

## AGILE GOVERNANCE IN CENTRAL ASIA: ADAPTING THE UAE'S 100-DAY CHALLENGE MODEL FOR KAZAKHSTAN'S PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM

**Nurkhat  
IBADILDIN**

*Ph.D., Associate Professor, School of Digital Public Administration, Astana IT University, Astana, Kazakhstan, ibadildin.nurkhat@astanait.edu.kz, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6352-8713>, Scopus ID: 57238305900*

**Aigul  
AITBAYEVA**

*Doctoral Student in Project Management, Astana IT University, Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan, 242659@astanait.edu.kz, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-8634-2198>*

**Symbat  
ISSABAYEVA**

*Assistant Professor, Ph.D. in Public Administration, School of Digital Public Administration, Astana IT University (AITU), Astana, Kazakhstan, s.issabayeva@astanait.edu.kz, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-4225-2762*

**Mustafa  
COLAK**

*Assistant Professor, Ph.D., Social Sciences University of Ankara, Ankara, Turkey, mustafa.colak@asbu.edu.tr, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-3191-4134.*

Дата поступления рукописи в редакцию: 02/03/2026

Доработано: 10/03/2026

Принято: 26/03/2026

DOI: 10.52123/1994-2370-2026-1703

УДК 35:005.8

МРНТИ 82.15.23

**Abstract.** Amid rising technological and institutional complexity, public administration increasingly confronts the limitations of traditional bureaucratic mechanisms for project delivery. Lengthy approval cycles, fragmented accountability, and weak interagency coordination reduce the state's capacity to respond promptly to socio-economic challenges and implement innovative solutions. In this context, accelerated models of managing government initiatives-focused on achieving measurable outcomes within compressed timeframes-are of growing scholarly and practical interest. This study substantiates the feasibility and conditions for adapting the government acceleration model "100 Days Challenge," implemented in the United Arab Emirates, to the public administration system of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The methodological basis comprises qualitative case analysis, comparative examination of international government accelerator practices, and analysis of the pilot application of the 100-day methodology in Kazakhstan in 2024. The article demonstrates that acceleration mechanisms can substantially shorten the implementation time of cross-agency projects, increase controllability and transparency, and create conditions for institutional learning in the public sector. It is argued that direct transplantation of the UAE model into Kazakhstan is not feasible due to differences in project management maturity and institutional environment. As a scientific contribution, the paper proposes an adaptation framework-Kazakh 100-Day Challenge (K-100)-that combines a centralized political mandate, temporary autonomous acceleration structures, and formalized transparency and documentation protocols. The findings expand understanding of governance innovation transfer mechanisms in transitional administrative systems and may inform the design of national tools for accelerating public reforms.

**Keywords:** project management; public administration; acceleration; innovation; rapid innovation model; government accelerators; digital maturity

**Аңдатпа.** Технологиялық және институционалдық күрделіліктің артуы жағдайында мемлекеттік басқару жобаларды іске асырудағы дәстүрлі бюрократиялық механизмдердің шектеулеріне жиі тап болады. Ұзақ келісу кезеңдері, жауапкершіліктің бөлшектенуі және ведомствоаралық үйлестірудің әлсіздігі мемлекеттің әлеуметтік-экономикалық сын-қатерлерге жедел жауап беру және инновациялық шешімдерді енгізу қабілетін төмендетеді. Осыған байланысты қысқа мерзімде өлшенетін нәтижелерге қол жеткізуге бағытталған мемлекеттік бастамаларды басқарудың жеделдетілген модельдері ғылыми және практикалық тұрғыдан үлкен қызығушылық тудырып отыр. Бұл зерттеу Біріккен Араб Әмірліктерінде жүзеге асырылған «100 күндік шақыру» мемлекеттік жеделдету моделін Қазақстан Республикасының мемлекеттік басқару жүйесіне бейімдеудің мүмкіндігі мен шарттарын негіздейді. Өдіснамалық негізі ретінде сапалық кейс-талдау, мемлекеттік акселераторлардың халықаралық тәжірибесін салыстырмалы талдау, сондай-ақ 2024 жылы Қазақстанда 100 күндік өдіснаманы пилоттық қолдану нәтижелерін талдау қолданылды. Мақалада жеделдету механизмдері ведомствоаралық жобаларды іске асыру мерзімін едәуір қысқартуға, басқарылуын және ашықтығын арттыруға, сондай-ақ мемлекеттік секторда институционалдық оқытуға

\* Corresponding author: N. Ibadildin, [ibadildin.nurkhat@astanait.edu.kz](mailto:ibadildin.nurkhat@astanait.edu.kz)

жағдай жасауға мүмкіндік беретіні көрсетілген. Сонымен қатар, жобаларды басқару жетілу деңгейі мен институционалдық ортадағы айырмашылықтарға байланысты БАӘ моделін Қазақстанда тікелей енгізу мүмкін еместігі дәлелденеді. Ғылыми жаңалық ретінде орталықтандырылған саяси мандатты, уақытша автономды жеделдету құрылымдарын және ашықтық пен құжаттандырудың формалданған рәсімдерін біріктіретін бейімделген модель — Kazakh 100-Day Challenge (K-100) ұсынылады. Зерттеу нәтижелері өтпелі әкімшілік жүйелердегі басқару инновацияларын трансферттеу механизмдерін түсінуді кеңейтеді және мемлекеттік реформаларды жеделдетуге арналған ұлттық құралдарды өзірлеуде қолданылуы мүмкін.

