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DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION MECHANISMS IN THE SPHERE OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN UKRAINE IN THE CONDITIONS OF DIGITALIZATION

The state of digital transformation of regions and territorial communities in Ukraine was analyzed based on the corresponding index (for the first quarter of 2025). This index covers 5 main areas in which regions are surveyed to ensure digital transformation in them, namely: digital public services; digital skills; digital infrastructure; digital economy; institutional capacity. The use of this index made it possible to identify, firstly, the leading regions in ensuring digital transformation (Dnipropetrovsk, Lviv and Ternopil). And secondly, the challenges and problems of digital transformation of regions in Ukraine. Among these problems, uneven digital development of regions, limited resources, insufficient institutional capacity, and low level of digital literacy were identified. In addition, ways of developing public administration in the field of regional development in Ukraine under the conditions of ensuring its digital transformation were proposed.

Keywords: *public administration system, public administration mechanisms, state regional policy, socio-economic development, sustainable development, regional development, regions, principles, tools, digitalization, digital transformation.*

Problem setting. In Ukraine, the issues of digital transformation are becoming relevant in all spheres of public life, especially at the regional level, which is closest to the needs of citizens. It is in the region and at the local level that public interests are articulated, which should be aggregated primarily by regional state authorities. At the same time, there is no single generally recognized vision of the concept of digitalization and digital transformation, as well as mechanisms for its provision. In addition, the complexity of the situation is added by the fact that in Ukraine the issue of digitalization is only gaining momentum and not all

regions have the opportunity to develop in this direction. All this determines the relevance of the selected research issues, in particular, regarding the determination of the features of the development of public management of regional development in the conditions of digitalization in Ukraine.

Recent research and publications analysis. Organizational, legal, financial, economic and other aspects of ensuring the socio-economic development of regions are the subject of consideration by V. Bashtannik, R. Benedix, P. Blau, Ye. Borodin, K. Bradley, Z. Burik, S. Valton, J. Commons, R. Coase, N. Kolisnichenko, S. Kvitka, S. Lipset, R. Lukisha, T. Mamatova, A. Markusen, O. Matveieva, W. Mitchell, I. Petrik, A. Pomaza-Ponomarenko, G. Richardson, S. Romanyuk, G. Harris, G. Starushenko et al. [7; 8; 9]. At the same time, the relevance of scientific research dedicated to the assessment of the development of regions in today's minds in conditions of digitalization is becoming more relevant.

Paper objective. The purpose of this article is to determine the features of the development of public administration mechanisms in the sphere of regional development in conditions of digitalization in Ukraine.

Paper main body. Analysis of scientific developments [2] gives grounds to determine the fact of imperfection of legal support of the organizational mechanism of public administration in the field of regional development in the conditions of digitalization in Ukraine. Strictly speaking, there is a legal conflict in the definition of key concepts in this area, and this conflict is marked by paradigmaticity. The point is that domestic legislation does not contain a single (unified) definition of the conceptual and categorical apparatus, firstly, regional development, and secondly, digitalization and digital transformation. It is logical that this leads to unnecessary scientific discussions on the definition of the concepts of "digitalization" in general and "digital transformation" in particular.

Scientists O. Karpenko, S. Kvitka, V. Lunyak, O. Matveieva and others. [2; 7; 8] offer the following systematized definition of concepts:

- 1) digitalization is a vector of public policy regarding the introduction of digital technologies to improve public management;

- 2) digital transformation is synergistic (objective and subjective) changes in the spheres of social life caused by the use of digital technologies;

- 3) innovation is the process of ensuring the innovation-oriented development of the

state and society by using the latest achievements of production and management in the activities of public institutions (state and non-state), which together create the prerequisites for sustainable development;

4) innovative development is a form of manifestation of digital transformation [ibid.].

Based on these definitions, which are important for regional development in the context of digitalization, we can point to the expediency of studying the state of digitalization of the regions of Ukraine and its territorial communities. The profile ministry in this area, i.e. the Ministry of Digital Transformation (hereinafter referred to as the Ministry of Digitalization), uses the digitalization index of regions and territorial communities that are part of these regions. For a long time, such an index did not exist, and only at the beginning of 2025 did it begin to be used. Let us note right away that we previously assessed the barrier-free nature of territorial communities, which involves eliminating any obstacles for the public in obtaining services [3; 5].

