. a webpage or PDF) to the scope for users to receive personalised, integrated services proactively. Increasingly, users expect to be able to access services 'on the move' on their mobile phones and tablets.

Back-office operations should be steadily digitalised to ensure seamless interactions and open up new opportunities (pre-filled forms, proactive service provision, etc.). All five countries have electronic ID and have adopted e-signatures as the way of accessing e-services and validating e-documents. Two countries (GEO, UKR) have also legislated for other forms of e-authentication services, including electronic time stamps and seals, which give users confidence in the origin and authenticity of information, documentation and transactions that are conducted digitally. Base registries are authentic and trusted sources of fundamental information (e.g. births, property, vehicles) that can be digitally (re)used by others. To be authoritative and reliable, the registries should be comprehensive, accurate and secure, and datasets should be standardised. Governments have digitalised data in the base registries in Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine and mostly digitalised them in Azerbaijan and Moldova. Almost instantaneous data exchange requires full interoperability, which is not just a technical concept, but also semantic (common language), legal (permitted by legislation) and organisational (joint agreements). All five countries have the legal basis for interoperability and platforms that allow semantically compatible data flows across the public administration for service delivery.

Managing service design and delivery in the user's interest

There are many ways to gain insight into users' requirements, each with advantages and disadvantages, including surveys, focus groups, user panels, comments and complaints procedures, etc. While two countries currently plan to research and/or co-design new services and their delivery (MLD, GEO), and four enable user feedback on existing services (ARM, AZE, GEO, UKR), all five countries measure user satisfaction with existing services. None of the countries engages in customer journey mapping.

'Life events' – common, crucial moments or stages in the lives of citizens or the lifespan of a business – are only recognised explicitly in two countries (MLD, UKR). To illustrate this analytical technique, the study explored each country's approach to three life events for high-impact services: having a baby, buying a used car, and moving to another home. These enhanced insights provide the platform for reviewing and reimagining the design of service provision, to remove unnecessary burdens, reduce or simplify information requirements (including using plain language), and raise user ratings of service quality.

All five countries have the legal basis for 'once only' information provision, but in practice, application is only partial. From the user's perspective, government should be indivisible, not a collection of 'silos'. The omni-channel approach to service delivery can be achieved when public administrations are digital by design, and processes allow online and mobile services to co-exist with digitally assisted in-person or over-the-phone service of the same quality.

To complete the picture, public administrations typically put in place mechanisms to assess whether the overall system is developing as desired and delivering as required. Three countries have designed systems to monitor and evaluate service delivery performance, which present contrasting practices involving compliance against criteria (AZE), and application of targets that are universal (UKR) and tailored (MLD); a fourth (ARM) is developing and introducing a framework for measuring service delivery performance as a whole and in a disaggregated way by agencies and other parameters.

Ways forward

As in the EU, all countries should endeavour to improve systematically the design and delivery of inclusive, user-oriented public services, including: applying a life-events approach; collaboration within and across institutions, supported by interoperability; continuous development of horizontal enablers; and moving towards proactivity in service delivery using 'digital by design' thinking.

The 'one-stop shop' of service delivery should feel like the *de facto* lead institution for the service user, as a single portal for providing public administrative services. This puts the pressure on governments to extend and complete the network of physical one-stop shops as quickly as feasible, ensuring their reasonable proximity to settlements, providing options for remote areas (including mobile one-stop shops), and avoiding fragmentation of the service offer across myriad front offices, while enabling choice of channels (face to face, telephone, website, mobile app, etc.) and building a common and high-profile brand citizens can easily identify.

Governments should also continue to enhance digital access. This requires clarity about the range of services and thus the construction of complete service catalogues. Online service portals may vary in their level of maturity, but can act as enablers and solution providers *within* the public administration, with practical tools to design and build services.

Given that 'life events' often involve non-state actors -- for example, when moving to another home or starting a business -- governments could envisage a trajectory towards public-private partnership and collaboration with non-governmental actors in service design and delivery.

The public administrations' main mechanism for gauging whether service design and delivery is operating in the user's interest is measuring satisfaction, which of course is influenced by expectations. While this is an essential feedback loop, more experimental methods, such as mystery shopping, customer journey mapping and 'life event' analysis, can also be useful.

The starting point for this study was that modernising service design and delivery is a journey without end. There is always potential for improvement, while at the same time, user needs and expectations evolve and circumstances can change. Public administrations are more resilient if their systems are already robust.

Key facts and figures

	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia	Moldova	Ukraine
Population ¹	2 963 251	10 119 133	3 716 858	3 550 852	41 418 717
Population density (per km ²) ²	18	116	65	87	Not available
Average GDP per capita (EUR) ³	4 122	4 332	4 256	3 018	3 267
Key central actors (policy and co-ordination)	Deputy Prime Minister (Chief Information Officer, Chair of the Information Systems Management Board) and Office of the Deputy Prime Minister; Ministry of High-Tech Industry; Ministry of Justice; Central Bank of Armenia; e-Governance Infrastructure Implementation Agency	Ministry of Digital Development and Transport; State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations; E-Gov Development Centre	Ministry of Justice; Public Service Development Agency; Public Service Hall	Deputy Prime Minister for Digitalisation; State Chancellery; Public Services Agency; Electronic Governance Agency	Cabinet of Ministers; Ministry of Digital Transformation
Sub-national administrative structure	Provinces (<i>marzer</i>); municipalities (<i>hamaynkner</i>)	Autonomous republic (<i>muxtar respublikası</i>); cities (<i>şəhərlər</i>), districts (<i>rayonlar</i>); municipalities (<i>bələdiyyələr</i>)	Autonomous territories (<i>avtonomiuri respublika</i>); administrative regions (<i>mkhare</i>); municipalities (<i>munits'ipaliteti</i>).	Autonomous territory; districts (<i>raions</i>); towns / municipalities (<i>orase / municipii</i>); communes / villages (<i>comune / sate</i>)	Autonomous republic, regions (<i>oblasts</i>) and cities with special status; districts (<i>rayons</i>); municipalities (<i>hromadas</i>); districts in cities
E-government development index (EGDI) ⁴	0.7136 (68 th)	0.7100 (70 th)	0.7174 (65 th)	0.6881 (79 th)	0.7119 (69 th)
Internet access at home (%) ⁵	76	79	84	65	66
Computers at home (%) ⁶	58	65	62	61	66
Mobile network coverage (%) ⁷	100	98	100	100	89

¹ [Eurostat](#), 1 January 2021 for all countries except Georgia (1 January 2020) and Moldova (1 January 2017); Ukraine's population is estimated.

² [Eurostat](#), 2020.

³ [Eurostat](#), 2019.

⁴ [United Nations E-Government Development Index](#) 2020, scored on a scale of 0-1, ranked from 193 countries.

⁵ [United Nations International Telecommunication Union](#), % of households, 2019 in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Ukraine, 2020 in Georgia and Moldova.

⁶ [United Nations International Telecommunication Union](#), % of households, 2019 in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Ukraine, 2020 in Georgia and Moldova.

⁷ [United Nations International Telecommunication Union](#), population covered by at least 3G mobile network, 2020.

E-participation index ⁸	0.7500 (57 th)	0.6905 (73 rd)	0.6429 (80 th)	0.7619 (55 th)	0.8095 (46 th)
Government portal	https://www.e-gov.am	https://www.dxr.az/dxr https://www.e-gov.az https://my.gov.az	https://www.my.gov.ge/ka-ge/services/10	https://servicii.gov.md/ro	https://diia.gov.ua
Portal of e-services ⁹	Approximately 150	501	Over 700	87	72

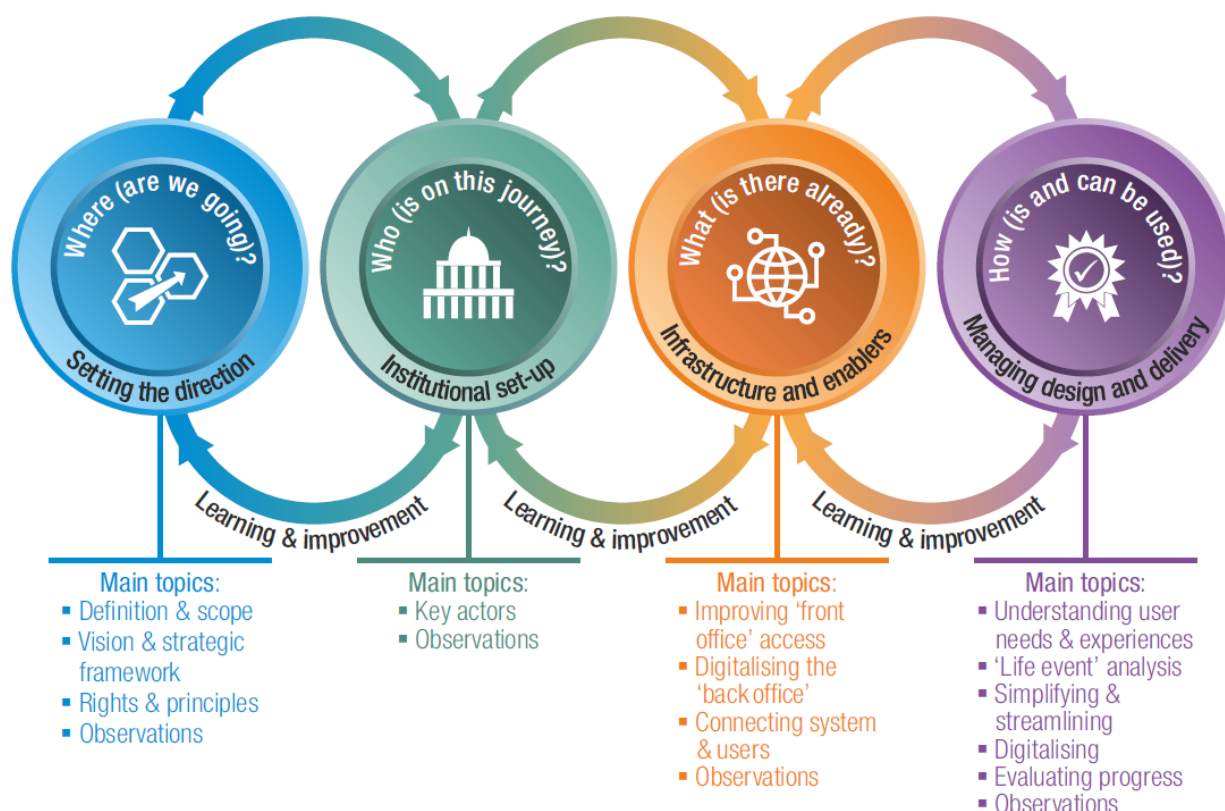
⁸ [United Nations E-Participation Index](#) 2020, scored on a scale of 0-1, ranked among 193 countries.

⁹ Number of e-services available through the government portal as of 1 May 2022 (ARM, AZE, GEO and MLD) and as of 23 February 2022 (UKR).

Introduction

This report represents the culmination of SIGMA's study of the state of play with public administrative service design and delivery in the European Union's Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries under the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

Following an opening chapter, which explores its importance and relevance, this comparative study looks at how the five ENP East countries are developing public administrative service design and delivery in a modern environment. For the purposes of this report, the service user is primarily external (citizens¹⁰, businesses, non-profit organisations), but inevitably also involves public bodies themselves as users of 'internal' services. The study seeks to address four main questions, shown in the navigation aid below.



These questions provide the structure for this study and its four main chapters, culminating in observations at the end of each chapter, and a final chapter setting out potential ways forward:

- Setting the direction:** Achieving the goal of consistently high-quality and user-centred service design and delivery across the public administration requires ambition. To bring all the stakeholders

¹⁰ When using the term "citizen" the same standards apply to all users of administrative services – individuals and legal persons, regardless of nationality/ country of registration.

together on this quest, governments can establish a shared vision by setting out and communicating clearly and openly their priorities and their plans for getting there, underpinned by enduring rights and principles as safeguards, elaborated on in the legal/strategic framework, and provide clarity about the coverage of administrative services. These key parameters create a sense of common purpose – including for the public bodies tasked with their implementation, the subject of the next chapter.

- **Institutional set-up:** In establishing this orientation, governments allocate roles and responsibilities to central authorities, especially to lead and co-ordinate. Every country has its own governmental structure, with no ‘gold standard’ for functional assignment, with the proviso that it should be rational (or rationalised), to avoid gaps, overlaps, duplication and confusion. To overcome organisational ‘silos’ and realise synergies in service design and delivery, governments need to create the conditions for interaction across institutions, which is the subject of the next chapter.
- **Infrastructure and enablers:** In striving for better service design and delivery, no government starts from scratch. Each country already has the building blocks of its (future) service design and delivery system in place, which it can continue to develop. The ‘front office’ is the interface with service users and should present a single point of entry into the entire public administration, while the ‘back office’ should be increasingly digitalised to ensure seamless interactions, which requires interoperability to exchange data almost instantaneously. Upgrading the system thus places the government in a better position to optimise its application, the subject of the next chapter.
- **Managing service design and delivery:** With all the elements in place, evolving as new technological solutions emerge, public administrations still need to ensure that the system is operating in the citizens’ interest. This starts with understanding users’ (changing) needs, expectations and experiences, and using this knowledge to simplify and streamline by re-engineering processes (if necessary), digitalising them, and regularly assessing the service design and delivery system and performance to modify and modernise them. Three ‘life events’ involving high-impact services are used to illustrate why this continual improvement is essential: having a baby, buying a used car and moving to another home.

Please note: The purpose of this report is to **inform and inspire**, rather than to investigate and evaluate. While the Principles of Public Administration form a backdrop to the study, it is not the product of a SIGMA assessment, and does not offer systematic analysis of the situation in each country based on rigorous interviews and extensive data collection. The report refers to existing frameworks¹¹, but does not benchmark against them. It does, however, make observations, which are intended as helpful pointers for the EaP countries themselves and the European Commission in its policy dialogues with them. The report is not a step-by-step practical guide to how to improve service design and delivery, but the start of a conversation about where things stand and where they could go. In doing so, it provides context, including laws and strategies since 2000 to describe the journey that these countries have been on. It recognises that there is no ‘ideal model’ that can be copied and pasted from one country to another, but offers illuminating examples to point the way forward, as food for further thought.

The report was largely prepared during January-December 2021, and further updated and expanded in January-June 2022. The large-scale aggression by Russia against Ukraine starting on 24 February 2022 has had a devastating impact on lives and livelihoods, inflicted massive damage on infrastructure and disrupted the ambitious reform agenda Ukraine had been pursuing since 2014. This report recognises the considerable efforts by the government (at all levels) and people of Ukraine to preserve and maintain the

¹¹ The OECD Digital Government Policy Framework (<https://www.oecd.org/gov/the-oecd-digital-government-policy-framework-f64fed2a-en.htm>), for example, and OECD Framework for Digital Talent and Skills in the Public Sector (<https://www.oecd.org/employment/the-oecd-framework-for-digital-talent-and-skills-in-the-public-sector-4e7c3f58-en.htm>).

advances already made in service design and delivery, to continue ‘business as usual’ in service provision as far as practicable in far-from-normal circumstances, and to adapt its services to the needs of life under martial law and massive displacement of citizens and businesses. For the purposes of the study, and to acknowledge the legacy of progress before the war, the data in the report for Ukraine is largely presented “as of 23 February 2022”, with some updates where appropriate.

While mainly providing a snapshot of the current situation in the five countries, which continues to evolve, the report also draws on inspiring practices (in boxes) from both ENP East and the European Union, and more specifically, highlights the following flagship initiatives (in grey boxes):

- automating the real estate cadastre (Armenia)
- one-stop shop for public services – ‘ASAN service’ centres (Azerbaijan)
- Public Service Hall (PSH) (Georgia)
- process re-engineering in the context of e-Government and e-Services (Moldova)
- ‘State in a Smartphone’ (Ukraine).

The report makes extensive use of footnotes, including web links where possible, so that readers can follow up the sources for further information. Some of these references are available in English, but they are mostly in the original languages, and require translation for non-native speakers.

1. The case for improving public service design and delivery

While ‘public services’ typically brings to mind schools, hospitals, water supply, waste collection, policing and other major state provisions, administrative services are less visible but no less vital, as they underpin a functioning society and a flourishing economy. When delivered well, the results can be seen in high satisfaction ratings, and maximum convenience and minimum cost for both public administration and service user. When delivered poorly, they can provoke huge frustration, undermine trust in public administration, and create the space for corruption (especially where there is little automation in straightforward decision making or fee payment, limited transparency and where public officials have significant discretionary powers).

Administrative service delivery concerns the vast array of citizen interactions with (and within) government, from cradle to grave, and the equivalent exchanges for businesses and NGOs: making enquiries, applications, registrations and payments, and receiving information, documentation, decisions and funds. These contacts allow service users to exercise their rights (e.g. citizenship, property ownership), access their entitlements (e.g. allowances, pensions), execute their obligations (e.g. taxation, environmental protection) and achieve their ambitions (e.g. studying, self-employment) under the law. They also enable governments to implement policies, collect revenues, spend budgets, gather data and enforce rules, including the rule of law in its application¹².

Service delivery takes place whenever citizens, businesses and NGOs come into contact with public administrations, whether face to face, by telephone, by mail or online. The service can be provided by central government, through territorial administrations, executive agencies or other intermediaries on its behalf, or by local self-government. Increasingly, with the advent of one-stop shops and digitalisation, the source of the administrative service is less relevant than its accessibility.

High-quality public services are those designed to be delivered effectively, in other words to achieve a satisfactory experience and outcome for the service user – whether the service is obligatory (e.g. obtaining a building permit or paying taxes) or an opportunity (e.g. applying for a grant or registering to study) – which should also benefit the public administration. This starts from seeing the whole service from the user’s perspective – end to end, front to back and through any channel (and the transitions between them). It should include all the individual service elements and content (information, communication, interactions and transactions), which are often fragmented across different ‘owners’ in government and which the users have to assemble and sequence themselves in order to move to a seamless service in the future¹³.

Every citizen should have the right to expect good administration and good administrative behaviour from its government, at whatever level, codified in legislation to give it full legal force¹⁴. Within the overarching

¹² See also European Commission (2017), *Quality of Public Administration: A Toolbox for Practitioners*: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8055&type=2&furtherPubs=no>.

¹³ Lou Downe (2016), “What we mean by service design”, UK Government Digital Service, <https://gds.blog.gov.uk/2016/04/18/what-we-mean-by-service-design/>.

¹⁴ OECD (2016), *The Principles of Public Administration: A Framework for ENP Countries*, OECD, Paris <http://www.sigmaxweb.org/publications/principles-public-administration-european-neighbourhood-policy.htm>.

framework of the rule of law, good service design and delivery can be said to embody the following principles¹⁵:

- **User-centricity and responsiveness**: Also known as ‘client orientation’, service design and delivery should be managed for the user’s convenience, which starts with understanding the (diverse) needs of citizens and businesses, and enabling them to access a customised service through the channel of the user’s choice, adjusted as needs and circumstances change based on feedback.
- **Legal certainty and predictability**: Service users should be fully confident that the administrative service will be delivered on a regular and consistent basis within the given framework of rules, procedures, timeframes and standards.
- **Efficiency and timeliness**: The service should be accessible at a time and place of the user’s convenience (within reason), and completed with as few, streamlined steps as possible. This principle is also embodied in the concept of a ‘single source of truth’ (SSOT), by which information/data is brought together in a common reference point (e.g. service catalogue) or repository (e.g. base registry), rather than being fragmented across units or organisations.
- **Digital by design**: The public administration should embed digitalisation in its plans and processes – not as an afterthought – if it is to exploit fully its potential to facilitate and transform service design and delivery, whatever the chosen channel.
- **Proportionality**: The public administration should not request excessive information and documentation to provide a response or reach a decision, and should seek to minimise such requests as far as possible.
- **Once only**: A logical extension of the proportionality principle, the public administration should set up systems and other arrangements (e.g. user’s consent to re-use of data, see also the confidentiality principle) to ensure that citizens and businesses are not required to supply the same information more than once to any public body at any level of government.
- **Equality, impartiality and transparency**: The service should be accessible equally, and through all modalities (offline and online) to all users entitled, eligible or obliged to receive it. To demonstrate equal treatment, the basis on which decisions are taken and services are provided by the public administration should be clear to both the service user and the administration itself, based on publicly available information, to avoid arbitrary decision making and abuse of discretion.
- **Confidentiality**: Service design and delivery should respect the user’s right to privacy and data security, with the appropriate enablers established by the public administration to ensure that this happens.
- **Accountability**: Public institutions should be answerable under the law for decisions made (which implies transparency on which institution is responsible), and service users should be able to request reasons for decisions, appeal them, and seek recourse and remediation (correction and/or compensation) if the public administration does not follow the prescribed rules, procedures, standards and timescales.

Citizens’ expectations have been heightened by their experiences with private sector services, such as banking, retail and recreation, increasingly with the use of their mobile phones. The world does not stand still, and this applies equally to public service design and delivery. Digitalisation can play a crucial role as a facilitator, but its true value comes from *how* it is applied and *why*.

The pressure from service users on governments at every level to enhance their service design and delivery should be sufficient motivation, especially given the dual role of citizens as both service users and

¹⁵ See also administrative law principles in OECD (1999), *European Principles of Public Administration*, SIGMA Papers, No. 27, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5kml60zwd7h-en>.

electors. As well as this external demand, there is also an internal dynamic for change: making the most effective use of limited resources, freeing them up for other purposes, achieving the best use of technology and organisation in their 'bread and butter' activities. All this can open up whole new avenues of communication with the public.

In the past, public administrations saw 'e-government' as a route to greater efficiency by reducing reliance on paper-based systems, moving in-person services onto the Internet, and unleashing the processing power of information and communication technologies (ICT). The ideal of 'digital as the default' was born with the expectation that those who chose to continue using offline channels would inevitably face higher transaction costs and/or greater inconvenience, nudging them towards the preferred online option. Inadvertently, however, this excluded those who needed in-person support or who lacked Internet access or the necessary skills and competencies to take advantage of e-services. This focus on technical means, rather than real-world ends, meant that conversations tended to start with an emphasis on what technology can do, rather than what an organisation was trying to achieve or how needs could be met. While aiming to be user-centric, the emphasis on efficiency was unintentionally government-centric. Paradoxically, this often left bureaucratic procedures untouched, so that back-office inefficiencies remained and citizens were not necessarily better served, or at best, the public administration continued to bear the burden on their behalf, like a swan that looks serene on the surface but is paddling furiously under the water to keep moving forward.

'Digital government', however, is not simply about converting what was on paper into electronic form. It is about embedding throughout the public administration a culture of meeting the needs of users by re-engineering processes and services, using technology as an enabler, not a driver, of transformation. This concept is critical in encouraging an open, pro-active and user-driven approach that rethinks and redesigns interactions, rather than simply moving bureaucracy from one channel to another. According to the OECD Digital Government Policy Framework (DGPFG), a mature digital government:

- is **digital by design** when it governs and leverages digital technologies to rethink and re-engineer public processes, simplify procedures, and create new channels of communication and engagement with stakeholders;
- is **data driven** when it values data as a strategic asset and establishes the governance, access, sharing and reuse mechanisms to improve decision making and service delivery;
- acts as a **platform** when it deploys platforms, standards and services to help teams focus on user needs in public service design and delivery;
- is **open by default** when it makes government data and policy-making processes available to the public, within the limits of existing legislation and in balance with the national and public interest;
- is **user driven** when it gives a central role to people's needs and convenience in the shaping of processes, services and policies; and by adopting inclusive mechanisms that enable this to happen;
- is **pro-active** when it anticipates people's needs and responds to them rapidly, avoiding the need for cumbersome data and service delivery processes¹⁶.

"Public administrations ... provide essential services and manage public spending. They are critical factors in long-term economic, social and territorial cohesion. But the current administrative systems were designed in times of relative stability, when changes were slow. Nowadays, administrations must be more flexible and resilient. Recent crises, including COVID, and future events such as the digital revolution,

¹⁶ OECD (2020), "The OECD Digital Government Policy Framework: Six dimensions of a Digital Government", *OECD Public Governance Policy Papers*, No. 02, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/f64fed2a-en>. <https://www.oecd.org/governance/the-oecd-digital-government-policy-framework-f64fed2a-en.htm>

demonstrate a clear need: public administrations must make organisational, technological and cultural transformations to move with the times". Elisa Ferreira, EU Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms¹⁷.

This is no less true in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood, where each country is demonstrating its willingness and ability to embrace change, a never-ending journey. In moving forward, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine enjoy the strong support of the EU, as set out below.

The European Commission has emphasised the importance of good public service design and delivery in its priorities for the Eastern Partnership beyond 2020, including the ambition that at least 80% of public services be available online through interoperable platforms, and at least four countries should have digital signatures that are recognised mutually with each other and with the EU, with 30% of documents transferred cross-border signed digitally¹⁸. This ambition of "*accelerating the digital transformation including investments in digital infrastructure and e-governance*" was reiterated in the 2021 Eastern Partnership Summit¹⁹.

On 23 June 2022, the European Council made the decision to recognise the European perspective of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, to conclude that the future of these countries and their citizens lies within the European Union, and to grant candidate country status to Moldova and Ukraine²⁰. This landmark moment only reinforces the mutual interest in good governance and quality user-centric and interoperable services.

¹⁷ Commission Staff Working Document, SWD (2021)101, *Supporting Public Administrations in EU Member States to Deliver Reforms and Prepare for the Future*, https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/structural-reform-support/supporting-public-administrations-eu-member-states-deliver-reforms-and-prepare-future_en.

¹⁸ Commission Joint Staff Working Document, SWD(2021) 186 final, *Recovery, Resilience and Reform: Post-2020 Eastern Partnership priorities*, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/european-neighbourhood-policy/eastern-partnership_en.

¹⁹ Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit (Brussels, 15 December 2021), p. 9 [20211215-eap-joint-declaration-en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eap/joint-declaration-en.pdf)

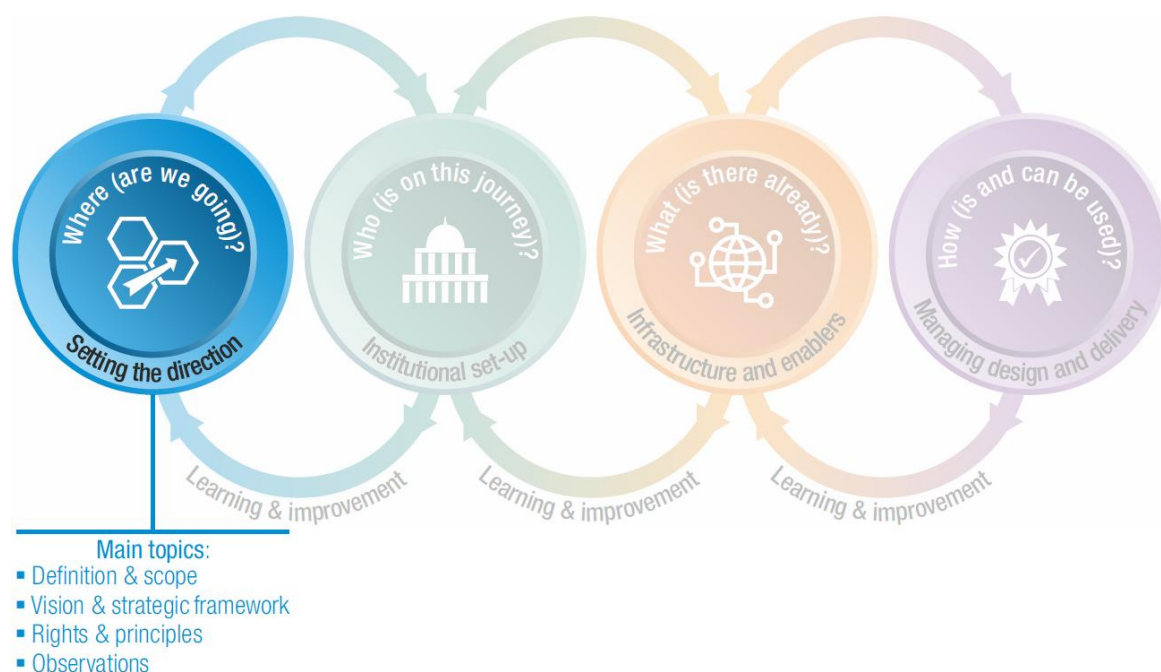
²⁰ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/06/23/european-council-conclusions-on-ukraine-the-membership-applications-of-ukraine-the-republic-of-moldova-and-georgia-western-balkans-and-external-relations-23-june-2022/>.

2. Setting the direction for service design and delivery



Every government has a policy towards public service design and delivery, whether it is expressed formally (preferably) or is only apparent through its actions. When articulated, it may be consolidated in one place, such as a national strategy or law on administrative services, or spread across several sectoral plans and individual pieces of legislation. In this chapter, we look at the stated or suggested policy in the five ENP East countries, as can be inferred from documents, decisions and ongoing developments. This sends a signal to citizens on the central government's role and its intentions, and just as importantly, aids public officials in relevant institutions at every level in navigating the way forward. We focus on three aspects in particular:

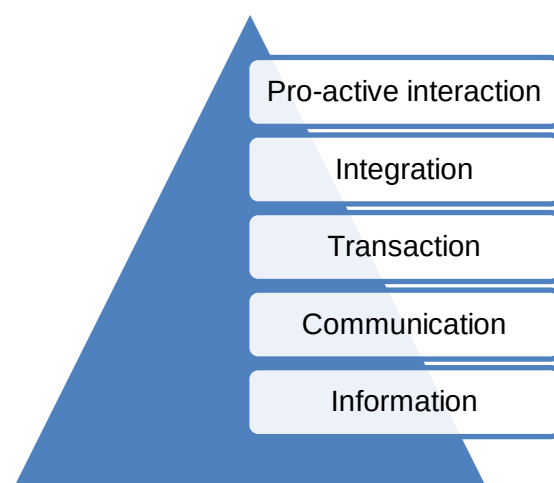
- **Definitions and scope:** To move forward, all parties should understand what is meant and what is covered by administrative services. This is easier to acknowledge than to achieve, as interactions with public institutions take many forms, and identifying the boundary between administrative and other public services is not straightforward. However, such clarity is required for governments to organise and present a comprehensive set of services to citizens through their front offices.
- **Rights and principles:** By establishing the *right* to good administration, both the citizen and the public official enjoy greater certainty about what is expected from services, backed up by the power for the citizen to seek redress if providers 'stray off the route'. A coherent set of principles should be the guiding light to keep everyone on the same path, and when it is expressed in law, it can also be enforced.
- **Vision and strategic framework:** To varying degrees of depth and detail, each country has set priorities for service design and delivery. Looking towards the future does not need to involve determining a destination or end-point, given that pursuing better service delivery is a continual challenge as technologies change and user demands adjust to them. However, it should constitute a clear 'direction of travel'.



2.1. Definitions and scope

By their nature, administrative services are multi-faceted and multi-sectoral, involving many public bodies with a diverse array of functional responsibilities. To develop a comprehensive approach to service design and delivery, the starting point should be clarity on what falls within the scope of 'public administrative service'.

To appreciate all the aspects of administrative service design and delivery, it can be helpful to visualise them as a pyramid²¹. The most basic level at the bottom is the one-way provision of useful information through any channel, which can be the basis for two-way communication (including asking questions, making comments and complaints, and interrogating sources in real time). This leads logically to transactions in the broadest sense (submitting applications, making payments, obtaining permissions and certification, etc). While the notion of a 'transaction' places the focus on individual services, the move up to integration comes from bundling related services, which should be seamless to the service user. At the top of the pyramid is pro-active interaction, allowing the user, among other things, to access both individual services and integrated packages across the full public administration (including automatically), engage through whichever combination of channels is most convenient (omni-channel), monitor in real time what is happening with their services and data, and combine them with other (private sector) sources in pursuit of their interests.



²¹ Based on European Commission (2017), *Quality of Public Administration: A Toolbox for Practitioners* (op. cit.), Theme 5: Service delivery and digitalisation.

Some countries define ‘administrative services’ in legislation, although this can also be achieved through a policy statement or government strategy, as long as it is comprehensible.

In Moldova, the notion of public administrative services was first identified and generalised within the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2016-2020²². At the time, Moldovan legislation did not include a clear definition, which was seen as a source of confusion and affected the planning of modernisation. Moreover, such concepts as ‘public service holder’, ‘public service provider’, ‘front-office’, ‘back-office’, ‘service delivery processes’ still had to be developed in accordance with European and international practices. Instead, they were approached intuitively, which complicated and delayed the process of modernising public services. In 2020, a Government Decision defined public administrative services for the first time.

With the adoption of the Law on Public Services in 2021, the definition of ‘public services’ was established at the level of the law, as follows:

“Public services – individual non-commercial administrative activities, performed in public power by the public services provider, with or without the request of the beneficiaries of services, and aimed at realising their rights, freedoms, obligations and legitimate interests, ensuring them, where appropriate, the corresponding tangible or intangible benefits”²³.

The legal definition in Ukraine similarly focuses on rights and obligations:

“Administrative service – the result that the administrative services providers produce exercising their power upon the application of an individual or legal entity, causing the acquisition, change, or termination of the rights and/or obligations of the applicant in accordance with the law”²⁴.

By themselves, however, definitions have limited utility, as it is hard to capture all aspects of administrative services in a single sentence, or even in several. It is thus necessary to specify those that are available to citizens, businesses and other organisations, ideally in a SSOT and making clear which apply to natural persons (i.e. citizens) and which to legal persons (i.e. businesses and other organisations), to make such ‘service catalogues’ easier to search.

While four countries have defined administrative services in laws or strategies, all have published lists of administrative services, which defines their scope ‘by proxy’. These are consolidated in one place in three countries, but this consolidated list currently covers all administrative services and all levels of government only in Ukraine.

²² [Public Administration Reform Strategy for 2016-2020](#), approved by Government Decision No. 911/2016, Official Gazette No. 256-264, Article 1 033.

²³ [Law on Public Services No. 234/2021](#), Official Gazette No. 34-38/2022.

²⁴ Law on Administrative Services, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/5203-17#Text>.

Table 1. Status of administrative services

Country	Definition	Published list(s)	Consolidated list	Number of services*
Armenia	No ²⁵	Yes ²⁶	No	560 ²⁷
Azerbaijan	Yes ²⁸	Yes	Yes ²⁹	1 005 ³⁰
Georgia	Yes ³¹	Yes ³²	No ³³	n/a
Moldova	Yes	Yes	Yes (central only) ³⁴	688
Ukraine	Yes	Yes	Yes (all levels)	2 230

* As of 1 May 2022, for ARM, AZE, GEO and MLD; as of 23 February 2022 for UKR.

The value of such lists are their transparency and user orientation, in assisting the service user to navigate the administrative system. They also provide a springboard for simplification and digitalisation of design and delivery processes, especially if the full portfolio of administrative services is captured in one database. They can signal the opportunity to make connections and stimulate cross-organisational collaboration to solve whole problems for service users and to retire services that can be replaced by a more pro-active solution.

Ukraine's register, for example, is extensive, accessible (in JSON and Excel) and reasonably user-friendly.

Inspiring practice: Diia register of public services (Ukraine)

The "Law on Administrative Services" (Article 8) requires that each body ("the subject") responsible for an administrative service publishes an information card (listing such details as the subject and/or provider, the legislative act, the list of required documents and the submission procedure, the conditions for obtaining the service, the fee, if necessary, and payment arrangements, the terms and the result of provision) and a technological card (with such information as the responsible official, process stages and responsible units, and implementation deadlines).

²⁵ Under the 2030 PAR Strategy, the full catalogue of public services was to be published within the next two years.

²⁶ The information on public services is typically available on the central Government portal, as well as on the official websites of state institutions.

²⁷ The approximate number of state and community services that can be obtained on the baseline inventory. Mapping of comprehensive public services is under way in the broader service delivery and digital transformation reforms.

²⁸ According to the Cabinet of Ministers' Decision on approval of the "Rules for maintaining the Electronic Register of Public Services", public service is the implementation of actions provided by the government bodies performing the service in the exercise of their powers and causing the relevant legal result, http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/29383#_edn6.

²⁹ A Presidential Decree of September 2014 assigned ASAN the responsibility for organising and operating an Electronic Register of Public Services, <http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/28319>.

³⁰ <https://www.dxr.az/dxr>.

³¹ The Public Services Development Strategy 2022-2025 defines a public service as an "inclusively planned process produced by an administrative unit(s) within a state agency that derives from law and regulation, has a precise guideline which is aligned with the legally defined goal, aims at addressing a public issue in the interest of the public good, and responds to citizens' and customers' needs and requirements".

³² Most state agencies at central or local levels list public services (including administrative services) in regulatory documents and/or their websites.

³³ Public service agencies usually have their own lists of services.

³⁴ According to Government Decision 169/2021 on the State Register of Public Services, Official Gazette No. 230-237, Article 436, Moldova maintains an electronic State Register of Public Services based on the Integrated Nomenclature, which is the responsibility of providers of public services in the competence of the Government. At present, local public authorities have no list of public services, but Article 11 of the Law on Public Services establishes the obligation to register all public services in the State Register of Public Services.

Article 16 also mandates the central executive body, currently the Ministry of Digital Transformation, to maintain a Register of Administrative Services to ensure open and free access to information, including a list of services, legal grounds for provision, the subject, the administrative fee (if applied), and other information as determined by the Cabinet of Ministers.

In this legal context, the online register on the *Diia* portal (<https://guide.diia.gov.ua/>) allows the user to access the following information for each of 22 300 administrative services (as of 23 February 2022):

• Service identifier • Subject area • Service category (sector) • Service name • Service level • Keyword • Short description • Administrative-territorial unit where the service is provided • Moderation status • Date of creation • Owner (central executive body that formulates or implements state policy in the relevant field) • Provider • Legal base • Grounds for refusal of service	• Applicant type • Access link (electronic) • Normative documents regulating service provision • Life event • Person entitled to file • Opportunity to appeal in court • Extrajudicial bodies of appeal • Results • Documents required to receive the service • Method of submitting the application and documents • Method of receiving the results of the service • Duration of the process • Cost of provision
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It takes time to build a complete catalogue, and it cannot be assumed that every administrative service appears in the published lists. The services can also change as laws and regulations are amended, responsibilities are reassigned, additional services are put online, etc., so service catalogues must be regularly updated and expanded. The *Diia* register, for example, is still being supplemented.

Under the ISA² programme, the European Commission (DG DIGIT) has published guidelines on building catalogues of public services in portals³⁵. These emphasise that: services should be described once only, in a standardised/harmonised, machine-readable and interoperable format, so that information can be disseminated across multiple channels; the catalogues should be user-friendly, easily accessed and searched, with information that is immediately understandable, ideally structured according to life events (see section 5.2); and redundant information (obsolete services, outdated descriptions or duplications) should be removed from the catalogue, which suggests regular reviews and maintenance. This guidance can inspire ENP East administrations, as can the practical example of Estonia's service catalogue.

Inspiring practice: Catalogue of public services (Estonia)

In Estonia, almost every government service, of which there are over 1 000, is accessed online. The public service catalogue is a simple, web-based tool, covering 11 ministries and 40 institutions. The service catalogue is completed by each authority, and every service owner is responsible for ensuring that the information is up to date, with a 'responsible person' appointed in each one. Service management is co-ordinated by the Information Society Services Development Department of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications.

³⁵ [D06.02 Guidelines on how to build catalogues of public services at one-stop-shop portals and improve user experience \(europa.eu\)](#)

The catalogue is chiefly intended for citizens and businesses, to help them find the services they are searching for, and to see how the government is spending money. In addition to this end-user version, there is a statistical 'view' for service owners and managers, as the service catalogue collects and presents data on the use of public services via API. As this information is publicly available, it is possible to make dashboards presenting information data on chosen channels, number of transactions, time spent, satisfaction ratings and administrative cost. In this multiple view model, there are also two machine-readable views, one of which is used as an input for developing ICT policies. Service owners can compare the 'as is' situation with the 'to be', and calculate if there will be additional benefits. The service catalogue thus also contributes to continual improvement of the user experience and informed choices by the public administration.

Sources: <http://mkm-itaio.github.io/catalogue/>; <https://www.axelos.com/resource-hub/blog/catalogue-for-change-using-the-service-catalogue-to-improve-public-services>.

2.2. Rights and principles of good administration

In accordance with the aforementioned principles of legal certainty, predictability and accountability (see Chapter 1, 'The case for improving public service design and delivery'), the right to good administration can be enshrined in legislation. Codes or laws of administrative procedure regulate how public administrations and their officials reach and substantiate decisions, and set out the mechanisms by which citizens exercise their rights and can challenge the outcome if the administration strays outside these rules.

- In Armenia, the Parliament adopted the Law on Fundamentals of Administration and Administrative Procedure in 2004³⁶.
- In Georgia, a General Administrative Code³⁷ defines the procedure for issuing and enforcing administrative acts, reviewing administrative complaints and applications, and preparing, concluding and executing contracts under public law by administrative bodies³⁸. Because the code is too general, however, state agencies usually define procedures more specifically within their own organisational statutes.
- The Public Services Development Strategy 2022-2025 has a status of Decree of the Government of Georgia (GoG) and is detailed enough to further specify and shape principles of good administration in the public sector.
- In Moldova, the Law on Public Services stipulates that the refusal to provide public services can be litigated in accordance with the provisions of the Administrative Code³⁹.
- In Ukraine, the Law on Administrative Procedure was published on 15 June 2022, prior to entering into force 18 months later⁴⁰.

Such primary legislation can give a legal force to a wider set of principles, as is the case in Armenia, although they can also be presented through other legislative vehicles. This is the situation in Ukraine

³⁶ https://www.legislationline.org/download/id/4056/file/LFAAP%20Armenia_2004.pdf.

³⁷ Parliament of Georgia (1999), Code N 2181, General Administrative Code of Georgia consolidated version from 2019, access <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/16270?publication=33>.

³⁸ The code aims to ensure that the administrative bodies respect human rights and freedoms, the public interest and the rule of law. It lists rights and principles of good administration, like equality before the law, exercising powers under law, the procedure for exercising discretionary powers, proportion of public and private interests, impartial resolution of cases, assurance of administrative bodies, publicity, secrecy, the right to apply to administrative bodies, the right to submit personal opinions by interested parties, the language of administrative proceedings, timing, the obligation of administrative bodies for mutual assistance, protection of secret information, reimbursement of expenses, protecting personal data, protecting commercial secrets, availability of public information, right to request for public information, confidentiality of personal data, etc.

³⁹ [Administrative Code of the Republic of Moldova No 116/2018](#), Official Gazette No. 309-320, Article 466.

⁴⁰ Law on Administrative Procedure, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2073-20#Text>.

under the aforementioned Law on Administrative Services⁴¹ and more recently, the Law “On the peculiarities of providing public (electronic public) services”, which came into force in November 2021⁴². The historic absence of a law to embed the *right* to good administration in Ukraine, however, has created anomalies, such as the absence of a systemic possibility of filing an appeal to an administrative decision to a hierarchically higher body. Existing legislation obliged entities, including state bodies and local authorities, to admit and consider appeals themselves⁴³, and hence they tend to resolve disputes to their own benefit. The Law on Administrative Procedure seeks to resolve this situation, among other things, by proposing that the body of the next higher level shall be the instance for appeal, and that those institutions without such bodies shall establish commissions for appeal in which one-third of the members can be non-governmental organisation (NGO) representatives.

These principles of good administration can also be found in secondary legislation, which places the emphasise on their intended application, as in the case of Azerbaijan⁴⁴ and Moldova⁴⁵. They can also be expressed in strategy documents, which gives them less immediate impact as intentions without any legal force, but which can be the platform for future legislation. In Georgia, the Public Service Development Strategy 2022-2025 proposes to introduce a code of conduct to instil the principles and values of good administration in public service provider agencies, by reflecting on integrity, dedication and humanity while providing services to citizens and businesses. The code of conduct is expected to support those efforts by sharing best practices and promoting harmonised, citizen-focused quality service standards and a culture that listens to, and learns from, its interactions with citizens and businesses⁴⁶.

While each has its own terminology, to date, all the major principles outlined in the introduction are covered by at least one country.

Table 2. Stated principles of administrative service design and delivery

Principle	ARM	AZE	GEO	MLD	UKR
Compliance with the (rule of) law	X	-	X	X	X
User-centricity ('client orientation')	X	-	X	X	X
Accessibility and convenience	-	X	X	X	X
Legal certainty and predictability (stability)	-	-	X	X	X
Efficiency and timeliness	X	X	X	X	X
Digital by design	X	-	X	X	-
'Once-only' information provision/prior fulfilment/ trustworthiness of data	X	-	X	X	X
Proportionality	X	-	X	X	X
Equality	-	-	X	X	X

⁴¹ Article 4.

⁴² <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1689-20#Text>.

⁴³ Law “On citizens’ appeals”, consolidated version: 1 January 2020, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/393/96-%D0%B2%D1%80#Text>.

⁴⁴ Presidential Decree No. 685 establishing the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations in July 2012.

⁴⁵ Law on Public Services No. 234/2021 includes the “main principles of service delivery”, in particular “providing public services in electronic form by default (digital-by-default)”, “providing public services in electronic form as a matter of priority (digital-first)”, “omni-channel nature of the delivery of public services” and “providing data once-only”. At the same time, these principles are reflected in the [Methodology on the re-engineering of public services](#), approved by the Order of the Secretary General of the Government No. 598-A of 10 August 2020.

⁴⁶ The PAR Roadmap 2020 also mentions public service principles and values.

Impartiality (avoidance of arbitrariness, abuse of discretion)	X	-	X	X	X
Openness and transparency	-	X	X	X	X
Confidentiality (personal data protection)	X	-	X	X	X
Accountability (justice)	-	-	X	-	X

Table 2 should not be interpreted too strictly, as it relates to only stated principles, while others can be *implicit* in the legal base and the practice of design and delivery. For example, countries might have laws on personal data protection (as is the case in Armenia), while not spelling out ‘confidentiality’ as an explicit principle. While ‘user-centricity’ is only mentioned *explicitly* in Moldova and Ukraine, other principles such as accessibility and convenience, and once-only information provision, also place the service user at the centre of the public administration’s thinking. There are also other legal commitments that might appear to cross principles, such as ‘silence from the administration is consent’, which embodies elements of user-centricity, efficiency and proportionality in setting a clear time limit on decision making and not putting the onus on the user to pursue a decision from the public administration.

Ultimately, principles are only substantive if they are applied in practice. However, the starting point has to be an unambiguous commitment, which precedes action to establish the structures and systems to operationalise them. Any intent should ideally be accompanied by an explanation of what the principle means. While most countries opt for simply stating the principle in a short phrase, the Law on Fundamentals of Administration and Administrative Procedure in Armenia provides a fuller explanation of its eight main principles, while noting a ninth: the other eight are “*not exhaustive and shall not preclude the application of other principles of administration*”.

Inspiring practice: Principles of administrative service design and delivery (Armenia)

1. Legality of administration: Administrative bodies shall assure compliance with laws.
2. Prohibition on the abuse of formal requirements: If the obligations are fulfilled in substance, then administrative bodies shall be prohibited from burdening persons with [further] obligations or refusing to honour the person’s rights on purely formal grounds.
3. Restriction of discretionary powers: Discretionary power is a right granted to an administrative body by law to choose any one of several possible legitimate solutions.
4. Prohibition of arbitrariness: Administrative bodies shall be prohibited from manifesting unequal treatment in similar factual circumstances, unless there is grounds for differentiation. Administrative bodies are obliged to manifest individualised treatment towards essentially different factual circumstances.
5. Proportionality of administration: The administration shall pursue the aims set by the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Armenia, and the means for achieving these aims shall be useful, necessary and moderate.
6. The principle of prior fulfilment: Administrative bodies do not have the right to compel persons to carry out actions that these persons have already carried out in other contexts or whose substance has been included or could be included in those other contexts.
7. Presumption of trustworthiness: The data or information pertaining to factual circumstances that persons have presented to administrative bodies for consideration shall be deemed trustworthy in all cases, unless the administrative body proves otherwise. Persons shall not be required to submit documents or additional information proving the trustworthiness of the data or information they have submitted, except as prescribed by law.

8. Efficient operation: In the exercise of its powers, an administrative body shall act to secure the maximally efficient use of the means at its disposal for the achievement of maximally favourable results, without impairing the fulfilment of its duties.

Source: Law on Fundamentals of Administration and Administrative Procedure, op. cit.

There are further examples. In Ukraine, the Law on Administrative Services sets out the requirements for adhering to the principle of accessibility. Specifically, it gives individuals, including private entrepreneurs, the right to receive administrative services regardless of their place of registration, unless otherwise stipulated by law. It also requires that applicants be able to apply to submit their requests for administrative service in writing, orally or electronically. A written application may be submitted personally or by representative, sent by mail, and if electronically, by means of the *Diia* portal or integrated into the information systems of state administrations and local self-governments. The Law also articulates the 'once-only' principle. It prohibits requiring applicants to provide documents and information that the state administrations and local self-governments already possess. The service providers shall obtain such documents and information without applicants through electronic interaction across informational systems or by immediate access to the data of an appropriate system, *inter alia* ⁴⁷.

Such principles can be valuable in pointing the way to the next steps in a country's trajectory. For example, the once-only provision of information is an expression of 'user-centricity' and 'efficiency', but any potential abuse in its application must be safeguarded by 'confidentiality' (personal data protection), while the risk of some citizens being left behind by digitalisation is mitigated by 'equality' and 'impartiality' (equal treatment of all service users). The portfolio of principles should be both comprehensive and complementary.