**Түйін сөздер:** жобаларды басқару; мемлекеттік басқару; жеделдету; инновациялар; жедел инновация моделі; мемлекеттік акселераторлар; цифрлық жетілу.

**Аннотация.** В условиях растущей технологической и институциональной сложности государственное управление всё чаще сталкивается с ограничениями традиционных бюрократических механизмов реализации проектов. Длительные циклы согласования, фрагментированная ответственность и слабая межведомственная координация снижают способность государства оперативно реагировать на социально-экономические вызовы и внедрять инновационные решения. В этой связи ускоренные модели управления государственными инициативами — ориентированные на достижение измеримых результатов в сжатые сроки — вызывают всё больший научный и практический интерес. Настоящее исследование обосновывает возможность и условия адаптации модели государственного ускорения «100-дневный вызов», реализованной в Объединённых Арабских Эмиратах, к системе государственного управления Республики Казахстан. Методологическую основу составляют качественный анализ кейсов, сравнительное исследование международных практик государственных акселераторов, а также анализ пилотного применения 100-дневной методологии в Казахстане в 2024 году. В статье показано, что механизмы ускорения способны существенно сократить сроки реализации межведомственных проектов, повысить управляемость и прозрачность, а также создать условия для институционального обучения в государственном секторе. Обосновывается, что прямое заимствование модели ОАЭ в Казахстане невозможно ввиду различий в зрелости управления проектами и институциональной среде. В качестве научного вклада предлагается адаптационная модель — Kazakh 100-Day Challenge (K-100), сочетающая централизованный политический мандат, временные автономные структуры ускорения и формализованные протоколы прозрачности и документирования. Полученные результаты расширяют понимание механизмов трансфера управленческих инноваций в переходных административных системах и могут быть использованы при разработке национальных инструментов ускорения государственных реформ.

**Ключевые слова:** управление проектами; государственное управление; акселерация; инновации; модель быстрой инновации; государственные акселераторы; цифровая зрелость.

## Introduction

The contemporary paradigm of improving project management effectiveness in the public sector increasingly shifts away from exclusively traditional bureaucratic models toward adaptive governance systems that combine strategic methodology selection, human capital development, and active use of digital technologies. Classical bureaucratic procedures-based on linear decision chains and multi-level approvals-demonstrate limited effectiveness in contexts where innovation and digital solutions constitute the foundation of socio-economic development and require prompt managerial response (OECD, 2025). This situation is largely driven by the specifics of public projects, which are typically characterized by a high degree of regulatory constraint, multiple stakeholders, and political sensitivity of decisions. Taken together, these factors necessitate comprehensive management approaches capable of balancing institutional predictability in public administration with the flexibility required for innovation and the achievement of measurable results (O’Leary & Tross, 2017; Deltek, n.d.).

In the Republic of Kazakhstan, recent years have produced a certain-though still limited-practical experience in introducing project management in the public sector. An important institutional step was the establishment of the National Project Office (hereinafter, NPO), operating as a collegial working body under the relevant ministry (previously the Ministry of Digital Development, Innovation and Aerospace Industry; currently the Ministry of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan). The NPO is built on a matrix organizational model and is mandated to implement project management methodologies in the public sector and ensure delivery of national priority portfolios. Its membership includes representatives of the Administration of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Delivery Unit), the Digital Government Support Center, the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and heads of project offices of central and local executive bodies. Despite tangible progress, empirical research indicates that most project management offices (PMOs) in Kazakhstan’s public sector exhibit low levels of project management maturity, significantly limiting their capacity to implement and scale government projects effectively (Yessengeldina et al., 2025). This conclusion is consistent with comparative international assessments: while Kazakhstan ranks relatively high in the e-government index (24th place), it simultaneously faces systemic constraints related to institutional maturity and managerial

agility, which hinder the transformation of digital achievements into sustainable governance effects (UN E-Government Survey, 2024).

Against this background, global public management practice shows a persistent shift toward Rapid Innovation Models (RIM)-flexible governance approaches built on short delivery cycles, interagency collaboration, and continuous results monitoring. Unlike traditional administrative strategies, these models rely on project logic and the principles of agile governance, emphasizing adaptive response and accelerated solution implementation within strictly limited time horizons rather than linear planning (World Bank, 2020). Accordingly, studying contemporary project management models that leverage innovative methods, digital solutions, and flexible organizational structures is particularly relevant. The purpose of this article is to develop recommendations for adapting a rapid innovation model to Kazakhstan's context, drawing on the experience of the United Arab Emirates implemented through the government acceleration methodology. The proposed approach accounts for the features of Kazakhstan's public administration system, which combines elements of a traditional bureaucratic model with modern, flexible project management methods. The study findings suggest that an adapted government acceleration model may serve not only as an instrument for borrowing a successful international practice but also as an empirical basis for examining mechanisms of accelerated innovation in transitional administrative systems operating under hybrid political regimes (Libman, 2008).