This barrier-free nature involves the active use of digital technologies, which allow you to freely contact public authorities in the “here and now” mode in order to provide the necessary information and receive administrative services. In fact, digital technologies eliminate obstacles on this path, which becomes possible if an appropriate digitalization policy is implemented, which, in turn, results in the digital transformation of certain spheres of public life. Among them, one of the main ones is the public (state) administration system.

In continuation, we note that in 2022, about 13,000 objects were surveyed in 957 territorial communities and, accordingly, regions to ensure barrier-free access [5.]. It presents the results of monitoring and analysis of the state of barrier-free communities that participated in the assessment, namely: Chernihiv, Khmelnytskyi, Ternopil, Kirovohrad, Kyiv and Zhytomyr regions and the city of Kyiv. It is clear that due to the unstable situation in Ukraine, fewer communities were assessed regarding the level of barrier-free facilities of their physical environment in Kherson and Zaporizhia regions. In these regions, 25% and 18% of communities participated in the assessment, respectively [ibid.]. The largest number of facilities of the physical environment that were monitored and assessed was studied in the following regions: 1) Kyiv – 1353 facilities; 2) Dnipropetrovsk – 1077 facilities; 3) Khmelnytskyi – 1007 facilities [5]. By the way, as of 2022–2023, the website of the Khmelnytskyi Regional Military Administration was recognized as exemplary in terms of covering aspects of barrier-free access and ensuring

it [5].

The survey of physical environment facilities in territorial communities across Ukraine for barrier-free access was carried out in accordance with the requirements of current legislation. In particular, clause 14 of the Procedure for Monitoring and Assessing the Degree of Barrier-Free Access to Physical Environment Facilities and Services for Persons with Disabilities, approved by the Resolution of the Government of Ukraine dated May 26, 2021 No. 537 [3; 9]. Strictly speaking, 5 types of facilities were assessed for barrier-free access, namely: 1) buildings for accommodating evacuees (dormitories, modular camps, etc.); 2) administrative buildings; 3) buildings of social service providers; 4) employment centers; 5) financial institutions (banks, post offices, insurance companies, non-state pension funds, investment funds) [ibid.].

It is obvious that it is not enough to assess territorial communities and their regions for accessibility precisely in terms of aspects of surveying physical environment objects. We believe that determining aspects of barrier-free digital development of regions is becoming more relevant. On this basis, we will focus on their more detailed consideration.

The Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine (hereinafter referred to as the Ministry of Digital Transformation) has published the results of the digitalization of regions and communities of Ukraine for the first quarter of 2025. For the first time, data for the Regional Digitalization Indexes was collected directly through the platform “Action.Digital Community – quickly, conveniently and online” [6].

According to the measurement results, the average Digital Transformation Index score of regions in Ukraine is 30 points out of 100 possible. Among the leaders are Dnipropetrovsk (43 points), Lviv (43 points) and Ternopil regions (42 points) (Fig. 1).

The regions demonstrated the highest results in the areas of digitalization of public services, digital infrastructure and digital skills. At the same time, it is the digitalization of territorial communities and the digital economy that remain the weakest points at the regional level. However, the measurement results provide a clear understanding of where to focus efforts and launch systemic solutions.