Inspiration can be drawn from the EU's right to good administration, which is enshrined in its Charter of Fundamental Rights⁴⁸. Article 41 ensures that "every person has the right to have his or her affairs handled impartially, fairly and within a reasonable time by the institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the Union", including the right "to be heard, before any individual measure which would affect him or her adversely is taken" and "to have access to his or her file, while respecting the legitimate interests of confidentiality and of professional and business secrecy". The administration is obliged to give reasons for its decisions, and the EU must make good any damage caused by its institutions or by its servants in the performance of their duties.

While Article 41 applies specifically to the institutions of the European Union, similar provisions can be found in almost every EU Member State in laws on administrative procedure (LAPs). This is illustrated by the example of Germany at the federal level (below), which is interesting for its efforts to incorporate the transition to e-services into the LAPs' provisions over time.

Inspiring practices: Legal framework for good administration under digitalisation (Germany)

Germany's federal Administrative Procedures Act (*Verwaltungsverfahrensgesetz*) has defined the general principles of administrative procedures law since 1976. At the state level, all the German *Länder* have adopted their own administrative procedures legislation, which either largely repeat the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) word for word or directly refer to it⁴⁹.

⁴⁷ Law on Administrative Services Article 9 (Parts 2,3,7,8).

⁴⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/info/aid-development-cooperation-fundamental-rights/your-rights-eu/eu-charter-fundamental-rights_en.

⁴⁹ https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/EN/gesetztestexte/VwVfg_en.html.

While the APA aims to regulate administrative activity precisely, as reflected in its considerable detail, it is not all-encompassing. It is one pillar of the so-called ‘three columns system’; tax law administration and social law administration each have their own procedural codes. While the APA has barely changed in the decades since it was adopted, it became increasingly clear in recent years that it was crafted for an ‘analogue’ world of paper-based systems and deliberations by civil servants, not the digitalised context of online interactions and automation. If citizens’ rights are to be safeguarded, it is important to ensure that administrative procedures are transparent and that the public administration continues to be accountable for its decision making in electronic form. The APA needed to stand up to the winds of change.

For the APA, the first step was to recognise electronic administrative acts. APA amendments in 2003 laid the groundwork, with the new provision for multi-channel electronic communication of an administrative act (as an option), although a digital signature was required for electronic transmission of documents (compulsory for notaries and lawyers), while non-interoperability of IT systems at federal, state and municipal levels discouraged data exchange. Transposition of the 2006 EU directive on free movement of services into German law led to a further APA addition, introducing the right to an electronic procedure. Subsequently, reforms in 2017 allowed fully automated administrative procedures, managed by algorithms (and supplemented by the investigative powers of public administration). This move was prompted by revisions to the tax code from a 2016 law to modernise tax procedure by fully digitalising tax assessment.

Changes to the APA’s provisions were complemented and stimulated by the 2013 Law on promotion of e-Government⁵⁰, which initiated a review of all federal administrative law, to promote digitalisation and obliged administrations to store documents electronically *inter alia*. It was also prompted by the 2017 Law on improving online access to administrative services⁵¹, and the 2017 Law on dismantling expendable regulations in written form in federal administrative law⁵², which aimed to remove the requirement for paper-based procedures, so they could be carried out electronically.

Source: Based on Professor Cristina Fraenkel-Haeberle (2020), “Fully Digitalised Administrative Procedures in the German Legal System”, *European Review of Digital Administration & Law*, 1 (1-2), June-December, pp. 105-111⁵³.

SIGMA conducted an analysis of LAPs adopted in the Western Balkans⁵⁴ that came into force in 2016-2017 and compared them with key international standards on good administrative practice established by the Council of Europe’s recommendations and resolutions, the aforementioned EU Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the Principles of Public Administration. SIGMA has reviewed the LAPs’ practical implementation by examining a sample of administrative procedures for handling applications for construction permits and social benefits, and for value-added tax audits. It highlights the importance of harmonising the special legislation regulating administrative procedures with the LAPs, and contains a template for drafting the special legislation and/or checking its alignment with the LAP. The paper also proposes measures to overcome implementation challenges based on experiences in EU and OECD countries⁵⁵. SIGMA has also published a checklist for all governments interested in introducing a general LAP, based on the principles of legality, impartiality, procedural fairness, openness and transparency, and accountability and reliability⁵⁶.

⁵⁰ *Gesetz zur Förderung der elektronischen Verwaltung* (2013), BGBl. I, 2 749.

⁵¹ *Gesetz zur Verbesserung des Onlinezugangs zu Verwaltungsleistungen (Onlinezugangsgesetz – OZG)*, BGBl., I, 2017, 3122 and 3138.

⁵² *Gesetz zum Abbau verzichtbarer Anordnungen der Schriftform im Verwaltungsrecht des Bundes* of 29 March 2017 (BGBl. I, 2017, 626).

⁵³ <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=7646487>.

⁵⁴ Albania, Kosovo*, Montenegro, the Republic of North Macedonia, and Serbia (*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244/99 and the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on Kosovo’s declaration of independence).

⁵⁵ Ligi, T. and A. Kmecl (2021), “Implementation of laws on general administrative procedure in the Western Balkans”, SIGMA Papers, No. 62, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/e5162057-en>.

⁵⁶ <http://www.sigmaxweb.org/publications/37890936.pdf>.

2.3. Vision and strategic framework

Inevitably, this study is a snapshot in time, as the strengthening of administrative service design and delivery is a continual work in progress. In the pursuit of modernisation, governments strive to keep pace with technological solutions and match the evolving expectations of service users. Here, we ask: what is important to policy makers, as they seek to strengthen their service provision? The table below highlights the principal themes that appear in existing strategic documents and/or recently adopted umbrella laws, indicating the ‘direction of travel’ for the coming period. A further elaboration follows in the country summaries.

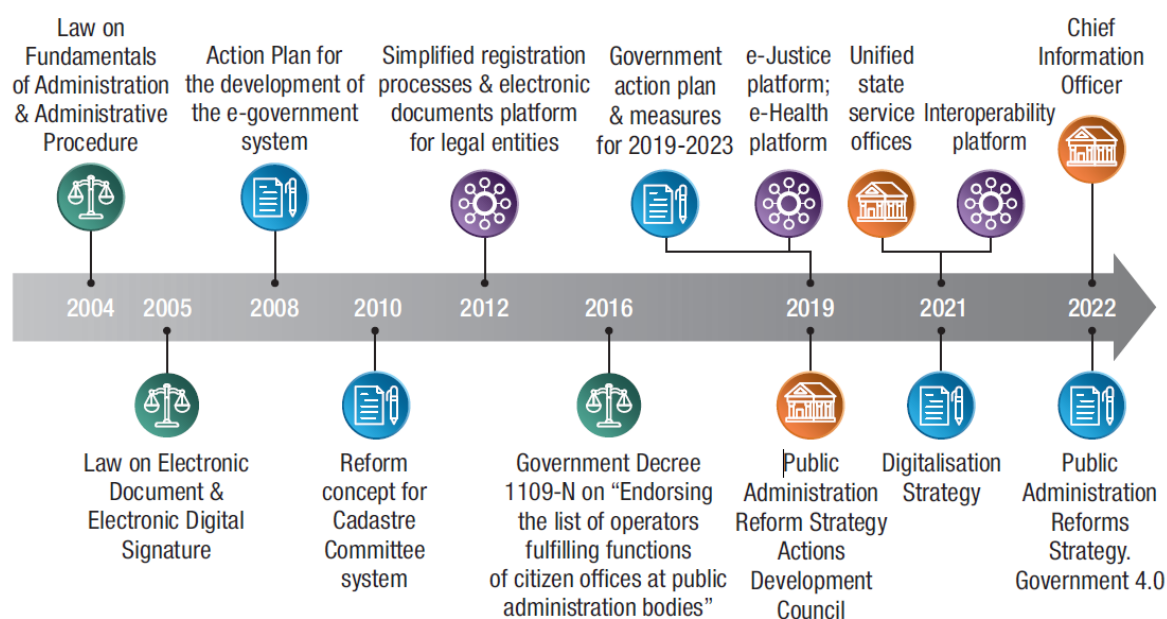
Table 3. Major strategic themes in service design and delivery

Country	Key words
Armenia	Legal framework, data policy, accessibility (one-stop shops), re-engineering, service inventory and passports, key enablers and critical infrastructure, digitalisation (registries, a unified platform, interoperability), rules/ethics, outsourcing, quality assurance, citizen feedback, customer codes
Azerbaijan	Accessibility (one-stop shops), quality standards, paperless government, key enablers, digitalisation (mobile and cloud-based)
Georgia	Deconcentration, decentralisation, accessibility, standardisation, simplification, innovation, costing, digitalisation, digital transformation, quality assurance, evaluation
Moldova	Legal, institutional, methodological and technological framework, electronic state register of public services, accessibility (e-service, multi-functional and service delivery centres), re-engineering and digitalisation, monitoring of service delivery, quality evaluation
Ukraine	Legal framework, accessibility (one-stop shops), streamlining, decentralisation, digitalisation (interoperability), digital transformation, professionalisation, quality, monitoring

As Table 3 makes clear, some themes recur in all five countries, not least the common focus on the ‘front end’ (the interface with service users), digitalisation as the solution to modernising service design and delivery and achieving a step-change in performance (process efficiency and automaticity, and accessibility through non-traditional channels), and an emphasis on quality (standards, assurance and assessment). Some also highlight their incomplete regulatory frameworks as deserving of attention and/or the role of public administrations below the central level, which have key competences and are closer to the (physical) service user. These current and ongoing themes are described in more detail in the summaries below, in the context of key milestone events (the adoption of major legislation, the launch of significant strategies, and the creation of important institutions) since 2000, which are further elaborated upon in Annex 1.

2.3.1. Armenia

The vision for administrative service design and delivery has been articulated in several strategic and policy



documents. Of the most recent, it was set out in the Government Programme for 2021-2026⁵⁷. This includes a vision to “radically transform the quality of public service delivery to become citizen-centred and modern based on advanced technology, with the aim of mitigating the unreasonable administrative burden and inconvenience for citizens and businesses in relationships with the state”. More specifically, it includes the following commitments of the Government:

- modernising administrative registers for services, including by ensuring interoperability of the digital administrative registers, and the digitalisation and interoperability of registers that are currently non-electronic;
- introducing a unified electronic platform to provide digitalised public services, to ensure simple, accessible and convenient use of services;
- developing and introducing a modern model of unified service centres to ensure the universal availability of state services;
- establishing legal arrangements for outsourcing state services delivery;
- introducing a quality control and assurance system for public services;
- introducing rules of operation and a code of ethics for public service delivery.

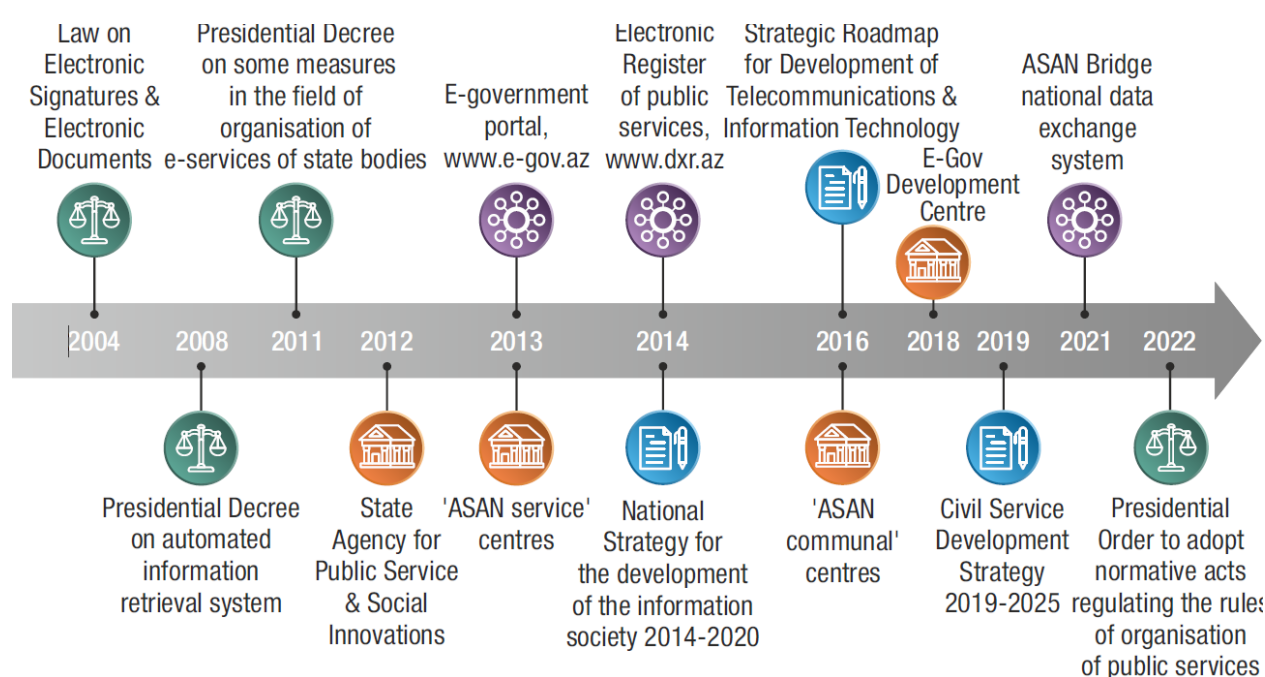
In February 2021, the Government adopted its Digitalisation Strategy⁵⁸, to achieve the digital transformation of the government, economy and society by introducing innovative technologies, cybersecurity, data policy, e-government and e-services. The Digitalisation Strategy aims to ensure high-quality public service delivery and an efficient, transparent public administration system, and contains analysis of the current situation, goals and strategic directions, the basic conditions for digitalisation, monitoring and programmes as defined by the action plan.

⁵⁷ <https://www.gov.am/files/docs/4629.pdf> <https://www.gov.am/files/docs/4737.pdf> (in English), adopted 18 August 2021.

⁵⁸ Decision “On Approval of Armenia’s Digitalisation Strategy”, https://hti.am/edfiles/files/N183_L.pdf.

In May 2022, the Government adopted the “Public Administration Reforms Strategy. Government 4.0”, to be implemented in three phases by 2030: the first stage from 2022-2024, the second 2025-2027 and the third 2028-2030. The PAR Strategy has four pillars, including public service delivery. The reforms on service design and delivery involve an ambitious policy agenda, from establishing regulatory frameworks and standards to re-engineering and digitalising business processes, setting up a national electronic service platform and establishing unified delivery centres, to introducing quality control and monitoring systems and citizen feedback mechanisms. Reforms will achieve a set of impact and outcome indicators and targets, including: developing a consolidated list of public services to be at least 50% complete within 1 year, 80% complete within 2 years and 100% within 3 years; achieving at least 40% digitalisation of public services by 2024; to improve costs, time, and paper consumption to be cut twice by 2024, etc.

2.3.2. Azerbaijan



There is no single strategy document in Azerbaijan that sets out a vision for administrative service design and delivery. However, the Government made a strong commitment to digitalise service design and delivery in the 2016 Strategic Roadmap for Development of Telecommunications and Information Technology⁵⁹, including making it a priority to expand the scope of e-government, increase the number and quality of e-services, and improve their implementation in the form of automated interactive services. This includes the following strategic actions:

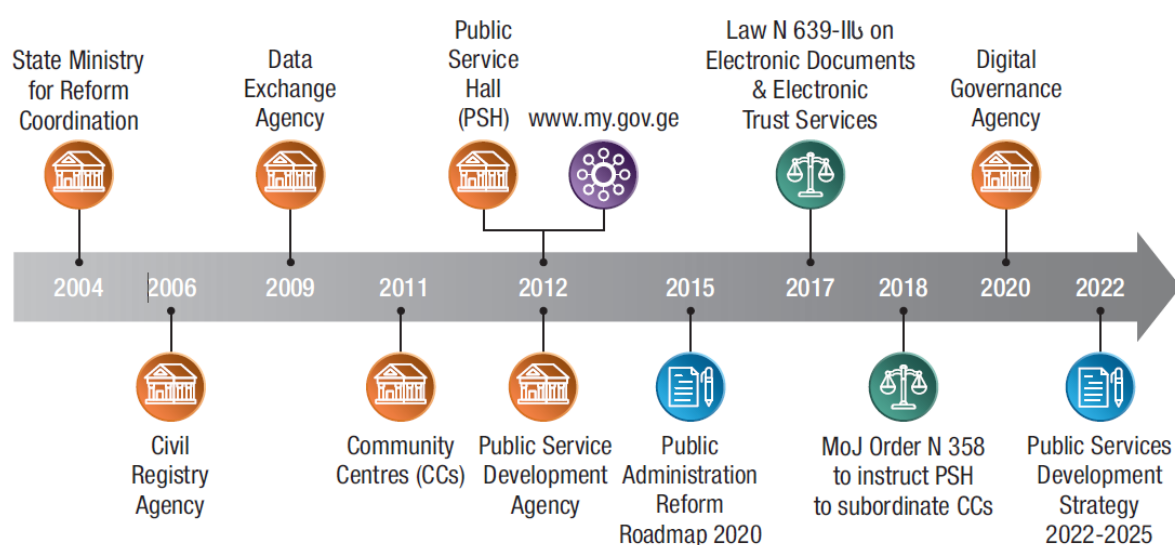
- development of quality standards in government service delivery;
- completely electronic correspondence and elimination of the use of paper in the government sector, as well as in communication with the government sector;
- development of common principles and standards for establishing the information systems of government bodies;
- development of a concept for mobile government in eGov2.0 version (mGov);
- creating a 'Government Cloud';

⁵⁹ <https://monitoring.az/assets/upload/files/6683729684f8895c1668803607932190.pdf>.

- ensuring mutual recognition of electronic signatures, including the electronic 'ASAN Signature' at the international level.

This emphasis on e-government is confirmed by the Strategy for Civil Service Development in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2019-2025, under 'Civil service information support and development of e-civil service'. In addition, the Cabinet of Ministers has adopted the Plan for Transition of the Government Information Systems and Resources to "Government Cloud" until 2024⁶⁰. The broader framework includes "Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socio-Economic Development", approved by the Presidential Order and "The National Action Plan on: the Promotion of the Open Government for 2020-2022". Additionally, according to the "National Action Plan for Strengthening the Fight Against Corruption for 2022-2026" approved by the President on 4 April 2022, adoption of a single law regulating the principles and rules of organisation of public services, defining the requirements for the provision of services by government agencies (institutions) is set out for 2022-2023⁶¹.

2.3.3. Georgia



The Public Administration Reform Roadmap 2020⁶² adopted by the Government in 2015, and the Public Services Development Strategy 2022-2025⁶³, which was developed in 2018 and adopted by the Government in April 2022, identified several gaps in public service design and delivery. In particular, they noted the absence of a common legal framework, unstructured service design, chaotic costing and lack of a clear pricing methodology, scattered and irregular service quality control, and no meaningful, sustainable internal monitoring and service delivery accountability practices. The Basic Data and Directions 2021-2024 (BDD) strategy focuses on the need to modernise and expand public services to serve citizens more effectively⁶⁴.

⁶⁰ <http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/46243>.

⁶¹ https://static.president.az/upload/Files/2022/04/04/a1973b5f44580dab0e6f634f6fcd3aed_4407904.pdf.

⁶² Government of Georgia (2015), PAR Roadmap 2020, pp. 27-31 <https://cutt.ly/AnTg9DO>.

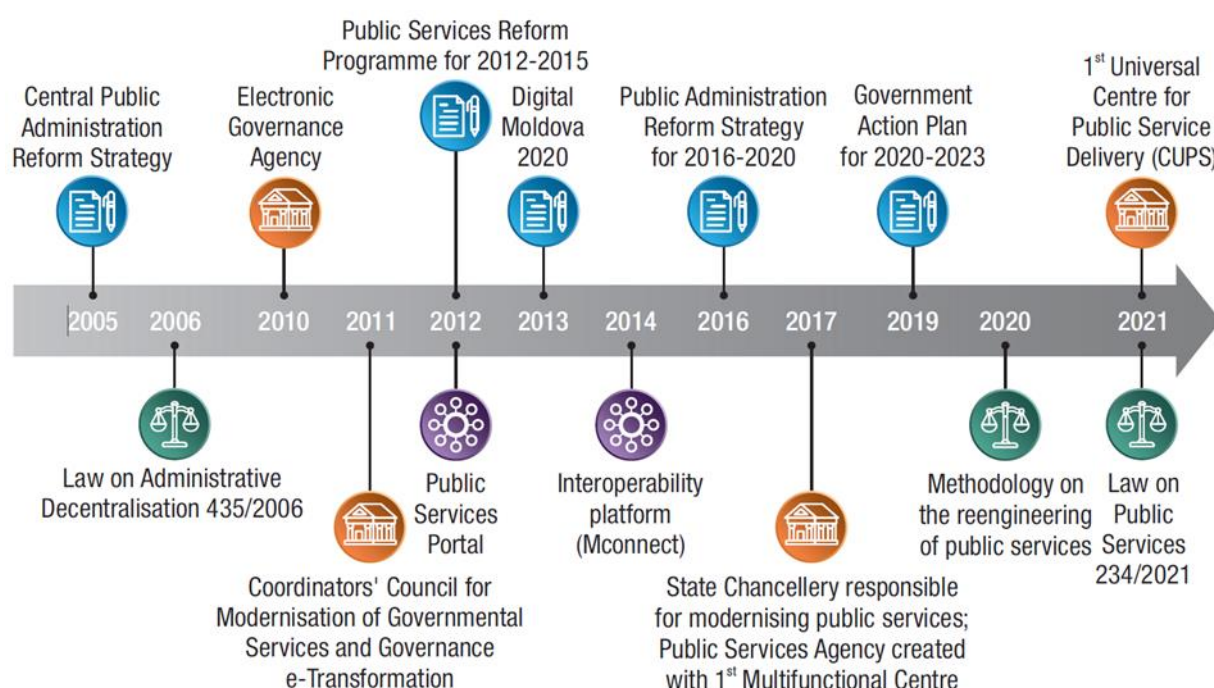
⁶³ Government of Georgia (2022), the Public Services Development Strategy 2022-2025, pp. 9-16, <https://matsne.gov.ge/document/view/5436909?publication=0>.

⁶⁴ A Digital Georgia: e-Georgia Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2018<?> and the Freedom, Rapid Development and Prosperity Government Programme 2016-2020 are also relevant to this goal.

The Government Programme 2020-2024 “Toward Building a European State”, approved by Parliament in February 2021, includes public service reform⁶⁵, with the following aspects:

- deconcentrating public services and decentralising the system of state governance fiscally, to establish successful European-standard local self-government by 2024 and successfully finalise the process of transforming sectoral-centralised governance into effective local-territorial governance;
- upgrading state and municipal services by developing a single standard for service creation, delivery, quality assurance and evaluation that will allow for ensuring user engagement and even simpler access to services;
- along with physical services, upgrading online services and digitalising new, additional state services, leading to the country’s first fair and transparent standard for pricing state services;
- developing the country’s Second Digital Governance Strategy and Action Plan, to digitalise public institutions’ internal processes for greater effectiveness, upgrade and enhance remote services to ensure greater availability and effectiveness, and offer citizens and businesses simplified, user-oriented and high-quality electronic state services, in line with international standards for personal data protection;
- developing an electronic programme and new catalogues for remote services;
- fostering modern systems of professional development in public institutions to ensure the success of the service reform.

2.3.4. Moldova



⁶⁵ “Government Programme 2021-2024: Toward Building a European State”, pp. 44-45.

A series of national strategies for public administration reform⁶⁶ and e-government⁶⁷ set the scene for the state of play in 2021. After the appointment of a new Government on 6 August, the Government Action Plan (GAP) for 2021-2022 was approved on 13 October⁶⁸, and contains key objectives, result/outcome indicators and priority actions in the field of good governance and digital transformation policy dedicated to: modernising public administrative services; increasing the quality and accessibility of public services provided to citizens and businesses; and extending and improving electronic services provided to citizens and entrepreneurs. To achieve these objectives, GAP 2021-2022 planned a series of concrete practical priority actions, including:

- promoting the (then draft) Law on Public Services;
- promoting the draft Government Decision on the Electronic State Register of Public Services (which was subsequently approved⁶⁹);
- continuing the re-engineering process and digitalisation of the most popular public services;
- approving the digitalisation methodology;
- founding and piloting the Unique Services Delivery Centres (CUPS) in partnership with diplomatic missions and consular offices of the Republic of Moldova abroad, as well as with local public authorities (at least 17 unified public service centres created)⁷⁰;
- launching the new version of the Public Services Portal;
- promoting the draft Government Decision on approving the concept of the single digital platform for local public authorities (e-LPA)⁷¹.

The Action Plan for the years 2017-2021 on the implementation of the Public Services Modernisation Reform⁷² sets out three specific objectives:

- developing and implementing the framework necessary for the modernisation of public services, according to good European and international practices in the field;
- strengthening institutional and human capacities to modernise public services;
- increasing the quality and accessibility of public services (re-engineering public services, digitalising public services that have been re-engineered, creating unified centres for delivery of public services, monitoring the quality of public services, modernising selected public services, and strengthening e-Government platforms and support infrastructure).

As a major step towards modernising and completely digitalising administrative service design and delivery as a single system, the Law on Public Services was formally adopted by Parliament on 23 December 2021⁷³. It: enshrines the rights and duties of public service providers and beneficiaries, including once-only information provision by citizens, businesses and other organisations; creates a legal framework to ensure

⁶⁶ Including the aforementioned Public Administration Reform Strategy for 2016-2020, and [Action Plan for the years 2016-2018 on the implementation of the Public Administration Reform Strategy reform for 2016-2020](#), approved by Government Decision No. 1 351/2016, Official Gazette No. 459-471, Article 1 452.

⁶⁷ [National Strategy for the Development of the Information Society "Digital Moldova 2020"](#), approved by Government Decision No. 857/2013, Official Gazette No. 252-257, Article 963.

⁶⁸ https://gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/subiect_2_-_nu_-_368_cs_2021.pdf.

⁶⁹ Government Decision No. 169/2021 on the State Register of Public Services, Official Gazette No. 230-237, Article 436.

⁷⁰ [Government Decision on the Piloting of Unique Public Service Centres No. 322/2021](#), Official Gazette No. 274-278, Article 588.

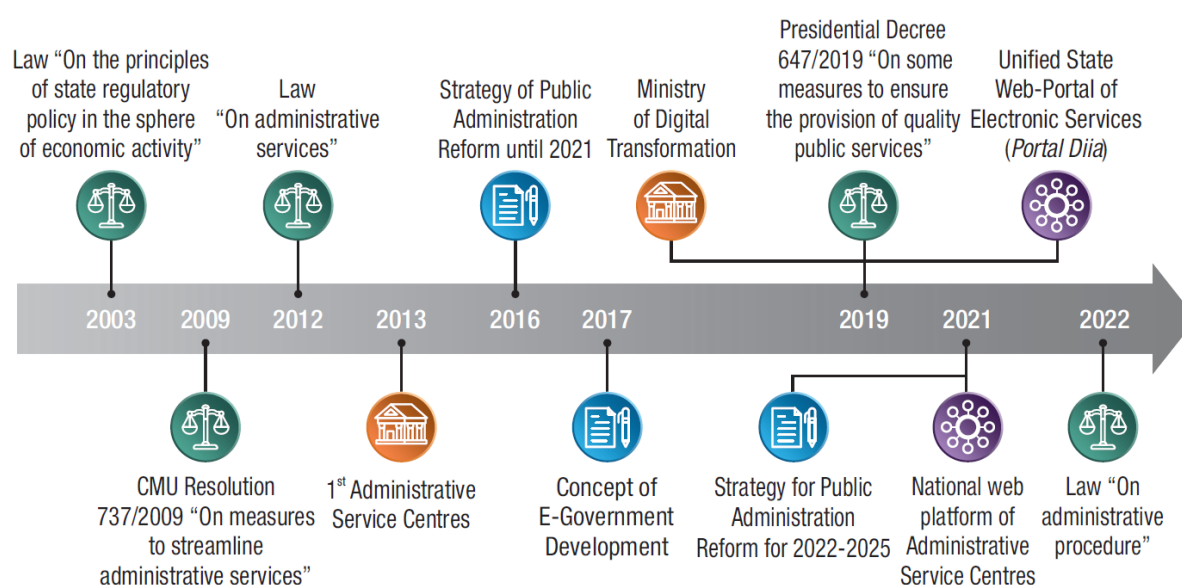
⁷¹ At the time of writing, the draft concept of the single digital platform for local public authorities (e-LPA) was under review for proposal and scrutiny.

⁷² [Action Plan for 2017-2021 on the Public Services Modernisation Reform](#), approved by Government Decision No. 966/2016, Official Gazette No. 265-276, Article 1 049.

⁷³ Law on Public Services No. 234/2021, Official Gazette No. 34-38/2022, Article 34.

accessibility, quality and efficiency, including the possibility of requesting public services at any counter or centre, regardless of the beneficiary's place of residence; and enables services to be provided pro-actively, without submitting additional requests or approaches from beneficiaries. The Law prioritises electronic delivery (e-service by default), while simultaneously delivering services through all possible and reasonable channels, and envisages secondary acts by the Government to organise and operate Unified Public Services Centres as one-stop shops, and so on.

2.3.5. Ukraine



Effective, efficient administrative services design and delivery has been a distinct policy imperative since 2014, rather than an adjunct of other policy objectives, with major efforts made to support the conditions required to develop services. In 2019, a vision of service design and delivery, 'the State in a Smartphone', was proposed to: simplify service delivery; eliminate duplication of front offices; improve feedback and monitor service delivery⁷⁴; draft a law on streamlining the administrative fee⁷⁵; set up conditions for e-services (including web portals, online administrative services and interoperability)⁷⁶; and define by law the specific modalities of delivering public (electronic) services (for example, delivering life-event e-services, using digital images of documents and 'once-only' provision of information)⁷⁷.

Together with other strategies and concepts specifying goals, actions and targets for administrative and electronic service design and delivery⁷⁸, the Strategy of Public Administration Reform in Ukraine until

⁷⁴ Presidential Decree No. 647/2019 "On some measures to ensure the provision of quality public services", <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/647/2019#Text>.

⁷⁵ Presidential Decree No. 837/2019 "On urgent measures to reform and strengthen the State", <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/837/2019#Text>.

⁷⁶ Presidential Decree No. 558/2019, "On some measures to improve the access of individuals and legal entities to electronic services", <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/558/2019#top>.

⁷⁷ Law of Ukraine No. 1 689-IX "On peculiarities of delivering public (electronic) services".

⁷⁸ State Strategy of Regional Development for 2021-2027, Strategy for Digital Transformation of the Social Sphere, Concept of Electronic Services System Development in Ukraine, Concept of E-Government Development in Ukraine, and Concept of Development of Digital Competencies and Action Plan for Its Implementation.

2021⁷⁹ set out the framework and conditions for improving the quality and accessibility of administrative services, with annual indicators:

- introducing a general administrative procedure with basic guarantees (the principle of legality, establishment of true facts, right to be heard, right for effective protection of rights, right to receive a written decision containing grounds for its adoption, right to non-judicial appeal, etc.);
- improving the quality and accessibility of administrative services, and decentralisation of administrative services;
- systematically reducing the administrative burden on citizens and legal entities;
- optimising and increasing the efficiency of work of the executive authorities by introducing electronic interdepartmental interaction and circulation of electronic documents;
- providing administrative services in electronic form.

In July 2021, the Government adopted the Strategy for Public Administration Reform in Ukraine for 2022-2025⁸⁰, based on SIGMA principles, which aims to create conditions for citizens, businesses and other legal entities to receive high-quality, affordable and accessible administrative services according to convenient and clear procedures, as well as establishing a system of professional and politically neutral public service focused on protecting the interests of citizens, again with annual indicators. Particular attention is paid to developing and optimising the network of Administrative Service Centres (ASCs), and increasing the number of administrative services (in particular, those that are the most requested) provided through ASCs, improving their quality and ensuring that ASCs can cover their costs. The strategy also aims to simplify and optimise procedures to reduce the administrative burden, re-engineer administrative services to increase user orientation, continue to decentralise powers (with resources) to local self-government bodies so they can provide administrative services, and pursue digitalisation.

The pillar legislation, the Law on Administrative Services, is regularly updated and defines the general requirements for administrative service design and delivery, provides the legal grounds for the functioning of the ASCs, establishes the *Diia* portal for electronic service delivery, and sets the monitoring of quality of administrative service design and delivery.

2.4. Observations

Three common themes run through all ENP East government's policies, namely accessibility, digital transformation and quality. Other important issues include devolution (deconcentration from central to sub-national levels of state administration and/or decentralisation from central government to sub-national self-government), and simplification (streamlining, re-engineering). These will be explored in Chapters 4 and 5.

At the time of writing, none of the five countries has a 'complete' policy framework for designing and delivering administrative services, which can be defined as:

- an up-to-date strategy, either focused on administrative services or embedded in a broader programme for public administration reform and modernisation, that incorporates digital transformation, setting out the vision and priorities and accompanied by a costed implementation plan;

⁷⁹ CMU, *The Strategy of Public Administration Reform in Ukraine until 2021*, Order No. 474-o, June 24, 2016, *Some Issues on Public Administration Reform in Ukraine*, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/474-2016-%D1%80#Text>.

⁸⁰ CMU Order No. 831-p "Some issues of public administration reform in Ukraine", <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/831-2021-%D1%80#Text>.

- an umbrella law on administrative services that clearly defines administrative services, provides the powers to achieve the policy goals, and is accompanied by functioning legislation on administrative procedure, which cements the citizen's right to good administration and administrative behaviour, both based on lasting principles;
- a comprehensive 'service catalogue', easy to access and use, that shows which institution is ultimately accountable for good service design and delivery, even if there is, as there should be, a single 'shop window' for all services.

The closest to completing the set was Ukraine, which promulgated its Law on Administrative Procedure in June 2022. This was not due to take effect until 15 December 2023, allowing time for service providers to prepare fully for its provisions.

In Moldova, the deadline for implementing a policy document dedicated specifically to the field of public services⁸¹ expired at the end of 2021. The adoption of the Law on Public Services in late 2021, however, was a landmark moment in creating a regulatory framework for service provision. A nomenclature of public administrative services has been approved⁸², but at the time of writing, it included only services provided at the central level.

Strategies, laws and lists of services are in themselves not enough to ensure a streamlined public administration and satisfactory user experience. The system must be set up to design and deliver services that achieve the goals of the public administration, while optimising user experience. This starts with institutional arrangements, including leadership, assignment and co-operation.

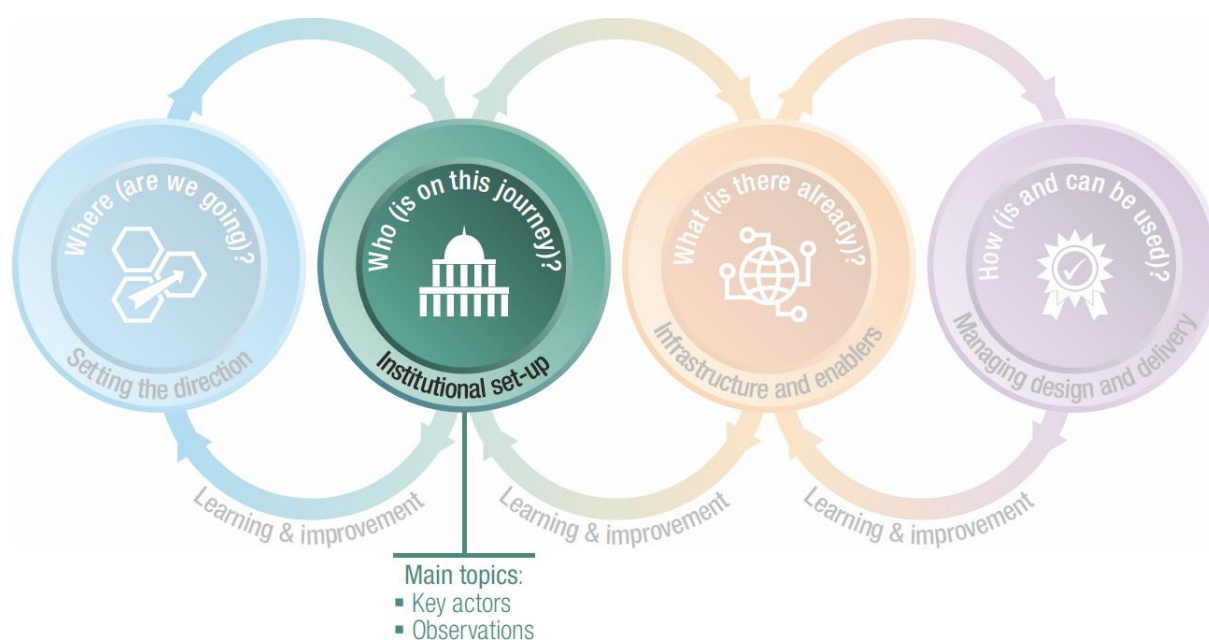
⁸¹ [Action Plan for 2017-2021 regarding the Public Services Modernisation Reform, approved by Government Decision No. 966/2016](#), Official Gazette No. 265-276, Article 1 049.

⁸² [Integrated nomenclature of administrative public services and the list of life events associated with them, approved by Government Decision No. 670/2020 \(Annex 1\)](#), Official Gazette No. 229-233, Article 800.

3. Institutional set-up



Every country has its own distinct machinery of government, and this is equally true of the countries of ENP East. Given the ubiquity of administrative services, their design and delivery inevitably involves a plethora of public institutions in the state administration, as well as intermediaries working on their behalf, and local self-government. As sub-national structures and functions can be highly complex, this chapter focuses largely on the organs of central government: ministries, agencies and other public bodies. While individual organisations can be owners and/or providers of specific services, they also have to work together in the interests of their common service users.



3.1. Key actors

The head of the government has the ultimate responsibility for public service design and delivery, supported by his/her cabinet of ministers. However, there are hundreds, or even thousands, of public institutions in each country that are directly or indirectly involved in service provision at all levels of government within their own mandates. This includes ministries, agencies, committees, commissions, funds, services, enterprises, centres, offices, bureaux, institutes, commissions, boards, services and inspectorates, and even institutions that are not normally associated with public administrative services, such as central banks and police. Many national state bodies have their own territorial administrations. At the sub-national level, local self-government also plays a crucial role in service design and delivery – with as many as 1 470 municipalities in the case of Ukraine. Focusing on policy and co-ordination at the central level, Table 4 presents the key institutions in each ENP East country.

Table 4. Central stakeholders in public services policy and co-ordination

Country	Institutions
Armenia	Deputy Prime Minister (Chief Information Officer, Chairman of the Information Systems Management Board); Ministry of High-Tech Industry; Ministry of Justice; Central Bank of Armenia; e-Governance Infrastructure Implementation Agency (EKENG).
Azerbaijan	State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations under the president; Ministry of Digital Development and Transport E-Gov Development Centre
Georgia	Ministry of Justice; Public Service Development Agency; Public Service Hall
Moldova	Deputy Prime Minister for Digitalisation; State Chancellery; Ministry of Economy; Electronic Governance Agency; Public Services Agency
Ukraine	Cabinet of Ministers; Ministry of Digital Transformation (vice prime minister)

Note: Note, institutions designated as responsible for policy and co-ordination may also be involved in the design and delivery of administrative services under their competence

The institutional set-up in each case merits further explanation, to shed light on the context and allocation of the leading roles:

- In **Armenia**, service design and delivery modernisation takes place within the scope of public administration reforms. These are co-ordinated at the centre of government by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, who is also responsible for the co-ordination of overall digital transformation reforms as the Chief Information Officer. The Information Systems Management Board⁸³, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, is set up to run a high-level policy and portfolio co-ordination of e-society and e-economy reforms and digital administrative services. The Ministry of High-Tech Industry is immediately responsible for developing and implementing digitalisation policy and standards. The role of the Ministry of Justice in service design and delivery mainly concerns the unified service delivery centres, administrative legislation and personal data protection. EKENG⁸⁴ is one of the important players in the overall architecture of the institutional governance of service delivery, ensuring critical digital and electronic services infrastructure, and in particular acting as the trust centre for electronic signature and electronic identity, and as operator for the Government's interoperability platform. In the overall digital transformation reforms, the Information Systems Agency of Armenia (ISAA) was set up in 2022 and covers quality control and compliance assurance for information systems and electronic services, CERT management, operation of the national services portal and so on.
- In **Azerbaijan**, overall responsibility for policy and co-ordination at the central level has been largely assumed by the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations, established under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan⁸⁵, but it shares responsibilities with the recently renamed Ministry of Digital Development and Transport, which has been tasked with the development and operation of the G-cloud⁸⁶. The Ministry's Data Centre has been established and functions, for the first time in the South Caucasus, in accordance with TIER III level, ISO 20000 and ISO 27001 standards⁸⁷. The E-Gov Development Centre⁸⁸ was established under the State Agency in 2018, as a co-ordinating body in the field of formulating, implementing, integrating and effectively

⁸³ Other members are the deputy head of the prime minister's staff, the ministers of finance, high-tech industry, economy and justice, and the head of the Central Bank; <http://www.irtek.am/views/act.aspx?aid=114361>.

⁸⁴ <https://ekeng.am/en>; an open joint stock company with the authority to manage state property stocks is delegated to the staff of the prime minister.

⁸⁵ <http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/23926>.

⁸⁶ <http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/46243>.

⁸⁷ <http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/42560>.

⁸⁸ <https://www.digital.gov.az/en/page/about>.

managing public information resources and systems, running the data exchange platform, and promoting public awareness of e-services.

- In **Georgia**, the Administration of the Government co-ordinates public administration reforms, including those affecting administrative services. However, by law, the main custodian of public services is the Public Service Development Agency (PSDA) under the Ministry of Justice⁸⁹. The role of agencies as the main delivery arm of central government can be traced back to 2004, when a new law was adopted on the “Structure, Functions and Responsibilities of the Executive Branch”⁹⁰. The government at the time understood that to eradicate public sector corruption and strengthen ministries’ capacity, the ministries had to be remodelled as smaller entities. In 2005, the Parliament introduced amendments in the law⁹¹ to give ministerial departments the authority to establish themselves semi-independently as Legal Entities of Public Law (LEPLs). These new agencies were able to set up their own organisational structures, appoint managers as heads, provide competitive salary packages to personnel, and innovate to provide quality public services. The Public Service Hall (PSH) was established as an LEPL under the Ministry of Justice as a front office for its agencies. While both PSDA and PSH fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice, they have independent legal status, management and organisational structures.
- In **Moldova**, the Deputy Prime Minister for digitalisation is responsible for co-ordination of the activities and the field of modernisation of public services and administrative processes. The State Chancellery is responsible for promoting and monitoring the implementation of state policy in the field of modernisation of public services⁹², and is empowered to develop the methodology for re-engineering public services⁹³, with the support of the Electronic Governance Agency (EGA)⁹⁴. The Public Services Agency (PSA)⁹⁵ also plays a pivotal role in policy preparation, as does the Ministry of Economy⁹⁶, being responsible for state policy in the field of information resources. The government also benefits from two inter-ministerial initiatives: the National Council for Public

⁸⁹ Parliament of Georgia (2012), Law 6 913-Ilb, Legislative Herald of Georgia, <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/1666869?publication=6>.

⁹⁰ Government of Georgia (2004), Law No 3 277, Legislative Herald of Georgia, <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/2062>.

⁹¹ Parliament of Georgia (2005), Law No 1 131, Legislative Herald of Georgia, <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/30928?publication=0>.

⁹² [Regulation on the organisation and functioning of the State Chancellery, approved by Government Decision No. 657/2009](#) (Section 7, paragraph j²)), Official Gazette No. 162/2009, Article 724.

⁹³ [Government Decisions on particular measures for the implementation of the project “Modernisation of Governmental Services” No. 354/2020](#) (Sections 1 and 2), Official Gazette No. 142-146/2020, Article 449.

⁹⁴ The EGA’s mission consists of implementing policies to modernise government services and e-Transformation of central public administration, [Government Decision on the creation of the E-Governance Agency No. 392/2010](#).

⁹⁵ The PSA is one of the largest providers of public services in the areas of: state records of the population, means of transportation and drivers; state registration of civil status documents and preservation of the national archival fund; state registration of real estate and property rights; regulation through licensing of the entrepreneurial activity, in accordance with the legislation; and state registration of legal entities, their subsidiaries and representations and of individual entrepreneurs). [Bylaws of the Public Institution “Public Services Agency”, approved by the Government Decision No. 314/2017](#), Official Gazette No. 162-170/2017.

⁹⁶ [Law on information and state information resources No. 467/2003](#) (Articles 21, paragraph (2), 23, paragraph (2)), Official Gazette No. 6-12/2004, Article 44.

Administration Reform (NCPAR)⁹⁷ and the Co-ordinators' Council for Modernisation of Governmental Services and Governance e-Transformation⁹⁸.

- In **Ukraine**, the lead responsibility for forming and implementing policy in administrative service design and delivery through all channels rests with the Ministry of Digital Transformation (MinDigit), which assumed this role in August 2019 from the Ministry of Economy. Its minister was accorded the role of a vice prime minister. Within the executive branch, the highest body and main decision maker is the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (CMU)⁹⁹. In March 2018, the CMU was given the authority to conduct experiments (within limits, and for no longer than two years) on issues under its responsibility that require regulation by law, including public administration¹⁰⁰. This means that, without having to wait for Parliament to adopt legislation, the CMU is entitled to regulate 'blind spots' by establishing its own procedures for experimentation (see section 5.2, for how these provisions have been applied to registering a birth and a residence online, for example).

The considerable progress made in Albania since 2013 demonstrates the merits of making a firm commitment to e-services, with the National Agency for Information Services (NAIS) playing a central role.

Inspiring practice: National Agency for Information Society (Albania)

The NAIS was established in 2007, and operates under the Prime Minister's Office. Its main mission is to: develop and maintain the e-Albania governmental portal as well as governmental systems and networks; provide centralised online services through ICT; transform the operation of government institutions through the introduction and use of innovative ICT tools; create and manage ICT governmental systems; conduct analysis and write terms of reference for ICT projects requested by central agencies or NAIS itself; implement the electronic seal; issue electronic signatures to businesses, public administration employees etc.; administer the Governmental Data Centre; organise and manage IT staff and the structure of institutions operating under the Council of Ministers; manage the registry of state databases; and manage the official government e-mail for public employees.

Digital transformation has progressed rapidly since 2013, when the incoming government made a total commitment to electronic service design and delivery, as summed up in the catchphrase: "Everything to everyone":

- At the time, the Albanian state offered just 14 e-services, with 51 000 applications during the year and 50 000 registered users. Six state databases were involved in 680 000 transactions.
- By 2021, 1 209 public services were available online, offering 95% coverage (compared to 1% in 2013), with 13 million applications and 2.3 million registered users of e-Albania, in a population of just under 3 million. Roughly 55 state databases interacted in real time through the Government Interoperability Platform, conducting 145 million transactions, 211 times more than 2013.

From almost a standing start, in just eight years, the Government of Albania had managed to encourage most of the population, of all ages, to engage with public services online. The impact of moving has been

⁹⁷ The NCPAR is chaired by the Prime Minister and representatives of the Parliamentary Committee on Public Administration, the Parliamentary Committee on Economy, Budget and Finance, the Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment and the State Chancellery. One of its tasks is to evaluate the list of public services to be re-engineered and digitalised.

⁹⁸ The council, chaired by the deputy secretary-general of the government, with the director of the EGA as deputy chair, includes the secretary-generals of all nine ministries, plus the heads/deputy heads of other central administrative authorities, self-management public authorities under government jurisdiction and the director of the PSA.

⁹⁹ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, "The Constitution of Ukraine", Article 113,

https://www.kmu.gov.ua/storage/app/imported_content/document/110977042/Constitution_eng.doc.

¹⁰⁰ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Law "On amendments to certain laws of Ukraine concerning powers in the field of environmental protection, Division II Final provisions (Item 2), <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2362-19#top>.

to save the equivalent of EUR 6.5 million and 766 years that could have been wasted waiting in queues for services.

The introduction of e-signatures has facilitated even the most complex services, and can be applied to 190 types of documents as of December 2021. They have been used over 170 000 times. Electronic stamps provide 49 types of electronic documents with legal value, and have been applied to over 16.2 million documents.

NIAS and the rest of the public administration, which comprises 194 institutions in total and over 11 000 employees, is planning to enhance service design and delivery, including: receiving an e-signed/e-sealed response for each e-service on the e-Albania portal to monitor whether deadlines have been met; establishing an official e-mail platform for every citizen and business as the only communication channel with the state; digitalising physical archives; and integrating private sector services into the e-Albania platform using interoperability.

Source: “Designing e-services from a user’s perspective”, Romina Kostani, National Agency for Information Society, Albania, E-Government Conference “Human-Centric Digital Transformation of the Public Sector”¹⁰¹.

3.2. Observations

In four of the five countries, the overall leadership of service design and delivery policy can be traced back to the centre of government, whether the president (Azerbaijan) or deputy prime minister (Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine), which underlines the importance and impact of administrative services in the daily lives of citizens and the smooth operation of the economy. At the central level, each ministry, agency or other state body is responsible for designing and/or executing service design and delivery in its specific sphere, along with all the associated processes and their quality, and alongside any leading role in overall policy and co-ordination designated by the centre of government. Given the territorial organisation of the central state administration, alongside the frontline role of local self-government, even individual services can involve multiple public bodies in their organisation and provision.