### Literature Review

The scholarly literature consistently emphasizes that successful borrowing or adaptation of managerial and institutional innovations from one governmental context to another is decisively shaped by the level of institutional and cultural fit in the receiving environment (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Stone, 2017). Within policy transfer theory, governments often turn to successful foreign examples in search of solutions to similar governance problems; however, accumulated empirical evidence indicates that mechanical copying of policy instruments without deep contextualization typically results either in reduced reform effectiveness or in entrenched institutional resistance (Howlett & Ramesh, 2022; Andrews et al., 2017).

The problem of institutional mismatch is especially acute in transitional and developing economies. A number of studies document a systemic tendency in such states to import so-called symbolic policies aimed primarily at external legitimation and reputational effects rather than real institutional feasibility and long-term sustainability of the introduced solutions (Williams & Dzhekova, 2014). As a result, significant resources are allocated to creating new innovation centers and managerial initiatives, while the potential for accelerated development through adaptation and refinement of already tested methodologies remains underutilized (World Bank, 2020; OECD, 2023).

In contemporary scholarship, a key indicator of public organizations' readiness to implement accelerated innovation models is the level of Project and Programme Management Maturity (PPMM). According to the P3M3 (Portfolio, Programme and Project Management Maturity Model), organizations evolve from fragmented and weakly formalized processes to strategically integrated practices embedded in corporate and public governance systems (Young et al., 2014). For the public sector, maturity assessment is essential because it helps determine whether institutions can not only initiate projects but also ensure their systemic delivery, scaling, and performance control (Mergel et al., 2019).

Within modern approaches to public governance improvement, project management maturity is treated as a foundational element in the transition from "e-government" to "smart government," where digital services are supported by robust management processes, effective coordination mechanisms, and accountability (OECD, 2025; Janssen & van der Voort, 2020). Thus, digital maturity without corresponding managerial maturity does not deliver expected efficiency gains in public administration and does not lead to sustainable institutional change.

Post-Soviet administrative systems, including Kazakhstan, are often characterized by a structural conflict between the bureaucratic logic of hierarchy and compliance and the project management logic that presupposes implementer autonomy, horizontal collaboration, and high trust in interdisciplinary teams (Battalov & Kangalakova, 2023). This conflict substantially constrains the adoption of flexible and accelerated governance models in the public sector. One mechanism discussed in the literature for mitigating this tension is the creation of temporary autonomous structures—so-called "innovation convergence units" – that operate outside standard bureaucratic hierarchies while remaining within a clear strategic government mandate (OECD, 2025; Mergel,

2019). Such structures provide a managed environment for interdisciplinary collaboration and rapid experimentation by bringing together analysts, IT specialists, economists, and representatives of relevant agencies.

In this context, the UAE experience is particularly relevant for Kazakhstan – namely, the implementation of a rapid innovation model through the “100 Days Challenge,” launched as part of the Government Accelerators national program. This program functions as a structured platform for delivering strategic government priorities within compressed timeframes by forming cross-sector teams that unite ministries, municipal authorities, businesses, and research institutes (Government Accelerators UAE, 2024). A distinctive feature of this model is the combination of strong political support, advanced digital infrastructure, and methodological rigor, enabling measurable outcomes within a 100-day cycle (Global CIO, 2025). The UAE Government Accelerators program is positioned as a flagship instrument of the national strategy to accelerate public innovation. The “100 Days Challenge” fully embodies the principles of Rapid Innovation Models (RIM), offering a managed format for achieving concrete results under strict time constraints. Conceptually, the model is grounded in the transition “from ambition to action,” mobilizing public and private institutions, research centers, and civil society to address priority governance challenges (Government Accelerators UAE, 2024; Mazzucato, 2021). The effectiveness of the model is supported by several interrelated principles. First, political leadership and strategic vision play a decisive role, neutralizing institutional inertia and ensuring centralized coordination. In high power-distance settings such as the UAE, a top-down strategy functions not as a constraint but as a driver of disciplined acceleration of governance processes (Global CIO, 2025). Second, the model relies on integration of advanced digital technologies-including AI, blockchain, and the Internet of Things-enhancing transparency and scalability. The UAE Pass national digital identity and the Smart Dubai initiative form foundational digital infrastructure for accelerator projects (OECD, 2025).

Third, methodological rigor is achieved through the institutionalized use of strategic management tools such as the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP), Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM), and Balanced Scorecard. These instruments help structure priorities, align goals among stakeholders, and systematically assess project progress (World Bank, 2020; Saaty, 2008). Fourth, the model emphasizes results and transparency: each accelerator project concludes with a public presentation of achieved effects and lessons learned, reinforcing a culture of accountability and institutional learning in the public sector (UAE Vision 2071, 2017). Despite the widely recognized success of Government Accelerators, the literature identifies a significant empirical gap due to limited availability of data on the internal operational processes of the “100 Days Challenge.” The lack of detailed studies of these mechanisms complicates international transfer and institutional replication in other administrative contexts (OECD OPSI, 2019). This gap highlights the need for transparent documentation and data-sharing protocols when adapting accelerator models in other countries.