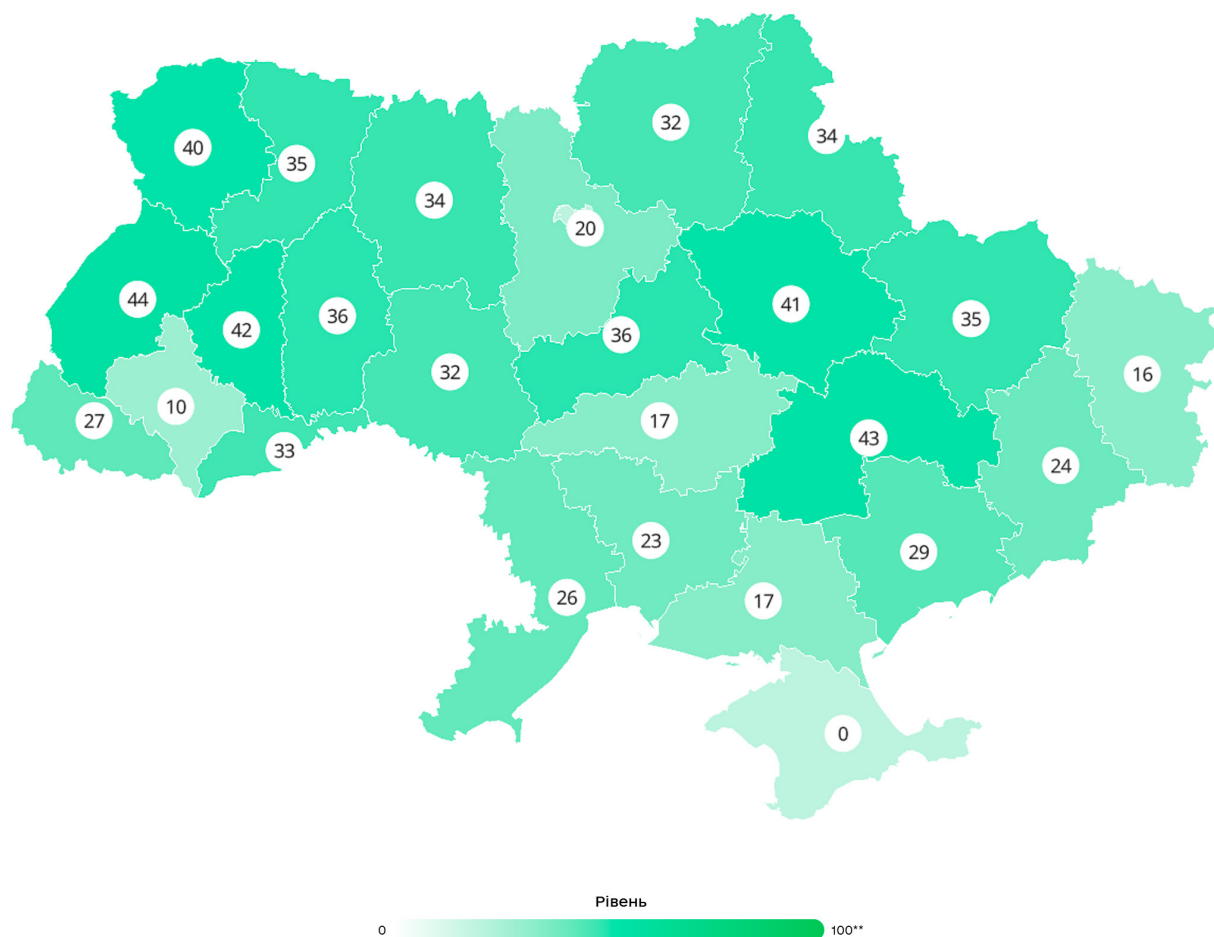


Fig. 1. Dendrogram of the digital transformation index of regions of Ukraine in the first quarter of 2025

Source: compiled based on [1]

As you know, the platform “Action.Digital Community” was created for the effective coordination of digital transformation in regions and territorial communities. This platform is designed to provide an opportunity to track the dynamics at the level of not only regions, but also each territorial community, which is important in the context of stimulating the development of their cooperation.

It should be noted that the digital transformation index makes it possible to clearly determine where there is already progress on the ground, and where it is necessary to strengthen support or adopt appropriate state decisions in order to increase the level of digital transformation of the regions of Ukraine and its territorial communities. This is a new level of maturity of our digital transformation. The Deputy Minister of Digital Transformation notes that Ukraine and its regions are moving not pointwise, but systematically – and this is the strength of the team. This is considered possible with the participation of partners,

in particular, the EGAP Program, within the framework of which organizational support and expert participation in the creation of this extremely important tool for the development of states and populations have been provided.

Among the main results of the assessment of the digitalization index of territorial communities and regions for the first quarter of 2025 are the following:

- 85 communities have industrial parks;
- in 43% of IT enterprises, women are the leaders;
- on average across Ukraine, communities have digitized their services for business at a level of 10%;
- 80,000 doctors, 240,000 school teachers, and 88,000 municipal employees have passed the “Digitalization” course;
- almost 12,000 settlements are connected to fiber-optic networks, and 23,000 settlements are provided with 4G mobile communication;
- 166 communities have an integrated video surveillance system;
- 3,300 kindergartens have introduced an electronic queue for enrolling a child in an institution;
- 1,280 hospitals have implemented online doctor appointments [1].