This raises the importance of clarity and rationality in functional assignment and accountability (who does what and when) and of avoiding gaps and overlaps. Effective multi-level governance is essential for high-quality service design and delivery. Strong leadership is also required to drive up quality continually and effectuate the principle of digital by design. This is easiest to achieve where a single central or horizontal body is assigned lead responsibility for policy development (including legislation and consultation) and active institutional co-ordination. If there is more than one leading actor, as for example, if a specialist agency is tasked with digital transformation across government, roles should be clearly assigned, understood by all stakeholders, and these lead bodies must have the competence, capacity (personnel and financial) and authority to discharge their duties¹⁰².

Effective co-operation is the precondition for seamless, user-centric service design and delivery, as the next chapter will show. The chapter will consider not only how institutions can work together ‘under one roof’ (physically and virtually), involving the local level of (self-) government alongside the state administration, but also how service offers can be integrated, data can be exchanged almost instantaneously, and individual systems become fully interoperable.

¹⁰¹ The presentation can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/N1zv8naJfLQ>.

¹⁰² See OECD (2021), *E-Leaders Handbook on the Governance of Digital Government*, <https://www.oecd.org/digital/digital-government/the-e-leaders-handbook-on-the-governance-of-digital-government-ac7f2531-en.htm>.

4. Putting in place the infrastructure and enablers



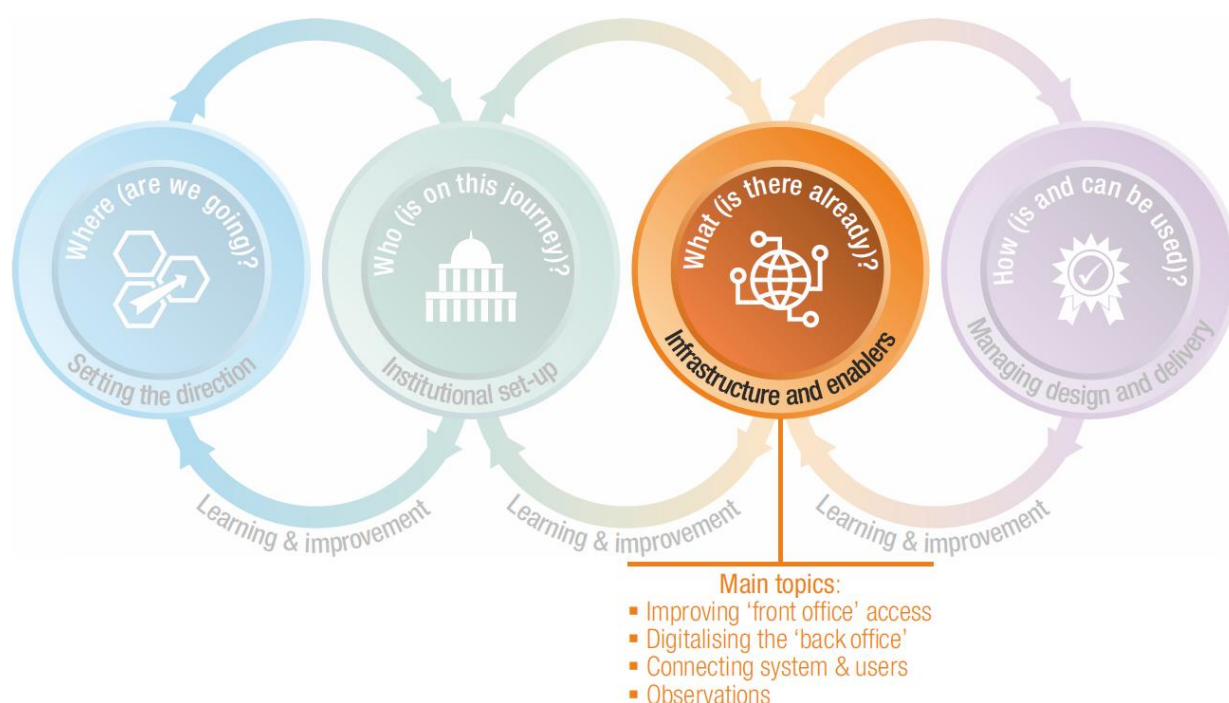
To achieve their strategic vision, governments must establish a certain infrastructure as the basic foundation for fulfilling user requirements. Each of the ENP East countries has expressed its ambition to expand online service design and delivery, alongside more traditional in-person channels, and must thus also have a well-developed digital dimension.

Every institution providing administrative services offers public entry points, so-called front offices, including walk-in service centres and official websites, often supported by a central telephone number and call centre, and postal addresses for submitting applications and other documentation. For citizens, businesses or other organisations, public administrations can be 'black boxes', leaving little incentive to understand how they function internally, beyond the front-office interface, unless they are obliged to do so by design and delivery deficiencies that need to be addressed (through complaints or legal action). Users wish to experience smooth and satisfying service, and their overriding interest is that the chosen front office with which they have direct contact is highly accessible and meets all their service needs, so interaction with the back office is both hidden and efficient.

As public administrations increasingly invest in digital transformation, there is huge potential to integrate front and back offices seamlessly, speed up service delivery and reduce transactional costs to benefit all parties. This chapter explores three elements:

- **Improving access to the front office:** To provide universal coverage, physical 'front offices' should be within reasonable reach of all citizens, including remote settlements. To optimise their utility, whether physical or virtual, they should be 'one-stop shops' where the service user (whether resident, parent, property owner, entrepreneur, employer, tax payer, vehicle owner, etc.) can access all public services within each role and life event (see section 5.2), with clear and navigable paths to the required (obligatory) or desired result. To avoid confusing the public, one-stop should mean exactly what it says, and the 'shop' should have common, consistent branding and appropriate visibility.
- **Digitalising the back office with key enablers:** The delivery of services involves many steps and procedures behind the scenes, such as checking applications against held data, verifying compliance with criteria, assessing the merits of specific cases and initiating payments. With online services, many processes services can happen automatically without the need for human intervention in decision making, and digitalisation also opens up opportunities that are not possible in the 'analogue' world, such as pre-filling forms with data held by the public administration before they are sent to citizens and businesses. Where there is human involvement, operators can make use of electronic information systems, so that services are digitally assisted. Key enablers include: electronic documents (e-Documents), the possibility of electronically identifying the service user, other so-called electronic 'trust services' that confirm authenticity, and digitalised registries (comprehensive, accurate and up-to-date databases).

- **Connecting the system and the service users through interoperability:** In the modern era, front and back offices can only interact effectively and extensively if they can talk to each other digitally. For seamless and almost instantaneous data exchange, this goes beyond connecting institutions and their systems through networks, and instead requires full interoperability, which is not just a technical concept, but also semantic (common language), legal (permitted by legislation) and organisational (joint agreements). Once interoperability is established as an integral ingredient of Government as a Platform (GaaP), this opens up the potential for 'once-only' information provision and 'no stop' shops, and users combining modular services into personalised solutions (see Chapter 5).



4.1. Improving access to the front office

A common thread running through all five countries' strategies (see section 2.3) is the emphasis on accessibility to public administrations and their services. For service users, a choice of channels is important to meet their diverse situations, including physical, oral (by telephone) and digital. Equally and increasingly essential, each channel should offer the possibility of accessing the *entire* public administration, rather than opening a small window to one institution and one service, and services should be designed to enable the user to move smoothly and conveniently across channels to meet their needs and achieve the expected outcome (omni-channel).

4.1.1. Physical one-stop shops

While every ENP East country has a plethora of service owners in central and subnational administrations, each has also recognised that citizens and businesses need help in navigating the public service system. In line with common international practice, each government has initiated physical 'one-stop shops', which enable users to access multiple administrative services, personal or corporate, across organisational boundaries. This concept is now well established across the EU and internationally, as a single point of contact with the state.

Table 5. Physical networks of one-stop shops

Country	Name	Offices*	Services*
Armenia	Unified Offices for Public Services	3 ¹⁰³	97
	Citizens' Offices	55	26
Azerbaijan	'ASAN service' centres	23 ¹⁰⁴	> 300
	'ASAN communal' centres	3	54
Georgia	Public Service Halls	27	476
	Community Centres	88	280
Moldova	Multi-functional Centres of PSA	40	> 70
	Unified Public Service Centres (CUPSs)	26	28 ¹⁰⁵
Ukraine	Administrative Service Centres (ASCs)	1 042 ¹⁰⁶	383-598**

Notes:

* As of 1 May 2022 (ARM, AZE, GEO, MLD) and as of 23 February 2022 (UKR)

**The number of services depends on the category of ASC, which in turn depends on the size of the population in the ASC's zone of responsibility. This is the expected number; in practice, the average number of services is 185.

Of course, setting these up takes time, and their institutional, territorial and service coverage tends to expand after the initial conservative operations. This is clearly the case in ENP East for physical one-stop shops, and each country is now at a different phase in the path towards a fully fledged network.

- The establishment of a one-stop shop network of public service delivery in **Armenia** has become a critical policy issue in recent years. Several Unified Offices for Public Services were set up as a pilot project. The first was launched in July 2020 in Yerevan¹⁰⁷, while the first territorial office was opened in the Haypost¹⁰⁸ regional office in Ijevan (the administrative centre of Tavoush *marz*). Citizens can receive services rendered by 10 public bodies¹⁰⁹, as well as notarial services. The first Citizens' Office was opened in 2015, and each of the 55 Citizens' Offices at the municipal level provides 26 services¹¹⁰. Through the Armenia PAR Strategy, the Government is committed to establish the network of Service Delivery Centres based on international best practice and lessons learned from the piloted projects. This will be advanced alongside the reforms related to data policy, critical digital infrastructure and administrative registries, and the re-engineering of service delivery processes in the back office.
- In **Azerbaijan**, the Azerbaijan Service and Assessment Network (ASAN, which means 'easy' in English) was established by Presidential Decree in 2012 to improve the services government agencies provide to citizens and accelerate the transition to e-services¹¹¹. The State Agency for

¹⁰³ Two Unified Offices provide full public services, and 157 centres a limited number of state services (such as state registry, cadastre, Civil Acts Registration Agency related services, etc.), https://moj.am/en/services/service_offices (the Armenian page contains all the 157 addresses: https://moj.am/services/service_offices).

¹⁰⁴ Six further centres are in the pipeline, and an 'ASAN train' and 10 'ASAN buses' have been set up as mobile service providers.

¹⁰⁵ Nineteen from PSA, 9 from National Social Insurance House.

¹⁰⁶ A total of 2 917 ASC establishments, including branches, have been set up. Some municipalities also have 'mobile ASCs' that can bring service delivery to remote areas.

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.moj.am/en/page/617>.

¹⁰⁸ Armenia's national post operator, which is a state-owned organisation.

¹⁰⁹ The Civil Status Acts Registration Agency, the Agency for State Register of Legal Entities, State Administration Republican Body maintaining the State Unified Cadastre of Immovable Property, Cadastre Committee, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Police of the Republic of Armenia, the State Migration Service, the State Revenue Committee, National Archive, the Social Security Service and the Funeral Bureau.

¹¹⁰ The Citizens' Offices have been established in the frame of project "Development of regions in East Caucasus" implemented by the German Agency for International Co-operation (GIZ).

¹¹¹ <http://www.e-ganun.az/framework/23926>.

Public Service and Social Innovations has founded 23 'ASAN service' centres, of which seven in Baku and 16 in the rest of the country, to bring together 140 services of 11 government bodies with 170 services of 29 private organisations, in a public-private partnership, including notarial, banking, insurance, medical, legal support, translation and other functional services. The 'ASAN communal' centres were established under a Presidential Decree in May 2016, and now provide 54 services of the national utilities: Azerigas (gas), Azersu (water) and Azerishig (electricity). Three 'ASAN communal' centres had been opened, all in Baku.¹¹²

- The PSH in **Georgia** was also launched in 2012, and provides 476 services of LEPLs operating under the Ministry of Justice, and those of different public agencies and the private sector through 27 regional branches¹¹³ (including one in Tbilisi). At the municipal level, Community Centres (CCs)¹¹⁴, first established in 2011 and now under the PSH, allow local users to access 280 public and private services through 88 CCs. At the regional and local levels, PSH offers public services, issuing passports and e-IDs, registering land and property registry, registering civil acts (birth, death, filiation, marriage, divorce, etc.), and issuing residence permits and school diploma duplicates, through a unified front office. The process is ongoing, and more regional and village-level service points are expected to be opened in coming years. Separately, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has created its United Service Centres (USCs) and Service Agencies (SAs) to provide services to the public, including car registration, issuance of numberplates, driving licence applications, car accidents acts, and driving penalties. The branches are largely in regional centres and are exploring the possibility of further expanding the infrastructure.
- The Public Services Agency in **Moldova** has established Multi-functional Centres in 40 locations, including five in Chişinău¹¹⁵ for administrative services related to state registration of civil status documents, state registration of real estate and rights over them, licensing of entrepreneurial activity, and state registration of legal entities and of natural persons as individual entrepreneurs. To increase accessibility to public services, the Government has also launched the piloting of Unified Public Service Centres (CUPSs) until 1 January 2023 in nine diplomatic missions and consular offices abroad and in 17 first-level local public authorities in rural localities, after agreement with the respective mayors and following approval of the local councils¹¹⁶. According to the concept¹¹⁷, CUPS specialists provide citizens with information and technical support, helping residents of villages to send the complete file to providers and to obtain certain public services more easily through a local or neighbouring CUPS office. In the first phase, the pilot CUPSs will act as a front office only, and will receive requests for service delivery in the competence of PSA and National Social Insurance House, and send them to service providers (back offices) to be resolved. Subsequently, the list of public service providers and institutions will be extended. The second phase will involve expanding CUPS to another 80 localities, depending on the experience gained and citizens' needs.
- The network of ASCs in **Ukraine** is in a period of transition. As of 23 February 2022, it had 1 018 ASCs. The front-office locations are supported by territorial units and the remote workplaces of

¹¹² <https://www.asan.gov.az/en>.

¹¹³ <http://psh.gov.ge/main/page/7/406>.

¹¹⁴ <http://www.centri.gov.ge/en/about-us/history>.

¹¹⁵ <http://asp.gov.md/ro/cmf>.

¹¹⁶ The first CUPS was inaugurated in Lozova village on 21 December 2021, followed by 16 more on 4 February 2022: Albota de Sus, Biliceni Vechi, Chiperceni, Colibasi, Corjeuti, Holercani, Pelinia, Limbenii Noi, Mereni, Parcova, Panasesti, Pepeni, Peresecina, Pirjolteni, Sculeni and Taxobeni, (<https://www.egov.md/en/content/cups-project-brings-public-services-closer-people>).

¹¹⁷ <https://www.egov.md/en/content/cups>.

local self-government (LSG) administrators¹¹⁸. Under the decentralisation reforms, each of the 1 470 municipalities was to have its own ASC by 2022-2024, depending on its status¹¹⁹. Municipal ASCs deliver both administrative services under their competence (269) and state administrative services. The list of state administrative services is determined by the CMU Order and includes 412 services¹²⁰. The number of state administrative services delivered by each ASC depends on its category: city ASCs should deliver up to 598 services, ASCs in district centres should deliver 548, and ASCs in other municipalities should deliver 383, while visitors to territorial divisions and remote workplaces would be able to access 282¹²¹. As for administrative services not included in the list, state providers may deliver them using their own front offices.

While one-stop shops should offer a seamless service package to citizens and other users, this can only be achieved with a robust structure, staffing, system (including co-operation agreements with back-office service providers, processes and procedures) and methodology (rulebooks). These parameters are well illustrated by Georgia's PSH¹²².

Flagship initiative: Governance of the Public Service Hall (PSH) (Georgia)

PSH is a 'legal entity of public law', a semi-independent state agency accountable to the Ministry of Justice. This means that PSH has both the power to represent itself and its own bank account, and can establish a contractual relationship with any state or non-state actor in its mission to operate a unified front office for public (and private) services and deliver them to citizens in a user-friendly, innovative and effective manner¹²³.

PSH is led by an executive director, three deputy directors and heads of the following offices: branch co-ordination; call service centre; CCs co-ordination; marketing and service development; infrastructure development and logistics; quality management; administration and legal; procurement; finance and budget; HR management; and internal audit. This central structure operates all PSH regional branches and CCs nationwide. The system has 1 529 employees. The largest branch of PSH is in Tbilisi, with 407 employees, the second-largest branch is in Batumi with 74 employees, and the third-largest branch, with 57, is in Kutaisi.

Before the PSH and CCs were set up, each of the back-office public agencies (below) had their own front offices (e.g. NAPR and PSDA to deliver land registration, civil acts registration and other services), and hence citizens had to visit each in turn to receive the complete service.

¹¹⁸ As of May 2022, Ukraine had 1 055 ASCs, 124 territorial subdivisions and 28 mobile ASCs (of which respectively 922, 101 and 5 were working). Temporarily, in some regions, the functions of the ASCs are performed by the civil-military administration.

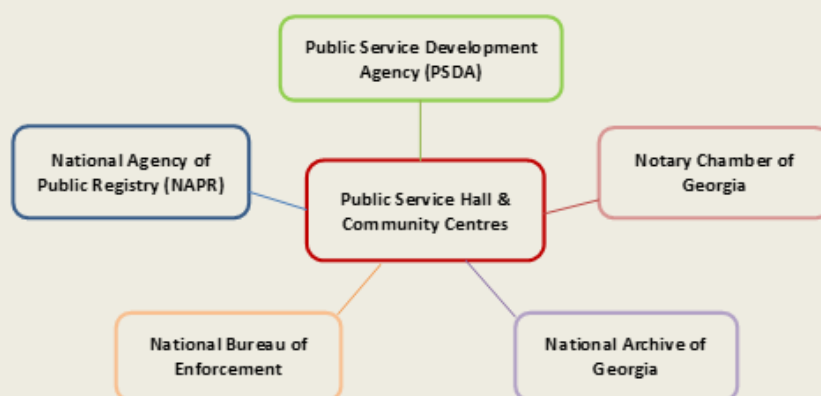
¹¹⁹ By 1 January 2022, if the municipality was the administrative centre of its district on 1 January 2020, regardless of the number of residents; by 1 January 2023, if the municipality has more than 10 000 residents; and by 1 January 2024, for municipalities with fewer than 10 000 residents, provided that they receive financial support for this purpose from the State Budget.

¹²⁰ CMU Order No. 523, 16 May 2014, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/523-2014-%D1%80#Text>.

¹²¹ <https://decentralization.gov.ua/en/news/13891?page=2>.

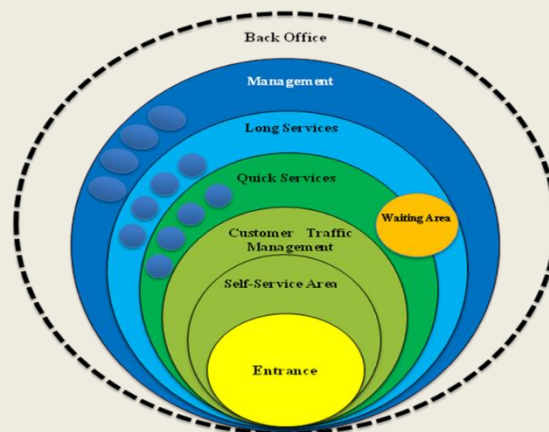
¹²² Vashakidze, G. (2016), "One-Stop-Shop Public Service Delivery Model: the case of Georgia, United Nations Development Program, Regional Hub of Civil Service in Astana", pp. 5-6 [accessed 22 April 2021 at <https://www.astanacivilservicehub.org/study/>].

¹²³ Minister of Justice Georgia (2015), Order No. 148, on the statute of Public Service Hall, Articles 2 and 3, Legislative Herald of Georgia [accessed online on 14 July 2021, <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/2923513?publication=0>].



PSH enters into detailed contractual arrangements with each ‘back office’ agency annually, to renew the list of administrative services for delivery, to define functional responsibilities (e.g. providing access to databases or giving back-office monitoring units unrestricted access to front-office operations), and to agree on financial modalities to allow PSH and CCs to operate smoothly. This relationship regulates product design, new service launches, technical and administrative support, ICT and communication modalities.

PSH and CCs are now the main face of public administration, which has forced state agencies to intensify co-operation and integrate processes and procedures. Citizens no longer perceive the back office as the main actors, although they remain major players in the system (see right), and only engage directly with users in emergency situations to solve pertinent issues. Visitors to a regional branch or CC enter a standardised, branded space with a common services area, divided into self-service (automated, for example, for taking a passport photo or paying fees), and quick and long service (more or less than five minutes). Some large PSH branches have a “Just Café”, where citizens can receive administrative services and enjoy coffee and food¹²⁴. The Tbilisi branch also offers “Just Drive”, where service users can pick up prepared documents without leaving their cars¹²⁵. PSH also offers e-services indirectly on its website, which refers citizens to back office agencies’ websites to receive services. For example, citizens who need to register land can click on a link provided by PSH and are moved to the NAPR website to process the service¹²⁶.



In the period 2013-2021, PSH’s average annual budget was around GEL 21.9 million¹²⁷, or approximately EUR 8.76 million¹²⁸. While PSH is not permitted to produce its own stand-alone services, it can offer supplementary services, usually provided by private enterprises, that can motivate citizens to seek the public service (e.g. international travel insurance alongside passport renewal). The public-

¹²⁴ <http://psh.gov.ge/main/texts/509>.

¹²⁵ <http://psh.gov.ge/main/texts/508>.

¹²⁶ <http://psh.gov.ge/main/page/6/554>.

¹²⁷ The PSH budget fluctuates according to the number of infrastructure projects it is mandated to implement from year to year. Usually, the infrastructure costs are indirect costs, and in the absence of such costs, PSH is nevertheless expected to operate without interruption. The indicated amount is arrived at by considering only the core cost of public service delivery, an average budget PSH must have to operate effectively, regardless of whether or not it has infrastructure projects to undertake.

¹²⁸ Public Service Hall (2013-2021), annual budget data, finance balance sheets, forms 1 and 2, Annex 5 and interview with a respondent.

private co-operation generates extra revenue, including renting space, but covers just a few percent of operating costs, and hence PSH relies heavily on funding from back-office agencies and also receives financial support from the MoF (state budget). While PSH takes fees directly from citizens, they are recycled (in effect) by being passed first to the back-office agencies' bank accounts, and then, in turn, finance PSH. PSH is also allowed to receive grants, credits, donations and other income as defined by the legislation¹²⁹.

The top five services requested are electronic IDs, passports, registering property, registering a birth and registering a juvenile's registration card¹³⁰. On average, PSH used to serve around 20 000 service users each day across the country, but the COVID-19 pandemic had a huge impact on service delivery, reducing the number to around 5 500. Instead of approaching PSH directly, citizens were expected to book an appointment (date and time) in advance to receive services. Demand for online services has grown dramatically in this period. While PSH has responded to the challenge, staff shortages and restrictions caused by the pandemic have made the service delivery process more cumbersome.

The advantages of physical one-stop shops can only materialise if the public is made aware of the one-stop shops. The Government of Azerbaijan has achieved notable success in promoting the ASAN brand.

Flagship initiative: 'ASAN service' centres (Azerbaijan)

Following a Presidential Decree in July 2012, the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations created the 'ASAN service' centres as a one-stop shop for government. The initiative was a response to several enduring problems in the public administration, despite measures taken by the government during the 2000s, as "public services had remained weak and inefficient, though some ministries had been performing relatively well. Red tape, petty corruption, unjustified bureaucratic hurdles, lack of adequate professional capacity of civil servants had been conspicuous"¹³¹. The difficulties were due to a lack of uniform standards for service design and delivery, lengthy processes for submitting documents and considering applications, and relations between officials and citizens. The purpose of introducing 'ASAN service' centres was to: reduce costs and time citizens spent on public services; enforce ethical rules and courtesy to citizens; increase professionalism; improve efficiency; expand the use of electronic services; increase transparency to reinforce the fight against corruption; and strengthen trust in government structures¹³².

The defining characteristic of the 'ASAN service' centre is that it does not deliver its own services. Instead, the State Agency recruits and trains the internal staff, including the secondment of the employees of both government and private agencies. It assigns and manages the space for both public and private entities to offer their services directly to citizens, within the framework of its standards and principles: transparency, efficiency, responsibility, courtesy and comfort¹³³. The centres are designed, constructed and equipped to offer citizen-friendly accommodation and maximise comfort and convenience, including wheelchair access and Braille text for those with visual impairments.

To codify the ASAN approach, the State Agency has documented the administrative structure, centre management and job descriptions for each position, and specific rules and instructions for each process (such as organising meetings, the greetings protocol, recruitment exams and interviews, etc.). The representation of organisations and the number of the public services they provide at 'ASAN service' centres are regulated under the Presidential Decree, but individual initiatives by public and private agencies are also considered. The relevant state authorities are asked to propose which of their services

¹²⁹ Minister of Justice of Georgia (2015), Order No. 148, on the statute of Public Service Hall, Article 28, Legislative Herald of Georgia, <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/2923513?publication=0>.

¹³⁰ <http://psh.gov.ge/main/page/7/405>.

¹³¹ Regional Hub of Civil Service in Astana, *One-Stop-Shop Public Service Delivery Model: The Case of Azerbaijan*, December 2016.

¹³² <https://www.asan.gov.az/az/about>.

¹³³ Regional Hub of Civil Service in Astana, op. cit.

can be allocated to the 'ASAN service' centres, as part of an inter-ministerial co-operation system. While many actors are involved, the centres operate with providers' functions clearly delineated, to avoid duplication¹³⁴.

Citizens can book services on the website (www.asan.gov.az) or mobile app, or use the 108 call centre set up in 2013. Starting in June 2013, to serve citizens unable to come to the 'ASAN service' centres, as well as regions and remote areas without centres, the State Agency for Public Services and State Innovation introduced mobile buses, equipped with the necessary technology, to visit each region and stay for about two weeks, and subsequently introduced the 'ASAN train'. As of October 2021, more than 2 million applications had been made to the mobile ASAN service. On payment of an additional fee (but free of charge to all persons with disabilities and children in poor health), intra-city mobile services enable citizens to receive services at work or at a home address, or any other location they choose. To increase public awareness of its services and their rights and obligations, 'ASAN Radio' was set up in 2015 as the first-ever and unique radio station specialising in public services¹³⁵.

Among the challenges of developing the 'ASAN service' centres was setting up a centralised recruitment database accessible by all state entities offering ASAN services. It also involved selecting and training representatives of state entities to: serve citizens at the centres, communicate with hundreds of people a day, achieve high standards of behaviour in customer service, and manage time and workload. The citizen-centric approach allows young people between 17 and 25 who are interested in pursuing their first work experience to volunteer at the centres. This opportunity has been taken up by over 24 000 volunteers, of whom more than 2 500 were subsequently employed by the 'ASAN service' and relevant ministries¹³⁶. Volunteers participate in specialised training after completing the programme. Moreover, volunteering is not limited to youth. Of the 24 000 volunteers, nearly 50 have been elderly and 60 persons with disabilities.

'ASAN service' also aims to prevent corruption with its e-queue system, all-glass offices, recording of service provision, ban on cash payments and awareness-raising measures involving a list of documents, fees, procedures, addresses, servicing duration, and the rights and freedoms of citizens in relation to the services rendered.

The State Agency monitors and evaluates public providers' performance (see section 4.6). Citizens can provide feedback and suggestions, and voice their complaints, through e-mail, the 'ASAN service' centre kiosks, website, social media pages and the 108 call centre. A dedicated department utilises several tools, including cameras recording the service process in the centres, the on-site presence of the department's representatives, and citizen surveys. It also prepares periodical reports, investigates citizens' complaints and violations of service-related rules and regulations by the officers rendering services, and takes any necessary measures in that regard. On average, 'ASAN service' centres receive over 28 000 applications a day, and each centre serves more than 2 500 people daily. Applicants provide feedback, with a satisfaction rating of 99.5%. 'ASAN service' was the winner of the 2015 United Nations Public Service Award, leading to Memorandums of Understanding with more than 15 foreign states and several international organisations wishing to modernise their public service delivery systems based on this model.

Priorities and plans for the future include streamlining the services provided in 'ASAN service' centres, and applying artificial intelligence technology to automate the process of answering citizens' requests through the call centre.

¹³⁴ Regional Hub of Civil Service in Astana, op. cit.

¹³⁵ <http://asanradio.az/>

¹³⁶ Young people who participate in the 'ASAN school' volunteering training programmes gain theoretical knowledge, which they then utilise during their internship at the 'ASAN service' centres. Once volunteers complete their service, they are awarded a certificate and a reference letter.

'One-stop shops' can only become effective if they co-operate and interact successfully with the competent institutions, as illustrated by the example of Georgia (below), where each agency is institutionally independent, but the agencies' operations are inter-linked.

Inspiring practice: Inter-agency co-ordination (Georgia)

The Public Service Hall (PSH)¹³⁷ is tasked with ensuring that citizens can access a well-functioning and user-friendly front office to receive a variety of public services. The PSH would not be able to deliver public services if it failed to co-operate and work well with the Public Service Development Agency (PSDA), the National Agency of Public Registry (NAPR), National Archive of Georgia or any other back-office agency that uses PSH as the front office to deliver services. Their mutual dependence is guided by ministerial ordinances and contractual¹³⁸ relationships that are negotiated annually. These documents regulate responsibilities and obligations, as well as financial modalities¹³⁹, between back- and front- office agencies and ensure stability and reliability in public services development processes.

Many public services require co-operation across central government, to ensure that service users are not obliged to fill a 'co-ordination void' by shuttling between one institution and another. Ministries expect their subordinate agencies to engage with each other on service design and delivery to citizens and businesses. Car import and re-export registration services, for instance, require close co-operation between the Service Agency¹⁴⁰ (under the Ministry of Internal Affairs), which is responsible for car registration and de-registration, issuance of licence plates or driving license related services and the Customs Department (under the Ministry of Finance). The latter's representatives are stationed in the Service Agency to monitor and perform related operations.

In Georgia, the NAPR and PSH co-ordinate land confirmation and registration services with municipalities for properties that fall under the latter's direct jurisdiction of local municipalities. If a citizen decides to register an ancestral land parcel for which he or she does not have proper ownership documentation at hand, and is not able to conclusively prove ownership, but contends that traditionally, the land belonged to his or her ancestors, then citizens were given a mechanism under the land registration reform of 2016 to prove ownership and register the land parcel. Citizens are expected to bring a notary act confirming the ownership of the land. This is usually done by inviting local residents who know that the land traditionally belonged to the family. Upon issuance of the notary act and submission of a land plan, the citizen can approach PSH and submit the documentation. PSH routes a package to NAPR, which then sends it to the respective municipality for verification. The municipality's land registration commission checks the validity of the package and either approves the registration or not. In either case, a letter is prepared, which is routed through the NAPR, and the citizen receives a response through PSH.

4.1.2. Virtual one-stop shops

The physical network is typically complemented by online one-stop shops, which offer the advantage of allowing public administrations to reach service users at any time and, anywhere, subject to Internet access, willingness and, most importantly, capacity of the service user, which cannot be assumed. In principle, they avoid integrity risks by eliminating discretionary decision making, but they must also be flexible enough to account for individual needs and circumstances. They can be an extension of the physical networks and integrated with them (as exemplified by Georgia's Public Service Hall), or they can stand alone as portals to e-services in their own right. Multiple portals, however, risk creating confusion

¹³⁷ Minister of Justice (2015), PSH statute, Order No 85,

http://psh.gov.ge/res/editor/Sajaroinformacia/samartlebrivi_aqtebi/iusticiis_saxlis_debuleba.pdf].

¹³⁸ PSDA (2015), contract with NAPR and contract with the National Archive of Georgia, granting functions and responsibilities to deliver public services through the Community Centres, pp. 1-11 and pp. 1-8.

¹³⁹ NAPR and PSDA (2017), programme: purchasing PHS services in the annual budget.

¹⁴⁰ Minister of MIA (2018), Order No. 24, statute of the Service Agency, <https://www.sa.gov.ge/d/normativeacts>.

among citizens and businesses and inefficiencies in public administration as they compete for the attention of the public.

Not surprisingly, given each government's high-level commitment to digitalising service design and delivery, every ENP East country has a national web portal offering access to multiple electronic administrative services. Azerbaijan has three portals (as shown below).

Table 6. Virtual one-stop shops

Country	Name	E-services*	Weblink ***
Armenia	e-gov.am	Approx. 150	https://www.e-gov.am
Azerbaijan	Unified information portal on public services Electronic services portal My.gov	501**	https://www.dxr.az/dxr https://www.e-gov.az https://my.gov.az
Georgia	Unified electronic services portal	700+	https://my.gov.ge/ka-ge/services/10
Moldova	Unique government portal of public services	131**	https://servicii.gov.md/ro
Ukraine	Diia portal	72	https://diia.gov.ua/

Notes:

* Numbers as of 1 May 2022 (ARM, AZE, GEO, MLD) and 23 February 2022 (UKR).

** Also information on non-digital administrative services.

*** The weblinks for Armenia, Georgia and Moldova also have an English-language option.

Table 6, however, comes with a caveat: the existence of an e-service on a website does not guarantee its quality. As the service pyramid illustrates (see section 2.1), there is a wide spectrum of service maturity, from simple information provision that happens to be online (e.g. a webpage or PDF) at the most basic level, to the scope for service users at the most sophisticated end to receive them pro-actively from the public administration as personalised services. This spectrum provides a pointer to the full scale of possibilities for digital service design and delivery, and again, the potential is not realised in one movement. Typically, public administrations achieve their aspirations incrementally, which takes time.

- In **Armenia**, e-gov.am is an umbrella platform that brings together information sources and directs users to web pages including decrees that have been adopted, draft legislation, government agendas and minutes, court cases, procurement decisions, a unified register of licences, with a unified portal for online enquiries and other e-services, including making online notifications, registering businesses, applying for licences, applying for construction permits, registering intellectual property, registering real estate¹⁴¹, submitting tax declarations, and making payments of fees, duties and penalties. The system has been developed since 2008 and around 150 e-services are now accessible. The Government is developing the national service platform (a gateway or an authentication platform) under the PAR and e-Economy and e-Society reforms. The platform aims not only to act as a gateway to all state and community services, but also as a digital marketplace for the financial and business sectors. Under the 2030 Armenia PAR Strategy, the full catalogue of public services will be published and state agencies are to develop and publish user manuals for services in the next two years.
- In **Azerbaijan**, Presidential Decree No. 429 assigned responsibility in May 2011 to the Ministry of Transport, Communications and High-Technologies to create an e-Government portal organising state e-services under the 'one-stop shop' principle.¹⁴² The Cabinet of Ministers tasked the Ministry

¹⁴¹ See section 5.4 for the flagship initiative.

¹⁴² <http://e-qanun.az/framework/21716>.

to establish and maintain a register of e-services, instructing central authorities to ensure that all e-services were registered on it¹⁴³. In November 2012, responsibility for the registry and its development was transferred to the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations¹⁴⁴, which was deputed in September 2014 to collect and systematise information on all administrative services, eliminate duplication and ensure flexibility by creating new types of services¹⁴⁵. Today, central executive authorities and public legal entities provide e-services on their own online platforms and/or the 'unified information portal on public services' (www.dxr.az/dxr). E-services can be included in the registry, integrated into this portal and delivered *only* after receiving the State Agency's approval or after improving functionality based on its feedback. The portal lists 1 005 public services, of which 501 are electronic (as of May 2022). A parallel national portal provides access to all e-services, including those that are not registered with the State Agency. The E-Gov Development Centre is planning to incorporate the e-gov portal into dxr and my.gov as the new 'super-portal' interface.

- In **Georgia**, the MoJ's Digital Governance Agency established and operates the unified electronic services portal, my.gov.ge, which gives resident users who register with their electronic ID access to more than 700 e-services on the 'one-window' basis, according to the website. The service user can request public information electronically from different state agencies, and complete applications to receive certain services, using a qualified electronic signature/stamp, and receive the response through the portal. Users who are authorised representatives of a legal entity (e.g. business) may use the services intended for such entities. The e-services are grouped into categories: main services (e.g. birth and death certificates, provision of e-documents); municipal services; property; social services; permits and licenses; business; education; transportation; debt, miscellaneous; and online payments. MoJ's Public Service Development Agency, for example, operates an e-platform where more than 50 services, including renewals of biometric passports and ID cards, and issuance of civil act certificates, are available to non-resident citizens, even teaming up with DHL and FedEx to deliver the documents anywhere in the world.
- In **Moldova**, the Government's 2011 e-Transformation Strategic Programme and subsequent 2012 Government Decision 657/2012¹⁴⁶ established a priority for developing a unique government portal of public services to simplify access and use of e-services. The portal was built under Government Decision No. 330/2012¹⁴⁷ as a single platform (state property) containing information on public services by ministries and other central administrative authorities, including their subordinate structures, both through traditional and electronic means¹⁴⁸. As of 1 May 2022, the Unique government portal of public services presented information on 13 life events (see section 5.2) and 664 public services, 131 of which are e-services, which means public services delivered in whole or in part in electronic form through the e-government system. The services are organised under four categories (all, citizens, businesses and visitors). The Electronic Governance Agency launched an improved version 2.0 on 5 October 2021 to make the portal more user-friendly.
- In **Ukraine**, the portal *Diia* (meaning 'action' in English) is designed in accordance with the Law on Administrative Services¹⁴⁹ as an online front office to provide electronic administrative services,

¹⁴³ <http://e-qanun.az/version/3351>.

¹⁴⁴ <http://e-qanun.az/framework/24805>.

¹⁴⁵ <http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/28319>.

¹⁴⁶ [Regulation on the management of the content of the unique governmental portal of public services and the integration of electronic public services in the portal](#), approved by Government Decision No. 657/2012, Official Gazette No. 186-189, Article 709.

¹⁴⁷ [Government Decisions No. 330/2012](#), Official Gazette Nos. 104-108, Article 370.

¹⁴⁸ <https://servicii.gov.md/>.

¹⁴⁹ Law on Administrative Services, Article 9 (Part 1), Article 17.

integrated with electronic information resources. The portal was created in 2019¹⁵⁰ to replace the Unified State Portal of Administrative Services, which had few functional capabilities, given its outdated software and hardware, its difficulties with operability and mobile applications, and manual management of data, *inter alia*. In the long term, the *Diia* portal is planned to be the sole online front office for electronic administrative service delivery, but as of 23 February 2022, it was linked to just 72 online administrative services. The state electronic resources provide a further 87 online administrative services outside the portal, such as through the Cabinet of Electronic Services, whose holder and administrative service provider is the Ministry of Justice¹⁵¹. Meanwhile, the portal is structured separately for citizens and businesses.

Increasingly, citizens and businesspeople expect to be able to access administrative services on their phones, laptops and tablets. The ENP East administrations are equally adopting mobile applications, as illustrated by Ukraine's flagship initiative.

¹⁵⁰ CMU Resolution No. 1137, "*Regulations on the Unified State Web Portal of Electronic Services*", 14 December 2019, *Issues on the Unified State Web-Portal of Electronic Services and Unified State Portal of Administrative Services*, consolidated version: 09/09/2020, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1137-2019-%D0%BF#top>.

¹⁵¹ Cabinet of Electronic Services website, <https://kap.minjust.gov.ua/>.

Flagship initiative: ‘State in a Smartphone’ (Ukraine)

The phrase ‘State in a Smartphone’ sums up the aim that citizens should be able to access government in the broadest sense, and more specifically, to use their electronic devices (including tablets) as access points to obtain public services.

“It would be cool when you drive to work and not only get the news, information about the weather forecast, but also control the draft laws submitted, can change them, see what people are being elected and how you can revoke them, what petitions are being drafted. This is why I dream about our country in a smartphone.” President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, May 2019, iForum¹⁵²

This ambition was becoming a reality through a series of steps: strategic¹⁵³, institutional, legislative and technological. Presidential Decree No. 558 in July 2019¹⁵⁴ tasked the Cabinet of Ministers with creating a technologically advanced web portal for electronic service delivery enabling individuals and legal entities to use a smartphone or tablet to:

- create electronic ‘cabinets’ (pages with their own profiles and other information to receive services);
- obtain their personal data from national electronic information resources;
- verify information on a registered residence;
- provide e-services, including administrative services;
- access the catalogue of e-services classified by life events;
- pay an administrative fee for administrative services delivery, a fine for administrative offence, taxes and other payments, and send the relevant entities information about the payment;
- submit appeals, specifically to state administrations and local self-governments, and obtain information on their progress and results;
- survey initiatives and projects in various areas of public life.

Decree No. 558 also covered checking driving documents using information stored in national electronic information databases, without the driver needing to present them to the police¹⁵⁵.

Institutionally, the creation of MinDigit in September 2019 gave a focus and prominence to the ‘State in a Smartphone’ within the wider goal of transforming digital public administration at every level. In co-operation with the Ministry of Interior, National Bank of Ukraine, donor-funded programmes¹⁵⁶ and private enterprises¹⁵⁷, MinDigit created the mobile application *Diia* (an integral element of the portal), with software designed for Android and Apple operating systems¹⁵⁸. The state company *Diia*, subordinate to MinDigit, became the technical administrator, and the *Diia* app was officially launched on 6 February 2020¹⁵⁹.

To reach this landmark, the Government first had to take some key legislative steps: adopting a CMU Resolution on *Diia*¹⁶⁰ and giving MinDigit the authority to define the app’s functionality; giving legal force to digital images of documents (alongside paper and electronic versions); legalising the application of remote qualified electronic signatures; and adopting resolutions regarding specific services. A major legislative milestone was reached in April 2020, when CMU Resolution No. 278 authorised e-passports presented through the app to be used in a range of situations: (national) transport, banking, confirming citizenship and age, participating in elections, etc. In March 2021, the law was changed to consolidate the government decision and permanently legalise e-passports.

The legislation now stipulates that Government institutions must accept the digital images and their copies, provided they have the technical possibility of verifying these images, while others may accept them optionally¹⁶¹. This requires the institution to have appliances (code readers) to retrieve data from the relevant register using the unique codes on the images, and to connect its information system to the *Diia* portal. This is achieved by submitting an Application for Accession¹⁶² and forming an Accession Agreement for Partners¹⁶³ with the state company *Diia*, which also provides service support¹⁶⁴.

By February 2022, the following results were available through the *Diia* app¹⁶⁵:

- 11 digital images of documents and the ability to share them: birth certificate; passport of a citizen of Ukraine in the form of a card; passport of a citizen of Ukraine for travel abroad; tax number certificate; driver's license; vehicle registration certificate; vehicle insurance certificate; student license; internally displaced person registration certificate¹⁶⁶; information on residence registration (but not a residence registration certificate); electronic ID of a war veteran and injured participant in the Revolution of Dignity;
- 11 administrative services: registration of residence; registering in the waiting list for COVID-19 vaccination; replacement of driver's licence; payment of administrative services by QR-code; submission of private individual entrepreneurs' declarations to the Internal Revenue Service; payment of income taxes by private individual entrepreneurs; payment of fines for traffic violations; one-time assistance to private individual entrepreneurs and employees; payment of debts under enforcement proceedings; vehicle registration document sharing; and court case notices;
- submission of local petitions (if a municipality connects its information system to the *Diia* portal¹⁶⁷);
- use of remote qualified electronic signatures;
- e-surveys.

¹⁵² <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/ya-mriyu-pro-derzhavu-u-smartfoni-volodimir-zelenskij-55585>.

¹⁵³ The State Strategy of Regional Development for 2021-2027 plans to deliver electronic services on smartphones, creating Wi-Fi zones in public places for the purpose, and making smartphone software accessible for people with visual, hearing and speaking impairments, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/695-2020-%D0%BF#Text>.

¹⁵⁴ President of Ukraine Decree No. 558/2019, "On some measures to improve the access of individuals and legal entities to electronic services", 29 July 2019, Article 1 (items 5, 9), <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/558/2019#top>.

¹⁵⁵ In 2019, 310 959 drivers were fined for forgetting them, according to the Interior Minister, 6 February 2020, https://censor.net/ru/blogs/3174165/dokladyvayu_ukrainskomu_narodu_mvd_rasshiryaet_spisok_elektronnyh_servis_ov_chast_vtoraya.

¹⁵⁶ TAPAS, EGAP, EGOV4Ukraine (part of U-LEAD with Europe), SURGe.

¹⁵⁷ EPAM, Spiilka, Fedoriv Agency, De Novo, and Privatbank and Monobank.

¹⁵⁸ MinDigit, "Diia – in action! The mobile application Diia and the National Online Digital Education Platform were presented", 6 February 2020, <https://thedigital.gov.ua/news/diya-u-dii-prezentovano-mobilniy-zastosunok-diya-ta-natsionalnu-onlayn-platformu-tsifrovoi-osviti>.

¹⁵⁹ "President, Prime Minister, Ministry of Digital Transformation presented Diia mobile app", 6 February 2020, <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/news/prezident-premyer-ministr-mincifra-prezentovali-mobilnij-zastosunok-diya>.

¹⁶⁰ CMU Resolution No. 1 137, *Regulations on the Unified State Web-Portal of Electronic Services*, 14 December 2019, *Issues on the Unified State Web-Portal of Electronic Services and Register of Administrative Services*, consolidated version: Item 9, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1137-2019-%D0%BF#top>.

¹⁶¹ As of August 2021, digital images have been accepted by the CMU, 7 ministries and central executive authorities, 3 regional state administrations, the police, 93 ASCs, 15 supermarkets and shops, 3 postal companies, 13 banks, 3 insurance companies, 3 payroll systems, the State Administration of Railway Transport of Ukraine, "Ukrzaliznytsia", 3 automobile transport companies, 15 hotels, 13 airports, 3 phone operators, 2 internet providers, 2 universities, 3 utility providers, 1 medical lab, 2 hospitals, 2 veterinary clinics, 3 museums, 6 cinemas, 1 library and 7 other companies.

¹⁶² <https://diia.gov.ua/storage/app/media/uploaded-files/priednannya-do-dogovoru.docx>.

¹⁶³ <https://diia.gov.ua/dogovir-priyednannya-dlya-partneriv>.

¹⁶⁴ <https://chat.diia.gov.ua/>.

¹⁶⁵ Play Market, *Diia*, Google website, <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=ua.gov.diia.app&hl=ru&gl=US> (accessed 21 June 2021).

¹⁶⁶ CMU Resolution No. 910, "On amendments to the procedure for the registration and issuance of the Internally Displaced Person Registration Certificate", 16 September 2020, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/910-2020-%D0%BF#Text>.

¹⁶⁷ *Instructions on amending the local self-government regulations to participate in the pilot project "Local Petitions in Diia"*, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kfhJCaExFrLvXyzg_ZXQdoe2BBbIV4cjXVMxaf154/edit.

By February 2022, digital images of documents had been shared 10 million times¹⁶⁸, a testament to their usefulness, particularly during COVID-19 measures that required citizens to carry ID documents when leaving their homes, and also in order to receive parcels at post offices or to get credit in shops. More than 14 million users had downloaded the *Diia* application¹⁶⁹.

The counter concerns about the system's vulnerability to cyberattacks and leaks of personal data, MinDigit uses bug bounty programmes to test the application, which is designed not to store data, but simply to be used as a data transformer. Another concern is that it might fail at any time, causing problems for those traveling without paper documents. In the first year of its existence, this happened only once, for a limited period¹⁷⁰. The system has some limitations: the number of services currently available, the institutions that accept digital images of documents, and the date the relevant register was established (e.g. no digital images are available for driver's licenses issued before 2014 and vehicle registration certificates issued before 2013). Nevertheless, the 'State in a Smartphone' initiative appears to be viable, popular and in demand. A national sociological survey conducted by the independent research organisation 'Rating' found that the expansion of services on the *Diia* app was the achievement ranked fourth-highest in Ukraine in 2021, above even the beginning of mass vaccination against COVID-19¹⁷¹.

The *Diia* portal and mobile app have proven invaluable in wartime since 24 February, since they have allowed citizens to remain connected to the state administration and their local services, wherever they are, and to conduct essential services, such as: eDocument (IDs for people who have lost all their documents during the war); eEnemy (sending information to the Ukrainian armed forces on enemy movements); eAid (financial allowances for private entrepreneurs and employees from regions affected by war); notification of damaged or destroyed property; and many other services developed specifically to address the problems caused by the full-scale invasion.

4.2. Digitalising the back office with key enablers

Digitalisation presents a great opportunity to provide services faster and better, at the user's convenience, unconstrained by time or place. It can make more effective use of available information, reducing the burden on both user and provider, and can create new service offers by integrating individual elements into 'life event' packages (see section 5.2). By automating processes where appropriate, the removal of discretionary decisions also reduces integrity risks. However, to unlock this potential and create seamless solutions, each country must have the digital architecture to do so, especially if the intention is to move towards 'once-only' information provision from citizens and businesses (see section 5.4).

4.2.1. Electronic identification and trust services

To achieve the goal of personalised, user-friendly and end-to-end services, public administrations put in place 'key enablers'. These include electronic ID and electronic trust services, which, as the name suggests, give users confidence in the origins and authenticity of information, documentation and transactions that are conducted digitally¹⁷²:

¹⁶⁸ MinDigit, *Diia Summit*, from min.23:23 to min. 26:15, <https://live.diia.gov.ua/en-stream.html>.

¹⁶⁹ Google Play Market, *Diia*, <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=ua.gov.diia.app&hl=ru&gl=US>.

¹⁷⁰ *There Was a Technical Failure in Diia*, <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-technology/3238322-u-dii-stavsja-tehnicnij-zbij-mozlivi-problemi-v-roboti.html>.

¹⁷¹ *Суспільно-політичні настрої: підсумки 2021 року (16-18 грудня 2021) – Україна – Дослідження – Соціологічна група Рейтинг (ratinggroup.ua)*.