According to policy transfer and diffusion theory, the success of adapting managerial innovations depends on the degree of “policy fit” between the borrowed initiative and the institutional, cultural, and administrative characteristics of the receiving country (Williams & Dzhekova, 2014; Stone, 2017). Empirical studies confirm that direct copying of organizational structures and management instruments without accounting for these factors-especially when transferring models from countries with highly mature governance systems to developing or transitional economies-often results either in reform failure or in formalization without achieving declared goals (World Bank, 2020; Andrews et al., 2017).

### **Methodology and Research Methods**

This study adopts a qualitative research design (qualitative case study) focused on examining governance innovations in the public sector and the conditions of their institutional adaptation. The choice of a qualitative approach is determined by the nature of the object under analysis-government acceleration models-which constitute complex socio-managerial constructs emerging at the intersection of political, institutional, and organizational factors. In this context, quantitative methods are insufficient to capture the logic of managerial decision-making, the dynamics of interagency collaboration, and the contextual constraints that shape the outcomes of accelerated governance models.

The research employs a comparative analysis of practices in the United Arab Emirates and the Republic of Kazakhstan, alongside examination of empirical evidence from the pilot implementation of the 100-day methodology in Kazakhstan in 2024. This approach makes it possible

to identify both universal features of government acceleration models and context-dependent factors affecting their effectiveness across different administrative systems. The empirical base of the study consists of three complementary groups of sources. The first group includes official programmatic and analytical materials from the United Arab Emirates, including documents related to Government Accelerators, UAE Centennial 2071, and Dubai Future Accelerators, which describe the goals, principles, and organizational mechanisms of the 100-day model. The second group covers legal acts, strategic documents, and analytical materials of the Republic of Kazakhstan developed by the Ministry of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Development, the National Project Office, and other authorized state bodies. The third group comprises a case study of the pilot project “Digital Nomad Visa,” implemented within the acceleration methodology. The key research methods include document analysis and content analysis, which enable systematic mapping of management mechanisms used in government accelerators and comparison of institutional conditions for their implementation across countries. Particular attention is paid to formal mandates, interagency coordination mechanisms, monitoring procedures, and instruments for institutionalizing achieved results, as these elements largely determine the sustainability of governance innovations in the public sector.

The methodological core of the study is an analysis of the Government Accelerators program in the United Arab Emirates as a structured management instrument aimed at delivering measurable outcomes within strictly limited timeframes. A central component of this model is the formation of small interagency teams (Acceleration Teams) mandated to address a specific complex governance challenge within 100 days. The goals set for each team must be both ambitious and feasible, oriented toward solving practical problems relevant to citizens, and require participation of multiple government bodies. A defining feature of the acceleration model is the high degree of operational autonomy granted to teams. Leadership does not intervene directly in day-to-day activities, concentrating instead on providing resources and removing administrative barriers. In Government Accelerators practice, this approach is referred to as the “let go” principle and is interpreted as a leadership mode grounded in trust and accountability. Methodological and organizational support is provided by coaches (facilitators), who guide teams through planning, monitoring, and iterative adjustment of actions.

Operationally, the 100-day project cycle is structured into three consecutive phases: Design, Acceleration, and Sustainability. The Design phase, preceding the start of the main cycle, includes cohort launch and collection of proposals from government agencies, serving as a primary filter for governance problems requiring accelerated intervention. At this stage, key challenges aligned with strategic government priorities are selected, with an explicit refusal from imposing predetermined solutions in advance. The Acceleration phase covers 100 days of active team work and begins with a Launch Workshop, during which a measurable goal is defined, a working plan is developed, and principles of team interaction are agreed. A critical element is the Midpoint Review on Day 50, which assesses progress, adjusts plans, and addresses emerging delays. Empirical evidence indicates that this milestone often becomes a decisive point shaping the subsequent trajectory of implementation.

The Sustainability phase is aimed at consolidating results and evaluating their scalability. At the final milestone (Day 100), teams present achieved outcomes, synthesize lessons learned, and develop recommendations for institutionalization. Importantly, the objective of the acceleration cycle is not limited to short-term delivery; it also seeks to establish mechanisms that remain functional after the 100-day period ends. The organizational structure of team work includes multiple levels: strategic leadership (Leadership Team) providing overall direction; sponsors (Sponsors) facilitating access to resources and removing administrative obstacles; coaches (Coaches) responsible for methodological support; and the Acceleration Teams themselves, composed of representatives from different agencies. This structure fosters a culture of collaboration, rapid experimentation, and parallel work—an alternative to traditional sequential bureaucratic logic.

Analysis of typical 100-day cycle dynamics suggests several characteristic stages: trust-building and goal setting at the outset; intensive work to remove systemic barriers and launch early experiments; a crisis period requiring leadership support without micromanagement; a phase of acceleration and pilot testing; and, finally, institutional formalization of results. Together, these stages reflect the adaptive logic embedded in the acceleration methodology.

The findings indicate that the methodology has high practical value for the public sector, demonstrating that ambitious governance goals can be achieved without additional budgetary

financing or large-scale structural reorganization. The approach's effectiveness is driven by accelerated coordination, participant motivation, and cross-functional collaboration. Evidence from Government Accelerators suggests that solutions delivered within acceleration cycles-when supported by institutionalization mechanisms-can become a new, sustainable norm in public administration practice.