Within the framework of the EGAP Program, the Eastern Europe Foundation actively promotes the digital transformation of regions. This year, cooperation has already been established with 9 target regions and over 70 territorial communities. The Digital Transformation Index of these territorial entities can be a reliable tool that helps measure joint institutional and innovative progress, identify challenges and determine areas that require more attention. This allows for more accurate planning of support for international partners and strengthening positive changes.” [ibid.].

The following took part in measuring the Digital Transformation Index of regions and territorial communities:

- 24 regions that filled out the Digital Transformation Index of regions;
- 939 territorial communities submitted their data to the Digital Transformation Index of territorial communities;
- in total, over 1,200 users are registered in the system [6].

A chatbot has been launched in Ukraine – a new tool for investors in industrial parks.

To increase the level of digital transformation of regions and territorial communities of Ukraine, it is necessary to implement a set of measures, namely:

- 1) develop and implement digitalization strategies in each region: each region must have a clear digital development strategy that takes into account local characteristics and needs;
- 2) create a digital team that will implement the digital transformation of the public administration system in the region. The purpose of such a team (CDTO) is to coordinate and implement digital projects;
- 3) increase digital literacy. This requires conducting training programs and courses for the population and officials of public authorities;
- 4) development of digital infrastructure: unhindered access to broadband Internet and mobile communications should be ensured in all settlements;
- 5) support for the development of the digital economy in the region, which involves stepping up the implementation of the “Diya.City” regime, promoting the development of e-commerce, startups and the IT sector through the provision of grants, benefits and consulting support.

Conclusions of the research. Based on the investigation carried out, the following key findings can be obtained:

1. Thus, the digital transformation of the regions of Ukraine is a key factor in the modernization of public administration, increasing the competitiveness of the economy and ensuring sustainable development. In the context of decentralization and integration into the European digital space, systematic measurement of the progress of digitalization at the regional level is of particular importance. The Digital Transformation Index of Regions (hereinafter referred to as the DITR) serves as a tool for monitoring and assessing the digital “maturity” of regions, allowing to identify the strengths and weaknesses of digital development.

2. It is established that the Digital Transformation Index of Regions was developed by the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine in cooperation with the EGAP Program and the Eastern Europe Foundation. The index covers five key areas:

- Digital public services: the level of provision of administrative and social services in electronic format;
- Digital skills: the level of digital literacy of the population and government employees;
- Digital infrastructure: the availability of broadband Internet, mobile communications

and digital platforms;

- Digital economy: the development of e-commerce, startups and the IT sector;
- Institutional capacity: the presence of digitalization strategies, CDTO (Chief Digital Transformation Officer) and digital teams.

Each area is assessed on a scale from 0 to 100 points, which allows for a comprehensive assessment of the level of digital development of regions. According to the results of the ICTD measurement in the first quarter of 2025, the average score for Ukraine is 30 points out of 100 possible. The leaders in digital transformation were:

- Dnipropetrovsk region – 43 points;
- Lviv region – 43 points;
- Ternopil region – 42 points.

These regions have achieved significant success in the digitalization of public services, the development of digital infrastructure and the improvement of the digital skills of the population. However, the digital economy and the transformation of communities remain weak areas at the regional level.

3. It was found that despite digital progress, the regions of Ukraine and their territorial communities face a number of challenges in the field of digitalization:

- uneven development: significant differences in the level of digital transformation between regions and communities;
- limited resources: lack of funding and qualified personnel for the implementation of digital projects;
- insufficient institutional capacity: lack of digitalization strategies, CDTOs and digital teams in some regions;
- low level of digital literacy: the need to improve the digital skills of the population and government employees.

4. Therefore, the Digital Transformation Index of Regions is an important tool for monitoring and assessing the digital development of regions of Ukraine. Analysis of the results of the Digital Transformation Index allows us to identify the strengths and weaknesses of digitalization, as well as to determine priority areas for further development. Implementation of comprehensive measures to increase digital literacy, develop infrastructure and support the digital economy will contribute to increasing the level of digital transformation of regions

and ensure sustainable development of Ukraine as a whole.

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