¹⁷² https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_12_403

- e-Identification (e-ID): using electronic means to determine a citizen, business or other entities' identity without ambiguity, whether through a phone card, smart card, e-ID card, or mobile device;
- e-Authentication: this covers e-Signatures and digital signatures (the equivalent of a handwritten signature on an e-Document), website certification, electronic time stamps (showing the date and time on an e-document to prove that it was created at a point in time and has not changed subsequently), electronic seals (the equivalent of a physical seal or stamp), and registered electronic delivery of e-documents, verified by public key certificates.

As Table 7 shows, all five countries have adopted e-Signatures as the way to access e-Services and validate e-Documents, while Georgia and Ukraine have also legislated for other forms of e-Authentication services.

Table 7. Electronic identification and trust services

Country	e-ID	e-Authentication	Legal basis
Armenia	Yes	e-Signatures	2005 Law on Electronic Document and Electronic Digital Signature ¹⁷³
Azerbaijan	Yes	e-Signatures	2004 Law on Electronic Signatures and Electronic Documents ¹⁷⁴
Georgia	Yes	e-Signatures, electronic time stamps, e-Seals, biometric data encryption certificate	2017 Law on Electronic Documents and Electronic Trust Services ¹⁷⁵
Moldova	Yes	e-Signatures, public keys	2014 Law on Electronic Signature and Electronic Document ¹⁷⁶
Ukraine	Yes	e-Signatures, website certification, electronic time stamps, e-Seals, registered electronic delivery, public keys	2020 Law on Electronic Trust Services ¹⁷⁷

The state of play in each country is summarised further below:

- In **Armenia**, the main tool is the ID card, which allows every holder to sign documents and use electronic services. Different digital platforms allow for identification by a phone number or social card number, e.g. the Road Police allow drivers to enter the system and review any penalties imposed on them or any information related to the registered vehicles by phone number. The 2021 Digitalisation Strategy proposes the possibility for any private company to design and make available other tools for e-Signature, such as simple applications, QR codes, etc.¹⁷⁸. Mobile e-Signatures have also been introduced¹⁷⁹. A project to implement a new, updated version of Armenian ID cards and digital signatures is also under way at the time of writing; a transaction advisor is in the process of being appointed to ensure that Armenia can adopt the most future-proof technology solutions. The new solutions will also be more accessible (on mobile and other platforms), with the aim of increasing adoption of e-ID solutions amongst the general population. That, in turn, will make service design for government more consistent, allowing users to avoid complex offline and online log-in/verification processes.
- In **Azerbaijan**, the law defines the e-Signature as data added, or logically related, to other data that allows the owner of the signature to be identified. A 2011 Presidential Decree provided specific instructions on applying e-Signatures to access e-Services provided by state bodies, public and private legal entities, and individuals¹⁸⁰, while a 2011 Cabinet of Ministers' Decision¹⁸¹ set out the circumstances in which e-Signatures can be used for providing e-Services. The 2016 Strategic Roadmap for Development of Telecommunications and Information Technology aimed to ensure mutual recognition of electronic signatures, including an 'ASAN Signature' at the international level.

¹⁷³ http://parliament.am/law_docs/150105HO40eng.pdf.

¹⁷⁴ <http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/5916>.

¹⁷⁵ Parliament of Georgia (2017), Law on Electronic Documents and Electronic Trust services, No 639 – III LHG <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/3654557?publication=0>. Note, the first law on electronic signature and electronic documents came into force in 2008, but the 2017 law complies with the EU's regulation on electronic ID and trust services (eIDAS).

¹⁷⁶ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=112497&lang=ro.

¹⁷⁷ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Law on Electronic Trust Services, consolidated version: 13 February 2020, Article 18 (Part 4), <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2155-19#Text>.

¹⁷⁸ <http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/22639>.

¹⁷⁹ https://www.ekeng.am/en/mid_auth.

¹⁸⁰ <http://e-qanun.az/framework/21716>.

¹⁸¹ <http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/22639>.

Furthermore, a 2019 ASAN Decision required that, as a result of the e-service, an electronic document must be certified by an enhanced electronic signature¹⁸².

- In 2017, the Law on Electronic Documents and Electronic Trust Services came into force in **Georgia**, and is fully compliant with the EU regulation on electronic ID and trust services (eIDAS), which ensures high standards for personal data protection and secure electronic transactions. In 2018, the PSDA introduced Qualified Trust Services (QTS) in Georgia, enabling secure, trustworthy and easy-to-use electronic transactions, in conformity with international standards, saving time and money. In developing QTS, the qualified e-Seal was created for legal entities in public and private sectors; public entities are required to put a Qualified e-Seal or e-Signature on their electronic documents. Moreover, PSDA offers a Qualified e-Signature (QES), with the same legal authority as the physical one. The technical interoperability of PSDAs and EU's QES is a major step towards mutual recognition. After the adoption of the 2017 law, public service providers started offering services associated with electronic signatures and document verification (electronic seal and time stamps)¹⁸³ to ensure the reliability of e-Documents. This service is designed for citizens, residents and inter-institutional correspondence. The customers can receive e-IDs, as well as e-ID readers with a set of codes that are used to acquire services, from PSDA through Public Service Hall, and replacements through my.gov.ge and Sda.gov.ge.
- In **Moldova**, the law has been in force since 2014, and in recent years, the use of digital signatures has grown from 5.6 million in 2019 to 22.1 million in 2020 and 26.8 million in 2021. The public institution "Information Technology and Cybersecurity Service" has recently taken steps to increase the issuance of public key certificates, intended for the use of the e-Signatures in e-Documents in all existing electronic systems¹⁸⁴. Moreover, the Government is taking action to make e-ID and e-Signatures more accessible to the public (see 'Inspiring Practice' below).
- In **Ukraine**, the 2017 Law on Electronic Trust Services, amended in 2020, stipulates that electronic signatures have the same legal power as, and presumes their conformity to, handwritten signatures¹⁸⁵. The Integrated Electronic Identification System, administered by MinDigit, allows applicants to apply for administrative services electronically in different capacities, as an individual, entrepreneur or representative of a legal entity¹⁸⁶. e-ID in this system is verified by e-Signatures (kept on file, cloud or other protected carriers, by MobileID and BankID of the National Bank of Ukraine). A person may receive his or her own e-Signature from electronic trust services' providers by visiting their front offices or remotely via the mobile application of the *Diia* portal¹⁸⁷. The e-Signature is valid for one year from the date it is obtained. A further CMU Resolution in May 2021¹⁸⁸ set a deadline for technical realisation of this project. The duration of the experiment was extended due to the military invasion and the impossibility of adopting the necessary changes to the law by the initial deadline.

¹⁸² "Technical requirements for the formation, maintenance, integration and archiving of state information resources and systems", <http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/41290>.

¹⁸⁴ <https://semnatura.md/>.

¹⁸⁵ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Law "On electronic trust services", consolidated version: 13 February 2020, Article 18 (Part 4), <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2155-19#Text>.

¹⁸⁶ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, *Regulations on The Integrated Electronic Identification System*, Resolution No. 546, June 19, 2019, consolidated version: 17 September 2020, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/546-2019-%D0%BF#Text>.

¹⁸⁷ CMU Resolution No. 785, "On realisation of the experimental project on the use of the remote qualified electronic signature *Smart-Diia*", 2 September 2020, consolidated version: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/785-2020-%D0%BF#Text>.

¹⁸⁸ CMU Resolution No. 565, "Some issues on realisation of the experimental project on the application of the remote qualified electronic signature", 14 May 2021, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/565-2021-%D0%BF#Text>.

Inspiring practice: Plans to increase take-up of e-ID and e-Signatures (Moldova)

Legislation in Moldova provides for two types of digital certificates used to identify persons: non-qualified advanced and qualified advanced. The latter are issued: a) by certification authorities, registered under the law; and b) on secure technical devices (smart cards¹⁸⁹, USB tokens¹⁹⁰, e-ID cards¹⁹¹ and mobile signatures¹⁹²). e-Signatures applied with qualified advanced certificates are considered to have legal force, without the need for additional technical and organisational elements. However, major barriers to their implementation include: a) the complexity of enrolling and obtaining e-ID; b) the complexity of using e-Signatures; and c) the relatively high price of certification services compared to average income levels of the population.

To eliminate these barriers or at least reduce them, in accordance with GAP 2021-2022, the Government approved Decision No. 324/2022 on government identity services and mobile electronic signatures (MobiSign), a technical solution of mobile electronic identity without specialised devices on the signatory's side, without specialised SIM cards and without reliance on mobile operators, while maintaining compliance with the requirements of the EU Trust Services Directive. Estonia introduced a similar model in 2018 known as 'Smart ID'. At the same time, under GAP 2021-2022, the Government planned by the end of June 2022 to recognise qualified advanced electronic signatures based on certificates issued by an EU Member State.

4.2.2. Base registries

A base registry is an authentic, trusted source of fundamental information, especially relating to citizens or businesses, held by government-appointed public administrations or organisations, that can be digitally (re)used by others¹⁹³. Examples include registers of births, deaths, marriages, enterprises, establishments, real estate, residents, taxpayers, importers, exporters, passport holders, permit holders, license holders and vehicles. Base registries are essential elements of the e-service ecosystem. For electronic data transfer, it must be possible for other institutions' information systems to read and understand the data, in machine-readable formats (e.g. CSV, RDF, XML, JSON, not in PDF or Excel spreadsheets). To be authoritative and reliable, the registries should be comprehensive (without data gaps), accurate (up to date) and secure (safeguarded from data loss, manipulation and hacking), and datasets should be standardised.

According to the May 2022 eGovernance reports of the EU-financed EU4Digital initiative¹⁹⁴, base registries in Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine have digitalised data and Azerbaijan and Moldova have mostly digitalised them.

The World Bank's GovTech Maturity Index¹⁹⁵ measures performance in four focus areas supporting core government systems, enhancing service delivery, mainstreaming citizen engagement and encouraging GovTech enablers. In the overview for 2020, all five countries feature in Group B, meaning maturity is "High: significant focus on GovTech". More detailed information available on the status of back-office digitalisation across the ENP East reveals:

¹⁸⁹ Around 5 000 units have been issued since 2006, mostly to public officials as an official pass (May 2022).

¹⁹⁰ Around 130 000 units have been issued since 2011, mainly to civil servants and economic agents (May 2022).

¹⁹¹ Over 500 have been issued since June 2014, only to individuals and mainly unused (May 2022).

¹⁹² This involves the replacement of simple SIM cards with SIM cards with cryptographic elements ("mobile electronic identification v.1.0"). Around 100 000 units have been issued since 2012, mainly to individuals (May 2022).

¹⁹³ <https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/collection/access-base-registries/about>.

¹⁹⁴ <https://eufordigital.eu/>.

¹⁹⁵ Dener, Cem et al. (2021), "GovTech Maturity Index: The State of Public Sector Digital Transformation. International Development in Focus". Washington, DC: World Bank, doi:10.1596/978-1-4648-1765-6. License: Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 3.0 IGO.

- According to the World Bank¹⁹⁶, “core state data registers have been set up” in **Armenia** and “the exchange of citizen data across registers is based on unique identification numbers, the so-called Social Services Number (SSN), which serves as the main identifying data in state registers. The SSN is assigned to citizens and residents including individuals without citizenship and refugees”. It reports that Armenia’s electronic document management system, “Mulberry”, has been adopted by over 75 ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) as the standard for intra-governmental digital document circulation, but digitalisation of “old, paper-based registries is relatively recent. Many MDAs still rely on paper-based data requests and responses in their business processes and have not yet digitized their data archives and other data”. According to the 2030 Armenia PAR Strategy, the administrative data registries should be mapped, the catalogue of registries should be published, the data registries will be digitalised and the interoperability should be ensured in the next two years. At the time of writing, the intense work on data mapping was already under way.
- In **Azerbaijan**, “several important data registers are in place and are being used across government”, according to the World Bank¹⁹⁷, including “data registers on businesses, population, land and other infrastructure related registers (e.g. the State Real Estate Register, the State Address Register, the State Land Cadastre and the Land Use and Land Resources Register)”. Nevertheless, the World Bank also notes that: “The storage of government data needs greater alignment, as each agency operates its own mini-database which is often a rack in the server room with limited use of cloud computing and no cloud policy. This leads to extensive risks, including the risks of non-compliance with the rules of information and technological security, unauthorized access, loss of data and cyber-security risks”.
- The World Bank¹⁹⁸ notes that: “Existing state registers (including civil, property, business, land, real estate, motor vehicles, administrative fines, civil acts, seizure and pledge, social subsidies, tax and customs, etc.) are all available in digital format” in **Georgia**. However, while “permanent upgrading efforts are underway, these are independently undertaken by each MDA with their own resources and according to their own plans”. The Law on the Unified State Registry of Information¹⁹⁹ adopted by the Parliament in 2011 regulates “the basic principles of the establishment, use and alteration of registries, databases, services and information systems”. The Digital Governance Agency is the main body responsible for establishing and maintaining a unified catalogue of the public sector’s information resources, setting uniform standards for handling information, co-ordinating information systems, and supporting their continuous development. According to the World Bank, the 2011 law “is not fully implemented. At this stage only 20 registries have been made, amounting to approximately 2%-3% of the total number of all information registers in the state) and the information provided is not updated”. It also reaches the same conclusion on data storage as contained in the Azerbaijan report.
- In **Moldova**, the Law on Registers No. 71/2007²⁰⁰ determines the manner of establishing, maintaining, reorganising and liquidating registers. According to Article 25, paragraph (1), state registers are kept in electronic format. However, the Law on Data Exchange and Interoperability

¹⁹⁶ “World Bank (2021), “GovTech: A Whole of Government Approach as a Key Foundation for the Digital Economy in Armenia”, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/35852>.

¹⁹⁷ “World Bank, 2021, “GovTech: A Whole of Government Approach as a Key Foundation for the Digital Economy in Azerbaijan”, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/35853>.

¹⁹⁸ “World Bank, 2021, “GovTech: A Whole of Government Approach as a Key Foundation for the Digital Economy in Georgia”, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/35851>.

¹⁹⁹ The Parliament of Georgia (2011), the Law on Unified State Registry of Information, Legislative Herald of Georgia [accessed online on 9 June 2021, <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/1338521?publication=0>].

²⁰⁰ [Law on Registers No. 71/2007](#), Official Gazette No. 70-73, Article 709.

²⁰¹ entered into force on 10 November 2018, according to which all state registries shall be kept exclusively in electronic form from 10 November 2021.²⁰²

- In **Ukraine**, the key state information resources are digitalised. They face two common problems, however: the technical architecture (software and hardware) was appropriate at the time they were designed, but it is difficult to update for today's needs, especially as regards interoperability²⁰³ and the lack of an individual identifier, so that two are used: the tax number, which not all residents (e.g. children) have, and the unique number of the Unified State Demographic Register on ID documents, which dates from 2012²⁰⁴ (one-third of the population use ID documents issued before then). State registers thus have to rely on more extensive personal data (name, birthdate, address, ID document requisites and two identifiers), which results in data duplication, redundancy and error. Ukraine is seeking to create a large state data centre that will optimise registries to remove duplication and irrelevance, minimise illegal and corrupt actions arising from uncontrolled access to the most basic registers, and ensure transparency and digital signature entry. This will make it possible to see who enters the registry and changes the data²⁰⁵. The large number of state electronic resources used for service delivery creates problems for using the Diia portal as an efficient front office, because it still needs to build an informational interface with each of them. This is technically difficult, since many of them are in poor condition, which explains the plans to reform the registries and reduce their number. Ministry state secretaries and heads of central executive authorities must conduct audits of their registers for 2021 and publish the reports on the web portal 'Audit of the Functioning of National Electronic Information Resources'²⁰⁶. To resolve the issue of electronic registries and their interoperability at all levels of government, the Parliament adopted the Law on Public Electronic Registers²⁰⁷ in November 2021, which establishes a common system and requirements for all registries.

Flagship initiative: Key registers and the 'State in a Smartphone' (Ukraine)

The *Diia* mobile application connects to the relevant national electronic information resources (registers). When the app is downloaded, it extracts the necessary information from the registers and renders it as digital images of documents. Each digital image has a unique code (QR-code, barcode, digital code, etc.) that allows the information in the image to be verified immediately from the register.

In October 2019, for example, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted Resolution No. 956 "On realisation of the experimental project on the application of the electronic driver's license and electronic certificate of vehicle registration", which defined the procedure for ordering, presenting and verifying the digital images of these documents (driver's licences issued after 2014 and vehicle registration certificates issued after 2013) on a smartphone or tablet. The CMU Resolution also gave digital images legal status equivalent to the paper versions. Now, drivers who download the *Diia* mobile app on their smartphones need not bring a driver's licence or certificate of vehicle registration, because a police officer can access the necessary registers on drivers' smartphones to check that they have these documents.

²⁰¹ [Law on data exchange and interoperability No. 142/2018](#), Official Gazette No. 295-308, Article 452.

²⁰² [Law on amending and supplementing some legislative acts No. 143/2018](#), Official Gazette No. 309-320/2018, Article 482.

²⁰³ The Ministry of Justice, for example, had this problem with its registers. <https://minjust.gov.ua/news/ministry/denis-malyuska-v-ukraini-dlya-realizatsii-zalishilis-skladni-reformi-yaki-potrebuyut-stvorenniya-balansu-dlya-riznih-chastin-sotsiumu>.

²⁰⁴ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, *On the Unified State Demographic Register and Documents Confirming the Citizenship of Ukraine, Identity, or Special Status*, Law of Ukraine, consolidated version: 25/01/2021, Article 10 (Part 1) <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/5492-17#Text>.

²⁰⁵ *Diia* portal, *Reforming the registers*, <https://diia.gov.ua/news/reformuyemo-reyestri>.

²⁰⁶ *Audit of the Functioning of National Electronic Information Resources* website, <https://audit.gov.ua/>.

²⁰⁷ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, *Law on Public Electronic Registers*, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1907-20#Text>.

An inspirational example of the merits of linking base registries to provide a single source for all levels of government is Belgium's Crossroads Bank for Enterprises.

Inspiring practice: Crossroads Bank for Enterprises (Belgium)

The Crossroads Bank for Enterprises (CBE) has been the registration office for entrepreneurs, companies, associations and other organisations in Belgium under the Ministry of Economy since 2003. It brings together several registries for business, trade, value-added tax and social security in a linked database. The front office for the CBE is the network of Business One-Stop Shops (BOSSs) that operate across the country under various non-profit providers.

For a new enterprise, an authorised BOSS enters its data into the CBE after examining whether it meets the legal conditions (prior authorisations), and it also provides access to CBE data. Once the enterprise is registered with the CBE, it receives a unique registration number that must be noted on the enterprise's correspondence, documents and invoices. This new procedure replaces the previous registration procedure of a company at the commercial registry.

All federal, regional, provincial and municipal authorities use the CBE as the single database. The unique identifier enables all government bodies at all levels to access the basic data of new and established enterprises. The aim of the CBE and the introduction of a single identifier is intended to simplify the companies' administrative obligations and to improve the efficiency of public services. Once its data have been entered into the CBE, the enterprise is no longer required to communicate the information to other public services, in accordance with the once-only principle.

The combined data also improves the reliability of enterprise statistics, as it allows for more control and comparison. The registered enterprise can consult its own data in the CBE through the 'private search' system, while anybody can consult the publicly available data through the 'public search' system by number, name, activity, license or address²⁰⁸.

Source: Based on European Commission (2017), *Quality of Public Administration Toolbox, for Practitioners*: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8055&type=2&furtherPubs=no>.

4.3. Connecting the system and the service users through interoperability

The front office can only offer a seamless service if it is fully synchronised with the back office', meaning both with the service owners in the ministries, agencies and municipalities, and with the ultimate beneficiaries: citizens, businesses and other organisations. Accessing base registries to deliver e-services, such as the *Diia* mobile app, relies entirely on interoperability: *"the ability of organisations²⁰⁹ to interact towards mutually beneficial goals, involving the sharing of information and knowledge between these organisations, through the business processes they support, by means of the exchange of data between their ICT systems"*²¹⁰. This is pivotal to digital service design and delivery.

The European Commission has identified four main layers of interoperability, with a cross-cutting layer of integrated public service governance, all within an overarching layer of interoperability governance²¹¹:

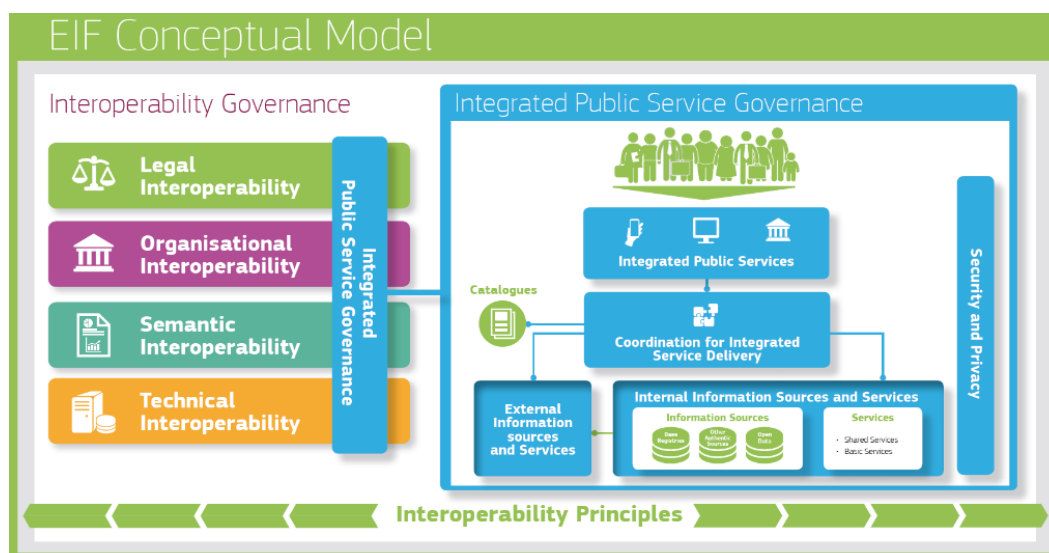
²⁰⁸ <http://kbopub.economie.fgov.be/kbopub/zoeknummerform.html?lang=en&nummer=&actionLu=Research>.

²⁰⁹ Public administration units or any entity acting on their behalf.

²¹⁰ "New European Interoperability Framework, Promoting seamless services and data flows for European public administrations", https://ec.europa.eu/isa2/eif_en.

²¹¹ See also "Recommendations for organising and governing integrated public services", https://ec.europa.eu/isa2/news/report-recommendations-organising-and-governing-integrated-public-services_en.

- legal: ensuring that organisations operating under different legislative frameworks do not face unjustified barriers to the reuse of data in different policy areas;
- organisational: forming and formalising relationships, aligning or integrating existing business processes, and potentially establishing new ones;
- technical: ensuring the unimpeded flow of information through applications, infrastructure, and communication protocols to link the systems;
- semantic: using common data descriptions (formats, standards, and specifications), so that the precise meaning of exchanged information is preserved and understood by both parties.



All five countries have the legal basis for interoperability, and interoperability platforms that allow semantically compatible data flows across the public administration for service delivery.

Table 8. Interoperability in principle and practice

Country	Legal basis	Platform
Armenia	Yes	Government Interoperability Platform (GIP)
Azerbaijan	Yes	ASAN Bridge System
Georgia	Yes	Georgian Government Gateway (3G)
Moldova	Yes	Interoperability Platform (MConnect)
Ukraine	Yes	System of Electronic Interaction of Executive Bodies; <i>Trembita</i> data exchange solution

The state of play in each country is summarised and assessed below:

- In **Armenia**, the legal base has been in place since 2015, when a Government Decree²¹² defined the general technical requirements for the security and interoperability of information systems for e-service delivery by state and local self-government bodies, including legal, organisational, semantic and technical interoperability. The Government Interoperability Platform (GIP) is operated and maintained by EKENG, and facilitates data exchange for 200 public and private sector entities that can access base registries in real time. The World Bank has recommended “*increasing the quality of basic state databases with focus on digitization of paper sources and optimization of*

²¹² Government decree 1 093-N, 8 August 2015.

database structures to ensure full-fledged data availability and transfer to other systems through Government interoperability platform”²¹³. EKENG continues to develop the GIP, which is expected to be completed in 2023²¹⁴.

- In **Azerbaijan**, interoperability was provided for in the 2011 Presidential Decree on the e-government portal²¹⁵, to enable sharing of information resources (databases, retrieval systems, electronic base registries, etc.). In May 2014, Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 118²¹⁶ mandated 45 central executive authorities and other state bodies to take the necessary steps to connect their systems and resources to the e-government portal. A subsequent September 2018 Presidential Decree and January 2019 ASAN Board Decision²¹⁷ defined the rules and technical requirements for forming, maintaining, integrating and archiving state information resources and systems. The e-Government Development Centre under ASAN developed the ASAN Bridge System as an integrated module of the e-Government Information System. This provides co-ordination of government information resources and systems, as well as stable and secure exchange of information between those resources and systems²¹⁸. The World Bank²¹⁹ has noted that: “*Digital systems are being developed and managed by MDAs separately with separate management, budgets and variable quality. This constrains the interoperability between systems, leading to cost inefficiencies and suboptimal user experiences*”.
- **Georgia** has no stand-alone legislation on interoperability, but the Digital Governance Agency (DGA) was set up with the explicit mandate to ensure the interoperability of information systems²²⁰. The Georgian Interoperability Framework²²¹ has been developed as the guiding document for service providers to achieve technical, semantic, legal and organisational interoperability, but it has not yet been adopted by the Government. Nevertheless, the Georgian Government Gateway (3G) exists as a secure interoperability platform implemented by the DGA and accessible by the private sector. It is applied across the public administration, but not fully and consistently. Whenever two unrelated agencies decide upon data interoperability, for whatever reason, they may issue a special ordinance defining the characteristics for interoperability and either directly engage with each other through their respective ICT infrastructure or engage the DGA to use 3G infrastructure to ensure that interoperability is reliable. Some 350 services were integrated into the 3G infrastructure serving 300 organisations (278 of which are private institutions) and accounting for over 111 million transactions in 2020²²².

²¹³ GovTech for Armenia, op. cit.

²¹⁴ <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=149957>.

²¹⁵ Presidential Decree on Approval of the “Rules for the formation, maintenance, integration and archiving of state information resources and systems” and some measures related to e-government, <http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/40020>.

²¹⁶ On the approval of the “List of information systems and resources to be connected to the e-government portal” and “Technical requirements for connection of information systems and resources, e-services to the e-government portal”, <http://e-qanun.az/framework/27667>.

²¹⁷ <http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/41290>.

²¹⁸ <https://www.digital.gov.az/en/projects/our-projects/asan-bridge>.

²¹⁹ GovTech for Azerbaijan, op. cit.

²²⁰ Digital Governance Agency (2020), Law of Georgia N6297-III, Article 4 (f-interoperability), Legislative Herald of Georgia, <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/4893222?publication=0>.

²²¹ Data Exchange Agency (2017), MoJ, Georgian Interoperability Framework, “Support to Strengthening of e-Governance in Georgia II”, Twinning project: GE/2.

²²² GovTech for Georgia, op. cit.

- In **Moldova**, Law No. 142/2018 on Data Exchange and Interoperability²²³ and Government Decision No. 211/2019 on the Interoperability Platform²²⁴ established the state-owned Interoperability Platform (MConnect)²²⁵ as the technical solution to ensure the exchange of data between information systems. The process of connecting to MConnect is a continuous one, both for public and private entities. According to the Electronic Governance Agency, 71 entities have connected since it was piloted in 2014-2018 and fully operationalised, of which 45 are public authorities, about 200 notaries, and 26 private companies (16 financial and 10 insurance). In the context of the global pandemic, around 5 million queries were recorded in January 2020, rising to over 8 million in November 2020, an impressive increase. From January to December 2021, over 232 million queries were made through the Interoperability Platform, an average of over 635 000 per day, while over 432 million queries were made through the Interoperability Platform from January to May 2022, an average of over 796 700 per day. In November 2021, the government approved a new concept, the 'Semantic Catalogue', and set up the Semantic Catalogue Information System, which will ensure that data is stored and exchanged through MConnect in a single format across all institutions that manage or hold state information resources²²⁶.
- **Ukraine** has two platforms, one for institutions and another for electronic information resources. Almost all key institutions engaged in service delivery are connected on the platform known as the System of Electronic Interaction of Executive Bodies²²⁷ established by the CMU in January 2018²²⁸. By the end of 2020, 136 electronic informational interactions were provided by this data exchange system²²⁹. As of February 2022, 4 200 entities were using the system, including 600 ASCs using the information sub-system *Vulyk* (Beehive)²³⁰ designed specifically for this purpose. This platform is used when there is no immediate information exchange among electronic information resources, or resources have no data, or one institution has no access to the resources of another institution. A second platform, known as *Trembita* (a traditional wooden mountain horn), has been created for information exchange among electronic information resources.

Portugal's automated social energy tariff (ASET) offers a good illustration of the role of interoperability in enabling reuse of existing data sources (public base registries) and putting the once-only principle into practice to offer a pro-active service to those who most need it.

²²³ [Law on data exchange and interoperability No. 142/2018](#), Official Gazette No. 295-308/2018, Article 452.

²²⁴ [Government Decision on the interoperability platform \(MConnect\) No. 211/2019](#), Official Gazette No.132-138/2019, Article 254.

²²⁵ <https://mconnect.gov.md/#/>.

²²⁶ Government Decision No. 323/2021 for the approval of the Concept "Semantic Catalogue" Information System and the Regulation of the way on keeping the Register of the "Semantic Catalogue" Information System, Official Gazette No. 286-289/2021, Article 632.

²²⁷ State Enterprise 'State Centre for Information Resources of Ukraine', *System of Electronic Interaction of Executive Bodies*.

²²⁸ CMU Resolution No. 55, "Rules of Procedure on the Organisation of the Interaction of Executive Bodies in Electronic Form", 17 January 2018, consolidated version: 22 December 2020, Annex, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/55-2018-%D0%BF#Text>.

²²⁹ *Report on the Implementation of the Strategy of Public Administration Reform in Ukraine in 2020*.

²³⁰ <https://vulyk.gov.ua/>.

Inspiring practice: Automated social energy tariff (Portugal)

In 2010, Portugal adopted a Decree-Law entitling low-income households to a reduced tariff for electricity and natural gas ('social energy tariff'). It was originally assigned to the energy providers to manage, but it was not promoted as effectively as desired (the initiative reduced the supplier's revenues). This reduced awareness of the initiative among its potential recipients, who were required to submit applications and provide paperwork showing the family's income levels, which often took several months. In 2016, the secretaries of state for justice, energy, tax and social security adopted a new approach assessing eligibility automatically, based on information already held by state administrations (while retaining the right to opt out).

The responsibility for the tariff shifted from the energy companies to the Directorate-General for Energy and Geology (DGEG), which developed an information system to process around 4 million records (contracts) from all the energy providers. The DGEG used the existing Integration Platform, available to all Portuguese public administrations, to exchange data with the tax and social security authorities on income and benefits respectively, based on citizens' tax identification numbers, names and addresses. As part of the Interoperability in Portuguese Administration concept (iAP) aligned with the European Interoperability Framework (EIF), the Integration Platform contains a catalogue of web services provided by authentic sources of information that can be used and reused by the different entities, developed by the Administrative Modernisation Agency. The two authorities check against the criteria and send binary yes/no responses to the DGEG via the platform; the financial and social information never leaves their internal databases, protecting confidentiality and respecting privacy. The DGEG then sends the list of customers entitled to the benefits to the respective energy companies, requiring them to change the tariff. Eligibility is reverified annually in September (the reduced tariff is thus applicable for one year), while checks for new and updated contracts are run every three months.

In the development phase, working groups were formed with the relevant stakeholders, but only light-touch governance is required for its operation to make any improvements, because each organisation's responsibilities are defined by protocols specifying core roles, the exact information to be exchanged, and how the eligibility criteria are to be applied.

This case has been noted²³¹ as a successful example of cross-sectorial collaboration between public entities, using an existing interoperability platform. It led to a substantial increase in the number of citizens receiving a reduced energy tariff, from 150 000 to 850 000.

Source: Based on the European Commission case study (2020), '[Recommendations for organising and governing integrated public services](#)', ISA² programme.

4.4. Observations

In the context of 'government as a platform', infrastructure and enablers exist to help service users achieve a satisfactory result with minimum effort end to end, from their first interaction on an administrative issue to its resolution. This requires that the external interface with users (the front office) become more than a user-friendly mask for inefficient processes and procedures (the back office). It also ensures more consistency for users in the quality of the experience, whichever channel is involved (omni-channel).

The experiences and characteristics of physical one-stop shop networks in ENP East countries offer some useful learning points, in four areas:

- ***Territorial coverage:*** Each country is expecting to expand its network, to ensure that citizens and businesses have relatively easy access to the physical front office. Most started with front offices in the capital, where their ministries and central executive agencies are situated, expanding next

²³¹ https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/inline-files/eGovernment_in_Portugal_2018_0.pdf.

to other large cities and regional centres where there are population concentrations and- with public transport to the surrounding towns and villages. Some countries focus on one-stop shops at the local level, where there is a strategic commitment to deconcentration (Georgia) and decentralisation (Ukraine). In Ukraine, the Government issued recommendations²³² for the location of ASCs that “the distance to an access point shall be no more than 14 kilometres, or if territorial accessibility is evaluated by public transport availability, no more than 30 minutes”, thus translating the goal into a meaningful metric.

- **Service coverage:** In addition to increasing the number of front offices, ENP East countries are seeking to expand the range of services that can be processed by the network. Given functional assignment in central and sub-national government, this means that the lead responsible body must co-operate vertically and/or horizontally with ministries, their agencies, sub-national state administrations and local self-government, as appropriate. Ideally, a single, recognised, national one-stop shop network would operate as a single physical portal to all administrative services. Individual ministries with their own networks undermine the ‘one-stop’ concept.
- **Institutional capacity:** The one-stop shops must have sufficient capacity and resources (including suitably trained and motivated staff), both individually (each branch) and collectively (throughout the network), to ensure that they are effective and able to achieve the government’s ambitions for administrative service delivery. The experience of Georgia’s Community Centres is illuminating. With support from an EU-funded project, the Government established pilot CCs, some of which were transferred to local municipalities to operate, while others remained under PSDA management. However, an assessment showed that some local municipalities were not ready to manage their pilot CCs, and hence they remained with PSDA. In 2020, the MoJ and PSDA decided to move all CCs under PSH management. Institutional capacity requires a judicious combination of commitment (prioritisation), financial and human resources, in the context of localised circumstances, and it is thus not helpful to rush to judgement. However, it appears that all these factors need to be in place for one-stop shops to flourish.
- **Complementary policy goals:** The benefits of one-stop shops go beyond bringing services closer to citizens, reducing burdens and increasing user satisfaction with services delivered. They can also promote integrity and reduce the risk of corruption. In Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine, this has even become an explicit goal of one-stop shops. In Georgia, payment by cash in PSH is not an option; the user can pay the service fee at a bank counter in the front office or pay the amount directly to the back-office agency by credit card.

Valuable lessons can be learned from the development of the electronic portals in the five countries, which are summarised below:

- **User-friendly service design and delivery:** In the case of physical one-stop shops, the public administration determines the office design and processes, and hence how the service users ‘flow’ through the system, and must be conscious of users’ (diverse) requirements (see Chapter 5). With online platforms, service users should be able to control the way they navigate through the administrative system if the site is well-designed, user-oriented and, ideally, offers routes to a comprehensive e-service package. Users should be able to transition smoothly from information to interaction and transaction, which requires a high level of service maturity. They should also be able to enjoy a personalised experience, customising their engagement with the platform and its services to satisfy their individual wants and circumstances. Some of the portals organise their user interface by incorporating ‘life events’ (see section 5.2) into their approach to structuring how the services are offered, most notably in Moldova and Ukraine.

²³² CMU, *Methodical Recommendations on the Criteria of Territorial Accessibility of the Administrative Service Centre including its territorial units and remote (including mobile) working places of administrators*, Order No. 574-o, 2 June, 2021, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/574-2021-%D1%80#top>.

- **Full-service delivery:** Often, individual ministries, agencies, municipalities and other public institutions start with their own websites. However, as with the shift to physical one-stop shops, it is the move to cross-governmental platforms that adds value to service users. Impressively, each ENP East government has made a clear commitment to a unified portal in the last 10 to 15 years, and taken the legislative steps to bring such plans to fruition. However, gaps in coverage remain, and often, the option for individual public institutions to make their own 'offer' to citizens and businesses. In Armenia, for example, state bodies use about 300 digital platforms and websites, contradicting the concept of 'government as indivisible' for citizens and businesses.
- **Integrated service delivery:** These centralised portals are in most cases currently limited to state administrations. It is not feasible for each local self-government body to invest its limited resources in developing, operating and maintaining its own digital solution, and not rational when their services and systems are similar. While the central government 'owner' might be open to integrating municipal services into its platform, this requires an explicit strategy. Moldova, for example, has plans to create a single platform for local public authorities, named 'e-LPA', to deliver public services of local interest more effectively. There is a case, however, for all administrative services to be harmonised, also with the physical one-stop shops, including their branding. In Ukraine, for example, municipalities are able to add the sign "*Diia* Centres" to their ASCs (the official name under the law), given *Diia*'s brand recognition among the public.

Government portals can also provide practical tools for government bodies to design and build services, and themselves act as enablers, as happens in Lithuania.

As Ukraine's experience with *Diia* demonstrates, the gains of digitalisation can only be realised fully with the key enablers in place (e-ID, e-Authentication, digitalised registers) and full technical, semantic, legal and organisational interoperability²³³.

There is also merit in a comprehensive approach to front offices that deals with any legacy overheads that have emerged from past investments by individual public institutions. By consolidating networks into single portals and achieving a common branding and a quality user experience (not just signposting to multiple providers with divergent approaches), the public administration can avoid confusing service users with competing physical sites in close proximity to each other, or a plethora of public websites run by different bodies in government.

²³³ The European Commission's 'Digital Public Administration factsheet 2021' rates interoperability in Ukraine at the highest level (4 out of 4) for each layer, with a good implementation of the EIF principles overall, <https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/collection/nifo-national-interoperability-framework-observatory/digital-public-administration-factsheets-2021>.

5. Managing service design and delivery in the user's interest



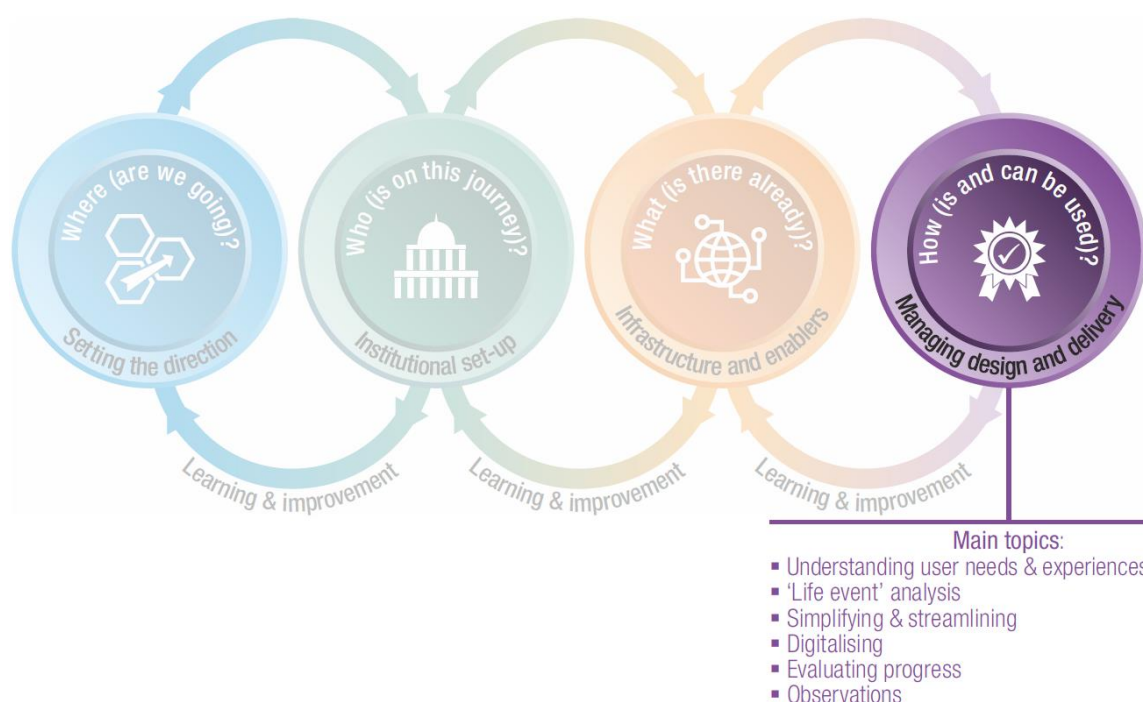
With the vision, principles, parameters, institutions, infrastructure and enablers in place, governments have the strategic and operational framework to offer modern administrative services to citizens, businesses and other entities. Attention then turns to managing the system and making sure it delivers – not just literally ‘delivering’ services to users, but also delivering the results they expect.

In providing services in the user's interests, public administrations should be putting all the key principles into practice, especially user-centricity, efficiency, predictability, proportionality and impartiality. User-oriented service delivery has a wider context, which is a reduction of the administrative burden: minimising the cost (in time and money) and inconvenience of complying with the necessary regulations. But public administrative services extend beyond regulatory compliance, as they include not only mandatory services, which citizens, businesses and other organisations are obliged to engage in (such as paying taxes or obtaining permits), but also opportunities they can opt to take (e.g. applying for financial assistance). Nevertheless, the same principles apply, and most importantly, the same mindset: as public administrations, how can we make the process as ‘painless’ as possible for both service providers, and, especially, service recipient?

This has several components that are considered further in this chapter:

- **Understanding user needs, expectations and experiences:** Users know best what they expect from the public service, and how far that matches reality. They can identify the pinch points, anomalies and irritations, and equally, the positive surprises and successful practices. By gaining insights into users' wants and experiences, the public administration can improve service design and delivery, bearing in mind its own capacities and constraints, including through a technique known as ‘customer journey mapping’.
- **‘Life event’ analysis:** While some services are repetitive by nature (the aforementioned tax payments, for example), users often interact with public administrations in the context of ‘life events’, significant stages or moments in life that are common across society, such as getting a job (citizen) or taking on an employee (organisation). These often involve multiple engagements with what appear to be individual services from the administration's perspective, but can be seen as a package from the user's side. The user's path through the system can be mapped for each service individually and together (the service experience end-to-end), and synergies across services can be found to make the whole journey smoother. Life events are also a useful way of grouping the hundreds of services across the public administration for presentational and management purposes.
- **Simplifying and streamlining administrative services:** These enhanced insights into users' experiences provide a platform for reviewing and reimagining the design of service provision, to remove unnecessary burdens, reduce or simplify information requirements (including using plain language), and raise user ratings of the service quality.

- **Digitalising service delivery:** Among the avoidable burdens are repetitive requests for data already in the system, but held by another part of the public administration. From the user's viewpoint, government should be indivisible, not a collection of 'silos'. By applying the principle of 'digital by design', public administrations can realise the potential of their infrastructure and enablers (see Chapter 4) to offer a full choice of channels to service users, connect public institutions and also private providers in complementary fields (legal, banking, etc.), achieve seamless access to clusters of 'life event' services, and move from being reactive to pro-active, for example pre-filling forms to further reduce the bureaucratic burden.
- **Monitoring and evaluating progress:** This brings us back full circle, to the start. How do we know we are fulfilling user needs and satisfying their expectations? By establishing criteria and setting goals, the public administration can codify user expectations as commitments and benchmarks against which they can be judged. Good service design and delivery involves feedback loops that facilitate continual learning and improvement.



5.1. User needs, expectations and experiences

The foundation of user orientation is understanding service users' needs and wants in all their diversity when (re-)designing service design and delivery in the first instance, and throughout its implementation, so that user feedback inspires continual improvement of the service experience. Some of the many ways of gaining insight into service users' requirements include²³⁴:

- **User surveys** are typically conducted either face to face (by interviewers on a structured or semi-structured basis), or online (structured and self-completed), as a valuable way of gathering large volumes of data for analysis. Most commonly, they take the form of 'satisfaction surveys', but they can also be employed to bring in fresh thinking on new design and delivery scenarios.

²³⁴ See also the European Commission's *Quality of Public Administration: A Toolbox for Practitioners*, Theme 5: Service delivery and digitalisation.

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8055&type=2&furtherPubs=no>.

- **Focus groups** are small selections of existing or potential customers, based on pre-determined criteria that can be broadly representative of all service users (or target groups), and manageable enough in size to hold a meaningful, moderated and interactive discussion. They are convened to generate qualitative information for better catering to their needs in the future.
- **User panels** are larger pools of people who can be sampled (i.e. sub-sets of citizens) to participate in user research on a periodic basis, reducing the start-up costs and offering continuity of consultation.
- **Comments and complaint procedures** are open channels to facilitate immediate feedback, through 'suggestion boxes' in physical offices, call centres that can be reached by telephone, and/or opportunities on websites to contact the public administration with concerns or ideas.

Other techniques that can be employed during service design and delivery include observation, in-depth interviews, user stories and contextual inquiry.

Drawing lessons from private enterprise, public administrations can also reach beyond traditional research methods, and even stakeholder consultation that can be largely passive, and co-design services and their delivery mechanisms with the expected beneficiaries. This involves engaging directly on an extended basis with the target audience, or rather, a representative sample of them. The lead public institution assembles a user panel of citizens and/or businesses and involves them in the service (re)design process from the outset, so that their perspectives are taken fully on board. In this way, public administrations create co-ownership with service users.

Table 9. Mechanisms to seek service user perspectives

Instrument	ARM	AZE	GEO*	MLD	UKR
Researching and/or co-designing new services and their delivery	-	-	X	X	-
Enabling user feedback on existing service design and delivery	X	X	X	-	X
Measuring user satisfaction with existing service design and delivery	X	X	X	X	X

Note: Researching and co-designing services is covered in the Public Services Development Strategy 2022-2025, which proposes that state agencies rely on the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and design thinking approaches and to use respective instruments to strengthen research and co-design practices.

The table above summarises the situation in the five countries. As can be seen, the emphasis is placed on mechanisms for receiving service user feedback and tracking satisfaction (see also section 5.5). The state of play is further elaborated on below:

- **Armenia** launched a pilot initiative in 2021 on the web portal www.gnahatir.am, to receive feedback from citizens on services. Several areas are still covered under this pilot, including the Civil Status Acts Registration Agency, Agency for State Register of Legal Entities and the Road Police. Local self-governments are also integrated into the platform on the municipal management information system. Citizens who interact with the institution receive a service code after the service has been provided and, after inserting the code into the system, can evaluate the quality of the service provision and provide comments²³⁵. The Government intends to critically reform the citizen feedback mechanisms and systems under the implementation of the PAR Strategy in the next three years to allow for comprehensive assessment and monitoring of the quality of state services. This

²³⁵ Once a citizen initiates the process for such a service, the provider (public administration) must complete the service with a certain time limit, providing each user with a code on completion to assess its quality. If the public administration fails to provide the service and it is left open (without a code), this is a basis for complaint or even legal recourse.

can also serve as a data bank and an innovative analytical tool for policy decision making on services.

- For **Azerbaijan**, the importance of measuring user satisfaction and providing a mechanism for comments and complaints is inherent in the 'ASAN service' index used to evaluate the performance of all administrative services annually (see section 5.5). In assessing different approaches to conducting user surveys, the evaluation criteria also account for formats that are accessible to persons with disabilities and the availability of a professional sign language interpreter in the service area to record complaints from persons with speech and hearing impairments²³⁶. The State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations has initiated its own suggestion scheme, the 'Idea Bank', which has since become a nationwide resource.

Inspiring practice: The 'Idea Bank' (Azerbaijan)

The 'Idea Bank' platform (<http://ideya.az>) was created to collect ideas from citizens to improve the activities of the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations, and its 'ASAN service' centres. It has since expanded its remit to become the single collection point for ideas for public authorities and enterprises across Azerbaijan; for example, the Republic Innovation Competitions, held jointly by the Ministry of Economy and the UN Office in Azerbaijan, is held on the platform. Organisations can register on the site and announce a competition on any topic, which allows them to promote themselves to service users and engage citizens directly in developing their services. Most of the suggestions are targeted at the 'ASAN service' centres, and those that have been taken up include, for example, an ASAN library, an electronic complaint kiosk, an exit poll device, help-point equipment, a children's car park, and an ASAN seat.

- In **Georgia**, the baseline assessment for the (then draft) Public Services Development Strategy 2022-2025 noted that "the failure of state agencies to establish, institutionalise and fund a unit specifically focused on research, development and innovation prevents them from robustly generating and effectively sharing information and data on public services design and delivery." However, the flagship Public Service Hall does gauge user satisfaction, as shown below.

²³⁶ <https://www.dxr.az/xidmet-istifadechileri>.

Flagship initiative: Citizen satisfaction with Public Service Hall (Georgia)

The Public Service Hall operates under public service quality standards²³⁷, which articulate expectations of service quality to guide staff behaviour and engagement with service users. For example, staff members are expected to be pro-active in establishing contact with service users; each and every step that they take in the interaction with the customer needs to be clarified and explained; people with disabilities should be treated with priority and without delay; if any issue requires special attention, operators should involve their superiors to solve it, etc. There is also an emphasis on branding, not just in the branch design, but also staff clothing (dress code) and name badges.

To assess the efficacy of these measures and user satisfaction with the service itself, the Public Service Hall established what is known as 'customer's voice', to collect and analyse citizens' feedback in three categories: positive feedback, negative feedback and recommendations.