## Results

Historically, project management emerged as a tool of the corporate sector, primarily oriented toward achieving measurable outcomes within limited timeframes and under competitive conditions. Consequently, core project management methodologies-from early instrumental approaches to contemporary PMI and IPMA standards-were originally designed for business organizations, where efficiency criteria focus on resource optimization, schedule compliance, and attainment of clearly defined results. As the complexity of public governance increased and the need for interagency coordination intensified, this approach gradually began to be adapted for the public sector, including in the Republic of Kazakhstan, through the establishment of a national project management system and the introduction of project offices within government bodies.

At the same time, accumulated practical experience demonstrates that transferring corporate project management methods into the public sector cannot be mechanical or universal. Public administration and project-based management represent systems of fundamentally different institutional nature. Public governance relies on legal and regulatory mechanisms, formalized procedures, and extensive documentation workflows, covering a wide range of functions—from rule-making and politico-administrative activities to analytical and international engagement. These functions are characterized by continuity, high sensitivity to socio-political factors, and the need for specialized control procedures, making them only partially compatible with the classical project life cycle. A significant share of public administration activities is process-oriented and requires stability, operational continuity, and predictability, whereas project management presupposes clearly defined objectives, timeframes, and deliverables. In this regard, attempts to universalize the project approach across all areas of public governance are often methodologically unjustified. Nevertheless, in specific domains characterized by clearly bounded tasks, measurable outcomes, and the need for intensive interagency coordination, the project approach demonstrates high effectiveness. Such domains include, in particular, regulatory and digital reforms that do not require capital-intensive infrastructure investments but involve coordination among multiple government bodies and rapid changes in the regulatory environment. Within this logic, the present study selected the case of the “Digital Migration Platform and Digital Nomad Visa” as a representative example of applying a Rapid Innovation Model (RIM) in Kazakhstan's public sector.

The Digital Nomad Visa project was implemented under the coordination of the Ministry of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan as the authorized body for digital transformation. Participating institutions included the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the State Corporation “Government for Citizens,” the National Security Committee, and the international technology park Astana Hub. The project was characterized by a high level of interagency coordination and the absence of a dominant implementing agency, which aligns with the core principles of the acceleration methodology. The relevance of the project stemmed from intensified global competition for digital talent and Kazakhstan's aspiration to strengthen its position as a regional hub of the digital economy. Given limited domestic human capital in the IT sector, the Digital Nomad Visa initiative was conceived as a tool to address multiple strategic objectives simultaneously: attracting highly skilled professionals, fostering the development of the Astana Hub ecosystem and other innovation platforms, stimulating exports of IT services, and enhancing the international competitiveness of the digital sector.

The project's objective was to establish a new channel for attracting foreign IT specialists, technology entrepreneurs, and remote workers by creating a legal, simplified, and transparent mechanism for their residence and professional activity within the Republic of Kazakhstan. Unlike traditional migration reforms, the project did not involve large-scale budgetary expenditures or institutional restructuring; instead, it focused on regulatory adjustments and digitalization of procedures.

Project implementation required a clear distribution of interagency roles. The Ministry of Internal Affairs was responsible for drafting and coordinating amendments to migration regulations; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs addressed international legal aspects; the National Security

Committee ensured security-related considerations; the Ministry of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Development oversaw the digital architecture of the solution and service integration; and Astana Hub facilitated engagement with the target audience and launched digital application channels. As a result of project implementation, a new visa category-V9-1 Digital Nomad Visa-was introduced; amendments to migration legislation were adopted; a digital application service was launched via the Astana Hub platform; a Digital Nomad Residency mechanism was established; eligibility criteria for digital nomads were defined; and a regulatory framework ensuring sustainable operation of the initiative was developed.

Analysis of this case indicates that the Digital Nomad Visa project closely corresponds to the logic of the 100-day acceleration model. The initiative did not require lengthy construction, engineering, or budgetary procedures; relied entirely on interagency coordination; combined regulatory reform with digitalization; and delivered rapid, measurable outcomes. In this sense, the case serves as empirical evidence of the applicability of Rapid Innovation Models to accelerating decision-making processes in the public sector.

Overall, the analysis of the Digital Nomad Visa case demonstrates that acceleration methodology can be effectively applied to public reforms focused on regulatory change and digital service delivery. The findings confirm that even under institutional constraints typical of transitional administrative systems, significant governance outcomes can be achieved provided there is a clear mandate, effective interagency cooperation.

## Discussion

When implementing high-speed Rapid Innovation Models (RIM), public governance systems often encounter barriers stemming from low procedural readiness and the absence of institutional learning mechanisms. These constraints manifest not so much in a lack of technological solutions as in insufficient capacity of management teams to prioritize tasks, structure complex problems, and systematically measure results. In this regard, overcoming such barriers requires the establishment of an embedded system for strengthening managerial capacity, within which methods such as the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) and Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) are used not only as evaluation tools but also as learning instruments that train management teams in decision-making logic and working under uncertainty.

The transfer of the “100 Days Challenge” model implemented in the United Arab Emirates presupposes a comprehensive analysis of both regulatory and organizational dimensions of so-called prospective policy analysis. A key strength of the UAE model lies not only in its ambition-setting but also in its high degree of methodological rigor, expressed through the institutionalized application of AHP and ISM tools for prioritization, identification of causal relationships, and assessment of project maturity (Government Accelerators UAE, 2024; Vavreniuk et al., 2021). It is precisely this combination of political mandate and methodological discipline that ensures the reproducibility of governance decisions within compressed timeframes.