In parallel, it also engages specialist agencies to conduct annual research using in-depth interviews, focus groups and user surveys. According to its website, the results are positive and improve year over year. Respondents generally consider Public Service Hall stable, oriented to high quality, useful, organised, modern/progressive, actively communicative and successful.

In 2018-2019, PSH introduced the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). In assessing challenges, the self-assessment working groups have analysed customer satisfaction and other data to make substantive progress in public service quality management, to share knowledge within the agency, and between the agency and its partners, and to find consensus on major issues and challenges. The agency has developed a realistic range of steps to carry out in the coming years to increase institutional and public service quality.

- In **Moldova**, the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2016-2020 noted the absence of a framework to evaluate, from the beneficiary's perspective, the quality of the services delivered, declaring it an obstacle to modernisation. No universal mandatory procedures existed to survey the opinions of citizens and businesses regularly, with no possibility to assess the quality of services provided immediately after delivery, either offline or online²³⁸. To solve this problem, the first studies and systems to examine complaints and manage user satisfaction were introduced, and then to develop a comprehensive approach to feed into the process re-engineering methodology (see section 5.3). This is devoted to determining beneficiaries' perception of service quality, problems and bottlenecks using various tools (surveys, focus groups, heuristic assessment, observations, follow-up, etc.), across service user segments (differentiated by gender, disability, economic status, etc.), and ensuring that the service satisfies the special needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups. The portal www.servicii.gov.md also collects beneficiaries' opinions on the usefulness of the information that the portal provides, as well as users' comments. The EGA's most recent annual report presents data on satisfaction with the quality of electronic public services²³⁹. Moreover, the requirement to monitor the delivery of public services and the

²³⁷ Public Service Hall (2017), Order No. 240/s, on public service quality standards for PSH branches and telephone service centre, pp. 2-10.

²³⁸ [Public Administration Reform Strategy for 2016-2020](#), approved by Government Decision No. 911/2016, Official Gazette No. 256-264/2016, Article 1 033, section 79.

²³⁹ [Summary of the Progress Report regarding the activity of Public Institution "E-Governance Agency for the year 2021"](#), Annex No. 1 to the Decision of the Council of the Public Institution "Electronic Government Agency" No. 12 of February 14. "Overall, 1 in 4 citizens in the last 12 months prior to the study have benefited from certain public services, regardless of the access method (online or offline). There is an increased level of satisfaction with the service received if the citizen has accessed this service online, especially in the case of services accessed through the Public Services Portal (www.servicii.gov.md). ... About 8% of the citizens who accessed the public services made complaints or came up with suggestions on how the service is provided, on the degree of reaction and on the speed of response, offering satisfactory marks and every second respondent, declaring his gratitude".

evaluation of their quality was introduced as a legal requirement in the recently adopted Law on Public Services (see section 5.5).

- In **Ukraine**, the Law on Administrative Services requires administrative service providers to place suggestion boxes in their front offices for users to drop claims/proposals, and to establish electronic feedback from applicants through the ‘online monitoring and quality assessment system’ module of the *Diia* portal. Every year, the provider must analyse such claims/proposals and take action²⁴⁰. Of the ENP East countries, Ukraine appears to be unique in contemplating the use of utilising ‘mystery shopping’ for systematic, objective assessment of the quality of service design and delivery, based on agreed criteria.

Inspiring practice: Mystery shopping (Ukraine)

The Cabinet of Ministers’ Resolution²⁴¹ on monitoring the quality of administrative services regulates a ‘mystery shopper’ technique for assessing satisfaction. This involves a designated individual applying for the administrative service, acting like a customer, and collecting information on the user experience in a prescribed manner. The ASC and administrative service provider are not aware that the technique is being applied to this *specific* case.

Funding for MinDigit in 2021 is set by the budget programme Electronic Government. The act provides that, when MinDigit monitors any service providers or ASCs, when central executive authorities monitor their own service providers, and when local self-governments monitor their municipal ASCs, they are entitled to book a mystery applicant service paid out of the state or local budget.

The mystery shopper service is provided under agreements that stipulate, among other things: the indicators (sub-indicators) on which evaluation data are collected; an inspection plan including different scenarios, if necessary; issues relating to preparation (training, coaching) of the mystery applicant; the cost of booking a mystery applicant service; and the frequency and form of reporting the inspection results.

No rules are given as to which services or institutions mystery shopping should be applied. It is recommended that the mystery shopper inspect both ‘offline’ front offices covering more than 30 000 residents, and online front offices. The administrative service providers and ASCs are prohibited from preparing (teaching or training) the mystery applicant.

In total, mystery shoppers conducted 1 500 visits to 344 ASCs in 2021 to assess compliance with established quality standards for the nine most popular services: international passport; certificate of availability and size of a land plot (share); information from the State Register of Real Estate Rights; residence registration and de-registration; information on the normative monetary valuation of a land plot; closing a private entrepreneur’s business; information from the State Land Cadastre; opening a private entrepreneur’s business; and residence registration certificate. Overall, the Centres achieved 81.3% compliance with quality standards. The mystery shoppers rated 16% of Centres as “excellent”, 33% as “good”, 29% as “average” and 22% as “poor”. While the mystery shoppers found the Centres strong on language and vocabulary (96.0%), comfortable premises (94.6%), and competence (93.8%), they performed less well on consistency in the process of providing services (75.2%) and friendliness and politeness (41.7%).

While the findings from the mystery shopping indicate room for improvement, MinDigit also assembled the findings of customer satisfaction surveys conducted via telephone, SMS, Viber and QR-codes, which creates a more positive impression of the current state of play. From 38 170 responses nationwide, the service quality at the centres was rated “excellent” by 69% and “good” by 24%, with just 5% rating it

²⁴⁰ Law on Administrative Services, Article 6 (Part 2) (Item 6).

²⁴¹ CMU Resolution No. 864, “Issues on Monitoring the Quality of Administrative Services”, 11 August 2021, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/864-2021-%D0%BF#Text>.

“average” and 2% “poor”. Almost 79% of customers expressed their readiness to recommend the centre to someone else.

Also borrowed from the business sector, **customer journey mapping** is another mechanism for seeing service design and delivery through the user’s eyes. The customer journey map is a way to describe, systematically and often visually, all the steps that the user must take to meet a need and obtain the desired result. This includes all the interactions with public institutions along the way, the information provided, the procedures that have to be followed, the documents that are requested, the payments that have to be made, the time that each step takes, and equally as important, the emotional responses that they prompt, from high satisfaction to deep frustration. The purpose of mapping the service user’s experience is to identify the successes, the bottlenecks and the blockages. It seeks to answer the question: when does the service generate disappointment (if at all), and why is this happening? In this way, the public administration can begin to address any pinch points at source. Clearly, such a process involves not only systems thinking, but also engaging with citizens, businesses and other organisations, drawing on interviews and other techniques (surveys, focus groups, analysing complaints etc.).

None of the ENP East countries yet appear to employ customer journey mapping, although they do provide guides, infographics and videos (e.g. the ASAN YouTube channel²⁴²) to help users navigate through the public administration to find the service they desire, which could be enriched by this technique. Georgia’s Public Service Development Strategy 2022-2025 proposes customer journey mapping with respective tools to be used for designing public services.

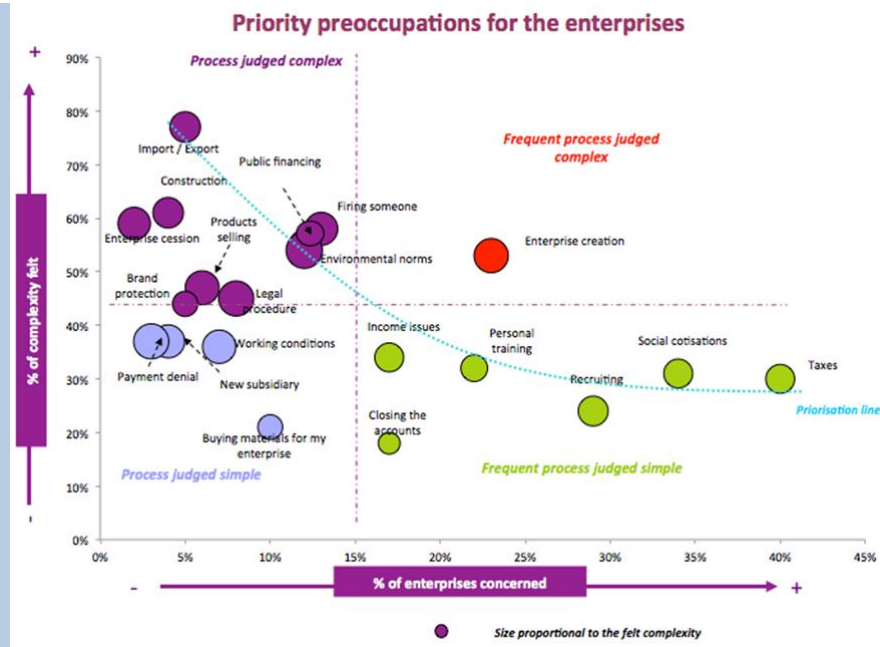
One of the pioneers of customer journey mapping as a technique for understanding the user experience of public administrative services is France, which serves as an inspirational example.

Inspiring practice: Mapping the customer journey for businesses (France)

The Modernisation State Department in France (*Secrétariat général pour la modernisation de l’action publique*) has been conducting a large-scale survey among service user groups (individuals, businesses, local authorities and associations) every two years since 2008.

The initial survey was based on 6 000 telephone interviews split between 3 015 individuals, 1 029 businesses, 804 local authorities and 805 associations. A quota sampling method was used to ensure that each sample was representative. The study was organised around 23 life events for citizens (buying a house, looking for a job, etc.) and 20 for businesses (recruiting staff, paying taxes, etc.) and their perceived complexity, as illustrated in the following graphic for businesses from the original 2008 study.

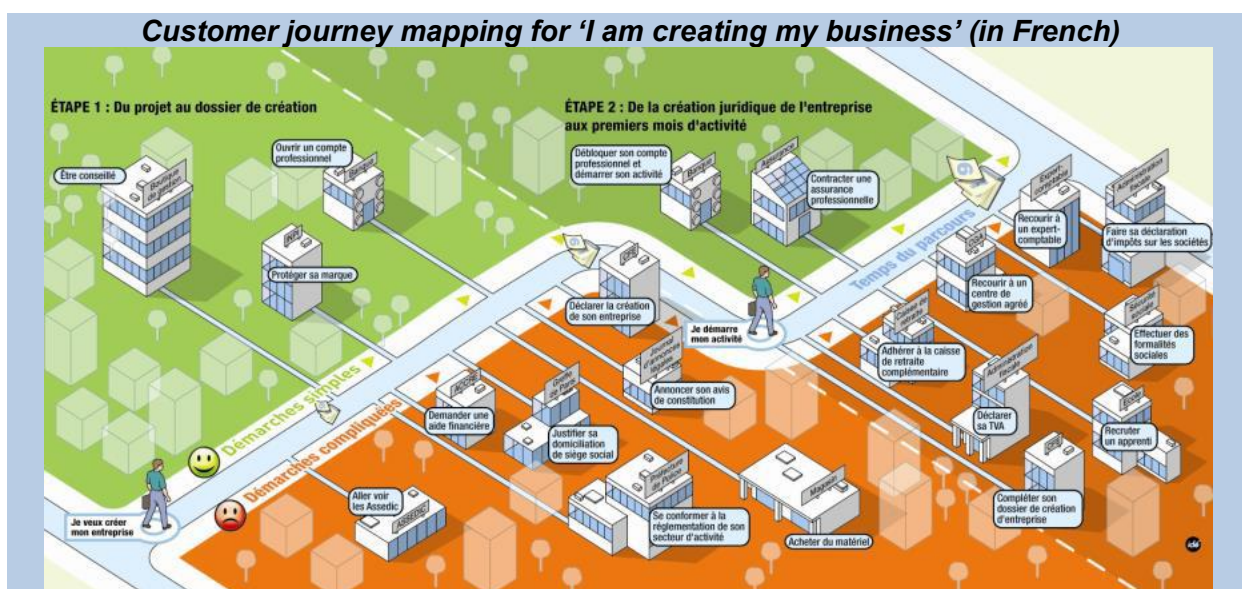
²⁴² <https://www.youtube.com/user/asanxidmat>.



Most importantly, the studies are conducted not for academic interest, but to make the shift from understanding complexity to addressing it, by redesigning services. An enterprise life event, for example, noted in the first study as being one of the most complicated and widespread was 'creating a business'. Over 300 000 businesses are set up every year, an administrative procedure that involved a protracted process, requiring numerous steps and documents. To understand the experience of start-up businesses better, the quantitative information from the survey was complemented by qualitative studies, to:

- 'walk in the customers' shoes' in interacting with different parts of the public administration, step by step, with a sample of 20 users;
- collect the feelings of the users, their emotional response to each step, both satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and the reasons behind them;
- gather these stories and the repetitive points of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and use them to identify opportunities for improvement and build an ideal journey.

The drivers of satisfaction and sources of dissatisfaction are specific to each life event. The customer journey map below illustrates the number of institutions the potential entrepreneur was required to engage with to set up a business, with the positive experiences in green and the negatives in red. This has provided the foundation for corrective action.



Over time, as understanding of the user experience has become more sophisticated, customer journey mapping has moved from qualitative studies to innovative methodologies, such as ethnography and design thinking.

Sources: Based on European Commission (2017), *Quality of Public Administration Toolbox for Practitioners*; SIGMA webinar for the Western Balkans region on seamless public service delivery²⁴³.

5.2. 'Life event' analysis

Customer journey mapping is most commonly used in the context of 'life events'. These are common, crucial moments or stages in the lives of citizens or the lifespan of a business, and may require multiple contacts with more than one institution, with the user at the centre trying to connect fragmented service offers.²⁴⁴

- The concept of 'life events' is recognised in **Moldova**, which defines them as "the generic name of a group of administrative public services associated with a fact of particular importance to a natural or legal person governed by private law"²⁴⁵. While some are purely categories (e.g. healthcare, social protection), in accordance with the definition, others are more properly key stages and moments for citizens (e.g. getting married) and businesses (e.g. registering intellectual property). The Public Services Portal includes sub-categories for 13 life events; for example, 'businesses' includes 'starting a business', 'doing business' and 'closing a business'. The Law on Public Services²⁴⁶ regulates 'life events' by requiring service providers to collaborate and co-ordinate their administrative activities, according to the needs and requirements of service beneficiaries.
- In **Ukraine**, the Diia portal links each administrative service to a life event in the online register, while also providing specific channels for life events around citizenship ('I turned 14') and family ('I'm expecting a baby', 'I had a baby').

²⁴³ <https://www.sigmaweb.org/events/western-balkans-seamless-public-service-delivery-sigma-march-2021.htm>

²⁴⁴ European Commission, *Quality of Public Administration Toolbox*, op. cit.

²⁴⁵ [Integrated nomenclature of administrative public services and the list of life events associated with them](#), approved by Government Decision No. 670/2020 (Annex 1), Official Gazette No. 229-233, Article 800.

²⁴⁶ Article 15, paragraph (1).

To become truly user-oriented, public administrations themselves can bring together information sources and individual services into integrated packages. To illustrate these potential packages and their interdependencies, the study looked at the services currently offered by the ENP East countries for three life events: having a baby, buying a used car, and moving to another home. Each is presented below and explained in more detail in Annexes 2-4.

Please note: The life event analysis is **illustrative**, with the intention of serving as a guide on how to conduct such exercises as 'preliminary' customer journey maps. As the research does not have privileged access to internal government processes, the study approaches this exercise from the viewpoint of outsiders looking in, which inevitably introduces an element of subjectivity and varying degrees of depth in the presentation of information. We would thus caution against drawing firm conclusions about performance across countries. Moreover, to make it manageable, the analysis assumes the life event itself happens entirely *within* each country, not abroad or a transaction across countries, and applies to a citizen, rather than a (permanent/temporary) resident or foreign visitor, because either scenario can involve different institutions, procedures and timescales. For the purposes of this analysis, the 'back office' operations are understood to mean not just the internal procedures of the public administration (including across organisational boundaries), but also the preparation by the service user of required documents (e.g. completing application forms, assembling necessary evidence).

To clarify the terms used in this section:

- 'Institutions involved directly' largely refers to public administrations, but includes medical institutions in the case of a birth. It includes only primary institutions with explicit front-office and/or back-office roles, not secondary institutions providing support services to them.
- 'Total steps' means the individual processes from the moment of the event (i.e. day of birth, sale of a car, initiating residence de-registration/registration) to completion of the service (e.g. receiving the official certificate, registration plates), and involves citizens (also in their roles as parents, guardians, business owners/managers, and/or representatives), external actors (in the case of having a baby, the medical institution), and public administrations, both in their front-office and back-office roles.
- 'Steps involving the citizen(s) directly' refers specifically to procedures in which the citizen(s) must directly participate, either initiating an action (e.g. preparing an application, assembling documents, making an appointment) or receiving the service (e.g. counter-signing a certificate).
- 'Documents needed' includes any application forms, but also other evidence, such as ID documents, medical certificates, driving license, power of attorney, etc. The documentary requirements can vary according to the individual's circumstances.
- 'Time taken' is measured from the moment of the event until the completion of the service, and can vary according to the individuals' circumstances, the path they choose to take through the system (e.g. physical or electronic), and other factors (e.g. options to receive the service more quickly for a higher fee). For simplicity's sake, it is assumed that all documentation is correct and complete, without errors, missing information or other irregularities (e.g. the used car is found to be stolen), which would lead to delays or suspension of the service.
- 'Degree of automation' is assessed from a citizen's perspective by the extent to which the whole process happens automatically and online, requires physical visits to public administrations in person, and relies on paper documentation, using a scale of low, low-medium, medium, medium-high and high.
- 'Total fees' includes charges for the regular service, and excludes any penalties for failing to observe public duties under the law.
- 'Ability to receive all life event services as a package' implies that administrative services are organised so that the citizen can access all of them through one portal.

In the following tables, 'M' means mandatory services citizens must complete and/or services provided by the state pro-actively and automatically without the need to apply (i.e. there is no requirement for a decision by the citizen), 'O' applies to services that are available but optional; even if they are entitlements, the citizen must make a conscious choice to 'opt in' to access them. '-' means not applicable.

5.2.1 *Having a baby*

This life event covers the period from pregnancy to the immediate aftermath and consequences of the birth, and is concerned with administrative services only, not other public services (e.g. healthcare, social services and education). The relevant services in the five countries can be characterised as falling into four categories:

- A. Even before the birth, the state provides financial support to the parents (or at least the mother) and for a defined period afterwards, when she/he is not working. This is typically known as parental leave (or sometimes maternity/paternity leave).
- B. Not surprisingly, all countries require that a child's birth be recognised officially. In all cases, this requires the hospital or other medical institution recording the birth as a medical fact and the parent(s) or a representative on their behalf to register the newborn in the population. This also involves establishing the child's identity (name, ID number), residency (where they live), and status (citizenship, and in Ukraine, establishing them in the taxpayers' register). These services can be bundled into a single process, or may be treated separately.
- C. The state and/or local self-government may also provide financial and/or material support for the child after birth. This can be a one-off gift, such as a grant or vouchers and/or, in the case of Ukraine, a 'baby box' of essential supplies (diapers, equipment). Alternatively, or additionally, it can be an allowance paid on a recurring basis, usually monthly, until the infant reaches a fixed age (e.g. 2 or 3 years old).
- D. The fourth is recognising the child in the healthcare system. This may happen automatically after birth (see B) as is the case in Azerbaijan²⁴⁷, Georgia and Moldova²⁴⁸, but can involve a separate process, as in Armenia²⁴⁹ and Ukraine.

The table below summarises the available services in ENP East countries. While mandatory services only appear in category B in every country (alongside some optional services in the case of Ukraine), potential services in the other three categories experience high take-up (up to 100%), which is not surprising, given that they represent rights and entitlements for citizens.

²⁴⁷ A unique code is assigned to the baby when the medical institution registers the birth in the Ministry of Health's information system.

²⁴⁸ The child is automatically insured when it is registered in the State Register of Population (through the government interoperability platform) after registration of the birth.

²⁴⁹ Every parent has the right to register a newborn baby in their territorial polyclinic, where they receive the insurance certificate (free) which is valid for the following seven years and which entitles them to any medical service in the hospitals free of charge. While this is a right, it is also optional, although it is rare for parents not to take up this entitlement, since they cannot access free healthcare without the certificate, and would otherwise have to pay, although this might be the case if they chose a private polyclinic instead.

Table 10. Scope of services for life event ‘Having a baby’

Cat	Individual services	ARM	AZE	GEO	MLD	UKR
A	Receiving social insurance during parental leave	O	O	- ²⁵⁰	O	O
B	Registering the birth	M	M	M	M	M
	Registering the child's identity (assigning ID number)					O
	Registering the residence of the newborn child	O				M
	Determining the child's citizenship	M			O	O
	Registering the child in the system as a future taxpayer	-		-	-	O
C	Receiving one-off childbirth support	-	O	O	O	O
	Receiving regular child allowance in the early years	O	O	-	O	O
	Certifying a large family	-	-	-	-	O
	Receiving regular large family/multi-child allowance	-	O	-	O	O
D	Registering the child for medical care	O	M	M	M	O

Note: M = mandatory, O = optional

The following table summarises the interaction between citizens, public administrations and other actors in the five countries for ‘Registering the birth’ under B, as the common service and hence the benchmark for comparisons (see Annex 2).

Table 11. Comparing services to register the birth

Overview	ARM ²⁵¹	AZE	GEO ²⁵²	MLD ²⁵³	UKR ²⁵⁴
Institutions involved directly (non-medical)	1	2	1-2	1	1
Documents needed to register the birth	2-5	4-6	2-3	7-11	3-5
Time taken to receive certificate (days)	1-6 ²⁵⁵	2	< 6	4-16	1-3 ²⁵⁶
Degree of automation of birth registration	Low	Medium	Medium-high	Low	Medium

²⁵⁰ Public sector employees receive 100% of their salary for six months while on parental leave (for women, this is usually from the seventh month of pregnancy onwards; for men, this right is rarely exercised). Non-public sector employees are not granted the same privileges, and it is the employer's decision to determine length of leave and amount of compensation.

²⁵¹ The number of documents and time taken in Armenia depends on whether DNA testing, analysis and reporting is necessary, the number of parents or representatives (e.g. social workers, grandparents) who are party to the application with ID cards, and marriage etc. certificate.

²⁵² The service in Georgia primarily involves the Public Service Development Agency, but citizens can elect to collect their birth certificates from Public Service Hall and its Community Centres, PSDA territorial offices or alternatively generate an e-certificate.

²⁵³ Citizens in Moldova can choose from three alternative paths to register the birth, but each involves just one front office, plus the medical institution. The number of documents required depends on the circumstances of the parents and whether an ‘alternate’ is empowered to act on the parents’ behalf. The time taken shows the minimum and maximum times based on the regulations.

²⁵⁴ The number of documents depends on the number of applicants (ID cards) and whether the parents are married (if not, a notarised statement to recognise paternity is required).

²⁵⁵ In theory, the whole process could take place in 1 day (the day of birth), if the parent(s) receive the medical document and choose to visit the Civil Acts Registration Agency or Unified Office of Public Services immediately, and no DNA testing or analysis is required. Up to 6 days for birth registration applies in the case of an abandoned child.

²⁵⁶ In theory, the whole process could occur in 1 day (the day of birth), if the parent(s) receive the medical document and choose to apply online or in person immediately, there is no requirement for notarial services, there are no mistakes in the application, it is submitted during working hours, and they pick up the birth certificate on the same day.

Total fees charged (equivalent in EUR)	None ²⁵⁷	None	None	None	None ²⁵⁸
Ability to receive all life event services as a package	No	No	No	No	Yes

In two countries, the ministries themselves have responsibility under the law for registering births: the Ministry of Health (Azerbaijan) and Ministry of Justice (Azerbaijan and Ukraine). In the other three, this role is taken by a ministry's agencies: Civil Acts Registration Agency (Armenia), Public Service Development Agency (Georgia), and Public Services Agency (Moldova). Each country makes use of territorial offices, but most also offer alternative front-office options: Unified Offices of Public Services (Armenia); 'ASAN service' centres (Azerbaijan); Public Service Hall and its Community Centres (Georgia); local self-government (Moldova and Ukraine, including ASCs); and even the medical institutions themselves (Moldova). The choice of front office(s) and their locations is likely to influence user satisfaction with the service, as most countries (except Georgia and partly Ukraine, see further below) rely on in-person interaction to submit documents and/or receive birth certificates.

In essence, each service has three main phases:

1. The birth act is recorded. This is the responsibility of the medical institution, and might be subject to its own registration process (as in Azerbaijan and Moldova, which has a medical certificate register), rather than just documented as the basis for Phase 2. In some cases (Georgia and Moldova), a parental signature is used for verification.
2. Confirmation of the birth is conveyed to the relevant state authority to register the newborn in the population and establish maternity and paternity (including providing/checking the necessary evidence).
3. The birth certificate is generated and provided to parent(s).

As the table shows, there is notable variation in the documents required and the time that elapses between the birth and receipt of the official certificate across the five countries. These metrics are particularly high in Moldova, where the degree of automation is low, which the Government recognised and placed the service in the programme for re-engineering and digitalisation (see section 5.3).

In completing and submitting their application for an official birth certificate, the parent(s), guardians or other representatives of the child/parents must present their ID cards in every country. Beyond those minimum requirements, obligations vary. In three countries, marriage (or divorce) certificates are required, as/if applicable (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Moldova²⁵⁹). In Armenia, the parent(s) or equivalent must perform DNA analysis if the child is born without assistance from a medical institution or with the help of assisted reproductive technologies.

In Georgia, apart from countersigning the medical birth record, the process is automated, and data transferred from the medical institution to PDSA, with the citizen able to generate an e-certificate, and hence the degree of automation is assessed as medium-high. The assessment is 'medium' in Azerbaijan, due to the interoperability of the medical institution, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Justice's information systems, offset by requirements for physical documentation and in-person presence to apply for and access the birth certificate. Similarly, it is assessed as medium in Ukraine; although all hospitals had connected to the Electronic Health System starting on 1 September 2021 (and as of 23 February 2022)

²⁵⁷ In situations when a DNA sample and analysis is required, in the case of childbirth without medical assistance or involving assisted reproductive technologies, a payment of DNA sampling and analyses is due equivalent to around EUR 40.

²⁵⁸ A fee equivalent to EUR 0.50 is payable for registering the residence of a newborn child, but this a separate (mandatory) administrative service from registering the birth.

²⁵⁹ Also Ukraine, if there is no information on the marriage in the register, e.g. it took place abroad.

and hence send birth confirmation and related data (as well as request for other services) to the other agencies online, the official birth certificate must still be received in paper form.

No service fee is payable to state authorities or local self-governments in any country. However, DNA testing and analysis in Armenia costs up to AMD 22 000 (equivalent to around EUR 40), while the separate service of registering the child's residence costs UAH 13.6 (equivalent to around EUR 0.50) in Ukraine (see also 'Moving to another home').

Of the five countries, only Moldova and Ukraine recognise 'Having a baby' officially as a life event, and only Ukraine enables the citizen to receive services, whether mandatory or optional, as a package through *eMalyatko* on the *Diia* portal²⁶⁰, by submitting one application for all 11 services with relevant documents attached that are not already available through electronic information interaction across the providers' registers. However, this currently has the status of an experimental project only²⁶¹, under time-limited powers granted by Parliament to the Government, and ends formally on 31 December 2022.

With a similar ambition to *eMalyatko*, Serbia's eBaby initiative seeks to bring services together into a one-stop life event package, which can provide helpful inspiration, along with other experiences, such as Estonia's pro-active provision of family and parental benefits²⁶².

Inspiring practice: eBaby initiative (Serbia)

The Prime Minister's Office established the Unit for Implementation of Strategic Government Projects (known as the 'Delivery Unit') to develop and co-ordinate the implementation of the 'Plan of Priority Activities for the Reduction of Administrative Burdens in the Republic of Serbia 2016–2018' (also called the 'Stop-to-Bureaucracy Plan')²⁶³, aimed at identifying and eliminating tangible administrative obstacles in citizens' life events. One of the priority initiatives was the 'Baby, Welcome to the World' project, which aimed at creating a digital one-stop shop service for the parents of newborns, popularly known as 'eBaby'. The implementation of the project started in September 2015 with the establishment of a cross-government working group²⁶⁴.

The first phase of eBaby covered three administrative procedures and allowed parents to register the baby's name, address and health insurance while still in hospital. The process is organised in four steps and requires that the parents must agree on the name, the home address (the law states that parents can choose only between the mother's or father's address, if they are different), and the title holder of the baby's health insurance (mother or father).

- 1 The authorised hospital staff log into the system and fill out an integrated online form, which is available through the eGovernment Portal, www.euprava.gov.rs. Both parents must be present and have their valid ID cards.
- 2 The authorised hospital staff enter the ID numbers of both parents, and the system uses web services technology to pick up all necessary information about the parents: from the birth registry within the Ministry for Public Administration and Local Self-Government (MPALSG); about their official home addresses from the Ministry of Interior (MoI); and about their social/health insurance from the Central Registry for Obligatory Social Insurance (CROSI).
- 3 The completed forms are printed out and given to the parents for their physical signature.

²⁶⁰ <https://diia.gov.ua/life-situations/yemalyatko>.

²⁶¹ CMU Resolution "On realisation of the experimental project on the creation of favourable conditions for the execution of the child rights".

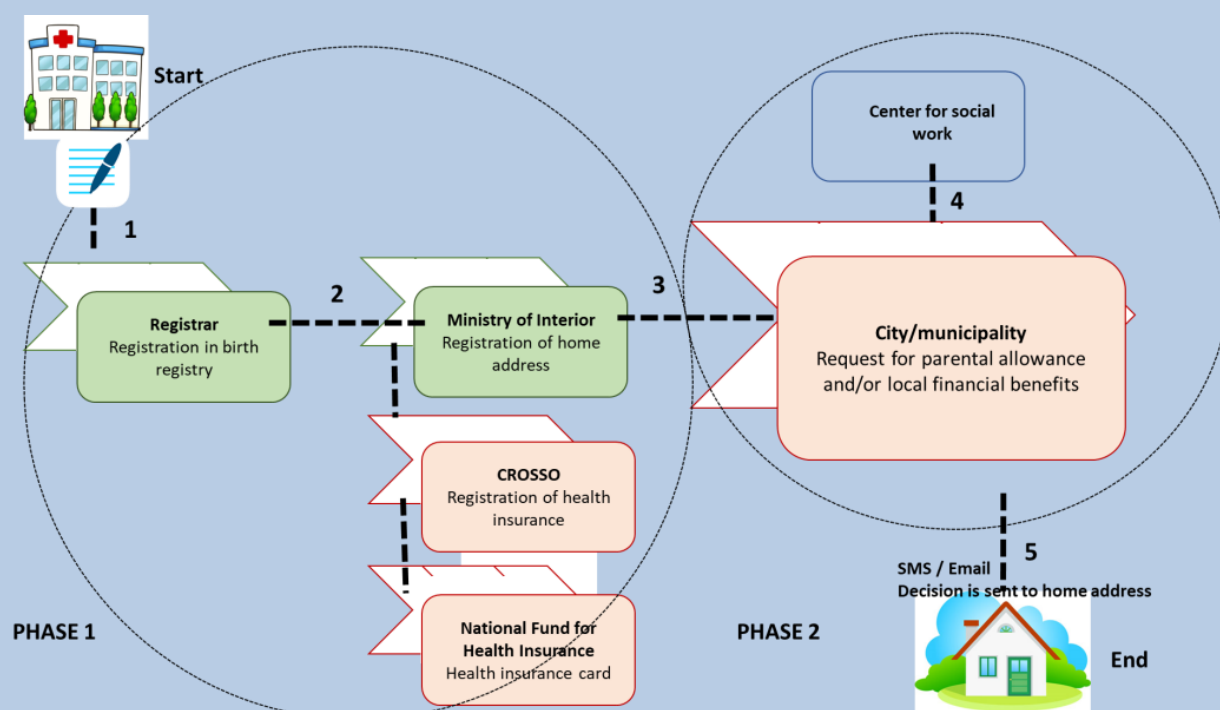
²⁶² https://blog.twn.ee/en/proactive_services.

²⁶³ The plan is available in Serbian via: www.mduls.gov.rs/doc/Stop%20birokratiji%20konacni.doc.

²⁶⁴ Membership comprised representatives of: the Ministry for Public Administration and Local Self-Government; the Ministry of Interior; CROSI under the Ministry of Finance; the National Health Insurance Fund (RFZO); the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia; the Office for Information Technologies and eGovernment; the Ministry of Health; the Ministry for Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy; Serbia Post; and the Faculty of Organisational Science.

- 4 The authorised hospital staff sign the integrated form online using their electronic certificate, once the parents have signed the printed paper forms.

Once the authorised hospital staff sign the online form, the eGovernment portal communicates first with the birth registry, by sending it data in XML. Birth registry officials open this data using their own IT system. Once the birth registry officials verify all data and get the ID number for the baby (via direct online communication between the MPALSG and the MoI), they register the baby into the birth registry and they send the information back to the portal (birth certificate in XML form). Once the portal receives this notification, the parents get an SMS or email saying the baby is registered in the birth registry, and the portal sends data to the MoI and CROSI to register baby's home address and health insurance.



Both systems send information back to the portal once they successfully register the baby's address and insurance, so that parents receive another two SMSs/emails. Later, a paper copy of the birth certificate, with the baby's health card, is sent to the address where the baby is registered. Depending on how quickly the birth registry staff verify the data received from the eGovernment portal, the registration in the birth registry can take between 15 minutes and 2 days (for example, in cases where the parents are not married, and the father needs to provide an official statement confirming that he is the baby's father). Once registered in the birth registry, a few minutes are needed to register the baby's home address and health insurance. The mother often receives SMS or email notifications that all procedures are finalised while still in hospital. Paper copies of the birth registration form and address registration form signed by the parents are sent from the hospital to municipality offices (birth registry) and police stations (MoI) every 15 days or once a month for record keeping, since it is important to have the parents' signatures on these forms.

To implement this first phase, which began in April 2016 and was completed by the end of the year, covering all hospitals, the Law on the Registry Books first needed to be revised, so that birth registration could be performed electronically by hospital staff; as did the Law on Administrative Fees to abolish the fee for home address registration for newborns; and a series of bylaws and rulebooks of the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and the MPALSG relating to birth and address registration. The Delivery Unit had to organise training on the system application for both birth registry officials and the hospital staff. Problems with hospital IT equipment at the start meant organising donors for more up-to-date computers, printers, etc. A good support system, including a call centre, was also important at the outset to answer questions. The whole service is run by existing staff in hospitals with other roles, whereas dedicated staff would be

preferable, employed only for these purposes. The total budget for developing the application for electronic registration in the birth registry in 2016 was RSD 5 million (approximately EUR 42 000).

This service saves time and money for both citizens and government. The process used to take several days, and involved the parents physically visiting institutions to collect the required documentation and register a baby.

The second phase of eBaby involved local self-government and concerned applying for parental allowance and local financial benefits, starting with five local authorities initially (including the City of Belgrade).

Source: [eBaby \(srbija.gov.rs\)](http://eBaby.srbija.gov.rs), [Serbian Monitor](#)

5.2.2. *Buying a used car*

The five countries have five potential services under this life event, as summarised in the table below:

- A. The mandatory service that applies in all countries concerns transfer of ownership by (re)registering the vehicle²⁶⁵.
- B. Each country has its own tax regime, and hence the conditions on taxing cars when ownership is taken also vary.
- C. With the exception of Georgia²⁶⁶, new owners are obliged by law to insure their car (or put another way, to assume the obligation to insure them). This is not a condition of ownership, rather use, but as the purpose of ownership is to drive the car (except for car collectors), this is also considered part of the life event, whether the insurance is arranged with a state insurance body or a private insurance company, as the mandate to insure brings it into the sphere of 'public' services in this study.
- D. Ukraine also offers the option of registering the 'proper user' of the vehicle²⁶⁷, free of charge, when the owner allows a third party to drive the car (for example, their partner, an adult child or employee). This is intended to safeguard the owner in the event of traffic offences, so that responsibility lies with the 'proper user' rather than the owner. In Armenia, by contrast, the name and ID of the user is part of the registration process and hence mandatory²⁶⁸, while in Georgia, use is based on the car's tech-passport, rather than on ownership²⁶⁹.

²⁶⁵ The terms 'registration' and 're-registration' can have different meanings in different countries. In most, the change of ownership is recognised through 're-registration'. In Armenia, 're-registration' refers to specific circumstances with a change in the owner's data (e.g. change of name, including when the owner is a legal person) without a change in the owner itself, or material changes have been made to the vehicle (e.g. numbered parts, license number).

²⁶⁶ This is optional for both new and used cars in Georgia, as insurance is 'market-regulated' and hence based on insurance companies being incentivised to promote their service offers.

²⁶⁷ CMU Resolution No. 1 197, "Procedure for entering information about the proper user of the vehicle in the Unified State Register of Vehicles", 14 November 2018, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1197-2018-%D0%BF#top>.

²⁶⁸ While anyone with a driving license is permitted to drive another person's car, the owner is liable for any fines if the driver fails to comply with driving norms or regulations. It is thus in the owner's interest to register officially any other user, and to ensure that the change of ownership is registered when the car is sold, to avoid future liabilities.

²⁶⁹ In Georgia, the car's tech-passport lists an owner's name and last name, personal identification number and a legal address. Other drivers can drive the car as long as they have the tech-passport (to show the police if stopped, along with a driving licence, so the police can see that owner and driver are two different persons). However, if the user wants to sell the car, the owner needs to provide a notary act that articulates the right of the user to sell the car. Hence, there is no document (or need) to list both owner and user.

- E. Furthermore, all five countries²⁷⁰ offer the opportunity to request personalised number plates for the purchased car, which a new owner might wish to take up, although this is not time-limited to the purchase.
- F. In Moldova, the Public Services Agency also provides assistance, on request, with concluding the sales-purchase agreement for the used car, in accordance with Civil Law. It charges MLD 450 for this service (around EUR 23). In Georgia, the Service Agency reflects the ownership change in its system and parties add their signature to prove it, all electronically.

Table 12. Scope of services for life event 'Buying a used car'

Cat.	Individual services	ARM	AZE	GEO	MLD	UKR
A	(Re)registering the vehicle to its new owner	M	M	M	M	M
B	Paying car tax	M ²⁷¹	M	-	M	M ²⁷²
C	Paying car insurance	M ²⁷³	M	O	M ²⁷⁴	M
D	Registering the 'proper user' of the vehicle	M	M	-	O	O
E	Issuing personalised number plates	O	O	O	O	O
F	Assisting the conclusion of the sale-purchase agreement	-	-	M	O	-

Note: M = mandatory, O = optional

The following table summarises the interaction between citizens and public administrations concerning the mandatory, common service of transferring ownership through (re)registration (see Annex 3).

²⁷⁰ While as in other countries, registration plates are generated automatically, in Armenia, the option for personalised number plates exists, costing up to AMD 1.2 million (almost EUR 2 500). In Georgia, prices vary from GEL 150 (EUR 50) up to GEL 10 000 (EUR 3 200); for instance, acquiring an 'OECD 1' plate would cost GEL 10 000. In Moldova, registration plates can be issued on an individual order, taking up to 3 working days, for a fee between MLD 2 200 and MDL 33 000 (around EUR 113-1 695); Annex 1 to the Nomenclature of the services provided by the PSA and the tariffs for them, approved by Government Decision No. 966/2020 on the services delivered by the PSA. In Ukraine, the administrative fee is UAH 300-1 100 (approximately EUR 10-36), depending on the complexity of plate design under Ministry of Internal Affairs Regulation No. 174, "Procedure for ordering, issuing, and accounting vehicle number plates made upon the individual order of their owners" 11 March 2016, consolidated version: 12 February 2019, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0494-16#top>.

²⁷¹ The payment of car tax in Armenia is mandatory for the seller (the previous owner) for the current year.

²⁷² Only mandatory in specific circumstances, namely the second sale of a car during a year and/or ownership of a luxury car (also first registration of a car), in which case there is an obligation to pay a tax and submit a proof of payment. If it is a first sale during a year, and the car has already been registered by the previous owner (and is not an imported or new car) and is not a luxury vehicle, no tax is due.

²⁷³ The payment of car insurance on a used car in Armenia is mandatory at least for the upcoming 3 months.

²⁷⁴ The transfer of ownership is carried out based on a copy of the compulsory civil liability insurance document for damages caused by vehicles, within its term of validity, and the new owner only pays for new insurance when the old one expires.

Table 13. Comparing services for used car (re)registration

Overview	ARM	AZE	GEO	MLD ²⁷⁵	UKR ²⁷⁶
Institutions involved directly	1	1	1	1	1-2
Documents needed	4-7 ²⁷⁷	6-7	4	10-11	5
Time taken to receive certificate (days)	2-5 ²⁷⁸	1	1	1 (varies)	1
Degree of automation	Low-medium	Low	Low-medium	Low	Low
Total fees charged (equivalent in EUR)	EUR 29	EUR 25 ²⁷⁹	EUR 20	EUR 17-135	EUR 21/22
Ability to receive all life event services as a package	No ²⁸⁰	No	No	No	No

In Armenia and Azerbaijan, the road/traffic police are responsible for the registration process. In Georgia and Moldova, it is the territorial subdivisions of a national agency (Service Agency of Ministry of Internal Affairs and PSA, respectively). In Ukraine, responsibility rests with the territorial service centres of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), but the local ASC can also be a conduit for documentation, if it has an agreement with the MIA.

In essence, each service has three main phases:

1. The used car is purchased. In four of the five countries, this is a private transaction, but in Armenia, the sales contract is an integral element of the public service, and is drawn up by the road police.
2. The buyer (with the previous owner, in the case of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) applies to register the change of ownership, which involves inspection of the car and/or its documentation by the responsible institution to ensure that it corresponds with the application to re-register.
3. The new owner receives the appropriate (updated) documentation and, in some cases, two new registration plates.

In each country, the used car owners must bring their vehicles to an examination centre for physical inspection by a government-approved specialist as part of the verification process (checking vehicle identification numbers, body and/or chassis numbers). The requirement for in-person attendance with the car itself obviously limits the potential for putting the *whole* service online, although other elements could

²⁷⁵ In Moldova, 'time taken' can be within 1 day, or at most, as long as it takes to arrange a visit by an expert to come to the car's location to examine it, plus up to 20 working days to receive the certificate. With the standard '20 working day' option, the cost is MLD 330 (around EUR 17), but with various options for shorter timescales (10, 5, 3, 1 days), to the most expensive scenario, which is MLD 1 980 (around EUR 102) for the same-day option. An additional document might be required for power of attorney if the owner's place is taken in the process by a representative. An additional fee of MLD 400 (around EUR 20) is due if the owner requests a PSA inspection to verify the engine number, and given the potential wait of 20 days, the possibility to purchase a temporary certificate allowing car use within Moldova (only) for MLD 80 (around EUR 4).

²⁷⁶ The citizen can submit documents and receive certificates through the local ASC (hence, up to two institutions), but must visit a Ministry of Internal Affairs' services centre for the vehicle examination, where documentation can be processed. The cost is the equivalent of EUR 21 if the car was manufactured in Ukraine, EUR 22 if manufactured abroad.

²⁷⁷ Armenia requires four documents and up to three more that may apply under certain circumstances (e.g. if it is not possible to inspect numbered parts, if the vehicle has changed in material ways, and power of attorney).

²⁷⁸ The whole process can be completed within 1 day, but the appointment must be booked up to a week in advance.

²⁷⁹ This includes AZN 10 (around EUR 5) to register the car, AZN 17 (around EUR 9) to issue the registration certificate, and AZN 22 (around EUR 11) to issue the new registration plates. An additional fee based on the engine capacity, of up to AZN 1 500 (EUR 750) for engines over 5 000 cubic centimetres, was abolished by the Cabinet of Ministers on 24 May 2022: <https://nk.gov.az/az/document/6151>.

²⁸⁰ While it is possible to receive all the services in the same premises on one visit, the same window or person do not provide the services together.

be (e.g. booking appointments) and are (e.g. making payments in the case of Moldova). The application to change registration must also be accompanied by documents, either submitted to the same service centre or another front office, although in principle this element could be digitalised further, including retrieval from existing databases. Proximity is thus again a factor in user satisfaction with the public service, along with timeliness. Only Moldova offers the option of the specialist coming to the car's location, rather than vice versa, for which an additional charge is applied depending on the distance travelled.

Every government charges an administrative fee(s) at broadly similar levels, at least for the standard service, in the range of EUR 17-29.

The highest variation between countries concerns documentation. The standard requirements are: ID cards/documents (new owner in all countries, also previous owner in Armenia and Georgia); legality of acquisition (e.g. sales contract); and proof of payment of service fee(s). Other specific evidence obligations include: existing registration certificate (Georgia and Moldova); vehicle identification report (Moldova); document verifying that the vehicle's construction meets road traffic safety requirements (Ukraine); evidence of periodic technical inspection (Moldova); confirmation of vehicle/road tax paid (Armenia and Moldova); confirmation of payment of any outstanding fines by the seller (Azerbaijan); civil liability insurance document for damages caused by vehicles (Moldova); and if the physical examination cannot be fully completed, certificate from the manufacturer or inspection body (Armenia).

The countries vary as to whether the result is simply a new registration certificate, or whether it includes new registration plates (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine). The other main distinction is the role of the seller. In Armenia, the process includes the purchase itself, but the process in Georgia requires the new owner and the previous owner to appear in person to sign a joint statement transferring ownership. In Azerbaijan, both seller and buyer must complete separate applications, to change ownership and to change the registration respectively, as well as attending in person.

Of the five countries, only Moldova recognises 'Buying a (used) car' officially as a life event.

5.2.3. *Moving to another home*

Some of the elements of 'Buying a used car' overlap with 'Moving to another home', as citizens may be obliged to re-register their vehicle at a new residence (e.g. Ukraine²⁸¹). This life event overlaps with 'Having a baby', given that a child must also be registered to a residential address. Implications of the life event include notification of change of address, for interactions with public and private service providers (such as communal services, banks, etc.), which will not be covered here. Otherwise, the main common public administrative services that apply to this life event can be categorised as follows, as summarised for the five countries in the table below:

- A. Every country but Azerbaijan requires citizens to register a new residence as their domicile (assuming they do not have several residences). In Moldova and Ukraine, this also involves de-registering the previous residence as a separate process/service, although this can also be performed simultaneously. In Azerbaijan, citizens are not required to change their place of registration, depending on where they live, but every citizen must be registered somewhere and this must be agreed to by the owner of the accommodations, and thus citizens have an incentive to register in the location where they live to access local benefits and entitlements²⁸².

²⁸¹ Note, the process of re-registration is the same, except there is no obligation to bring the vehicle(s) to the MIA territorial service centre for inspection, and the vehicle's certificates are subject to re-issue (because they contain residence data), but the registration numberplates remain the same.

²⁸² In Azerbaijan, the Ministry of Internal Affairs is responsible for the registering of residence, while the Ministry of Justice is responsible for registering home ownership; each has access to the other's information system. A resident would need to provide consent if the owner decides to sell the property.

- B. This can also affect the ID card (and passport, in Armenia), if the law requires that it show the current place of residence, and the citizen may thus have to apply to update it²⁸³.
- C. In Ukraine, a citizen is obliged to inform tax authorities of any change of address (within a month), free of charge. In Armenia and Georgia, tax authorities have access to the new address through the databases of the Ministry of Justice and National Police, respectively although a citizen can also contact the tax authorities directly to notify them of a change of address, which also applies in the case of individual entrepreneurs (see D).
- D. In Ukraine, citizens who are (self-employed) individual entrepreneurs, with their domicile as their business address, must also record, for a fee, the change of data in the United State Register of Legal Entities, Individual Entrepreneurs and Public Organisations.

Table 14. Scope of services for the life event ‘Moving to another home’

Cat.	Individual services	ARM	AZE	GEO	MLD	UKR
A*	De-registering residence at the previous domicile	M	O	M	M	M
	Registering residence in the new domicile				M	M
B	Updating the ID with the new address	-	O	M ²⁸⁴	M	-
C	Informing the tax authorities about the change of address	O	O	O	-	M
D	Registering change in state register of legal entities (if the resident is an individual entrepreneur)	O	O	O	-	M

Note: Note: M = mandatory, O = optional

* Separate rows indicate that each service is distinct, although they can also be performed simultaneously.

The following table summarises the interaction between citizens and public administrations for the specific service of registering the change of residence (see Annex 4). It assumes that the new residence is permanent, not temporary.

²⁸³ The ID card or passport is updated automatically in Armenia as an integral part of the process, while changing the data in the central State Register of Population when the new address is registered and at the time the old address is deregistered (A).

²⁸⁴ In Georgia, changing an ID document is only mandatory if it is *not* an electronic ID and if the address must be shown on the document.

Table 15. Comparing processes to register a change of residence

Overview	ARM	AZE	GEO	MLD ²⁸⁵	UKR ²⁸⁶
Institutions involved directly	1	1	1	1	1
Documents needed ²⁸⁷	2-3 ²⁸⁸	4	2	3-5	4 ²⁸⁹
Time taken to receive certificate (days)	1 (<7) ²⁹⁰	1	1	1 (<3) ²⁹¹	1
Degree of automation	Low	Medium	Medium-high	Low	Medium
Total fees charged (equivalent in EUR)	EUR 2	None	None	EUR 2.50	EUR 1
Possibility of receiving all life event services as a package	No	No	No	No	No

Registering a change in residence is obligatory in four of the five countries, except for Azerbaijan. Some countries impose a time limit, for example, within 7 days in Armenia, and up to 30 days after de-registering and arriving in the new place of residence in Ukraine. Citizens can be resident for 3 months in Georgia before registering their new abode.