In the context of the Republic of Kazakhstan, this approach appears justified not as a form of direct replication, but rather as strategic borrowing of instruments capable of compensating for institutional constraints and insufficient project management maturity (Yessengeldina et al., 2025). Such a mode of methodological import does not disrupt the existing public administration system; instead, it creates a transitional bridge between traditional bureaucratic logic and a contemporary results-oriented project management paradigm based on interagency collaboration.

A comparative analysis of institutional conditions for innovation implementation in the UAE and Kazakhstan (Table 1) indicates that Kazakhstan possesses significant potential for deploying accelerated governance models due to its advanced digital infrastructure and centralized political commitment. At the same time, persistent systemic constraints remain, including low project management maturity, conflict between bureaucratic and project logics, and cultural factors such as high power distance and uncertainty avoidance. These factors increase the risk of formalization of acceleration initiatives in the absence of specific safeguarding mechanisms.

**Table 1. Comparative Analysis of Innovation Implementation Conditions: UAE and Kazakhstan**

Dimension	UAE (Source Context)	Kazakhstan (Target Context)	Key Insights
Digital Readiness	Integrated use of artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, blockchain, and UAE Pass. Robust IT infrastructure.	EGDI ranked 24th globally; Top-10 in online public services. Strong momentum driven by the establishment of the Ministry of Artificial Intelligence and the development of the Digital Code.	High synergy: existing technological infrastructure can be leveraged for rapid deployment of digital public services.
Project Management Maturity	Highly structured frameworks (ISM, AHP, GEM); strong focus on maturity models.	Majority of PMOs operate at P3M3 Levels 1–2 (early stages). Weak procedural frameworks.	Core challenge: mandatory methodological rigor is required to standardize execution and performance evaluation.
Leadership Commitment	Visionary leadership and strong top-level commitment are key drivers of national development.	Centralized political commitment is evident (e.g., presidential focus on AI). However, policy continuity gaps persist.	Critical factor: political support must be institutionalized to sustain momentum beyond the initial mandate.
Cultural Constraints	High power distance and uncertainty avoidance; ongoing efforts to foster an innovation-oriented culture.	High power distance and strong uncertainty avoidance; persistent conflict between bureaucratic and project logics.	Key barrier: K-100 must function as a protected “convergence space” enabling flexibility and risk acceptance.
Institutional Conflict	Limited conceptual fragmentation noted; emphasis on systems integration approaches (e.g., Viable System Model).	Clear asynchrony between bureaucratic hierarchy and project-based logic; informal clan-based structures remain influential.	High risk: a formal mandate is required to bypass rigid bureaucratic procedures while maintaining ethical governance.

Source: compiled by the author based on Government of the UAE (2017; 2024), UN DESA (2024), OECD (2019), Times of Central Asia (2025), Saaty (2008), Young et al. (2014), Yessengeldina et al. (2025), Stone (2017), Williams & Dzhekova (2014), Howlett & Ramesh (2022), and Libman (2008).

Kazakhstan’s political leadership identifies digitalization as a strategic development vector. The declaration of priority for establishing the Ministry of Artificial Intelligence and the development of a Digital Code forming the regulatory basis of a platform economy reflect a clear political demand for accelerating governance processes (Times of Central Asia, 2025). These initiatives conceptually align with the core principles of the UAE acceleration model, particularly digital maturity and interagency coordination.

In this context, implementation of the Kazakhstan 100-Day Challenge (K-100) requires a balanced adaptation strategy based on three interrelated dimensions. First, a formalized political mandate at the highest level is necessary to ensure strategic continuity and interagency mobilization. Second, the creation of an institutional Acceleration Unit is required – a temporary interagency structure operating outside the standard bureaucratic hierarchy and applying AHP, ISM, and Fuzzy TOPSIS methods for rapid prioritization and evaluation of solutions. Third, the introduction of transparency and documentation protocols is essential to eliminate the empirical gap identified in the UAE experience and to establish a foundation for academic analysis of governance innovation transfer.

From a policy perspective, the implementation of K-100 can be viewed as a mechanism of institutional learning capable not only of improving the effectiveness of individual reforms but also of

enhancing overall public governance maturity. The model's deployment may facilitate standardization of project processes, foster a culture of accountability, support the development of ethical leadership, and create a regime of managed flexibility under conditions of high power distance. More broadly, such an approach enables Kazakhstan to move from a passive observer role to active participation in the global movement toward accelerating innovation in the public sector, while simultaneously strengthening internal institutional resilience and the external legitimacy of public reforms.

### Conclusion

The analysis conducted confirms that Rapid Innovation Models (RIM) possess significant potential for accelerating public sector reforms in transitional administrative systems; however, their effectiveness is directly dependent on the degree of institutional and methodological adaptation. A comparative examination of the experiences of the United Arab Emirates and the Republic of Kazakhstan, combined with an in-depth case analysis of the Digital Migration Platform and Digital Nomad Visa project, demonstrates that successful implementation of acceleration models is impossible without the integration of a strong political mandate, managed organizational autonomy, and strict methodological discipline.