In four countries, the same institutions are responsible for this service as are tasked with managing registration under 'Buying a used car', except it is the police, rather than the road/traffic police in Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the role of the front office is shared with the 'ASAN service' centres in the latter case. In Ukraine, responsibility for registering residential status rests solely with local self-government, including through the ASCs. As with the other two life events, the front office and its location are likely to influence user experience, since all countries rely on visits in person.

The end-to-end process is similar in the five countries. Broadly, it involves three phases:

1. The citizen(s) assembles the required documents according to the law and visits the front office of the institution responsible.
2. Officials check and verify the presented information and, assuming no gaps or errors, register the change in the system.

²⁸⁵ The total fee in Moldova assumes that de-registration and registration are performed at the same time as a single service, or the fee will be charged twice (once for each service), at a rate of EUR 1.50 each. The number of documents depends on whether the payment is made through banks or paying terminals (in which case a hard-copy receipt is required) or electronically through MPay (which can be verified through information systems), and also whether the accommodation is in a house privately owned by a legal person (e.g. company) and the administrator of the legal person cannot be verified through the State Register of Legal Units.

²⁸⁶ The difference in the number of steps in Ukraine depends on whether it is possible for the citizen to apply to change the place of residence online (1) or they make it in person (5 in total, 4 involving the citizen). The total fee shown assumes that de-registration and registration are performed as a single service, or the fee will be charged twice (once for each service), and the de-registration and registration take place within the mandatory 30 days. If the resident misses this deadline, the fee (per service) increases to the equivalent of EUR 1.5. The number of documents might be 4, if the single adult resident is subject to military service.

²⁸⁷ This is based on a single adult resident, as the number of documents can depend on the number of residents, their age (if there are different rules for children) and individual status (e.g. separated parents and/or subject to military services).

²⁸⁸ In addition to an application form and ID (card or passport), if the citizen is not the owner of the new residence, and the owner cannot attend in person, the owner must provide a written agreement (otherwise the police must go to the accommodation and check that the applicant lives at the address).

²⁸⁹ Some documents must be produced for each resident, depending on circumstances (e.g. age if under 14 years old, or if subject to military service). It is not possible to state how many required in total, but the minimum is 4.

²⁹⁰ From the citizen's perspective, all relevant steps in Armenia can be completed within 1 day, but updating the system fully, including de-registration from the previous place of residence, takes up to 7 days.

²⁹¹ In Moldova, from the citizen's perspective, all the relevant steps can be completed within 1 day, but full updating of the system, including the maximum 48 hours to transfer the updates to local self-governments, can take up to 3 days.

3. To complete the (back-office) process, the updated information is transferred (in Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine) to other public administrations that require it for their own registration purposes, including de-registration at the previous address.

In three countries (Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine), the process includes paying an upfront service fee, and in each case, the cost is modest.

Change of residence can be completed *in principle* within a working day, typically within the time of the visit to the front office. However, *in practice*, each citizen must also prepare their application before approaching the provider, which extends the time taken. Typically, registration requires citizens to present their ID card and evidence of their entitlement to reside in the accommodation, such as proof of ownership, lease agreement or written consent of the owner. In Georgia, this proof can be replaced by witness statements from two adults who must also attend alongside the applicant, while the owner in Ukraine can provide notarised approval, sign the e-approval by e-signature, or visit the front office in person and sign an application along with the applicant. Both scenarios increase the options and flexibility, but require extra input. In Armenia, if the citizen is not also the owner of the accommodation, the owner must also attend, or provide a written agreement, or in its absence, the police visit the address within 7 days to confirm that the citizen is in fact living in the place of residence. In Azerbaijan, the registration is made by the owner, rather than the resident, who presents proof of ownership and a formal 'no objection to residence' application.

The degree of automation is assessed as low in Armenia and Moldova. While the front- and back-office interactions are conducted electronically (i.e. entering and exchanging data in population registers), the service still largely relies on paper documents (originals or copies) and physical presence at the front office. This is also the case in Azerbaijan, but the registration itself fully takes place within the MIA's information system and updates the chip in the resident's ID card and hence the assessment is medium. In Ukraine, which is also assessed as medium, the Law on the provision of Public (Electronic) Services for the Declaration and Registration of Residence, which entered into force on 1 January 2022, makes it possible to register on the *Diia* portal: privately owned housing, provided data about this housing appears in the State Register of Real Property Rights; and a dormitory, provided that the manager of the dormitory gives e-approval²⁹². The assessment for Georgia is medium-high. While the in-person service still requires paper documents, the physical presence of the applicant (and potentially, two witnesses), and visual checks to validate documents, there are also online options to submit the application electronically through the government portals with QES, with ownership verified electronically or via video communication (although witness statements would still need to be submitted to the PSDA/PSH or CC).

None of the five countries recognises 'Moving to another home' officially as a life event, although Moldova includes 'Building a house' in its life events list.

5.3. Simplifying and streamlining administrative services

One-stop shop networks rationalise the front offices of the public administration (see section 4.1), and can play a vital role as a focal point for information and communication (including steps and procedures), as well as transactions and interactions. However, the service experience will not improve for the user, and public authorities will not achieve greater efficiency, if they do not streamline and simplify the back office, eliminating unnecessary steps, removing superfluous documentary requirements and/or shortening delivery timelines. It is more helpful to think of service provision as a single system in which front and back offices are fully integrated and interoperable.

²⁹² <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1871-20#top>.

Administrative simplification is the review and reduction of regulatory complexity and administrative barriers to obtaining public services, which create a bureaucratic burden for both the service user and the public administration. These can arise from repeat or duplicate information requests, unnecessary notarisation and insufficient standardisation. Often, they start from poorly conceived or rushed laws that have not received rigorous impact assessment or been subjected to adequate consultation. The problem can be addressed at source, by intervening before new regulations are introduced, as well as by inventorying the stock of regulations and evaluating whether they are fit for purpose, individually and in aggregate. Sometimes, the problem may lie with the public administration's interpretation of adopted legislation, with the addition of extra rules and the construction of complicated forms. In some cases, the service itself may have become obsolete, due to policy changes or technological developments, or is simply unnecessary and can be abolished and removed from service catalogues.

In a series of studies, the OECD has identified the success factors that can help overcome strategic and technical barriers to administrative simplification²⁹³.

In the context of administrative simplification, process re-engineering involves a fundamental redesign of operational processes from the user's perspective, including across organisational boundaries if appropriate, to optimise process flows and generate real improvements in critical performance metrics, such as service quality, speed and cost. This can lead to radical rather than incremental changes, and should be framed in the context of continual improvement.

The emphasis on electronic delivery in government strategies runs the risk that well-embedded practices are simply transplanted to a new online environment. Administrative simplification, and specifically process re-engineering, should occur before digitalisation, to ensure that e-services do not merely 'digitalise bureaucracy'. Given the complexities of service design and delivery, this demands inter-institutional co-ordination. Moldova's service modernisation initiative is a prime example of sequencing change management systematically and seeing it as a whole-of-government exercise.

Flagship initiative: Re-engineering and digitalising administrative services (Moldova)

Initiated under the Public Administration Reform Strategy for 2016-2020²⁹⁴, the Government of Moldova aims to modernise its public services and increase its quality and accessibility, by re-engineering and then digitalising their design and delivery. The aim is to simplify and streamline service delivery, reduce unnecessary administrative burdens (e.g. lists of documents) and delivery times, and minimise costs for beneficiaries and providers. In taking forward this plan, the Government benefited from a World Bank loan-financed project²⁹⁵ that began in 2018, to run until June 2023.

To take a harmonised approach across both national and local levels, this initiative is being led from the centre of government by the State Chancellery, and steered by certain principles, including citizen orientation (pro-active notification of service eligibility, trust the citizen, citizen silence is consent, etc.), enhancing choice of service channels (one-stop shop, internet, mobile, kiosks, call centre, etc.); and 'once-only' information requests (see section 5.4). Before re-engineering even starts, there are two important preceding steps: eliminating outdated services, and prioritising services for modernisation, including by merger.

²⁹³ See OECD (2009), *Overcoming barriers to administrative simplification strategies: guidance for policy makers*, and OECD (2006), *Cutting Red Tape: National Strategies for Administrative Simplification*, Paris, and OECD (2010), *Cutting Red Tape. Why Is Administrative Simplification So Complicated? Looking Beyond 2010*.

²⁹⁴ [Public Administration Reform Strategy for 2016-2020](#), approved by Government Decision No. 911/2016, Official Gazette No. 256-264, Article 1 033.

²⁹⁵ "Modernisation of Government Services", ratified by [Law No. 25/2018](#), Official Gazette No. 105-107/2018, Article 195.

The core tool, approved by the secretary-general and published on the State Chancellery's website, is the 'methodology on the re-engineering of public services'²⁹⁶. Crucially, this covers not only processes, but also eligibility conditions, information and documentation required to receive the service. The methodology breaks down into eight stages:

1. **Preparation:** Defining the objectives and goals and forming the team/working group that will perform the re-engineering of the public service;
2. **Mapping and analysing the current situation:** identifying legal foundation/requirements to obtain a service; developing and validating the 'as is' map of front- and back-office responsibilities, levels of staff expertise, ICT solutions (channels, technology, data); finding out users' perception (surveys, focus groups); mapping the level of development of the service; defining and measuring key parameters (time taken, service maturity) and preparing the baseline;
3. **Performing service re-engineering:** Creating an alternative process to replace the current system that will increase user satisfaction, based on more complete data (and hence the stage 1 objectives may change), and comprising five steps: administrative simplification; identifying deficiencies in the process; applying re-engineering strategies; developing 'to be' map; and developing service standards;
4. **Cost-benefit analysis:** Evaluating potential outcomes by enumerating all benefits and costs (optional, depending on objectives, investment size and service scalability);
5. **Stakeholder consultation and approval:** Presenting the new design and delivery model to service providers and other relevant stakeholders and consulting them on steps, procedures, staffing and legal changes;
6. **Determining implementation requirements:** Analysing the gap between currently available human, technical and financial resources and what is required to implement the proposed system, including organisational structure, allocation of tasks to departments, optimal staffing and skills requirements;
7. **Piloting/simulation:** Verifying the effectiveness of the proposed design and delivery system using simulation tools, ideally through testing with real service users, modifying the process until it performs satisfactorily, and using data collected to revise findings and feed into stage 8;
8. **Implementation of the new service design and delivery model:** Rolling out the new model according to the agreed action plan, monitoring and observing performance against indicators as necessary.

Modernising administrative services is under way, with no concrete results to report as yet, but it is expected that at least 21 services will undergo re-engineering and digitalisation before June 2023. Only administrative services subject to re-engineering will be eligible for digitalisation. Each step of the re-engineering process will be validated with a service provider and the interagency Coordination Council, and endorsed by the National PAR Council (see section 3.1). Applying the methodology on re-engineering public services, the goal is to reduce the time to deliver services by a target of 20%. Other expected benefits include: changing the mentality and attitude of civil servants towards the beneficiaries they serve (openness to innovation and modern technologies, kindness, fairness, receptivity, etc.); increasing transparency; and supporting the fight against corruption in central public authorities.

With the implementation of the Law on Public Services (see section 2.3), the process of modernising public services will be streamlined and become irreversible and far-reaching, with a beneficial impact on citizens and businesses, and, last but not least, the image of the public administration in society.

²⁹⁶ [Methodology on the re-engineering of public services](#), approved by Order of the Secretary General of the Government No. 588-A of 10 August 2020.

A natural counterpart of re-engineering is to commit to certain service standards, which define “what a customer can expect from a service and how it should be delivered by the service provider, e.g. in terms of timeliness, accuracy and suitability”²⁹⁷. In the case of Moldova’s re-engineering, such standards are intended to codify and communicate quality targets, hold agencies to account for the level of service they provide, and assess their performance (see section 5.5). The Government of Moldova is empowered to set cost standards and minimum quality standards for the delivery of public services transferred from state responsibility to local public authorities, in accordance with the Law on Administrative Decentralisation²⁹⁸. However, as of October 2021, no minimum standards had been approved. Their absence in Moldova should be addressed under the Government’s 2017-2021 Action Plan concerning public service reform²⁹⁹, which includes their development and approval for all services, as well as expanding on or adjusting job descriptions of public officials to implement them. At present, the other ENP East countries also do not set standards for administrative services.

These service standards can be codified as a customer charter, “a public document that sets out basic information on the services provided, the standards of service that customers can expect from an organisation, and how to make complaints or suggestions for improvement”³⁰⁰. The centrepiece of such charters is communicating clearly the commitment to the service user, which can be generic (e.g. ‘We treat all service users in a friendly and courteous manner’, ‘We ensure easy physical access for all citizens’) or specific (e.g. ‘You will receive an appointment date within 2 days of your request’, ‘Queuing time will be no more than 15 minutes’). While attractive on the face of it, caution should be exercised when they involve targets, as they can inadvertently favour indicators that are easy to measure (e.g. ‘We will answer the phone within five rings’, which prioritises a hasty response and not necessarily a satisfactory one), and can create the wrong incentives and unintended side-effects³⁰¹. The aim should be to create a balanced package that is realistic and reflects what is most important to service users in the context of quality management.

The charter can be sufficiently generic to apply to all public services (‘citizens’ charters’), or tailored to specific sectors (e.g. healthcare, justice) and/or individual institutions and reflect their particular remit (‘service charters’), as shown in the example below.

³⁰⁰ With the EU’s financial support, SIGMA commissioned a handbook in 2006 on making services more user-oriented through service charters, covering their purpose, content, preparation (including consultation) and application, https://www.govint.org/fileadmin/user_upload/publications/Improving_Customer_Orientation_through_Service_Charters.pdf. The EU Public Administration Network (EUPAN) subsequently published the 2008 guide ‘Seven Steps to a Citizen Charter with Service Standards’, <http://www.eupan.org/en/documents/show/&tid=189>.

³⁰¹ See European Commission (2017), *Quality of Public Administration, A Toolbox for Practitioners*, Chapter 4, on the pros and cons of targets.

Inspiring practice: Quality Service Charters (Malta)

The Maltese Public Administration has adopted the concept of Quality Service Charters (QSCs) to set and publicise delivery standards across government departments and entities. The QSC is based on a commitment to a service of excellence and a quality model with *four pillars*:

- **Voice:** We listen to the customer's voice and are open to their criticisms of the service we offer and their ideas as to how we can improve our service for them. We consider ideas from our customers and strengthen the scheme of ideas forwarded by our employees.
- **Design:** We develop policies and processes that reach the levels expected by our customers.
- **Delivery:** We deliver a service that is timely, of a high standard, easily accessible and which can reach the customer with ease.
- **Accountability:** This is intrinsic to a service which guarantees honesty towards the customer. Accountability also means loyalty towards the customer making use of our services, which translates into and is manifested in the basic principles we want to uphold.

Each institutional QSC follows a common format based on 10 headings, half of which are standardised for all entities (with some specificities to reflect particular circumstances): purpose (the four pillars); guiding principles; service commitment; 'We are at your service'; and commitment to continuous improvement. The other five headings are tailored to the entity itself, namely: who we are and what we do; customers; how to reach us; feedback and complaints; and an appendix with a table including details of each (eligibility, compliance requirements, application options, and service delivery timeline).

As for 'guiding principles', these are based on the SERVQUAL model defined as *10 determinants of service quality*: reliability; responsiveness; competence; access; courtesy; communication; credibility; security; understanding/knowing the customer; and tangibles. 'Service commitment' covers such issues as communication, premises, online information sources and payment methods, and includes some *targets*, the specificities depending in part on the organisation and its services, and in part on guidelines established by the Directive of Standards for the Service of Excellence Offered by the Public Administration to the Public and Public Employees. The targets are the following:

- **Request for information:** A final reply within 'x' working days depending on the complexity of the request;
- **Request for service:** 'x' working days from receipt of complete application.
- **Phone calls:** Answered within three rings on working days
- **Acknowledgements:** 1 working day from receipt of request for information or application for service. This may be omitted if a service or follow-up query is made in the same timeframe.
- **Appointments:** Replies to requests for appointments will be provided within 'x' working days, with the appointment date set within 'x' working days from the date of the request. When attending your meeting, you should expect no waiting time. We will respect the time allotted to you. If you arrive late, we reserve the right to reschedule your appointment.
- **Queueing time (if applicable):** We will greet you on your arrival and guide you on your requested service. You will be directed to the officer who will serve you. Waiting time will be approximately 'x' minutes under normal circumstances.

The Quality Service Charter is published on the website of departments or entities that have attained the Quality Award. While this Award is the end result of a lengthy process of improvement, it also poses a challenge to be maintained. The Quality Award is an agreement of high level of service towards the customers. Awardees are to make the Quality Service Charter accessible to all their clients.

Source: Quality of Service Directorate.

5.4. Digitalising service design and delivery

Every ENP East country has made digitalisation of administrative services a strategic priority (see section 2.3). The ‘**digital by default**’ concept, endorsed by the EU’s Tallinn Declaration³⁰², implies that e-services are so widely available, accessible and appealing that they become the primary option for the public, even as other channels (face-to-face, telephone, postal) are kept open for those who are disconnected by choice or necessity, or who wish to interact with the public administration personally, to respect the user’s preferences.

This omni-channel approach to service delivery can be achieved when public administrations are **digital by design**, whereby internal processes are engineered to fully mobilise the potential of digital technologies and data, allowing online and mobile services to co-exist with digitally assisted in-person or over-the-phone service delivery to the same level of quality³⁰³. It also implies widespread accessibility of a comprehensive package of e-services – and that they are straightforward to use, which is why the first consideration is often simplification, as shown by Moldova’s modernisation initiative. In considering how to digitalise services, the question arises: is there a necessity? Where the user base is small and/or the number of transactions per year low, it may not be appropriate to devote resources to digitalisation.

The existence of e-portals as virtual one-stop shops provides the interface for online services (section 4.1), while key enablers and interoperability lay the operational foundations (sections 4.2 and 4.3). The following summaries outline the **maturity** of the e-service offer at this moment in time, as far as this can be captured and briefly summarised in this report, given maturity’s multiple dimensions, which would require a depth of enquiry that is outside this study’s remit:

- Digital development of public services in **Armenia** is at different stages in different state bodies, in some cases very low. For many services, only one phase in receiving the service is digitalised and available online, while others are still paper-based and require an in-person presence³⁰⁴. This is evident not only in the case of complex services that involve several agencies, but also those that a single agency provides. It reflects many factors, including the lack of a fully functional interoperability platform, the internal priorities of individual departments, and the existence of separate, single-problem-solving systems. Before the adoption of the Digitalisation Strategy (see section 2.3), the lack of a unified policy meant that digitalisation had been mainly decentralised. Methods for data exchange of existing systems are being developed on the GIP, which will facilitate the digitalisation of a larger number of public services. Some gaps in e-service are being filled³⁰⁵, while new electronic systems in the areas of justice, statistics, territorial administration, migration and police were to be launched in 2021-2025. Some success stories have emerged, such as the automation of the real estate information system. To address the variable quality of digital public service design, the Ministry of High-Tech Industry, in collaboration with the Information Systems Management Board, is working on a set of “Service design standards”, supported by a “Service Design Kit” expected to be introduced by the end of 2022. These standards will offer real-world, practical guidance to public bodies and private sector partners.

³⁰² European Union (2017), Ministerial Declaration on e-Government, the Tallinn Declaration, <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/ministerial-declaration-egovernment-tallinn-declaration>.

³⁰³ OECD (2020), *The OECD Digital Government Policy Framework: Six Dimensions of a Digital Government*, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/f64fed2a-en>.

³⁰⁴ For example, in the case of custom clearing goods, the service user can fill in the declaration online, but still has to print it out and take it physically to get all the stamps and approvals; the cadastre user can apply online for many references, but must still go to the cadastre office to take the documents.

³⁰⁵ Registration of civil status acts through the launch of www.e-civil.am, access to health services through www.armed.am and the judicial system through www.e-justice.am.

Flagship initiative: Automating the cadastre system (Armenia)

Established in 1999³⁰⁶, the Cadastre Committee is responsible for Armenia's state registry of real estate and geospatial information systems, *inter alia*, with 38 regional centres, currently 941 staff³⁰⁷ and 2.4 million records.

The Cadastre Committee has been actively seeking to develop its real estate registration and information system, to ensure transparency, reduce corruption risks, and improve the quality of services to citizens and legal entities – by eliminating factors hindering the system's development, optimising human and material resources, and establishing a suitable legal and institutional basis for an IT system capable of meeting society's expectations.

The legal framework is especially significant, as it regulates key aspects of applying for state registration of property rights, submitting documents, and mandatory requirements for citizens and legal entities to exercising their rights – and was in particular need of renewal. The Law on State Registration of Property Rights had been adopted in 1998-1999 and not subsequently reviewed. A working group was formed in 2009 to identify issues to be improved, which took account of complaints from cadastre applicants, and examined international practice and experiences of European countries, including the Czech Republic, Netherlands and Norway. As a result, the Parliament adopted a new version of the law on 23 June 2011³⁰⁸, which among other things:

- clarified the legal norms and legal consequences of registering property rights and the priority of registered over unregistered rights;
- introduced new requirements for completeness of legal documents;
- cleared up the provisions relating to state registration of restrictions, including their suspension when the subject of restrictions is not determined unambiguously;
- established the complete privatisation of real estate measurement for state registration, so this function is performed exclusively by qualified specialists within the private sector, enabling citizens to choose the service provider;
- defined the requirements to obtain a certificate from a state authorised body to engage in cartography, geodesy and land construction activities,
- abolished the requirement for citizens to submit applications to the State Cadastre Committee's territorial bodies according to the real estate's location, and to obtain certificates, information or other documents from the same place;
- eliminated mandatory notarisation of real estate transactions, the alternative to which is the free conclusion of transactions with the recognition of the authenticity of signatures in the cadastre system;
- established a new provision, according to which the application for state registration of rights arising from transactions can be submitted not only by the right holders subject to registration under such transactions, but also by each of the parties to those transactions;
- established grounds for suspension and termination of state registration proceedings, separating them from the grounds for denial of state registration;
- defined the legal basis for submitting state registration applications electronically (and further peculiarities related to it) and hence persons with electronic signatures have an opportunity to submit applications to the Cadastre Committee, without visiting in person, through the official website of the State Cadastre Committee.

The Cadastre Committee has also acted to automate its internal functions (back office) and service delivery to external users (front office).

³⁰⁶ <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=147806>

³⁰⁷ <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=156790>

³⁰⁸ <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=132519>

After the 2005 Law on Electronic Document and Electronic Digital Signature³⁰⁹ was adopted, the first reform that followed was improving the administrative services of the Cadastre Committee, starting with simplifying the forms and cutting the timeline for service delivery. Via its e-services platform (www.e-cadastre.am), the applicant can now use his/her ID card, e-mail or mobile number to enter the system, and complete the service online – from applying to register real estate to receiving the final documents, and making payments. Users can also access a system of viewing and downloading cadastre archive documents.

Institutionally, the Cadastre Committee introduced ‘Service Offices’ from 2012 as territorial front offices, of which there are also 38, and as an alternative to applying by e-mail or online. At the Service Offices, the property owner can apply to register their real estate and/or receive information; banking services are also located there, providing the opportunity to pay all state fees. The Service Offices offer the opportunity to accept applications ‘offline’ and the service user to track them online. The Cadastre Committee has also established: an electronic system to exchange documents between its regional branches and the Service Offices; a unified electronic database of cadastre data; and a connection to all those networks who use the data and whose data was needed to manage the real estate. There is also an online ‘office of real estate measurement services’, so that citizens no longer need to physically hand in property measurement packages at the Service Office, but instead they can be downloaded by a qualified person working online, reducing the time for submitting applications. Through the platform, it is possible to specify the cadastral value approximated to the market value of real estate and hence the amount of property tax.

To optimise service delivery to citizens and businesses, the Cadastre Committee also introduced the Armenian Real Property Information System (ARPIS). Using this web-based system, municipalities and banks can become operators of ‘ARPIS Service Offices’, expanding in effect the reach of the Cadastre Committee across the country. The ARPIS system has been integrated with the IT system of the Ministry of Justice’s Judicial Acts Compulsory Enforcement Service, which is intended for automatic processing of arrests, detentions and inquiries, so that the Cadastre Committee can confirm that the property concerned is not subject to some restriction under the law.

The Cadastre Committee is committed to continuous development and improvement of e-service provision, and plans to transfer acceptance of applications for further functions to the online platform in the near future, while at the same time, work is also underway to optimise the Service Offices.

- In the interests of user convenience in providing e-services in **Azerbaijan**, a January 2019 Board Decision of the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations³¹⁰ defined measures to take, including: access should be available through all possible means (computer, tablet, mobile phone, etc.); it must be in continuous operation; users should be informed about the periods when the e-service is not active; a user manual covering all stages of using the e-service should be prepared and updated when making changes; and the required information must be obtained through the e-Government Information System. The coverage of e-services continues to expand, with 501 out of 1 005 services digitalised. In September 2020, Presidential Decree No. 1 160 determined that the state registration of births and deaths should be carried out electronically, and included in the respective state register, and tasked the State Agency with ensuring real-time data transmission to other relevant systems as well, through the Government Information System³¹¹.
- In **Georgia**, the baseline assessment for the Public Services Development Strategy 2022-2025 noted that “a large gap between the availability and use of e-services and scattered data-sharing practices within and between the state entities leaves significant scope for improvement”³¹². The strategy outlines the importance of e-services for faster, cheaper and better access to public

³⁰⁹ http://parliament.am/law_docs/150105HO40eng.pdf

³¹⁰ <http://www.e-ganun.az/framework/41290>.

³¹¹ <http://www.e-ganun.az/framework/46014>.

³¹² UNDP and PSDA (2018), Public Service Design and Delivery Strategy, pp. 15-22.

services, interactivity to allow for two-way engagement and sophisticated transactions, and introducing the principle of ‘digital by default’ in service delivery. The PSDA and DGA³¹³ under MoJ are the leaders in the field of digital governance. PSDA strives towards diversification of user-centred e-service delivery channels and tools, operates the e-service delivery platform, offers QTS to citizens and organisations, and provides a verification service to more than 200 public and private organisations. In 2014, PSDA launched a 10-year plan of digitalising all civil acts (more than 8 million at the time of writing, towards the final goal of 10 million), as a cornerstone for developing digital public services. DGA intends to further advance digitalisation of public services by improving coherence in inter-governmental data exchange, indexing e-services, establishing an interoperability infrastructure with robust enforcement mechanisms and supporting availability of open data through a unified portal in a machine-readable format³¹⁴. The agency operates a 3G interoperability infrastructure that is used by state agencies for data exchanges and to digitalise public services. It also enables various state agencies to offer public services through my.gov.ge in e-format. However, a lack of clear legal frameworks that allow for consistency in digitalisation and streamlining interoperability for data exchange prevents DGA and service providers in general from using the full potential of digitalisation in public services design and delivery.

- In **Moldova**, the EGA has already built the most basic and important platforms to transition to e-services. It is mandatory to integrate the e-services with available governmental ICT solutions in Moldova, namely: Mcloud³¹⁵, Mpass³¹⁶, Msign³¹⁷, Mpay³¹⁸, Mnotify³¹⁹, Mlog³²⁰, the enterprise content management platform³²¹, Mconnect³²², Mpower³²³, Mdelivery³²⁴, Mcabinet³²⁵, Public Services Portal³²⁶, and the open government data portal³²⁷. The Law on Public Services (see section 2.3) envisages that the creation and modernisation of public services will aim at their electronic delivery, including obtaining the results in intangible form (not just paper-based) and delivering public services in electronic format by default (‘e-service by default’), using the e-government system.
- In **Ukraine**, the Government adopted the Concept of E-Government Development³²⁸ in 2017, which introduced the principle of ‘digital by default’. In 2019, this principle was implemented through a

³¹³ Parliament of Georgia (2020), Law No 6297-III, Legislative Herald of Georgia.

<https://www.matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/4893222>.

³¹⁴ Digital Governance Agency (2020), Law of Georgia N6297-III, Articles 4 and 5, Legislative Herald of Georgia, <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/4893222?publication=0>.

³¹⁵ <https://www.egov.md/en/projects/m-cloud>.

³¹⁶ <https://mpass.gov.md/?lang=en>.

³¹⁷ <https://msign.gov.md/#/>.

³¹⁸ <https://mpay.gov.md/?lang=en>.

³¹⁹ <https://mnotify.gov.md/#/en/home>.

³²⁰ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=110234&lang=ro.

³²¹ <https://www.egov.md/en/projects/enterprise-content-management-platform>.

³²² <https://mconnect.gov.md/#/>.

³²³ <https://mpower.gov.md/#/en/main>.

³²⁴ <https://www.egov.md/ro/node/4226>.

³²⁵ <https://mcabinet.gov.md/en>.

³²⁶ <https://servicii.gov.md/en>.

³²⁷ <https://date.gov.md/en/>.

³²⁸ CMU Order No. 649-o, *The Concept of E-Government Development in Ukraine*, 20 September 2017, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/649-2017-%D1%80#Text>.

CMU Resolution³²⁹ that set the requirements for digital development, namely: openness, transparency, reusability, technological neutrality and portability, citizen orientation, inclusiveness and accessibility, security and confidentiality, multi-lingualism, decision-making support for high-tech projects, administrative simplification by digitalisation, storage of information; efficiency and effectiveness evaluation. The PAR strategies until 2021 and for 2022-2025 also invoke e-government for improving service delivery, the main task being to create modern digital infrastructure, create or improve data registers, ensure their interoperability, and exchange data at the operational level instead of submitting certificates and other documents. It is also expected that each data element will be recorded in a register only once, and that officials will have access for service delivery, provided that personal data is protected. The target is to introduce administrative services at level III (meaning the ability to submit the application and pay for the service in real time) and level IV (a fully integrated service), with at least 130 in 2022, 250 in 2023, 300 in 2024, and 350 in 2025.

With the drive towards digital transformation of public services, governments have to guard against the opening of a '**digital divide**' between the citizens who can access online services and those who cannot or will not. In the interests of equal treatment, public administrations can take action to reduce this divide. For example, in Ukraine, MinDigit has tasked the ASCs with increasing digital literacy. Investing in broadband infrastructure can extend e-services to remote and hard-to-reach areas (e.g. mountainous regions). However, even with these supply-side initiatives, there will always be some citizens who are not capable of interacting with public administrations online, constrained by physical conditions, intellectual capacity and/or financial resources. Public authorities thus need user-oriented measures to account for these preferences, including keeping alternative channels open, including call centre back-ups to e-services. Such safeguards are implicit in the omnichannel concept of digital by design, which directs public administration toward digitally assisted services, and not only e-services.

- The low level of use of existing e-services in **Armenia** is often due to the inconvenience of using digital tools, as well as low public awareness of the existing solutions. As of 2019, 15% of the population in Armenia used e-government tools and 82% did not, as they indicated there was no need to submit official forms, while for other reasons, 2.3% said it was because they lacked the skills and knowledge (mentioned most by those over 45). Just 3% of the population uses the ID card in electronic transactions³³⁰. Based on the World Bank's analysis in 2019: public service delivery systems are not easy to use and do not take into account the principles of universal design, including being accessible to users with disabilities; services are generally not adapted for use on mobile phones (and ID cards are used to use the services, which require an additional card reader to sign in); and services are often available electronically, but users prefer the non-electronic version. In line with government priorities, the results of a list of research and analysis on the state of digital state services have become the basis for Armenia to adopt the strategic goals and directions for the overall public administration and service reforms, and the digitalisation agenda at large, which should significantly decrease the digital divide.
- The combination of 'ASAN service' centres and the incorporation of e-services on the Unified Information Portal (see section 4.1) has increased the availability and accessibility of e-services in **Azerbaijan**, while the 2019 State Agency Board Decision required that e-services take account of users' physical capabilities, health status and limitations. The Government plans to expand the scope of e-services offered on ICT infrastructure by 2025. The State Agency's evaluation of e-services across government (see section 5.5), notably includes a sub-criterion on ensuring that the service is accessible to all user groups, according to whether text alternatives for non-textual

³²⁹ CMU Resolution No. 56, *The Basis for the Implementation by Executive Authorities of the Principles of State Policy on Digital Development*, 30 January 2019, *Some Issues on Digital Development*, consolidated version: 5 March 2020, Item 3, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/56-2019-%D0%BF#Text>.

³³⁰ Armenia ICT usage by individuals and households in Armenia, Survey by World Bank Group, 2020.

content, transcripts for audio and video content, subtitles, large fonts, font selection, colour management and character spacing are provided *inter alia*.

- While **Georgia** has not taken much action to date to reduce the digital divide, the Public Services Development Strategy 2022-2025 requires service providers to plan service delivery to guarantee equal access to services in physical and electronic form. The strategy outlines the importance for citizens of having faster, cheaper and better access to public services, including e-services. It is hoped this will lead to a new level of e-service maturity: the ‘no-stop shop’³³¹ automatically delivering a service without additional action on the part of the citizen.
- In **Moldova**, the 2011 Government e-Transformation Strategic Programme found that almost half of Moldovan citizens were already online, which allowed them to request public services regardless of their physical location. The e-Transformation Programme offered support to public institutions in receiving these requests, ensuring that citizens choose the most convenient way to access public services, such as online, mobile phones, interactive kiosks, etc., including people with disabilities. The re-engineering methodology also emphasises multiple channels, accessibility and inclusivity. The Law on Public Service defines the principle of “omni-channel” to avoid exclusion. The new CUPS (see section 4.1) provide a common access point to e-services for people in rural and surrounding areas with no Internet access or insufficient digital competence to use electronic portals by themselves to seek assistance, covering around 75 000 people in the pilot phase.
- In **Ukraine**, applicants who are not able or willing to access services online are able under the Law on Administrative Service to visit the ASCs or similar front offices of service delivery providers, where they may get services offline.

The combination of digital base registries (section 4.2) and interoperability (section 4.3) offers the possibility of applying the ‘once-only’ principle (section 2.2) in practice. Subject to the user’s consent, the concept is that citizens and businesses should not have to provide the same information (e.g. address) to the public administration multiple times. After it has been registered with one authority, it will not be requested again, reducing the administrative burden on service users.

This requires governments to make a significant commitment, usually expressed as a legal obligation that binds all authorities. To turn the citizens’ rights into operational reality, the relevant bodies must co-operate, take action to store and share data securely, and consider the user first: the essence of digital by design³³². This places the onus on the public administration to have the key enablers in place, especially digitalised base registries (see section 4.2), and if this practice is widespread, to ensure full interoperability for seamless data transfer (see section 4.3). Introducing once-only as a principle and right otherwise merely adds to the bureaucratic burden on the public administration to transfer information in the back office using their traditional systems and procedures, and can actually slow down service delivery.

Table 16. ‘Once-only’ in principle and practice

Country	Legal basis	Practical application
Armenia	Yes	Some agencies apply the once-only principle (e.g. police, Civil Acts Registration Agency).
Azerbaijan	Yes	Potentially through the ASAN Bridge System, relevant permissions can be managed centrally in transferring information from one institution to another.
Georgia	Yes	Only some agencies apply once-only ³³³ (e.g. PSDA).

³³¹ Scholta, H. et al. (2017), “From One-Stop-Shop to No-Stop Shop: An e-Government Stage Model”, ECIS, Research Papers.

³³² European Commission (2017), *Quality of Public Administration, A Toolbox for Practitioners*, op. cit.

³³³ Parliament of Georgia (2020), consolidated publication of Law 323 (Chapter 3, Article 20) on the Procedure for Registering Citizens of Georgia and Aliens Residing in Georgia, for Issuing an Identity (Residence) Card and a

Moldova	Yes	Potentially through the Interoperability Platform (Mconnect), but realised only sporadically.
Ukraine	Yes	Potentially through the Trembita data exchange system.

The table above sums up the status of 'once-only' in the five countries.

- In **Armenia**, a 2015 Government Decree³³⁴ defined the general technical requirements for the security and interoperability of the systems used to provide e-services by state and local self-government bodies. It creates the conditions in the public administration for 'once-only' to operate, rather than establishing a principle for citizens to exercise as a right.
- Since 2019, e-service users in **Azerbaijan** can require that state bodies obtain information on documents needed to provide e-services from electronic state information resources (if available), including those maintained in other state bodies, on the basis of the user's information³³⁵.
- In **Georgia**, the 'Georgian Interoperability Framework'³³⁶ is the guiding document for service providers to achieve technical, semantic, legal and organisational interoperability to enable systems to work together, within or across organisational boundaries, to establish reliable and sustainable system interoperability and provide information 'once-only' that can be used automatically for delivering other services. In practice, only PSDA is capable of applying the 'once-only' principle, particularly for issuing e-IDs and biometric passports. After the first encounter with a citizen, PSDA can register the citizen's credentials, including their signatures and biometric data, and then provide the repeated service completely electronically. Citizens have the option not to approach PSDA again and receive the e-ID and biometric passport service at a distance, including in a third country. However, not all agencies can apply 'once-only' to their administrative services; PSDA is a definitely a front-runner in this regard.
- In **Moldova**, public authorities since 2018 have had to ensure delivery of public services without requesting documents, if the data in these documents are already available in information resources and can be provided through the Interoperability Platform (Mconnect)³³⁷. In practice, 'once-only' provisions were only introduced in 2020 by legislation that amended some acts, and which entered into force on 18 January 2021. At present, it is thus not possible to discuss tangible results of implementing the 'once-only' principle and its impact on citizens and businesses.
- In **Ukraine**, the strategic intention is that "each data element will be recorded into a register once, and officials will be able to receive such register's data for service delivery, provided that personal data is protected"³³⁸. For this purpose, the government created the interoperability platform, Trembita, and defined the list of priority state electronic information resources to be included, with the target being 60% in 2022, 70% in 2023, 80% in 2024, and 90% in 2025³³⁹. One-time input is also a goal of the 'Concept of E-Government Development', the action plan setting out the

Passport of a Citizen of Georgia, Legislative Herald of Georgia, <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/31504?publication=51>.

³³⁴ Government Decree 1 093-N, 8 August 2015, <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=152169>.

³³⁵ <http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/41290>.

³³⁶ Data Exchange Agency (2017), MoJ, Georgian Interoperability Framework, "Support to Strengthening of e-Governance in Georgia II", Twinning project: GE/21.

³³⁷ Law No. 142/2018 on Data Exchange and Interoperability, Article 6, Paragraph 31.

³³⁸ CMU Resolution No. 606, *Some Issues on the Electronic Interaction of the State Electronic Information Resources*, 6 September 2016, consolidated version: 14 May 2020, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/606-2016-%D0%BF#Text>.

³³⁹ Strategy of Public Administration Reform for 2022-2025, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/831-2021-%D1%80#top>.

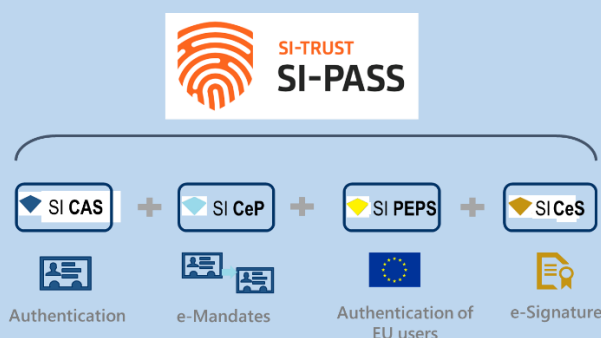
measures to achieve this goal³⁴⁰: improving the data protection system and interoperability of national electronic resources; implementing the individual identifier based on a unique number of the Unified State Demographic Register; upgrading national electronic resources; and systematisation of data content for multiple use. The aforementioned Law on Public Electronic Registers will enable the 'once-only' principle to be put into practice, by ensuring that the state will not require citizens to provide information that is already in the registers (see section 4.2).

Applying the once-only principle can be the stepping stone to **pro-active solutions** (sometimes referred to as 'no-stop'), which automatically deliver administrative services that citizens and businesses are entitled to receive (e.g. child/parental benefits after birth), without having to apply for them first, because all relevant data is already held and exchanged across the system. This is the ambition in Georgia's Public Services Development Strategy³⁴¹.

Inspiring practice: Using building blocks to achieve end-to-end e-service delivery (Slovenia)

All sectors of the Slovenian public administration, whether national or local (including its 212 municipalities), face many challenges and demands today, which individual institutions cannot manage by themselves. The decentralised approach, where each body devises its own solution, means fragmentation and limits progress. For this reason, the Government adopted a unified approach to information systems development, with a single 'state cloud' and three core components, comprising reusable building blocks, to facilitate e-service design and delivery.

The first component concerns trust in identification. Service users, both outside and inside administrations, need to be able to sign documents and authorise processes electronically, and to authenticate and validate them digitally. A large number of e-identification methods with different levels of assurance were issued by both public and private providers. These required integration, as well as mobile and cross-border solutions. This was achieved with a common package of trust services under the umbrella branding of 'SI-PASS' and co-created with users and responsible authorities, including e-Mandates to enable others to verify on the user's behalf (this was planned to go live in mid-2022).



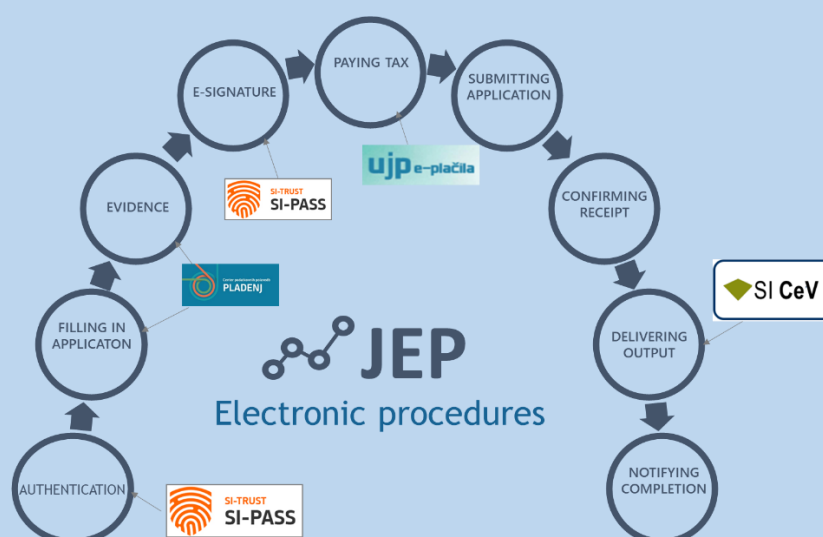
The mobile-based e-signature and authentication went live on 16 March 2018 under the name 'smsPASS'. As of 7 January 2022, SI-PASS was available on over 50 portals, with more than 600 000 users, almost 2 million signatures and 17 million authentications. The SI-TRUST portfolio is further complemented by two other central building blocks that are available to developers and project managers through the 'App store' alongside SI-CAS, SI-CeP, SI-PEPS and SI-CeS, namely SI-TSA (qualified time stamping) and SI CeV, the central e-delivery system. The SI-CKS Central Catalogue of Services is planned to go live in mid-2022, based on the EU's ISA² CPSV-AP data model, adapted to serve all national specific requirements, so that users can find information on services easily via the GOV.SI portal.

³⁴⁰ CMU Order No. 617-o, *Action Plan for the Implementation of the Concept of E-Government Development in Ukraine*, 22 August 2018, consolidated version: 17 September 2020, Items 16-22, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/617-2018-%D1%80#Text>.

³⁴¹ Scholta, H. et al. (2017), "From One-Stop-Shop to No-Stop Shop: An e-Government Stage Model" op. cit.

The second concerns data exchange, which now takes place on a national platform, the Tray ('*Pladenj*'). This is a secure, reliable, central system to connect data sources with search systems. It was built originally for the social security system and has since been extended to other uses, which puts the once-only principle into practice across the country. It is complemented by an IO-module for standardised data distribution and an asynchronous module for search requests to data sources where synchronous access is not possible.

The third component relates to procedures and the services themselves. Slovenia's JEP platform was developed for standardised, rapid development of electronic procedures and running/using e-services (including e-procurement, e-health, e-education, e-taxes, e-pension, etc.). JEP takes into account all modern principles, including user-friendliness. As the following diagram shows, it integrates the other two components and their building blocks, plus e-payment ('*UJP e-plačila*'), so that e-services can be designed (e-procedures and the respective e-forms) published and delivered, and seamlessly embedded into the state portals for citizens and businesses, for ease of use. A cloud-based solution, JEP enables the management of e-service design and delivery by combining pre-programmed process nodes (circles) and transitions (arrows).



Source: Dr. Alenka Žužek Nemec, Ministry of Public Administration (see also presentation at SIGMA webinar on 'Life events in the context of once-only, interoperability and the Single Digital Gateway', March 2021³⁴²).

5.5. Monitoring and evaluating progress

To complete the picture, public administrations typically set up mechanisms to assess whether the system is developing as desired and delivering as required. This goes beyond user feedback, although this is usually an essential input, and can also involve performance against service standards (section 5.3).

Three of the five ENP East countries have designed systems to monitor and evaluate service delivery performance, which present contrasting practices involving compliance against criteria, and application of universal and tailored targets respectively. Armenia is on its way to developing and introducing a monitoring and evaluation framework for measuring service delivery performance as a whole and disaggregated by agencies and other parameters.

In **Azerbaijan**, the approach taken is to conduct a centralised assessment of service delivery against specific criteria. The State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations evaluates the organisation

³⁴² <http://www.sigmaweb.org/events/western-balkans-seamless-public-service-delivery-sigma-march-2021.htm>.

and provision of public services in the electronic register, covering 139 government bodies, through the 'ASAN service' index³⁴³, which checks compliance with 23 criteria in seven categories:

- service information;
- opportunities to apply for the service;
- duration of service;
- digitalisation of information resources used in the organisation of the service and integration with information resources and systems of other government agencies;
- training of employees on the organisation of services;
- complaints and control mechanisms;
- measuring citizen satisfaction.

These criteria are broken down further into sub-criteria, each of which is scored by a working group set up by the State Agency to conduct the assessment, and which may comprise representatives of other government agencies and organisations, research institutions, independent experts and specialists, using data collection, analysis and systematisation. The assessment is conducted once a year and the results made public through the electronic register. The State Agency is empowered to make proposals and recommendations to eliminate the shortcomings identified by its evaluation, and to provide practical and methodological assistance to the state body, if necessary.

Since November 2020, the State Agency has also been evaluating e-services, information resources and systems in government agencies³⁴⁴ on a similar basis. These are structured around 23 criteria in the following six categories:

- access to the service;
- application stage;
- processing stage;
- the stage of presenting the result;
- obtaining and accessing information about the service;
- payment options.

The State Agency drafts the review and recommendations and sends it to the public body. Some general statements are to be provided to the public, but nothing is available online.

Ukraine has chosen to establish central targets instead, to convey its intention to improve service delivery. The previous Cabinet (August 2019-March 2020) declared in its Government's Action Programme³⁴⁵ that, in five years, all administrative services should be accessible online, making it possible to reach an ASC within 30 minutes. The current Cabinet in its Government's Action Programme³⁴⁶ set out the following long-term goals and priorities:

- transparency and consistency of service delivery with European principles of good governance;
- at least 200 government services are available online;
- 60% of Ukrainians use online services;

³⁴³ <http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/34012>

³⁴⁴ <http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/34358>

³⁴⁵ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine Regulation No. 188-IX, "About the Action Programme of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine", 4 October 2019, in the Action Programme: Aim 14-1, Annex, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/188-20#n2>.

³⁴⁶ CMU Regulation No. 471 "On approval of the action programme of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine", 12 June 2020, Verkhovna Rada website, in the Action Programme: Division Long-Run Priorities of Government Activity (Item 2) (Subitem 2.1), <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/471-2020-%D0%BF#Text>.

- 90% of Ukrainians are satisfied with the quality of service delivery;
- the number of people with digital signatures is increased by 35% (compared to 2019);
- the number of ASCs (their territorial units) is increased by 30%;
- the number of services provided at ASCs is increased by 35%.

In accordance with the Report on the Progress and Results of the Implementation of the CMU Action Programme in 2020³⁴⁷: 120 government services were available online by the end of 2020 (compared with 100 in 2019); 7% of Ukrainians who applied for the birth-related services used *eMalyatko*, while 40% of registrations of private entrepreneurs were conducted online (data was not available for other services); 77%-90% were satisfied with the quality of service delivery (depending on the specific service); the number of people with digital signatures increased by 69% compared to 2019; and the number of ASCs (their territorial units) increased by 28%; and the number of services provided by ASCs increased by 10.7%.

In addition, the CMU approves key performance indicators for state secretaries of the ministries (a deputy minister position) and heads of the central executive power bodies (other than ministers) each year. In 2021, these officials must approve the list of administrative services to be transformed into electronic services and adopt a plan for this transformation³⁴⁸.

According to the Law on Administrative Services³⁴⁹, the CMU adopted the procedure for monitoring the quality of administrative services and publishing information on the results³⁵⁰. The monitoring runs on a dedicated online system that is part of the *Diia* portal, collecting information from ASCs and service providers and processing this information against quality indicators determined by CMU. Monitoring results are open to the public and are to be published annually in general, and quarterly for ASC assessment. The monitoring online system will be piloted by the end of 2021 and rolled out in full by the end of 2022.

Targets are also the basis for assessing performance in **Moldova**, but in the context of individual services, in contrast to the blanket approach in Ukraine. The target-setting is thus integrated into the re-engineering process (section 5.3), as outlined below.