The Digital Nomad Visa case illustrates that the greatest impact of RIM application is achieved in areas of public governance where reforms do not require capital-intensive infrastructure or budgetary procedures but instead involve intensive interagency coordination, regulatory transformation, and digitalization of processes. The project's rapid and measurable outcomes were driven not by resource scale but by the architecture of the governance process itself, including clear role allocation, high trust in the interagency team, and the presence of a time-bound yet politically legitimate decision-making mandate.

The findings further confirm that direct replication of the UAE Government Accelerators model within Kazakhstan's context is methodologically unjustified. Despite a well-developed digital infrastructure and an explicit political orientation toward innovation, Kazakhstan's public administration system is characterized by lower project management maturity and a persistent conflict between bureaucratic and project logics, necessitating a context-sensitive adaptation of the acceleration model (Yessengeldina et al., 2025). Accordingly, the proposed Kazakhstan 100-Day Challenge (K-100) should be understood not as an institutional copy, but as an integrative framework enabling a gradual transition from a traditional bureaucratic paradigm toward results-oriented governance. A core element of this adaptation is the application of methodological instruments such as AHP, ISM, and Fuzzy TOPSIS, which within the K-100 model perform not only evaluative but also educational functions. Their use compensates for weak procedural frameworks, structures managerial priorities, and fosters a culture of measurability and accountability in the public sector (World Bank, 2020). The formalization of an Acceleration Unit as a temporary interagency structure creates a protected "convergence space" that mitigates risks of institutional resistance and enables controlled experimentation within the existing governance system (OECD, 2025). Particular importance is attributed to the introduction of mandatory transparency and documentation protocols aimed at systematically recording governance decisions, indicators, and results of acceleration projects. This mechanism addresses the empirical gap identified in international practice and forms a unique research base for analyzing accelerated innovation in non-Western and hybrid politico-administrative contexts (Libman, 2008; OECD OPSI, 2019). From a governance and policy perspective, implementation of the K-100 model can serve as a mechanism of institutional learning that enhances project office maturity, strengthens the accountability culture, and promotes ethical leadership. In a broader context, the adapted acceleration model enables Kazakhstan not only to accelerate the implementation of individual reforms but also to position itself as an active participant in the global discourse on public sector transformation in the era of digitalization and managed flexibility. Thus, this study contributes to the development of theoretical and empirical approaches to government innovation transfer and confirms the feasibility of their effective adaptation in transitional administrative systems.

**Acknowledgment.** This research has been funded by the Science Committee of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Grant No. AP26102429 "Increasing accountability and transparency in the planning and implementation of digital projects in public administration based on the application of Project Management in the Republic of Kazakhstan").

## References

- Andrews, M., Pritchett, L., & Woolcock, M. (2017). Building State Capability: Evidence, Analysis, Action. <https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/id/bb540dab-9bbb-45ea-8ef1-4843b24dd432/624551.pdf>
- Battalov, N., & Kangalakova, D. (2023). The adoption of project management practices by a local government in Kazakhstan: Barriers and solutions. *Public Policy and Administration*, 22(4), 548–564. <https://doi.org/10.13165/VPA-23-22-4-12>
- Deltek. (n.d.). Government procurement models. <https://www.deltek.com/en/government-contracting/guide/government-procurement/models>
- Dolowitz, D. P., & Marsh, D. (2000). Learning from abroad: The role of policy transfer in contemporary policy-making. *Governance*, 13(1), 5–24. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0952-1895.00121>
- Global CIO. (2025). Key IT trends in Kazakhstan 2025. <https://globalcio.com/longread/Digital-Strategies-of-Kazakhstan/>
- Government of the United Arab Emirates. (2017). UAE Centennial 2071. UAE Government Portal.
- Government of the United Arab Emirates. (2024). Government Accelerators. UAE Government Portal. <https://u.ae/en/about-the-uae/uae-competitiveness/steps-to-enhance-government-performance/government-accelerators>
- Howlett, M., & Ramesh, M. (2022). Policy cycles and subsystems: Theories of the policy process (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Janssen, M., & van der Voort, H. (2020). Agile and adaptive governance in the digital era. *Government Information Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2020.102180>
- Libman, A. (2008). Economic role of public administration in Central Asia: Decentralization and hybrid political regime. Munich Personal RePEc Archive, Paper No. 10940. <https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/10940/>
- Mergel, I. (2019). Digital service teams in government. *Government Information Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2019.07.001>
- Mergel, I., Edelman, N., & Haug, N. (2019). Defining digital transformation: Results from expert interviews. *Government Information Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2019.06.002>
- OECD. (2019). Diffusing lessons: Lifecycle report. OECD Observatory of Public Sector Innovation (OPSI). [https://oecd-opsi.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Diffusing\\_Lessons\\_LifecycleReport6\\_FINAL.pdf](https://oecd-opsi.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Diffusing_Lessons_LifecycleReport6_FINAL.pdf)
- OECD. (2025). Science, Technology and Innovation Outlook 2025: Technology convergence. OECD Publishing. [https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2025/10/oecd-science-technology-and-innovation-outlook-2025\\_bae3698d.html](https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2025/10/oecd-science-technology-and-innovation-outlook-2025_bae3698d.html)
- O’Leary, J., & Tross, R. (2017, October 10). The art of points-based procurement for agile projects. Deloitte Insights. <https://www.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/government-public-sector-services/agile-in-government-points-based-procurement.html>
- Saaty, T. (2008). Decision making with the analytic hierarchy process. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJSSCI.2008.017590>
- Stone, D. (2017). Understanding the transfer of policy failure: Bricolage, experimentalism and translation. <https://doi.org/10.1332/030557316X14748914098041>
- Times of Central Asia. (2025, November 12). Kazakhstan to establish Ministry for AI development and digital code. <https://timesca.com/kazakhstan-to-establish-ministry-for-ai-development-digital-code-and-crypto-asset-fund/>
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA). (2024). E-Government Survey 2024. United Nations. <https://desapublications.un.org/publications/e-government-survey-2024>
- Vavreniuk, S. A., Nepomnyashchyy, O. M., Marusheva, O. A., Lahunova, I. A., & Shostak, S. M. (2021). Mechanisms of public administration in post-Soviet societies. *Linguistics and Culture Review*, 5(S2), 354–365. <https://doi.org/10.37028/lingcure.v5nS2.1358>
- Williams, C. C., & Dzhekova, R. (2014). Evaluating the cross-national transferability of policies: A conceptual framework. *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*, 19(4), 1–18.
- World Bank. (2020). A practitioner’s guide to innovation policy instruments. World Bank Group. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/158861581492462334>
- Yessengeldina, A., Kylbayev, Y., & Baibussinova, Z. (2025). Assessment of the maturity of project management offices of government agencies of Kazakhstan: Analysis, trends, and development prospects. *Central European Journal of Public Policy*, 19, Article 0006. <https://doi.org/10.2478/cejpp-2025-0006>
- Young, R., Young, M., & Romero Zapata, J. (2014). Project, programme and portfolio maturity: A case study of the Australian Federal Government. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, 7(2), 215–230. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJMPB-04-2013-0011>