Flagship initiative: Measuring satisfaction with administrative services (Moldova)

The methodology on the re-engineering of public services recommends setting clear, measurable targets to increase the beneficiaries' satisfaction, taking into account the specific needs of gender, age, disability, etc. (e.g. raising beneficiary satisfaction by 10%, decreasing the number of steps in the service delivery process by 30%, service delivery through a minimum of three separate channels, etc.). The beneficiary's perception of the quality of the service should also be monitored and evaluated as an impact of change after the re-engineering of public services. The methodology proposes that the quality of service/customer satisfaction be measured through studies, public perceptions or the following indicators:

- reducing the time for accessing the service (on average, in %);
- reducing the waiting time in line (on average, in %);
- reducing the application submission time (on average, in %);

³⁴⁷ CMU Order No. 327-o, 14 April 2021, pp. 41, 42, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/327-2021-%D1%80#Text>.

³⁴⁸ CMU Order No. 1 645-o, *Tasks and Key Indicators of Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Quality of Official Activity of Civil Servants Holding the Positions of State Secretaries of Ministries for 2021*, 28 December 2020, Item 4 (Subitem 3), <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1645-2020-%D1%80#Text>; CMU Order No. 1 646-o, *Standard Tasks and Key Indicators of Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Quality of Official Activity of Civil Servants Holding the Positions of Heads of the Central Executive Power Bodies for 2021*, 28 December 2020, Item 1 (Subitem 5), <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1646-2020-%D1%80#Text>.

³⁴⁹ Law on Administrative Services, Article 7 (Part 4).

³⁵⁰ CMU Resolution No. 864, 11 August 2021, "Issues on Monitoring the Quality of Administrative Services", <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/864-2021-%D0%BF#top>.

- reducing the time required to obtain the service delivered by the back office and front office (on average, in %);
- reducing the number of required visits to the office (in % of the total);
- compliance with service standards.

The Law on Public Service regulates the principles, competences and obligations for monitoring quality and exercising control over the delivery of public services³⁵¹. Providers are directly responsible for the internal monitoring and evaluation of the quality of public services, but the law also requires the State Chancellery, ministries and subordinated central administrative authorities to monitor and evaluate the quality of services under their spheres of competence, according to a methodological framework approved by the State Chancellery. The respective authorities are to publish reports at least once a year on the government portal and their own official web pages, and also organise, at least annually, public debates on the reports. Local authorities must also monitor and evaluate their service provision using the same methodological framework, under Law No. 436/2006 on Local Public Administration.

5.6. Observations

Public administrations have many options for gaining insight into service users' lived experiences and preferences, and to engage them in redesigning processes. Each technique has its pros and cons, including inherent and unintended biases that must be evaluated to avoid a distorted picture (consultations and complaints procedures can amplify the voices of people who are well-connected and articulate, for example). This argues for a mixed and balanced approach, drawing on quantitative and qualitative (actionable) methods, so the findings can be generalised for the whole audience (i.e. representative) and actionable (i.e. relevant). The OECD recommends a research culture that includes user perspectives at every point in service design and delivery³⁵².

The simple analysis of three 'life events', and country comparisons of one service in each case, illustrate the value of seeing service design and delivery from the user's viewpoint. For example, the location of physical front offices is likely to have a significant influence on user experience and satisfaction, especially for services such as car registration, where owners have no option but to bring in their vehicles for inspection, making proximity a salient factor. Where front offices are only located in major cities and regional centres, citizens from smaller towns and rural communities must travel, incurring time, cost and inconvenience. An omni-channel approach also allows the service user to move seamlessly between offline and online (in either and both directions), regardless of the initial entry point, rather than experiencing each channel as a silo.

Aligning the design of service delivery with service users' preferences always leaves room for improvement. By identifying each step in the delivery process, and especially those that involve citizens engaging with the front office, public administrations can begin to build the full 'customer journey map'. By reviewing the back office steps as well, and the interactions across institutions (horizontally and vertically), governments have the ingredients for administrative simplification through process re-engineering. Once they are satisfied the end-to-end processes are streamlined, they can be confident that digitalisation is not just making bad bureaucracy more accessible.

³⁵¹ [Law on Public Services No. 234/2021](#), Official Gazette No. 34-38/2022, Article 34.

³⁵² OECD (2020), "Digital Government in Chile – Improving Public Service Design and Delivery", https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/b94582e8-en/1/3/3/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/b94582e8-en&csp_864d08acd5db1985bef8f2d586727be5&itemIGO=oecd&itemContentType=book#figure-d1e3826.

6. Ways forward

This report has examined key elements of administrative service design and delivery across the five ENP East countries and can draw some summary conclusions about potential ways forward:

- As in the EU, each country should endeavour to improve systematically the design and delivery of public services, in an inclusive, user-oriented way (see OECD's good practice principles in the box overleaf). This includes: introducing or extending a life events approach to services to citizens and businesses; collaborative (rather than silo) working by service owners, designers and providers, within and across institutions, supported by interoperability; and continuous development of horizontal enablers, as their user-friendliness has a huge impact on the quality, availability and uptake of services. Ultimately, the aim should be to move up the pyramid (see section 2.1) towards pro-activity in service delivery, using 'digital by design' thinking.
- Irrespective of the ministry or agency tasked with policy co-ordination, the 'one-stop shop' of service delivery should feel like the lead institution for the service user, as the single portal for providing public administrative services. This puts the onus on extending and completing the network of physical one-stop shops as quickly as feasible, ensuring their reasonable proximity to settlements, providing options for remote areas (including mobile one-stop shops), avoiding fragmentation of service from myriad front offices, while enabling choice of channels (face-to-face, telephone, website, mobile app, etc.) and building a common, high-profile brand that citizens can readily identify.
- While increasing physical access to services, governments should continue to enhance digital access. In both cases, this requires clarity about the services on offer, to be able to deliver them effectively, and thus constructing complete service catalogues. Online service portals can vary in their level of maturity – from simply listing services that are available electronically and directing users to different agencies, to genuine gateways into government where users log in and request and receive services seamlessly, satisfying their needs in combination with other channels as necessary or desired. Such portals can also act as enablers and solution providers *within* the public administration, with practical tools for public bodies to design and build services.
- Given that 'life events' often involve non-state actors, for example when moving to another home or starting a business, governments could envisage a trajectory towards public-private partnership and collaboration with non-governmental actors in service design and delivery. This is already the case in physical front offices, with private enterprises providing legal and banking services, for example, and back office hook-ups with logistics companies. Interoperability offers almost limitless potential to integrate appropriate private providers, subject to safeguards on personal data exchange.
- Given that this study is informative rather than evaluative, it has not sought to assess the quality of infrastructures, enablers or indeed the services themselves. However, the public administrations can utilise existing tools to make their own assessments. For example, the level of interoperability can be assessed using the EIF as a benchmark, and the Interoperability Maturity Assessment of a Public Service (IMAPS) as a quick, user-friendly survey questionnaire as the basis for identifying improvements if appropriate, with access to good practices.
- The public administrations' main mechanism for gauging whether service design and delivery is operating in the user's interest is by measuring satisfaction, which of course is influenced by

expectations. While this is an essential feedback loop, more experimental methods are also worth considering, such as mystery shopping, customer journey mapping, and even focus groups not tied to a specific service experience, as well as the collection and analysis of administrative data. With customer journey mapping, the technocratic ‘life event’ analysis can be supplemented by research to understand the user’s ‘emotional response’ to each step and actual behaviour, especially where it takes time, requires travel, can only be completed by filling in forms or finding documentary evidence, involves dealing with other institutions and their rules, etc. This way, governments can build a richer understanding of the user experience.

OECD Good practice principles for public service design and delivery in the digital age

The Good Practice Principles (GPPs) for Public Service Design and Delivery in the Digital Age have been developed in co-ordination with the OECD Working Party of Senior Digital Government Officials (E-leaders) and the Thematic Group on Service Design and Delivery, led by the United Kingdom. The GPPs are intended to support and guide public officials in the strategic and responsible use of digital technologies and data to improve the design and delivery of public services.

Build accessible, ethical and equitable public services that prioritise user needs, rather than government needs

1. Understand users and their needs.
2. Make the design and delivery of public services a participatory and inclusive process.
3. Ensure consistent, seamless and high-quality public services.

Deliver with impact, at scale and with pace

4. Create conditions that help teams to design and deliver high-quality public services.
5. Develop a consistent delivery methodology for public services.
6. Curate an ecosystem of enabling tools, practices and resources.

Be accountable and transparent in the design and delivery of public services to reinforce and strengthen public trust

7. Be open and transparent in the design and delivery of services.
8. Ensure the trustworthy and ethical use of digital tools and data.
9. Establish an enabling environment for a culture and practice of public service design and delivery.

Source: OECD (forthcoming), *The Good Practice Principles for Public Service Design and Delivery in the Digital Age*.

As for the individual EaP countries themselves, we offer the following concluding thoughts for the future, based on the concepts and inspiring practices in this study, and also drawing on the EU-financed EU4Digital’s May 2022 eGovernance reports (op. cit.):

- In **Armenia**, the recently adopted PAR Strategy provides orientation to 2030 and places particular emphasis on quality public services, which provides the impetus to complete the legal framework and to address several key issues highlighted in the study. This includes listing and cataloguing all services, which will not only help users navigate the entire service offer, but also provide a springboard for strengthening design and delivery, including the life events and constituent services. Extending the network of Unified Offices and Citizens’ Offices as the sole source of all in-person services, within reasonable reach of the population, and the launching of a national service platform, would contribute to the PAR Strategy’s intention to allow citizens “to receive all public services from a unified source”. As the EU4Digital’s recommendations of a unified digital services framework and stronger co-ordination indicate, more progress has yet to be made on

Armenia's digital transformation, but the strategic framework makes clear the aspiration and sets out actions to realise it. Piloting of user feedback at www.gnahatir.am is also a signal of intent, as a step towards re-engineering service design and delivery in the interests of both users and the administration.

- The centrepiece of service modernisation in **Azerbaijan** is clearly ASAN, as both a brand and an idea – to improve public services to make them 'easy' (*asan*) to use. While the network of ASAN service and communal centres has been expanding, the main focus has been placed on electronic access through the unified portal and underlying infrastructure, enablers and interoperability system. While the incremental developments are impressive, what appears to be missing is an overarching strategy, underpinned by key principles, which would cover the end-to-end design of public services (in a framework of life events) and all channels of service delivery and the interplay between them. EU4Digital recommends developing a digital services framework of standards and requirements for a unified national approach, and strengthening co-ordination, possibly through a mandate for the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations, to simplify and re-engineer existing services and establish new ones.
- Like Armenia, the Government of **Georgia** has also approved a pivotal strategic framework, in this case focused solely on public services, and is working towards a PAR Strategy. This should initiate a raft of initiatives to take service design and delivery forward, by providing clarity on scope (definition) and principles, and a springboard for a robust legal framework, participatory and evidence-informed service design, and process re-engineering and optimisation. As EU4Digital also notes, policy leadership might be better assigned to the centre of government or a horizontal ministry, rather than a sectoral line ministry (justice). To ensure a cohesive vision and better co-ordination, this could include a consolidated catalogue of services. The creation and (ongoing) expansion of the Public Service Halls and Community Centres provides a focal point for physical front-office delivery, but the existence of parallel structures and networks means that no single unified space for all government services offline yet exists, to correspond with the 'one window' approach to the unified electronic services portal. As EU4Digital notes, "the back-office automation has not resulted in the full public services digitalisation, despite or maybe because of the success of physical front offices in Public Service Halls".
- The passing of the Law on Public Service in **Moldova** at the end of 2021 was another landmark moment, providing greater certainty over rights and duties and enshrining accessibility and convenience, including the provision of once-only information and pro-active service delivery, and e-service by default. The piloting of Unified Public Services Centres (CUPSs) is a step in the right direction, towards a comprehensive in-person one-stop shop network, but the range of services on offer and the connection to the service providers themselves, and indeed their seamless integration into the end-to-end system, is equally essential to ensure the CUPSs do not become merely a shopfront, while the administrative burden is increased in the back office. The attention to modernisation through re-engineering and digitalising services should ensure that the services themselves will be systematically reviewed and improved in both their design and delivery, if carried through beyond the pilot phase. At the same time, EU4Digital emphasises the importance of key enablers, especially in increasing the take-up of e-Signature and identification, and introducing trust services, specifically e-seals, which should accompany public service development.
- Like Azerbaijan, **Ukraine** has built a distinctive brand, *Diia*, with high visibility. Before the Russian Federation's full-scale invasion on 24 February 2022, Ukraine was making significant progress in its ambitious plans to ensure a nationwide network of ASCs (which can also be called *Diia* Centres) was reachable by all citizens and to develop its *Diia* portal and app to achieve an ever more sophisticated service offer to citizens and enterprises. While many of the physical one-stop shops have been damaged or destroyed by the hostilities, the app has proved its value in continuing to connect citizens with essential state services, even when displaced from their communities. The immediate priority for Ukraine, of course, is to overcome its existential threat, emerge from war and

rebuild, but the Ministry of Digital Transformation remains active, with new developments with the *Diia* app continuing to evolve. Moreover, Ukraine was finally able to adopt its Law on Administrative Procedure in June 2022, despite the war, although its full provisions will not take effect until December 2023. In future, there should be opportunities to develop a digital service framework and extend *Trembita* to private sector users for data exchange, as proposed by EU4Digital, which would enhance the public service offer.

The starting point for this study was that modernising service design and delivery is a never-ending journey. There is always potential for improvement. At the same time, users' needs and expectations evolve, and circumstances can change. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 forced every government to adapt to a new situation, adjust its *modus operandi* and, particularly, to accelerate (if possible) the digital transformation of its internal processes and external interactions, because in-person service delivery was highly restricted. Whether dealing with regular day-to-day operations or responding to a major crisis like COVID-19, public administrations are more resilient if their systems are robust.

The SIGMA Programme

SIGMA (Support for Improvement in Governance and Management) is a joint initiative of the OECD and the European Union (EU), principally financed by the EU. SIGMA has been working with partner countries on strengthening public governance systems and public administration capacities since 1992.

In partnership with the European Commission (EC) Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), we currently work with:

- Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, the Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia and Türkiye as EU candidate countries and potential candidates; and
- Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Jordan, Lebanon, Moldova, Morocco, Palestinian Authority¹, Tunisia and Ukraine as EU Neighbourhood countries.

SIGMA provides assistance in six key areas:

1. strategic framework of public administration reform
2. policy development and co-ordination
3. public service and human resource management
4. accountability
5. service delivery
6. public financial management, public procurement and external audit.

SIGMA reviews and gives feedback on:

- governance systems and institutions
- legal frameworks
- reform strategies and action plans
- progress in reform implementation.

SIGMA provides:

- advice on the design and prioritisation of reforms
- methodologies and tools to support implementation
- recommendations for improving laws and administrative arrangements
- opportunities to share good practice from a wide range of countries, including regional events
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* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1 244/99 and the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on Kosovo's declaration of independence.

¹ Footnote by the European External Action Service and the European Commission: this designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the European Union Member States on this issue

ANNEX 1: Country factsheets

Country factsheet Armenia

Population



2 963 251

Eurostat, 1 January 2021

Population density



18 persons per km²

Eurostat, 2020

Average GDP per Capita

€ 4 122

Eurostat, 2019

Key central actors (policy and coordination)

Deputy Prime Minister; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister; Ministry of High-Tech Industry; Ministry of Justice; Central Bank of Armenia; e-Governance Infrastructure Implementation Agency

Sub-national administrative structure

Provinces (*marzer*)

Municipalities (*hamaynkner*)

Government effectiveness (-2.5 to +2.5)

-0.12

World Bank, 2020

E-government development index (EGDI, 0-1)

0.7136 ranked 68th of 193 countries

United Nations, 2020

Internet access at home



76% of households

United Nations ITU, 2019

Computers at home



58% of households

United Nations International Telecommunication Union (ITU), 2019

Mobile network coverage (at least 3G network)



100% of population

United Nations ITU, 2020

EGDI Online Service Index (0-1)

0.7000

United Nations, 2020

Government portal

<https://www.e-gov.am>



E-services



ca. 150
available through
government portal

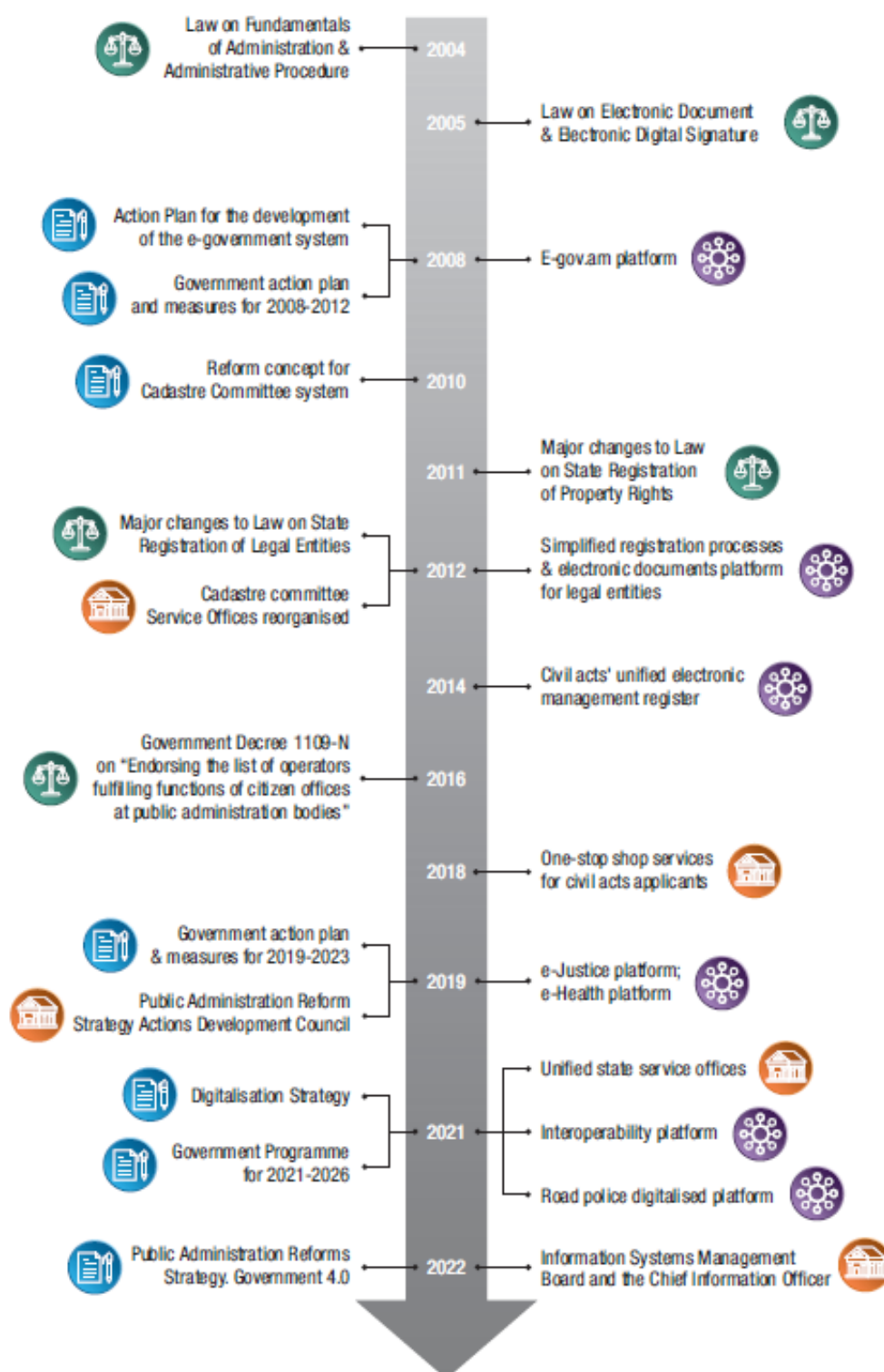
1 May 2022

E-participation index (0-1)

0.7500 ranked 57th of 193 countries

United Nations E-Participation Index, 2020

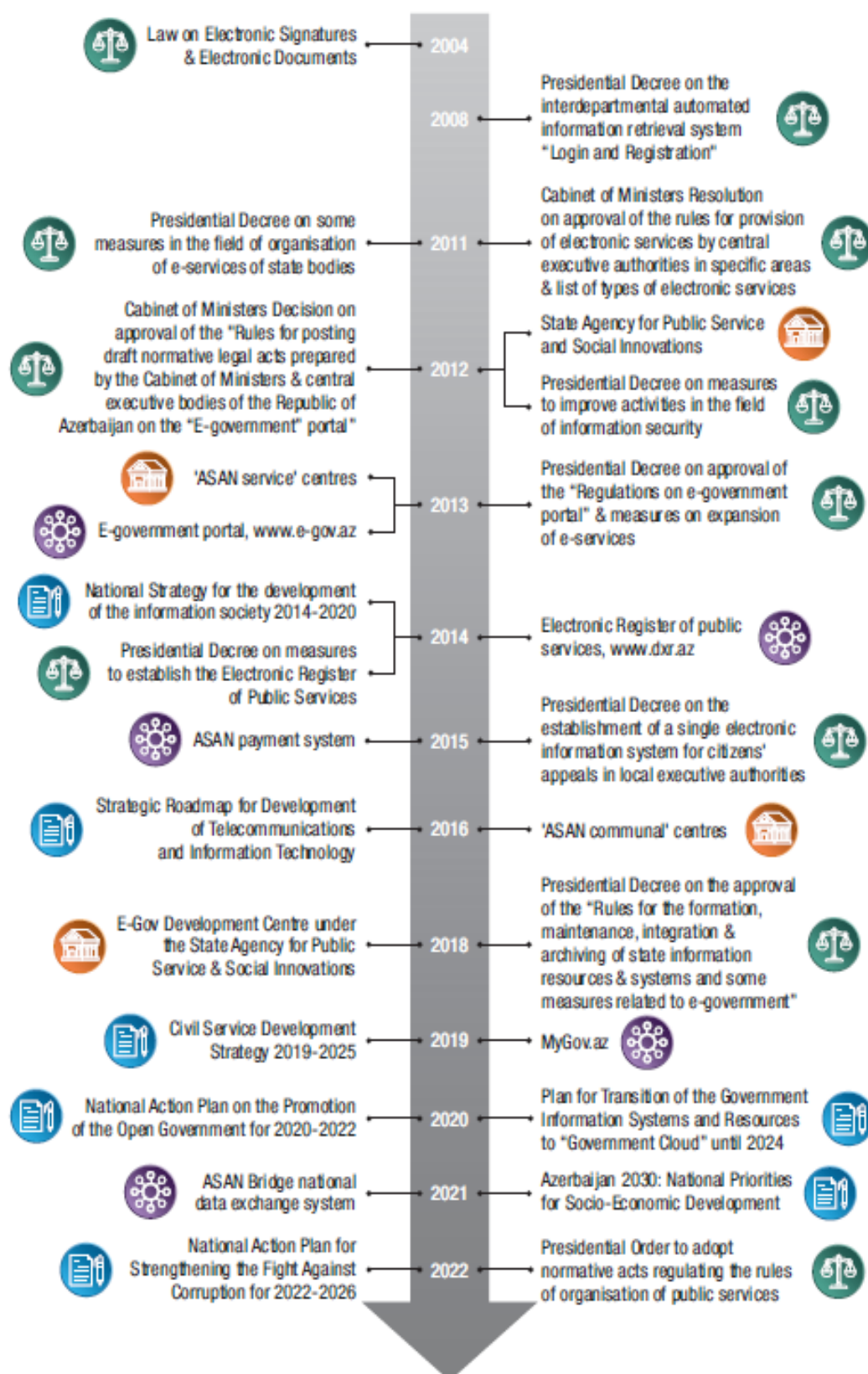
Key milestones: Armenia



Country factsheet: Azerbaijan

Population  10 119 133 Eurostat, 1 January 2021	Population density  116 persons per km² Eurostat, 2020
Average GDP per Capita € 4 332 Eurostat, 2019	Key central actors (policy and coordination) Ministry of Digital Development and Transport State Agency for Public Service & Social Innovations E-Gov Development Centre
Sub-national administrative structure Autonomous republic (<i>muxtar respublikası</i>) Cities (<i>şəhərlər</i>), districts (<i>rayonlar</i>) Municipalities (<i>bələdiyyələr</i>)	Government effectiveness (-2.5 to +2.5) -0.17 World Bank, 2020
E-government development index (EGDI, 0-1) 0.7100 ranked 70th of 193 countries United Nations, 2020	Internet access at home  79% of households United Nations ITU, 2019
Computers at home  65% of households United Nations International Telecommunication Union (ITU), 2019	Mobile network coverage (at least 3G network)  98% of population United Nations ITU, 2020
EGDI Online Service Index (0-1) 0.70590 United Nations, 2020	Government portal https://www.dxr.az/dxr https://www.e-gov.az https://my.gov.az 
E-services  492 available through government portal 1 May 2022	E-participation index (0-1) 0.6905 ranked 73th of 193 countries United Nations E-Participation Index, 2020

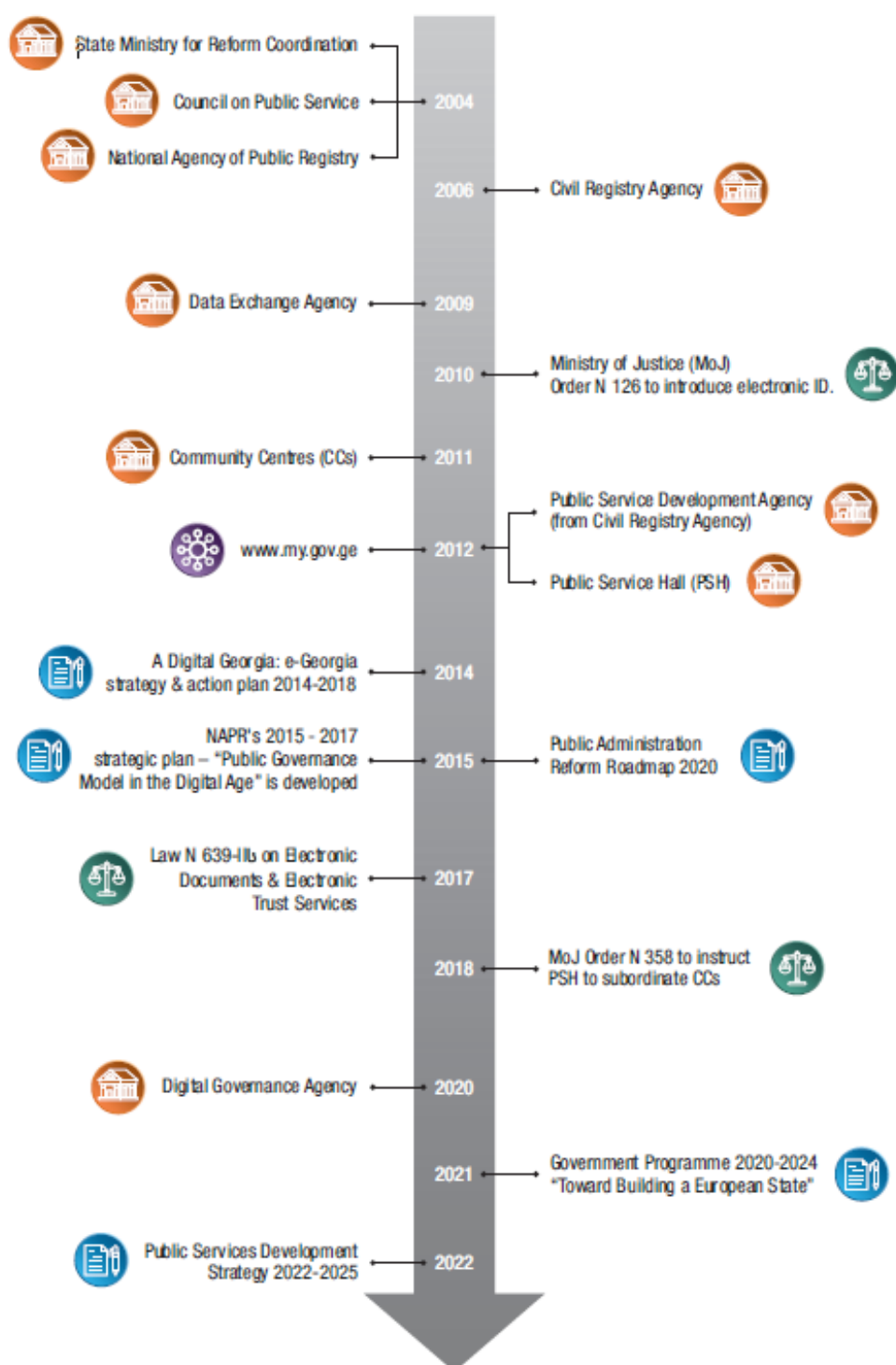
Key milestones: Azerbaijan



Country factsheet: Georgia

Population  3 716 858 Eurostat, 1 January 2020	Population density  65 persons per km² Eurostat, 2020
Average GDP per Capita € 4 256 Eurostat, 2019	Key central actors (policy and coordination) Ministry of Justice Public Service Development Agency Public Service Hall
Sub-national administrative structure Autonomous territories (<i>avtonomiuri respublika</i>) Administrative regions (<i>mkhare</i>) Municipalities (<i>munits'ipaliteti</i>)	Government effectiveness (-2.5 to +2.5) +0.79 World Bank, 2020
E-government development index (EGDI, 0-1) 0.7174 ranked 65th of 193 countries United Nations, 2020	Internet access at home  84% of households United Nations ITU, 2020
Computers at home  62% of households United Nations International Telecommunication Union (ITU), 2020	Mobile network coverage (at least 3G network)  100% of population United Nations ITU, 2020
EGDI Online Service Index (0-1) 0.58820 United Nations, 2020	Government portal https://www.my.gov.ge/kage/services/10 
E-services  700+ available through government portal 1 May 2022	E-participation index (0-1) 0.6429 ranked 80th of 193 countries United Nations E-Participation Index, 2020

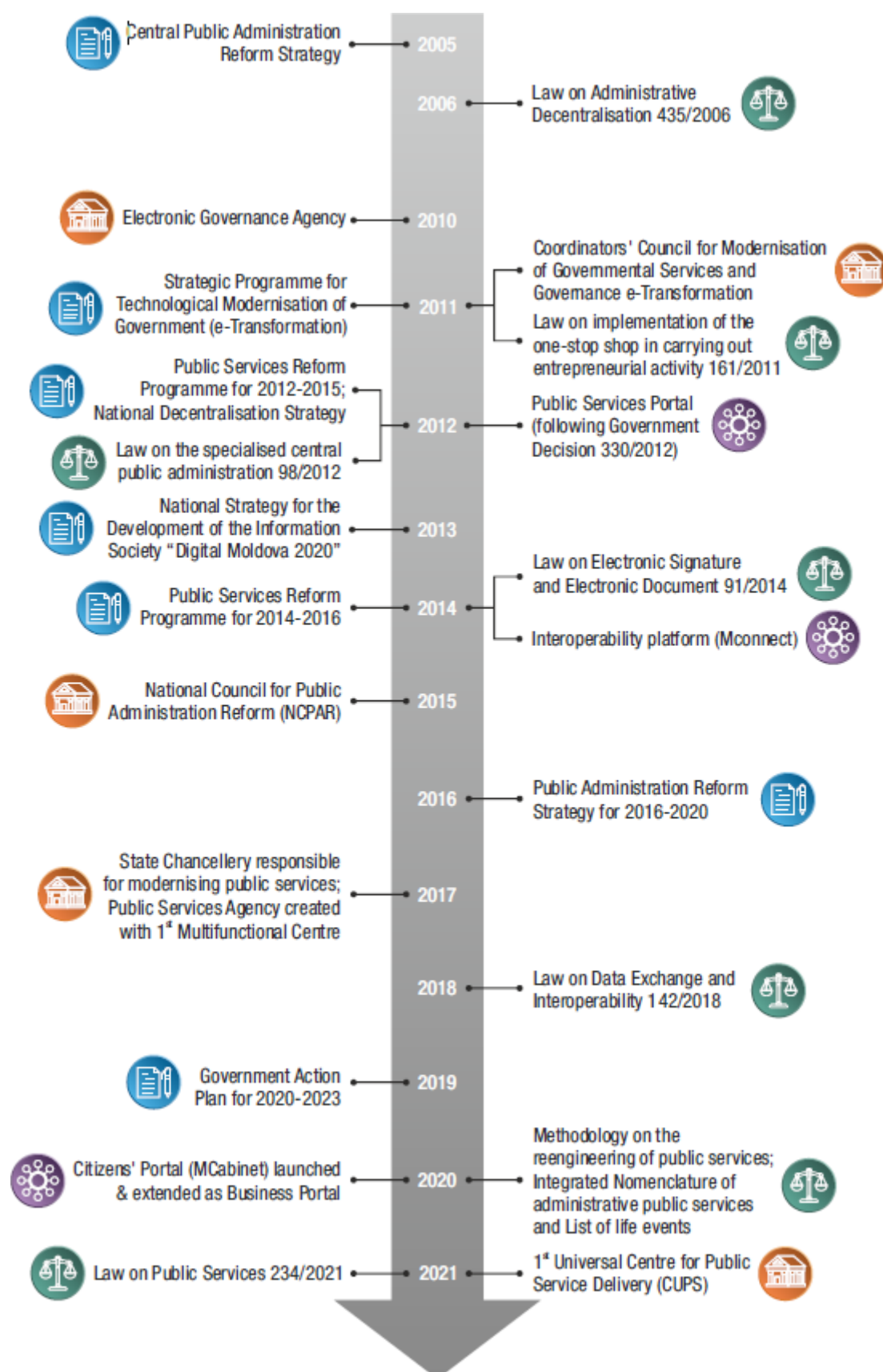
Key milestones: Georgia



Country factsheet: Moldova

Population  3 550 852 Eurostat, 1 January 2017	Population density  87 persons per km ² Eurostat, 2020
Average GDP per Capita  3 018 Eurostat, 2019	Key central actors (policy and coordination) Deputy Prime Minister for Digitalisation State Chancellery Public Services Agency Electronic Governance Agency
Sub-national administrative structure Autonomous territory Districts (<i>raions</i>) Towns / municipalities (<i>orașe / municipii</i>) Communes / villages (<i>comune / sate</i>)	Government effectiveness (-2.5 to +2.5) -0.46 World Bank, 2020
E-government development index (EGDI, 0-1) 0.6881 ranked 79 th of 193 countries United Nations, 2020	Internet access at home  65% of households United Nations ITU, 2020
Computers at home  61% of households United Nations International Telecommunication Union (ITU), 2020	Mobile network coverage (at least 3G network)  100% of population United Nations ITU, 2020
EGDI Online Service Index (0-1) 0.75290 United Nations, 2020	Government portal https://servicii.gov.md/ro 
E-services  87 available through government portal 1 May 2022	E-participation index (0-1) 0.7619 ranked 55 th of 193 countries United Nations E-Participation Index, 2020

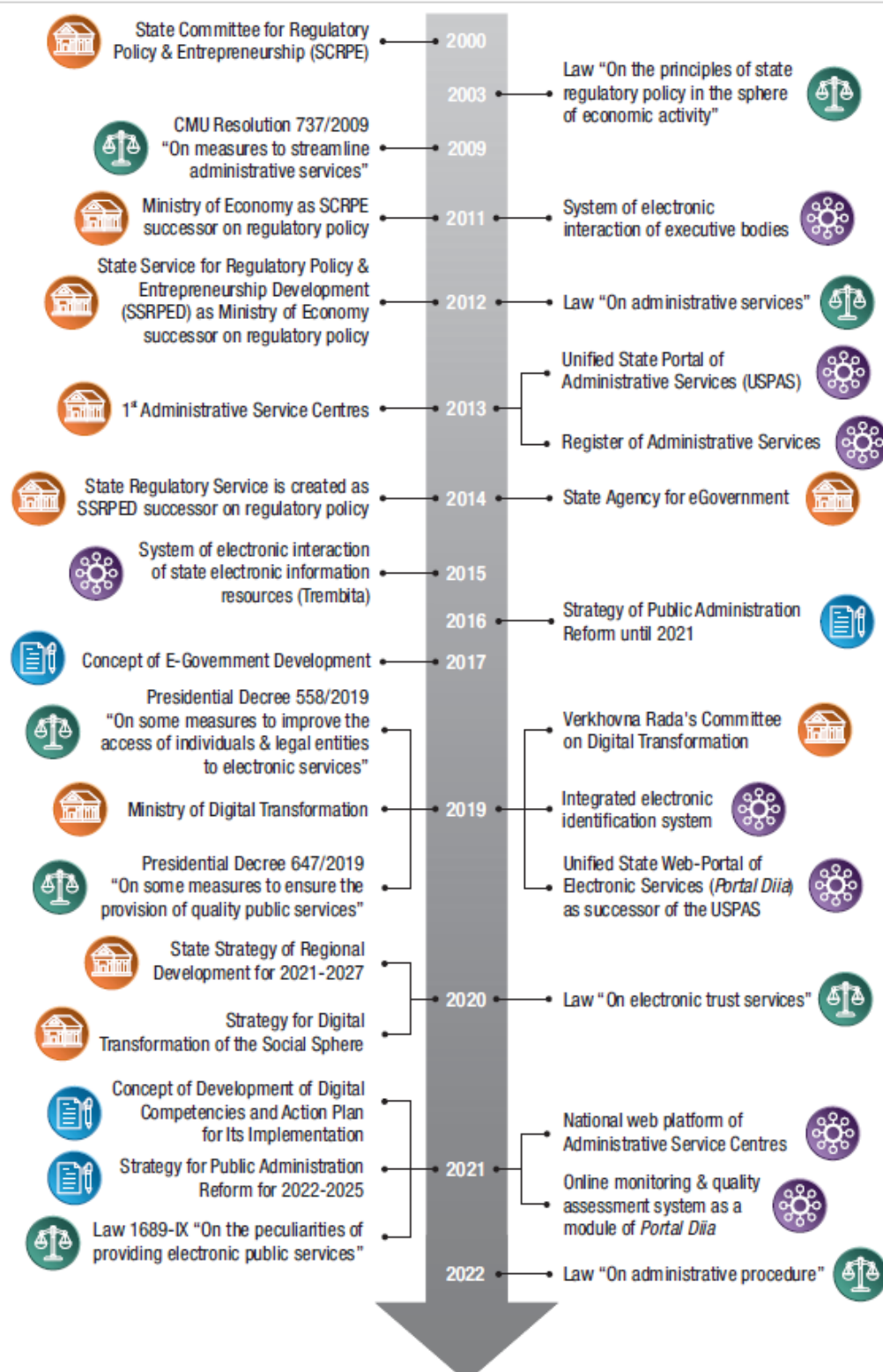
Key milestones: Moldova



Country factsheet: Ukraine

Population  41 418 717[*] * Estimated Eurostat, 1 January 2021	Population density  N/A Eurostat, 2020
Average GDP per Capita € 3 267 Eurostat, 2019	Key central actors (policy and coordination) Cabinet of Ministers Ministry of Digital Transformation
Sub-national administrative structure Autonomous republic, regions (<i>oblasts</i>) & cities with special status Districts (<i>rayons</i>); Municipalities (<i>hromadas</i>) Districts in cities	Government effectiveness (-2.5 to +2.5) -0.36 World Bank, 2020
E-government development index (EGDI, 0-1) 0.7119 ranked 69th of 193 countries United Nations, 2020	Internet access at home  66% of households United Nations ITU, 2020
Computers at home  66% of households United Nations International Telecommunication Union (ITU), 2019	Mobile network coverage (at least 3G network)  89% of population United Nations ITU, 2020
EGDI Online Service Index (0-1) 0.68240 United Nations, 2020	Government portal https://diia.gov.ua 
E-services  72 available through government portal October 2021	E-participation index (0-1) 0.8095 ranked 46th of 193 countries United Nations E-Participation Index, 2020

Key milestones: Ukraine



ANNEX 2: Registering a birth (in country)

Armenia

Legal framework

Registering a birth is regulated by the Family Code³⁵³, and in accordance with its Article 38, birth registrations are implemented in accordance with the Law on State Registration of Civil Acts³⁵⁴, Law on State Fees³⁵⁵ and Law on Fundamentals of Administration and Administrative Procedure³⁵⁶.

Institutions involved directly in registering the birth

- medical institution
- Civil Acts Registration Agency of the Ministry of Justice³⁵⁷ and its 52 regional centres

While the Civil Acts Registration Agency is the main focal point, the alternative front-office option is the Unified Offices of Public Services.

Steps to register the birth

The baby's parent(s) must register the birth not later than a month after the child's birth.

The steps set out below assume that the birth occurred in Armenia, not abroad. Steps involving citizens are highlighted in light green. The customer of the service is typically one or both parents, but the application to register the birth can also be performed by a social worker, in the case of an abandoned child, or by the grandparents or legal representatives, if the applicant does not have an identity document or is recognised as (partly) incapacitated.

Front office	Back office	External actors
		Medical institution (doctor) prepares medical document following birth.*
		Hospital provides extract of document that confirms birth to the parent(s).
	Parent assembles documents required for birth registration	

³⁵³ Family Code <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=152573>; an ENG translation as of 2005 can be found at http://parliament.am/law_docs/081204HO123eng.pdf.

³⁵⁴ https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?docID=149999#152573_1.

³⁵⁵ <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=152231>.

³⁵⁶ Law on Fundamentals of Administration and Administrative Procedure, <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=144936>; an English translation as of 2004 can be found at: https://www.legislationline.org/download/id/4056/file/LFAAP%20Armenia_2004.pdf.

³⁵⁷ <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=140086>.

	(minimum ID + birth confirmation document from the hospital).	
Parent (or alternate) makes in-person visit to Civil Acts Registration Agency or Unified Office of Public Services and applies to register the birth with the necessary documents.		
The application is filled electronically and directly into the system by an employee of the Civil Acts Registration Agency or Unified Office. Data is held only electronically, with no requirement for further checks at the back office.		
The Civil Acts Registration Agency or Unified Office issues the state birth certificate; the parent receives it immediately on the spot and provides e-mail address to receive it electronically as well (NB: the certificate contains a QR code).		

** If the child is born without assistance from a medical institution or with the help of assisted reproductive technologies, the legislation requires that a DNA test be performed.*

Documents needed by citizens to register the birth

Document	#
Medical form confirming child's birth Plus DNA analysis in case the child is born without assistance from a medical institution or with the help of assisted reproductive technologies Plus/or letter from the Social Security Service confirming age and gender, if registering an abandoned child	1-3
ID documents of parent(s) – or applicant, if social worker Plus marriage registration certificate or registration data (if parents are married) And/or death certificate or registration data (in the event of the death of the child's parent) And/or divorce certificate or registration data (in the event of divorce)	1-5
Total	2-5

Mandatory fee(s) to register birth

No service fee is payable to the state authorities. However, DNA testing and analysis costs up to AMD 22 000 (equivalent to around EUR 40).

Time taken from birth to receiving certificate

The timeline below assumes the birth took place in the Republic of Armenia.

#	Process	Days
1	Provision of medical document confirming birth	1
	Taking DNA test and receiving results	<4
	Receiving letter from Social Security Agency to confirm child's age and gender, if abandoned	<6
2	Application for birth registration and completion	1
Σ	Total	1-6

Degree of automation

This is assessed as low, since the parent (or alternate) must make an in-person visit and provide physical documentation, although the application is made directly into the information system and the birth certificate is e-mailed (as well as provided physically).

Azerbaijan**Legal framework**

The legal basis for registering the birth is Article 166 of the Family Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan³⁵⁸, and Section 2 of the Cabinet of Minister Resolution approving the “Rules of state registration of civil status acts”³⁵⁹.

Institutions involved directly in registering the birth

- medical institution (public or private)
- Ministry of Health (MoH)
- Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and its regional registration offices or ‘ASAN service’ centres.

Steps to register the birth

The parent(s) must apply to register the birth no later than 1 month from the date of birth, and if the child is stillborn, no later than 3 days after the date of birth. According to the regulation, the parents of a child bear administrative responsibility for failure to apply for registration of birth by the deadline.³⁶⁰ The Ministry of Justice is responsible for issuing the birth registration certificate.

The steps set out below assume that the birth took place in Azerbaijan, not abroad. Steps involving citizens are highlighted in light green.

Front office	Back office	External actors
	Prior to the birth, the parent(s) assemble the required personal information (IDs, and marriage certificate if applicable) and the ‘exchange document’ (record of pre-birth checks from the pregnant mother’s local consultancy centre), which must be presented by the mother on arrival at the medical institution, along with her ID.	
		After the birth, the medical institution completes a document of the baby’s medical history, based on the child’s data (date of birth, gender, weight, height) and the mother’s ID, which is then supplemented with the father’s name (based on ID), confirmed

³⁵⁸ <http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/46946>.

³⁵⁹ <http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/2426>.

³⁶⁰ <http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/2426>.

		by marriage certificate (if applicable).
	The medical institution submits the birth information online to the Ministry of Health (MoH) to its centralised registry, which generates a unique electronic health card ('VESKS') code ³⁶¹ for the baby, which is entered onto the medical history document and is accessible on the MoJ's information system. (NB: this information is accessed by the local clinic where the baby will receive medical care, e.g. vaccines).	
		The mother signs the document to discharge herself and the baby from the institution, and receives a copy in paper form including the newborn's VESKS code.
At least one parent attends either the MoJ registration office or 'ASAN service' centre in person with the required documents, including the medical birth certificate with the VESKS code, to apply for the birth certificate. The official checks the submitted documents and generates the birth certificate on the spot within the MoJ information system.		

Documents needed by citizens to register the birth

Document	#
Medical birth certificate (medical history document)*	1
Parents' ID documents(s)	1-2
Parents' birth certificate(s)	1-2
Marriage certificate (if applicable), translated and notarised (if married abroad)	1
Total	4-6

* If the child is not born in a medical institution, this would be a document issued by a doctor who assisted in the birth or was consulted by the parents after birth. Additional documents are required from the doctor if the child is stillborn, or dies before the mother leaves the medical institution (both medical birth and death certificates). If the child is found, this would be a document confirming time, place, and condition of the child (act, protocol, reference and a document issued by a medical institution verifying the age of the child)³⁶².

Mandatory fee(s) to register birth

None.

³⁶¹ Citizen's electronic health card code ('VESKS'), issued by the MoH.

³⁶² <https://asan.gov.az/en/service/asan-xidmetler/vetendasliq-veziyyeti-aktlarinin-doevlet-qeydiyyati/dogumun-qeyde-alinmasi>.

Time taken from birth to receiving certificate

According to www.dxr.az, the process takes 2 working days.

Degree of automation

This is assessed as medium, given the medical institution's ability to generate the unique VESKS code from the MoH information system, the access to the MoJ information system and hence its registration offices and the 'ASAN service' centres to the MoH's information system, and hence the ability to generate the birth certificate on the spot, but on the other hand, the requirement for physical documentation and in-person presence to apply for the birth certificate. The intention is to fully automate the application in the e-government system.

Georgia

Legal framework

Registering a birth is governed by the 2011 Law of Georgia No. 5 562 on "Civil Status Acts"³⁶³ and the 2012 Order of the Minister of Justice of Georgia No. 18 on "Approval of the procedures for civil registration"³⁶⁴. The 2016 Joint Order No. 01-37/6 -No. 73 by the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Justice regulates and approves the "procedures for filling, issuing and sending medical birth and death certificate forms and for accessing the data on birth and death in the electronic database of the Public Service Development Agency"³⁶⁵.

Institutions involved directly in registering the birth

- medical institution (public or private)
- Public Service Development Agency (PSDA).

While the PSDA is the focal point for back-office functions, the front-office options include PSDA, Public Service Hall (including its Community Centres) and the Government's online portal, my.gov.ge. Sda.gov.ge, PSDA distance service and PSDA territorial offices.

Steps to register the birth

The steps set out below assume that the birth took place in Georgia, not abroad. Steps involving citizens are highlighted in light green.

Front office	Back office	External actors
		Medical institution fills in a form to record child's birth.
		Parents verify the information on the form with signature.

³⁶³ Parliament of Georgia (2011), Law No. 5 562 on Civil Status Acts, Legislative Herald of Georgia, <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/1541247?publication=21>.

³⁶⁴ Minister of Justice (2012), Order No. 18 on Approval of the Procedures for Civil Registration, Legislative Herald of Georgia [accessed online on 21 June 2021, <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/1572063?publication=0>].

³⁶⁵ Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia and the Minister of Justice of Georgia (2016), Joint Order No. 01-37/6-No. 173 on "procedures for filling, issuing and sending medical birth and death certificate forms and for accessing the data on birth and death in the electronic database of the Public Services Development Agency", Legislative Herald of Georgia, <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/3169985?publication=0>.

		Medical institution submits form electronically to the PSDA.
	PSDA specialist compares data in the medical form with data on the parents held on PSDA's database and verifies their identity. If verified, PSDA specialist registers the child's birth as a civil act in the system and assigns a personal ID number.	
	The system generates a birth certificate.	
Parents can either physically visit a PSDA front office or Public Service Hall (or its Community Centres) to collect the certificate, or generate an e-certificate through my.gov.ge, Sda.gov.ge, PSDA distance service, or PSDA territorial offices.		

Documents citizens need to register a birth

Document	#
Medical form with child's details (name, birthplace, date) and parents' details (names, ID numbers, marriage data, registration address)	1
Parents' IDs or passports, so that the medical institution can fill in the form	1-2
Total	2-3

Mandatory fee(s) to register birth

None.

Time taken from birth to receiving certificate

The timeline below assumes the birth took place in the Republic of Georgia.

#	Process	Days
1	Completion of medical form and submission to PSDA	<5
2	Verification of data, registration and generation of birth certificate	1
Σ	Total	<6

Degree of automation

This is assessed as medium. The medical form is submitted electronically, but must first be countersigned physically by the parent(s); back-office tasks are conducted with the PSDA's databases, but the check is performed visually by the PSDA specialist, not automatically; and the birth certificate can be accessed in person or electronically.

Moldova

Legal framework

Registering a birth is regulated by: Article 47 of the Moldovan Family Code No. 1316/2000³⁶⁶; Law No. 100/2001 on Civil Status Documents³⁶⁷; Government Decision No. 258/2009 on simplifying the procedure for registering newborns³⁶⁸; Government Decision No. 314/2017 on the creation of the Public Services Agency³⁶⁹; Government Decision No. 757/2006 on the approval of the unique model of civil status certificates³⁷⁰; Government Decision No. 558/2007 on the approval of the unique models of the standardised forms of civil status documents³⁷¹; Order No. 44/347/100 of 11 October 2005 on the new wording of the Order No. 110/51/56 of 23 April 2002 “On the approval of the medical certificate confirming the birth” (Form No. 103/e-2002) and Annex No. 1 “Regulation on the manner of completion and issuance of the medical certificate on birth ascertainment”³⁷²; Rules on the manner of registration of civil status documents No. 4/2004, approved by the Order of the Information Technologies Department³⁷³; Order of the Minister of Justice No. 566 of 26 May 2016 on the approval of Rules regarding the filling in of surnames and first names in civil status documents (following their change, rectification or transliteration)³⁷⁴; and Order of the Civil Status Service No. 98 of 21 June 2016 on the implementation of the Automated Information System “Electronic archive of civil status documents”.

Late registration involves the application of administrative sanctions. In accordance with Article 339 para. (1) of the Code on Administrative Offences, concealment of birth or declaration of birth violating the conditions or deadlines provided by law shall be sanctioned with a fine from 9 to 21 conventional units (MDL 450-1 050, equivalent to approximately EUR 22-52).

In accordance with Article 339 para. (4) of the Code on administrative offences, failure to ensure the integrity and security of registers and forms of civil status certificates, according to the rules of keeping and recording them, is sanctioned with a fine from 15 to 27 conventional units (MDL 750-1 350) applied to the natural person, with a fine from 18 to 36 conventional units (MDL 900-1 800) applied to the person with a managerial position.

Institutions involved directly in registering the birth

- medical institution (public or private) – *although birth can be at home or under other circumstances*
- Territorial Civil Status Offices (CSOs) of the Public Services Agency (PSA)
- potentially, local authorities.

³⁶⁶ [Family Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 1316/2000](#), Official Gazette No. 47-48/2001, Article 210.

³⁶⁷ [Law No. 100/2001 on Civil Status Documents](#), Official Gazette No. 97-99/2001, Article 765.

³⁶⁸ [Government Decision No. 258/2009 on simplifying the procedure for registering newborns](#), Official Gazette No. 68/2009, Article 307.

³⁶⁹ [Government Decision No. 314/2017 on the creation of the Public Services Agency](#), Official Gazette No. 162-170/2017, Article 396.

³⁷⁰ [Government Decision No. 757/2006 on the approval of the unique model of civil status certificates](#), Official Gazette No. 102-105/2006, Article 782.

³⁷¹ [Government Decision No. 558/2007 on the approval of the unique models of the standardized forms of civil status documents](#), Official Gazette No. 74-77/2007, Article 594.

³⁷² [Order No. 44/347/100 of 11 October 2005 on the new wording of Order No.110/51/56 of 23 April 2002, “On the approval of the medical certificate confirming the birth” \(Form No. 103/e-2002\) and Annex No. 1 “Regulation on the manner of completion and issuance of the medical certificate on birth ascertainment”.](#)

³⁷³ [Rules on the manner of registration of civil status documents No. 4/2004, approved by the Order of the Information Technologies Department](#), Official Gazette No. 59-61/2004, Article 200.

³⁷⁴ [Order of the Minister of Justice No. 566 of 26 May 2016 on the approval of the Rules regarding the filling in of the surname and first name in the civil status documents \(following their change, rectification or transliteration\)](#), Official Gazette No. 59-150/2016, Article 150.

Medical institutions (i.e. hospitals) are the starting point for the service, but in the Moldovan system, they can also be the front office for subsequent steps. The focal point for the service is the Territorial CSOs of the Public Services Agency (PSA). However, citizens can also choose several front offices to complete the service if the birth occurs in the Republic of Moldova, namely:

- the territorial CSO where the birth took place or the parents are resident;
- specialised offices of the medical institution at which the child was born, if the declarant is the mother (there are four such offices, three in Chişinău);
- the 'town hall' (local authority) in the territory where the birth took place and the child resides (in which case an authorised official, such as secretary to the council, fulfils the front-office functions).

The National Agency for Public Health³⁷⁵ is also involved *indirectly* in back-office activities, being responsible for the medical birth certificates. Since it was established in 2017, the PSA has been responsible for the serial and ID numbers for each newborn, because it took over the responsibilities of the Centre for State Information Resources, "Registru".

Steps to register the birth

The steps set out below assume that the birth took place in Moldova, not abroad. According to the law, the declaration of birth must be made within 3 months from the day of the child's birth, but no later than 1 year from the day of the child's birth (late registration of the birth). The customer of the service is typically one or both parents, but the declaration of the birth can also be performed by: a relative of the parents or other person empowered by them; the administration of the medical institution where the birth took place or where the child is located; or by the 'wardship authority'. These individuals are referred to as 'alternates' below, and together with the parent(s) collectively as 'declarants'. Steps involving citizens are highlighted in light green.

Front office (FO)	Back office	External actors
		Medical institution prepares the medical birth certificate.
		Mother/alternate countersigns register to confirm issuance of the medical birth certificate.
		Medical institution transmits the medical birth certificate to CSO.
	Head of CSO signs birth into the medical certificate register; CSO sends information to State Population Register	
Parent(s) or alternate assembles necessary documents and physically submits them to CSO, specialised office of the medical institution where the birth took place, or the local authority.*		
FO specialist confirms declarant's identity and right to register.		
If confirmed, the FO specialist gives the (standardised) birth declaration form to the declarant (parent or alternate) for completion.		

³⁷⁵ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=100295&lang=ro.

	FO specialist verifies correctness of the completion of the birth declaration form and, if correct, records the declaration in the Register of Birth Declarations and enters the serial number from the register on the birth declaration and in the IS "Territorial Subdivision of Civil Status" (OSC Manager), which automates the collection process, accumulation, updating and analysis of data on the registration of civil status facts by the territorial subdivisions of the General Directorate of Civil Status in the State Register of Population. FO specialist prints two copies of the birth record, signs and applies the stamp.	
FO specialist obtains the declarant's signature on both copies of the birth record.		
	If the birth record is issued, FO specialist prepares the birth certificate on a standard form, and simultaneously enters it into the IS. FO specialist signs the (paper) birth certificate, stamps it and registers it in the Register of Birth Certificates.	
FO specialist obtains the declarant's signature in the Register of Birth Certificates and hands the birth certificate to the declarant.		

** In principle (although it is unlikely), this step could take place while the medical institution is transmitting the medical birth certificate to CSO, but as the submission must happen within 3 months (or longer, exceptionally), it is more likely to happen after the CSO sends information to the State Population Register.*

Documents needed by citizens to register the birth

Document	#
ID card of mother (to prepare the medical birth certificate)	1
Medical birth certificate (three types, depending on circumstances) – or medical death certificate in the case of a still-birth or death in the first week of life	1
Birth statement by parent(s) or alternate (relative, medical institution, etc.) – if an alternate, ID card and possibly other documentation to confirm authority to register birth (e.g. power of attorney).	1-3
ID card of at least 1 parent	1-2
Marriage certificate of parents Or declaration of paternity if parents are unmarried Or alternate is registering birth Or declaration that paternity is contested Or divorce certificate Plus opinion of 'wardship authority' (alternate) for a declaration of paternity by alleged father Plus death certificate of husband if he has died < 300 days before birth*	1-2

Birth declaration form	1
Birth record	1
Total	7-11

* Exceptionally, further documents may be required: minutes regarding registration of birth of a found/abandoned child; court decision ascertaining the fact of birth of the child. These are highly specific circumstances that would replace some of the documents listed, and are thus not included in the total.

Mandatory fee(s) to register birth

None.

Time taken from birth to receiving certificate

The timeline below assumes the birth took place within the Republic of Moldova, as different timelines apply for births abroad.

#	Process	Days
1	Hospital birth: medical birth certificate issued day after birth, up to discharge of mother from hospital (normally within 3 to 5 days)	1-5
	Home/other birth: medical birth certificate issued by medical institution within 10 days of birth	1-10
2	Submission of medical birth certificate to PSA (takes up to 5 days)	1-5
3	Declaration of birth by parent(s) or alternate within 3 months of birth (or within 1 year, in case of late registration), verifying documents and identity of declarant(s), registering and issuing birth certificate	1
Σ	Total	4-16

Degree of automation

This is assessed as low. While information is recorded online, most steps require the physical presence of parent(s) or alternates, and the submission of paper documentation. This service is being subjected to re-engineering and then digitalisation.

Ukraine

Legal framework

Registering the birth is governed by the Law of Ukraine “On the state registration of acts of civil status”³⁷⁶, while Ministry of Justice Regulation No. 52/5 “Rules of state registration of civil status acts in Ukraine”³⁷⁷ sets out the procedure in detail. The Ministry of Health Regulation No. 2 136 “Procedure on the formation and issuance of medical certificates of birth in the Register of Medical Certificates of the Electronic Health System”³⁷⁸ regulates the issuance of documents that register the birth (both paper and electronic).

Institutions involved directly in registering the birth

- medical institution (public or private)

³⁷⁶ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Law on the State Registration of Acts of Civil Status, consolidated version: 23 April 2021, Article 4, 9 (Part 4), 11, 13 (Part 1, 2, 3), <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2398-17#Text>.

³⁷⁷ Ministry of Justice Regulation No. 52/5, “Rules of state registration of civil status acts in Ukraine”, 18 October 2018, consolidated version: 2 October 2020, Division State Registration of Birth of Individuals and Their Origin, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0719-00#top>.

³⁷⁸ Ministry of Health Regulation No. 2 136, Procedure on the formation and issuance of medical certificates of birth in the Register of Medical Certificates of the Electronic Health System, 18 September 2020, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0953-20#top>.

- Ministry of Justice (holder of the State Register of Civil Status Acts) and its territorial departments
- local self-government (Administrative Service Centres).

Medical institutions (i.e. hospitals) are the starting point for the service, but can also be the front office for subsequent steps. Citizens have the option of applying to register the birth in person via “the bodies of the state registration of birth”, or the local ASC. Virtually all steps can be performed online if the hospital is connected to the Electronic Health System, through the Diia portal.

Steps to register the birth

According to the law, the state registration must take place within 1 month after the birth.

The steps set out below assume that the birth took place in Ukraine, not abroad. Steps involving citizens are highlighted in light green. NB: before the first step, the parent(s) can choose whether to receive the service separately or through the integrated service, *eMalyatko* (see ‘Degree of automation’)³⁷⁹. If they opt to receive the service(s) online, they will need to obtain an electronic signature, if they do not yet have it.

Front office	Back office	External actors
		If the hospital is connected to the Electronic Health System, it prepares an e-document as evidence of the birth, and records the newborn child as an ‘unidentified patient’. If the hospital is not connected, it prepares a paper version, and gives it to the parent(s).
Completing and submitting the application for the state registration of birth, either online on the <i>Diia</i> portal, or in person (e.g. at ASC) by officials in the presence of one or both parents*. If an application is made in person, the official prints the completed application, and it is signed by one or both parents.		
	The application is submitted to the ‘body of state registration’ on paper or online, depending on the region and the operability of the interaction software (mainly online). The ‘body of state registration of birth’ registers the application, and considers/ checks it. If it contains any errors, the body informs the applicant, who must submit a new one. Otherwise, the birth is registered.	
The parent(s) must receive the birth certificate in person and can choose to visit the body of the state registration of birth, the		

³⁷⁹ They will also need to open a bank account, if this is required to access (pay for) the service.

hospital where the child is born, the ASC or by post.		
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* If the parents live at different residences, have different surnames or are not married, parents who are applying alone must ensure they have notarised statements/approvals (or in the case of residence, electronic proof).

Documents needed by citizens to register the birth

Document	#
Medical (electronic) birth certificate	1
Application and ID document(s), potentially notarised approval by one parent*	2-4
Total	3-5

* If one parent submits the application alone, and the parents have different surnames, a notarised approval for the child's surname is needed by the one who has another surname. If the parents are not married, the father can either personally submit an application with the mother or submit a notarised application, or the father's name (without passport details) can be registered according to information provided by the mother.

Mandatory fee(s) to register birth

No service fee is payable to state authorities or local self-government to register the birth. However, the separate service of registering the child's residence costs UAH 13.6 (equivalent to around EUR 0.50).

Time taken from birth to receiving certificate

#	Process	Days
1	Hospital completes medical (electronic) document proving birth	1
	Notary verifies documents in circumstances noted above.	
2	Completing, submitting, registering, verifying and approving application to register birth*	1-2
Σ	Total	1-3**

* If the application is received after working hours, it will not be considered until the next day. Note, if the parent(s) choose to receive the birth certificate by post, this will also add extra time.

** In theory, the whole process could take place in 1 day (the day of birth), if the parent(s) receive the medical document and choose to apply online or in person immediately, there is no requirement for notarial services, there are no mistakes in the application, it is submitted during working hours, and they pick up the birth certificate on the same day. This is more likely if the service is completed fully online, with the exception of the pick-up.

Degree of automation

This is assessed as (currently) low to medium.

If they wish, parents may obtain the birth registration service, and 10 others, on the integrated service eMalyatko, according to the CMU Resolution "On realisation of the experimental project on the creation of favourable conditions for the execution of child rights" in 2020-2021. This allows the citizen to submit one application for all services with documents attached (those not already available through electronic information interaction across the providers' registers), either to state registration bodies in person, the hospital where the child was born, an Administrative Services Centre, or online. Starting 1 September 2021 (and as of 23 February 2022), all hospitals in Ukraine were connected to the Electronic Health System and send birth confirmation and related data (as well as requests for other services) to the other agencies online.

However, the birth certificate itself must still be received in paper form, either at the body of state registration of birth, the hospital where the child was born, the ASC or by post (in which case they must pay for the shipping).

ANNEX 3: Transferring ownership of a used car (in country)

Armenia

Legal framework

Vehicle registration (including re-registration) is governed by the Law on Ensuring Road Traffic Safety and regulated by Government Decision No. 1 251-N³⁸⁰.

Institutions involved directly in transferring ownership

- Road Police Service and its territorial registration-examination subdivisions

Steps to transfer ownership

Steps involving citizens are highlighted in light green.

Front office	Back office
	The car owner and the buyer apply online (https://roadpolice.am/en) for an appointment with the Road Police to sign a sales contract and receive the date and time for their visit, within 1 week
On the appointed date, the owner and buyer take the car to the road police subdivision, approach a window and the employee prepares the sales contract, including the personal information of the seller and buyer based on their IDs. Note: before starting the contractual process, the employee checks on the <?>IS whether the estate tax for the car has been paid by the previous owner, and if not, must pay the tax at the cashier window before starting the contractual process.	
While the employee prepares the contract, a technical employee checks the car with the previous owner (seller), to verify that its vehicle identification number (VIN) corresponds to the VIN on the car passport. After the check, the previous owner (seller) gives the employee the licence plate and current passport of the car.	

³⁸⁰ Government Decree #1251, <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=150480>, 9 September 2010.

Both the previous owner and the new owner sign the prepared contract on a digital tab, after which the employee prints out the contract and hands over the hard copies to them.	
After signing the contract, the new owner 'applies' for a new car passport and registration plates ³⁸¹ . In practice, the road police employee fills in the information directly into the IS, according to the official application form ³⁸² .	
The new owner pays the fee(s) at the payment terminal at the (separate) cashier window.	
After making the payment, the new owner presents the payment receipt to the employee at the original window and is informed of the wait required for the passport and plate to be printed, approximately 20 to 30 minutes. After this period, the owner goes to the window in the printing room to receive the new plates and passport.	

Documents <to here>needed by citizens to transfer ownership

Document	#
Identity documents (e.g. ID card, passport) of both the previous and new owners	2
Document confirming the legality of its acquisition (e.g. sales contract)	1
Document certifying payment of fees and duties, as defined by law	1
(Possibly) a certificate issued by representative of the car manufacturer or a vehicle inspection organisation, if it is not possible to see/find out the car's numbers/numbered parts, the year of production or engine power.	1
(Possibly) certificate of fulfilment of vehicle (property) tax obligations, if the car is not already registered with the Road Police or the colour/body has changed	1
(Possibly) power of attorney if application by a representative of the owner (preferably notarised)	1
Total	4-7

Note, the application form is completed online by the official who enters the information directly, making it effectively an e-application.

Mandatory fee(s) to transfer ownership

The fee for the service is AMD 16 000, equivalent to around EUR 29, and includes the (automatically generated) registration plates. Personalised plates can be obtained for an additional fee as a separate service (which can be performed in parallel).

Time taken from application to receiving registration document

The appointment can take up to 1 week to schedule (in practice, it usually takes 1-2 days). At the territorial subdivision, all the steps can be completed on the spot and within 1 working day.

Degree of automation

This is assessed as low to medium, as the steps involve the presence of the (previous and new) owners at the territorial subdivision with the car, physical checks of the vehicle, and involve some paper copy

³⁸¹ The process is the same if they wish to apply for a plate of high demand or a personalised licence plate, but fees for the plates range from AMD 60 000 to AMD 2 million. <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=145899>.

³⁸² <https://www.police.am/images/Havelvac5-16.doc>; <https://www.police.am/images/Havelvac6-17.doc>.

documents (IDs, contracts). At the same time, the contract and application are made electronically (and contract signed with a digital tab) if the public administration uses databases.

Azerbaijan

Legal framework

The legal basis for the state registration of vehicles is the Law on Road Traffic³⁸³, Presidential Decree No. 24 on the Application of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Traffic³⁸⁴, and the Cabinet of Ministers Order "On approval of the regulations on state registration and state registration of motor vehicles and their trailers and the procedure for alienation and pledge of vehicles"³⁸⁵.

Institutions involved directly in transferring ownership

- Ministry of Internal Affairs' Main Traffic Police Department³⁸⁶ and its registration-examination points

Steps to transfer ownership

Steps involving citizens are highlighted in light green.

Front office	Back office
	The seller completes an application to change ownership, and the buyer completes an application to change the registration, and they assemble the required documents. ³⁸⁷
The buyer and seller go to the local police registration examination point together (no appointment necessary), along with the car, and submit the forms and documents.	
At the registration examination point, the police verifies the information in the application forms and supporting documents, and conducts a physical check of the car to confirm that the vehicle's engine, body and chassis number correspond to the documentation presented.	
	The buyer pays the required fees in a local bank (and the seller pays any outstanding fines, if applicable).
The buyer brings the bank receipts to the registration examination centre, and waits while the new certificate and two new registration plates are prepared and provided on the spot.	

³⁸³ <http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/3423>, Article 27, Part II, Paragraph 1.

³⁸⁴ <http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/3246>, 22 November 1998.

³⁸⁵ <http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/5078>, Part 2.

³⁸⁶ <https://www.dyp.gov.az/?/en/mainpage/>.

³⁸⁷ Note, the seller can give power of attorney to the buyer, in which case this is one and the same person.

Documents needed by citizens to transfer ownership

Document	#
Application forms	2
Application must be accompanied by: • ID cards of buyer and seller • relevant document (e.g. sales contract) or court decision confirming its ownership • receipt confirming fees payment • (possibly) receipt confirming payment of any outstanding fines by the seller	4-5
Total	6-7

Further documentation is needed if the used car is imported into Azerbaijan. However, for the sake of simplicity, this life event example focuses on cars bought in-country only.

Mandatory fee(s) to transfer ownership

Under the Law on State Duty, a fee of AZN 22 (around EUR 11) must be paid for the issuance of state registration plates for vehicles (Article 18.65.2)³⁸⁸. A fee of AZN 10 (about EUR 5) is also paid for the registration of cars and other motor vehicles (except for re-registration of vehicles) or AZN 5 (around EUR 2.5) for motorcycles, trailers and semi-trailers (Article 18.65.3), while a fee of AZN 17 (around EUR 9) is paid for the issuance of a registration certificate (Article 18.65.7).

Time taken from application to receiving registration document

All the steps can be completed within 1 working day.

Degree of automation

Given that all the steps must be performed in person and involve physical documents and checks, this is assessed as low.

Georgia**Legal framework**

The service is regulated by Order No. 150 by the Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia from January 2007 on the registration and de-registration of vehicles³⁸⁹.

Institutions involved directly in transferring ownership

- Service Agency (SA) under the Ministry of Internal Affairs

The Public Service Development Agency (PSDA) under the Ministry of Justice is also involved, with a back-office role offering identification services (verification of personal data).

Steps to transfer ownership

Steps involving citizens are highlighted in light green.

Front office	Back office
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³⁸⁸ Fees for personalised number plates are specified in the table part of Article 18.65.6.1 of this Law.

³⁸⁹ The Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia (2007), Order No. 150 on the registration and de-registration of vehicles, Legislative Herald of Georgia [accessed online on 3 June 2021 <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/68950?publication=0>]

	The new and previous owner assemble the documentation required for the re-registration (IDs of both new and previous owners and the car's tech-passport held by previous owner).
The new owner requests the vehicle re-registration services from an SA inspector-operator and presents ownership documentation (the car's tech passport).	
On request from the inspector-operator, an SA inspector-specialist performs a physical inspection of the car to check that it corresponds with the information in the ownership documentation (car-tech passport) ³⁹⁰ .	
	The inspector-specialist registers the vehicle verification in the e-system of the Service Agency, which is immediately accessible by the inspector-operator.
	The inspector-operator verifies the personal data (IDs) in the PSDA's database and the (existing) vehicle registration document in the SA's database, comparing it with the verification act in the system.
The inspector-operator asks the previous owner and new owner to sign a joint statement confirming the change in registration.	
The new owner pays the service fee, either by credit card (to the inspector-operator) or cash (to a bank-operator located in the SA), with payment being registered as finalised in the e-system.	
The inspector-operator finalises the re-registration in the SA's database and asks the citizen to approach an inspector-specialist.	
The inspector-specialist provides the new owner with the new registration document and registration plates.	

Documents needed by citizens to transfer ownership

Document	#
IDs of previous and new owner	2
Existing vehicle registration document (car's tech-passport, which lists owner's name and last name, personal identification number and legal address).	1
Joint statement of previous and new owner on transfer of registration	1
Total	4

No application form is required, and the inspector-specialist changes the registration online, making it effectively an e-application.

Mandatory fee(s) to transfer ownership

The administrative fee is GEL 70, the equivalent of approximately EUR 20.

³⁹⁰ If the data does not match, the Service Agency will not perform the ownership change, initiating other procedures.

Time taken from application to receiving registration document

Assuming there are no errors or reasons to refuse the re-registration, all steps in the process can be completed in one day.

Degree of automation

This is assessed as low-medium. While the SA inspector-operator can access both the SA and PSDA databases only, which indicates interoperability between the two agencies, all other steps require physical presence and paper documentation.

Moldova**Legal framework**

Car registration and deregistration is regulated by the Law on the Safety of Road Traffic No. 131/2007, the Government Decision on the Reorganisation of the Automated Search Information System “Car” in the State Register of Transports and the introduction of testing of vehicles and trailers No. 1 047/1999, and the Government Decision on Services provided by the Public Services Agency No. 966/2020³⁹¹, which stipulates the tariffs to be paid.

Institutions involved directly in transferring ownership

- Territorial subdivisions of the Public Services Agency (PSA)

Steps to transfer ownership

Steps involving citizens are highlighted in light green.

Front office	Back office
The owner can request a vehicle inspection from the PSA (to be performed at a territorial subdivision, within 1 hour) to verify the engine number car in the State Register of Transports.	
	The (new) owner (or representative) completes the application form and assembles the required accompanying documents*.
The (new) owner pays the required fee for the service(s), either physically through a bank or payment terminal, or electronically on the e-payment gateway, MPay.	
The PSA's transport examination and record station conducts a physical inspection of the vehicle to verify its identity (vehicle identification number, body number and chassis number).	
The prospective new owner (or representative*) submits an application to transfer ownership, along with the necessary documents, to the PSA subdivision.	
	The PSA checks that the vehicle is not listed as stolen or otherwise prohibited from registration, then updates the information on the State Register of Vehicles.

³⁹¹ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=124770&lang=ro.

If the check reveals no prohibitions, the PSA issues the new registration certificate to the new owner at the PSA subdivision.	
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* With power of attorney (see 'Documents'), which may require a further step, and possibly fee.

Documents needed to transfer ownership

Document	#
Application form to transfer ownership*	1
Application should be accompanied by: - document confirming applicant's ownership (original + copy) - identity document of applicant (original) - evidence of periodic technical inspection within term of validity - confirmation of road tax payment - compulsory civil liability insurance document for damages caused by vehicles, within term of validity (copy) - registration certificate of former owner - confirmation of payment of tariffs for the services provided - vehicle identification report (possibly) power of attorney, if necessary	9-10
Total	10-11

* The applicant must also provide the registration number plates, if they do not comply with the provisions of standard SM 122:2014, or if the applicant requires the issuance of plates with another registration number.

Mandatory fee(s) to transfer ownership

The PSA charges fees for the services provided³⁹², based on a tariff system laid down in Government Decision 966/2020.

The first (set of) fees concern the physical inspection of the car. If the owner takes it to a PSA subdivision authorised to examine vehicles, the fee is MLD 220 (around EUR 11). However, the owner can also request that the PSA's expert travels to the car's location, in which case, the additional tariff depends on the distance from the transport examination and record station:

- within a radius of up to 25 kilometres (km) = MLD 300 (around EUR 15)
- within a radius of 25 km to 100 km = MLD 600 (around EUR 30);
- within a radius of more than 100 km = MLD 900 (around EUR 45).

The fee for the registration certificate is MLD 330 (around EUR 17), which the owner receives in 20 working days. Owners wishing to accelerate the process may pay a higher fee, as follows:

- within 10 working days = MLD 660 (around EUR 33)
- within 5 working days = MLD 990 (around EUR 50)
- within 3 working days = MLD 1 320 (around EUR 66)
- within 1 working day = MLD 1 650 (around EUR 83)
- on the day of the request = MLD 1 980 (around EUR 100).

Since receipt of the (permanent) registration certificate can take up to 20 days, the car owner is entitled to receive a provisional registration certificate as an official state document that allows its holder to use the vehicle on the territory of the Republic of Moldova (only) until receipt of the permanent certificate. The cost is MLD 80 (around EUR 4).

³⁹² <http://www.asp.gov.md/en/node/4730>

The owner also requests a PSA inspection to verify the engine number (see step 1), for which an additional tariff of MLD 400 (around EUR 20) applies.

Time taken to receive registration document

The time taken depends partly on the vehicle inspection. Applicants can to some extent determine the timing by visiting the examination and record station (on the spot), or can make an appointment for the station's expert to come to the location where the car is.

Otherwise, the application can be processed, and the vehicle registered, on the day of the request, with the identification request happening within 1 hour.

The registration certificate itself is not issued for (up to) 20 working days, according to the standard arrangement, but can be issued more quickly (see 'Mandatory fees').

Degree of automation

This is assessed as low. Tariff payments can be made electronically through MPay, but all other steps require physical presence, including physical attendance at a PSA office to submit paper copies of documents and the vehicle inspection.

Ukraine

Legal framework

The Law on Road Traffic regulates vehicle registration³⁹³, and the details determined by CMU Resolution "Procedure for the state registration (re-registration), deregistration of cars, buses, as well as self-propelled vehicles constructed on the chassis of cars, motorcycles of all types, brands and models, trailers, semi-trailers, wheelchairs, and other similar vehicles and mopeds"³⁹⁴.

Institutions involved directly in transferring ownership

- Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) and its territorial services centres³⁹⁵
- potentially, Administrative Service Centres (if there is an agreement between the MIA and the ASC).

Steps to transfer ownership

Steps involving citizens are highlighted in light green.

Front office	Back office
The new owner pays the administrative fee for the vehicle re-registration.	
	The new owner completes the application form and assembles the accompanying documents needed.
The applicant submits the form either in person at the MIA territorial services centre, or through the	

³⁹³ Law on Road Traffic, consolidated version: 17 March 2021, Article 34, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3353-12#Text>.

³⁹⁴ CMU Resolution No. 1 388, "Procedure for the state registration (re-registration), deregistration of cars, buses, as well as self-propelled vehicles constructed on the chassis of cars, motorcycles of all types, brands and models, trailers, semi-trailers, wheelchairs, and other similar vehicles and mopeds", 7 September 1998, consolidated version: 28 April 2021, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1388-98-%D0%BF#n16>.

³⁹⁵ Main Service Centre website, accessed 17 May 2021, <https://hsc.gov.ua/>.

ASC*. The applicant brings the vehicle to the MIA territorial services centre (if not already there) for inspection.	
The MIA's specialists verify that the vehicle identification number corresponds with those in the submitted documents, and has not been reported as stolen or is otherwise prohibited from registration.	
In the absence of grounds for refusal, the MIA territorial services centre issues the vehicle registration certificate and registration plates to the applicant (or the ASC distributes the certificate and numberplates on the MIA's behalf).	

* If the applicant wishes, the official who deals with the application can fill in the application form on the applicant's behalf, print it and give it to the applicant for checking and signing.

Documents needed by citizens to transfer ownership

Document	#
Application form	1
The application should be accompanied by: - the applicant's ID document (and tax number); - the document that proves the right of the vehicle ownership; - the document verifying that the construction of the vehicle meets road traffic safety requirements; - administrative fee receipt.	4
Total	5

Mandatory fee(s) to transfer ownership

The administrative fee for the service depends on whether the car was manufactured in Ukraine or abroad. The cost breaks down as follows, with its cost in UAH and the equivalent in EUR:

	Domestic		Foreign	
	UAH	EUR (approx.)	UAH	EUR (approx.)
Service	152.52	5	190.15	6
Registration plate	178.20	6	178.20	6
Vehicle registration certificate	312.00	10	312.00	10
Total	642.72	21	680.35	22

Time taken from application to receiving registration document

Assuming no errors or reasons to refuse the re-registration, all steps in the process can be completed in 1 day.

Degree of automation

This is assessed as low, as all interactions with the MIA territorial service centre must be conducted in person, the car must be physically inspected and paper documents are required. Even if the car owner chooses to utilise an ASC, the electronic application form must be printed out and signed physically.

ANNEX 4: Registering a change of residence (in country)

Armenia

Legal framework

Registering a new permanent residence is governed by the Law on State Register of the Population³⁹⁶, while Government Decision No. 1231-N “On establishing a system of State Register of Population”³⁹⁷ regulates the individual registration of persons.

Institutions involved directly in the change of residence

- police of the Republic of Armenia (responsible for managing the State Register of Population), Passport Division.

Steps to register a change of residence

If residents change their permanent residence (domicile), they must inform the territorial division of the police holding the local register where the new domicile is located within 7 days. Steps involving citizens are highlighted in light green.

Front office	Back office
If not already known, the citizen visits the police station's passport office and consults the service window for information about the correct service description and cost. Otherwise, the citizen approaches the payment terminal at the police station's passport office and makes the payment first, in cash.	
The citizen takes the payment receipt to any of the service windows in the passport office, is provided with the (paper) application form, and completes it on the spot to register the new domicile with the address plus personal data (ID card or passport, which is updated with the new address in parallel). If the citizen is not the owner of the residence, the owner must also be present to fill in an agreement form. (NB: If the owner of the residence does not	

³⁹⁶ Law on State Register of the Population <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=120904>. An English translation is available, dating from 2002: https://www.legislationline.org/download/id/5175/file/Armenia_Law%20on%20state%20population%20register_2002%20am_2012_en.pdf.

³⁹⁷ Government Decree No.1 231, <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=143794>, 14 July 2005.

provide consent, the police must go to the address to check that the person does in fact live there within 7 calendar days).	
	The employee at the window checks the original documents and takes copies of the passport(s) and certificate of ownership with the application and agreement(s).
	Based on the paper application, the passport office records the new residence electronically in the local Register of Population within 7 calendar days. This automatically updates the central register and transfers information to the local register at the previous residence.
	The passport office prepares a new ID card with the new address, or hand-writes the new address into the passport, as applicable.
Citizens must return to the passport office to collect their passport/ID with the new address, but no earlier than 7 calendar days after a successful application.	

Documents needed to register a change of residence

Document	#
Application form (including new address, social insurance card number and other personal details)	1
ID card or passport	1
(Possibly, if not owner), written agreement of the owner of the residence	1
Total	2-3

Mandatory fee(s) to register residence

There is an administrative fee of AMD 1 000 (equivalent to around EUR 2).

Time taken from starting registration to registering new address

While the initial attendance at the police station's passport office can be completed within 1 working day, the entire process takes at least 7 calendar days before registration of a new address and return of the ID card/passport at the second visit. No fast-tracking option is available.

Degree of automation

This is assessed as low, as the application requires physical attendance at the police station (including by the owner of the residence, if this is a different person), and is paper-based (before being entered into the register electronically) and cash-based, even though the updating links central and local registers.

Azerbaijan

Legal framework

Registering a change of residence is regulated by Presidential Decree No. 588 "On some measures in the field of increasing transparency in the provision of public services, electronic registration and licensing procedures at the place of residence"³⁹⁸ and Presidential Decree No. 706 "On ensuring the activities of the

³⁹⁸ <http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/30590>, 31 August 2015, Part 1.

State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations under the president of the Republic of Azerbaijan³⁹⁹.

Institutions involved directly in registering a change of residence

- Main Passport, Registration and Migration Department of Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)⁴⁰⁰ and its city and district police departments or via 'ASAN service' centres.

Steps to register a change of residence

Steps involving citizens are highlighted in light green. Note, the registration is made by the owner, rather than the resident, as presented in the table below (which assumes that the resident and the owner are not the same person).

Front office	Back office
	The citizen requests the owner of the accommodation to register at the new residence with the MIA/police.
If agreed, the owner, together with the citizen, applies to the local police department or 'ASAN service' centre to change the citizen's place of residence, by presenting proof of ownership, and both IDs, with a 'No objection to residence' application by the owner.	
	The police department or 'ASAN service' centre verifies the application using the interdepartmental automated information retrieval system to change the information in the registry, which updates the chip in the ID.

Documents needed by citizens to register a change of residence

Document	#
Proof of ownership of the accommodation	1
'No objection to residence' application	1
ID cards	2
Total	4

Mandatory fee(s) to register residence

None.

Time taken from starting registration to registering new address

All the steps can be completed within 1 working day.

Degree of automation

This is assessed as medium: the documents must be submitted on paper, but the registration takes place within the MIA's information system and updates the chip in the citizen's ID card.

³⁹⁹ <http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/24212>, 5 September 2012, Paragraph 5.6-1.

⁴⁰⁰ <https://bpgmi.gov.az/?en/mainpage//>.

Georgia

Legal framework

Registering the place of residence is governed by the 1996 Law No. 323 on “The procedure for registering citizens of Georgia and aliens residing in Georgia, for issuing an identity (residence) card and a passport of a citizen of Georgia”⁴⁰¹ and regulated by the 2011 Ministry of Justice Order No. 98 on “Approval of the procedure for registration and deregistration of Georgian citizens and aliens residing in Georgia and issuance of identity (residence) cards, passports, travel passports, and travel documents”⁴⁰².

Institutions involved directly in registering a change of residence

- Ministry of Justice’s Public Service Development Agency (PSDA) or PSH and its Community Centres.

The National Agency of Public Registry is also involved *indirectly* in the service, because its database is consulted during the process.

Steps to register a change of residence

Steps involving citizens are highlighted in light green.

Front office (FO)	Back office (BO)
Citizens either gather the required documentation (either proof of ownership or agreement of the owner to register at the residence) or identify two adult witnesses to confirm that the citizen has been residing at the address for the last 3 months.	
Citizens visit an FO official at a PSDA territorial office in their new place of residence, or any Public Service Hall or Community Centre, with a request for registration and either the required document or two adult witnesses (see previous step). It is also possible to apply electronically via My.gov.ge, Sda.gov.ge and PSDA distance service.	
Based on the information presented (see ‘Documents’ below), the FO official verifies ownership in the database of the National Agency of Public Registry. The FO official fills in the registration request with the respective information in the electronic system*.	
	The BO official checks and verifies the information in the request and performs registration at the new address.

* The FO official at this point will then identify whether the ID also needs to be updated, if the ID is not electronic and includes the residence address. However, this is a distinct service in its own right within the life event, with its own steps and service fee, and for the purposes of comparability with other countries is not presented further here.

⁴⁰¹ Parliament of Georgia (1996), Law 323 on “the Procedure for Registering Citizens of Georgia and Aliens Residing in Georgia, for Issuing an Identity (Residence) Card and a Passport of a Citizen of Georgia”, Legislative Herald of Georgia <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/1435931?publication=0>.

⁴⁰² Ministry of Justice of Georgia (2011), Order of the Minister No. 98 on “Approval of the Procedure for Registration and Deregistration of Georgian Citizens and Aliens Residing in Georgia and Issuance of Identity (Residence) Cards, Passports, Travel Passports, and Travel Documents”, Legislative Herald of Georgia [accessed online on 18.06.2021 <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/1435931?publication=0>].

Documents needed to register a change of residence⁴⁰³

Document	#
Document with proof of ownership of the property or approval of the owner to register at the property or form completed and signed by the two witnesses with the address to register and information regarding the owner.	1
ID document to prove identity*	1
Total	2

* Note, however, if a person has previously received the ID card from PSDA, there is no need to submit the document again, as his/her identity will be verified in PSDA's electronic database.

Mandatory fee(s) to register residence

No fees are required to register residence (only to update the ID card, if required).

Time taken from starting registration to registering new address

All the steps can be completed within 1 working day.

Degree of automation

This is assessed as medium. An online option to submit the application electronically is available on the government portals, with identity and ownership verified electronically, but service in person still requires paper documents, the physical presence of the applicant (and potentially, two witnesses), and visual checks to validate documents, even though the front-back office interactions are conducted electronically.

Moldova**Legal framework**

The registration of place of residence is governed by Law on Dwellings No. 75/2015⁴⁰⁴, and Law on Identity Documents in the National Passport System No. 273/1994⁴⁰⁵ and regulated by Government Decision No. 125/2013 approving the regulation on issuing identity documents and records of the inhabitants of the Republic of Moldova⁴⁰⁶, Government Decision on the Services Delivered by the Public Services Agency No. 966/2020⁴⁰⁷, and Government Decision for the Approval of the Concept of the Automated Information System "State Register of Population" and the Regulation on the State Register of Population No. 333/2002⁴⁰⁸.

Institutions involved directly in registering a change of residence

- Public Services Agency (PSA) and its subdivisions⁴⁰⁹.

⁴⁰³ There is no separate application, as the operator fills in an e-form in the system.

⁴⁰⁴ [Law on Dwellings No. 75/2015](#), Official Gazette No. 131-138/2015, Article 249.

⁴⁰⁵ [Law on identity documents in the national passport system No. 273/1994](#), Official Gazette No. 9/1995, Article 89.

⁴⁰⁶ [Regulation on the issuance of identity documents and registration of the inhabitants of the Republic of Moldova, approved by Government Decision No. 125/2013](#), Official Gazette No. 34-40/2013, Article 171.

⁴⁰⁷ [Government Decision on the services delivered by the Public Services Agency No. 966/2020](#), Official Gazette No. 372-382/2020, Article 1 145.

⁴⁰⁸ [Government Decision for the approval of the Concept of the automated information system "State Register of Population" and the Regulation on the State Register of Population No. 333/2002](#), Official Gazette No. 43-45/2020, Article 409.

⁴⁰⁹ <http://asp.gov.md/en/Mission>

Local self-governments (LSGs) are involved *indirectly* in the service, as the recipients of residential data that enable them to update their registries.

Steps to register a change of residence

Steps involving citizens are highlighted in light green.

Front office (FO)	Back office
	Citizens prepare their application and assemble the accompanying documents*.
	Citizens pay the appropriate fee, depending on whether they are de-registering, registering or both, at a bank, paying terminal or MPay, the Government e-payment gateway.
Citizens must visit a PSA subdivision and submit their application and supporting documents in person**.	
The FO specialist identifies applicants (or authorised representatives) based on their ID card and examines/ verifies the other documents. The FO specialist performs deregistration and/or registration by entering the data in the State Register of Population***.	
	The PSA subdivision informs the relevant LSGs about a change of residence in its territory or territories within 48 hours (working days only), so that they can update the Register of evidence of population households.

* This might also require legal services (to award power of attorney) or notarial services, if the accommodation is within a privately owned house and the (co-)owners are not able to present their written statement of accepting the citizen into the living space in person or through a representative with existing power of attorney.

** It is possible to book an appointment in advance in one PSA division in Chişinău.

*** In Moldova, it is mandatory for citizens over 16 years old to update their IDs with a change of address and request the issuance of a new card, if they hold a 'second-generation' ID card (issued on or after 7 March 2013) or 'third-generation' electronic ID. The ID card is issued with an accompanying file, which proves the registration for holders of 'first-generation' ID card (issued before 7 March 2013), and can be updated without issuing a new ID card. The final step of confirming de-registration and registration is only fully completed when the ID card or accompanying file is updated. Issuance of new ID cards is a distinct service in its own right in the life event, with its own steps and fee, and for the purposes of comparability with other countries, is not presented further here.

Documents needed by citizens to register a change of residence

Document	#
Application form	1
ID card	1
Either (a) document certifying right of ownership or use of the dwelling or (b) a written declaration confirming that ownership is registered in the Real Estate Register or (c) where the accommodation is in a privately owned house and the citizen has no document attesting the right of use, a written statement by the (co-)owners of acceptance to use the living space.	1
(Possibly) in case (c) above, if the dwelling is the private property of a legal person (e.g a company), the citizen must also present the extract from the State Register of Legal Units to establish the administrator of the respective legal person; however, this is not mandatory if the PSA can verify this information through the State Register of Legal Units.	1
(Possibly) confirmation of payment of fees for the deregistration / registration service*	1
Total	3-5

** If payment is made through MPay, paper proof is not required, as it can be verified by PSA's information systems.*

Where citizens are modifying their address at the same time as they apply to register their residence, they must also present a certificate issued by the cadastral authority. As these are exceptional circumstances, they have not been included in the list of documents, especially as a hard copy is not required if the PSA can verify this information through its information systems.

Mandatory fee(s) to register residence

The service fees are defined by Government Decision No. 966/2020 on the services provided by the Public Services Agency. If de-registration and registration are combined into a single service, the fee is MDL 50 (around EUR 2.5). If they are performed separately, the fee is MDL 30 each (around EUR 1.5). The service is free for citizens in specialised medical institutions, residential care or penitentiary institutions.

Time taken from starting registration to registering new address

From the citizen's perspective, all the steps can be completed within 1 working day. The entire process takes up to 3 working days, however, if the time to inform the LSGs (up to 48 hours) is also taken into account.

Degree of automation

This is assessed as low. While fees can be paid electronically through MPay and some evidence (e.g. MPay payment) can be accessed online rather than submitted in hard copy, the steps require physical presence and mainly hard copies of documentation.

Ukraine

Legal framework

The registration of residence is governed by the Law "on provision of public (electronic public) services related to declaration and registration of place of residence in Ukraine"⁴¹⁰, while the CMU Resolution "On issues of declaration and registration of place of residence and administration of registers of local communities"⁴¹¹ regulates the service in detail.

Institutions involved directly in registering the change of residence

- local self-government (LSG)⁴¹²

Local self-government bodies must establish registers of territorial communities, which can then interact electronically with the *Diia* portal, Sectoral Information System of the State Migration Service and the Unified State Demographic Register.

Steps to register change of residence

The law provides two options for notifying authorities about a change of residence:

⁴¹⁰ Law "On provision of public (electronic public) services related to declaration and registration of place of residence in Ukraine", <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1871-20#Text>.

⁴¹¹ CMU Resolution No. 207 "On issues of declaration and registration of place of residence and administration of registers of local communities" 7 February 2022, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/265-2022-n#Text>.

⁴¹² Registration Bodies, State Migration Service website, accessed 17 May 2021, <https://dmsu.gov.ua/services/regauth.html>.

- declaration (an automated electronic procedure);
- registration (a paper-based procedure requiring physical interaction with authorities).

The declaration procedure is available online on the *Diia* portal and application, and may be used if applicants can meet the following conditions:

- An applicant can be electronically identified by electronic signature or another admissible means.
- A title to the real estate (either private property or dormitory) is recorded in the State Register of Real Property Rights.
- The applicant is the owner of the property or, if not, the owners of the property are willing to confirm online their consent to have someone registered and have a proper means of electronic identification (e.g. an electronic signature).

The applicant submits the declaration online, providing information on previous domicile, personal data and information about payment of a fee (the fee can be paid online). Applicants who do not own the property are required to indicate information on the owner (passport details, tax identification number, information about the title to the real estate and contact details).

Declaration of residence of children under 14 must be submitted by the parent(s). Children over 14 submit a declaration on their own. However, if the children's declared new domicile is different from that of their parents', they must submit electronic consent to such a declaration.

All data indicated in the application are checked with the data of the State Register of Civil Status Acts, State Register of Real Property Rights, Register of Conscripts, Unified State Demographic Register and Unified Information System of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

If all information submitted in the application is correct and all requirements are met, the system reflects the change of the place of residence in the Register of Local Community, Register of Conscripts and Unified Information System of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

However, since the system of online declaration is new and has certain limits on implementation, a majority of applicants use the paper-based registration procedure.

The steps below represent the process for a vast majority of applicants, excluding special circumstances. For example, within 3 days before deregistering residence at a previous domicile, applicants on military service must visit the military commissariat to be removed from military registration at their previous domicile, and a special stamp is placed in their military documents⁴¹³.

Otherwise, the law requires citizens to register their new residence within 30 days of deregistration of residence at the previous domicile and arrival at the new domicile. (NB: for the registration of a newborn child, under the life event 'Having a baby', the time limit for registration of residence is 3 months after the birth).

Children under 14 years old can (with some exceptions) be registered only at a residence where one or both parents are already registered. Children under 14 are also prohibited from being registered at a previous domicile, if both parents de-register from this residence and move to a new domicile.

In the interests of comparability with the other ENP East countries, the following steps assume that citizens de-register from a previous domicile and register at the new one at the same time. It is also possible to de-register and register as separate services (the rules allowing up to 30 days between the two processes), but this involves further steps and doubles the cost.

Steps involving citizens are highlighted in light green.

⁴¹³ Law on Military Duty and Military Service, consolidated version: 23 April 2021, Article 37 (Part 3), <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2232-12#Text>.

Front office	Back office
The citizen pays the administrative fee prior to de-registration/registration.	
	The citizen completes the application form and assembles the required documents*.
The citizen takes the application form and accompanying documents either to the LSG body, its ASC, or (if applicable) the administration of the apartment building**.	
The LSG body issues the registration certificate to the citizen***.	
	The LSG body at the new domicile notifies the LSG body at the previous domicile regarding de-registration.

* If the citizen has a child under 14 and lives separately from the other parent, there may be an additional step of verifying the residence registration with a notary.

** Applicants can also ask the LSG/ASC official to fill in the form online and print it out, so they can check and sign it.

*** Citizens who opt to register via the ASC or apartment building administration, rather than directly with the LSG body, must take an additional step of requesting the return of the documents they used to process the application with the LSG body.

For the residence registration and deregistration, the grounds for refusal are:

- ineligible applicant;
- failure to submit the necessary documents (see below);
- application lacks the necessary information;
- failure to pay the administrative fee;
- failure to remove military registration at previous domicile (for those on military service).

Documents needed by citizens to register the change of residence

Document	#
Application form	1
ID document	1*
Document proving the right to live at the residence (e.g. ownership certificate, lease agreement, court decision, or notarised approval** by the residence owner of approval for registration)	1*
Administrative fee receipt	1
(Possibly) birth certificate(s) if registering a child/children under 14 years old	1*
(Possibly) notarised approval to register the child/children under 14 years old, if the parents live at a different residence, by the parent who lives separately	1*
(Possibly) document of military duty (if the person is subject to military service)	1*
Total	4+

* Per resident

** Or signature in the application form. This document is not required to register a child under 14.

Since some documents must be produced for each resident, the total number of documents may vary. However, for single adult residents, the total is 4 (or 5, if subject to military service).

Mandatory fee(s) to register residence

The administrative fee for service (whether registration or deregistration) is UAH 37.22 (around EUR 1). Simultaneous registration and deregistration are considered one service for payment, otherwise each service must be paid separately. If registration is not completed in 30 days of de-registering and arriving at the new domicile, the fee is set at UAH 62.03 (around EUR 1.5).

The same fee structure applies to registering a newborn child at the domicile (see 'Having a baby'), but with a longer time limit (3 months from the date of birth) before the higher fee applies.

If notarial services are needed (see 'Steps to register' and 'Documents needed'), a notary fee may apply.

Time taken from starting registration to registering new address

All the steps can be completed within 1 working day. Step 5 takes place on the next working day after the registration of the new place of residence, but this does not affect the time for the citizen to receive the registration certificate for the new address.

Degree of automation

This is assessed as medium, as online application is limited to specific categories of citizens and/or type of properties.