## ОРТАЛЫҚ АЗИЯДАҒЫ ИКЕМДІ БАСҚАРУ: БАӘ-НІҢ 100 КҮНДІК СЫНАҚ МОДЕЛІН ҚАЗАҚСТАННЫҢ МЕМЛЕКЕТТІК СЕКТОР РЕФОРМАСЫНА БЕЙІМДЕУ

**Нұрхат ИБАДИЛЬДИН\***, PhD, қауымдастырылған профессор, Цифрлық мемлекеттік басқару мектебі, Astana IT University, Астана, [Қазақстан, ibadildin.nurkhat@astanait.edu.kz](mailto:ibadildin.nurkhat@astanait.edu.kz), ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6352-8713>, Scopus ID: 57238305900

**Айгүл АЙТБАЕВА**, «Жобаларды басқару» мамандығы бойынша докторант, Astana IT University, Астана, Қазақстан Республикасы, [242659@astanait.edu.kz](mailto:242659@astanait.edu.kz), ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-8634-2198>

**Сымбат ИСАБАЕВА**, ассистент-профессор, мемлекеттік басқару саласы бойынша PhD, Цифрлық мемлекеттік басқару мектебі, Astana IT University (AITU), Астана қ., Қазақстан, [s.issabayeva@astanait.edu.kz](mailto:s.issabayeva@astanait.edu.kz), ORCID ID: 0000-0002-4225-2762

**Mustafa COLAK**, ассистент-профессор, PhD., Social Sciences University of Ankara, Ankara, Turkey, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-3191-4134, [mustafa.colak@asbu.edu.tr](mailto:mustafa.colak@asbu.edu.tr)

#### ГИБКОЕ УПРАВЛЕНИЕ В ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОЙ АЗИИ: АДАПТАЦИЯ МОДЕЛИ «100-ДНЕВНОГО ВЫЗОВА» ОАЭ ДЛЯ РЕФОРМЫ ГОССЕКТОРА КАЗАХСТАНА

**Нурхат ИБАДИЛЬДИН\***, Ph.D., ассоциированный профессор Школы цифрового государственного управления, Astana IT University, Астана, Казахстан, [ibadildin.nurkhat@astanait.edu.kz](mailto:ibadildin.nurkhat@astanait.edu.kz), ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6352-8713>, Scopus ID: 57238305900

**Айгүль АЙТБАЕВА**, докторант по направлению «Управление проектами», Astana IT University, Астана, Республика Казахстан, [242659@astanait.edu.kz](mailto:242659@astanait.edu.kz), ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-8634-2198>

**Сымбат ИСАБАЕВА**, ассистент-профессор, PhD по государственному управлению, Школа цифрового государственного управления, Astana IT University (AITU), Астана, Казахстан, [s.issabayeva@astanait.edu.kz](mailto:s.issabayeva@astanait.edu.kz), ORCID ID: 0000-0002-4225-2762

**Mustafa COLAK**, ассистент-профессор, PhD., Social Sciences University of Ankara, Ankara, Turkey, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-3191-4134, [mustafa.colak@asbu.edu.tr](mailto:mustafa.colak@asbu.edu.tr)