

Competence of The Executive Authorities of The Republic of Karakalpakstan In the Socio-Economic Sphere

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Abstract

The article analyzes the legal status and scope of powers of the executive authorities of the Republic of Karakalpakstan in the field of socio-economic development. The author examines the mechanisms of interaction between republican management bodies and the central ministries and departments of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Special attention was paid to the implementation of state programs aimed at improving the investment climate, modernizing infrastructure, social protection of the population, and overcoming the consequences of the environmental crisis in the Aral Sea region. The work identifies current problems in the legal regulation and practical activities of the region's executive authorities. Scientifically grounded recommendations are offered to enhance their competence to ensure sustainable economic growth.

Keywords: Republic of Karakalpakstan, executive power, Council of Ministers, competence, socio-economic sphere, state programs, Aral Sea region, investment climate, legal regulation.

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1. Introduction

The current stage of modernizing the public administration system in the Republic of Uzbekistan is characterized by a profound decentralization of governmental authority and an increased responsibility of regional executive bodies for the final outcomes of their territories' socio-economic development. Within this system, the Republic of Karakalpakstan holds a special place, possessing a unique sovereign status, its own administrative-territorial structure, and a specific legal and regulatory framework. In the context of implementing large-scale national reform strategies, the executive authorities of Karakalpakstan, primarily the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, face strategic objectives to ensure sustainable economic

growth, reduce unemployment, attract foreign direct investment, and mitigate the long-term consequences of the ecological crisis in the Aral Sea region.

The effective fulfillment of these tasks directly depends on the clarity of the legal consolidation and practical implementation of the competencies of executive bodies. Issues regarding the delimitation of powers between the central authorities of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the supreme governing bodies of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, as well as the mechanisms of their interaction in the socio-economic sphere, remain a subject of constant scientific and legal debate.

In the Republic of Uzbekistan, issues concerning the competence of executive authorities at various levels have been examined in connection with research into

their overall legal status, for example, in the works of O.T. Khusanov, A.A. Azizkhodzhaev, A.T. Tulyaganov, I.A. Khamedov, Sh.I. Jalilov, M. Akhmedshayeva, Kh.T. Odilkoriyev, G.S. Ismailova, M.M. Mirakulov, and others.

In the Republic of Karakalpakstan, some general theoretical aspects of the issue in question have been explored in the works of S.D. Niyetullaev, E.D. Kutibayeva, S.D. Allambergenov, S. Muratayev, B.A. Daumenov, and others.

The competence of the executive authorities of the Republic of Karakalpakstan as an element of the unified system of executive power of the Republic of Uzbekistan has not been the subject of dedicated scholarly research.

On February 20 of this year, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, while outlining the effectiveness of reforms in the Republic of Karakalpakstan and setting priority tasks for its socioeconomic development, specifically highlighted the following objectives:

- over the next 5 years, increase the region's economy to 102.5 trillion soums (for comparison, this figure was 54.3 trillion soums in 2023), and the per capita figure to 51 million soums, and implement projects in industry and services worth 7.2 billion dollars;
- by leveraging all available opportunities, increase exports in industry, services, and tourism to 900 million dollars (for comparison, this figure was 435 million dollars in 2023);
- reduce the unemployment rate to 4.2% and the poverty rate to 3.2% by the end of the current year, and transform the city of Nukus, Kungrad and Chimbay districts, as well as 109 mahallas, into territories free from unemployment and poverty. Among the tasks is also reducing the poverty level by 2 times in Bozatau, Kanlykul, Muynak, and Shumanay districts, as well as in 90 mahallas classified as "difficult".

Nevertheless, the institutional transformations of recent years, including the adoption of targeted decrees and resolutions by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan for the comprehensive development of the Aral Sea region—in particular, Presidential Resolution No. PP-70 of February 21, 2026, "On the Approval of Programs for the Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Karakalpakstan for 2026 and Subsequent

Years"—require a new, updated assessment of the actual authority of local governing bodies.

The research problem stems from some duplication of functions and a lack of flexibility in the mechanisms of executive power at the regional and interdepartmental levels. In some cases, this slows the implementation of investment projects and reduces the effectiveness of budget subsidy distribution. There is an objective need for a comprehensive analysis of whether the current material, financial, and regulatory powers of Karakalpakstan's executive authorities are adequate for the scale of the socio-economic challenges they face.

The purpose of this study is to conduct a comprehensive scientific, theoretical, and formal-legal analysis of the competence of the executive authorities of the Republic of Karakalpakstan in the socio-economic sphere. It also aims to develop practical recommendations for optimizing their activities in the context of deepening market reforms.

2. Methods

The methodological basis of this study is a set of general scientific, specific scientific, and specialized legal methods, the application of which ensured the objectivity, systematicity, and reliability of the results obtained. The primary theoretical and methodological framework employed is the systematic approach, within which the executive authorities of the Republic of Karakalpakstan are viewed as an integral element of the state-legal mechanism, functioning in continuous interaction with the central government bodies of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

To achieve the stated goal and address the research objectives, the following methods were successively applied:

The formal-legal method. This method was used to conduct a detailed analysis of the regulatory framework governing the competence of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, republican ministries, departments, and local khokimiyats in the socio-economic sphere. The objects of analysis were the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Constitution of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On State Authority in Localities," as well as decrees, resolutions, and orders of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted between 2022 and 2026, aimed at the comprehensive

development of the Aral Sea region.

The comparative-legal method. This method was used to compare the scope of powers and areas of responsibility of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan in matters of budget formation, state property management, tax incentives, and the implementation of social programs.

3. Results

The jurisdiction of the executive authorities of the Republic of Karakalpakstan is determined by the state structure of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan establishes a mechanism for forming the system and structure of executive authorities in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, which entails a degree of autonomy for these authorities in resolving matters within their exclusive purview. Furthermore, the legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan defines matters of joint jurisdiction between the two republics, as well as the exclusive jurisdiction of the executive authorities of the Republic of Uzbekistan. These matters are to be settled by a treaty between the two republics. Accordingly, relevant powers may be delegated to the executive authorities of the Republic of Karakalpakstan based on treaties delineating the subjects of jurisdiction and powers between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Karakalpakstan, which best aligns with the requirements of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

A distinctive feature of the state structure of the Republic of Uzbekistan is that it includes the Republic of Karakalpakstan, which, unlike the regions, is a state entity. Article 85 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan states that the sovereign Republic of Karakalpakstan is part of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The Republic of Karakalpakstan has constitutional guarantees of its status. It possesses constitutionally enshrined independence in the legislative and executive spheres and in the formation of its state bodies. Within the Republic of Uzbekistan, Karakalpakstan possesses full state authority, with the exception of powers that fall under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

At the same time, the Republic of Karakalpakstan, possessing full state authority outside the jurisdiction of the Republic of Uzbekistan, has the right to delegate specific matters of its own jurisdiction to the Republic of

Uzbekistan. These matters include foreign affairs, defense, customs, currency and credit affairs, state taxes, and others.

The mutual relations between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Karakalpakstan, within the framework of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, are regulated by treaties and agreements concluded between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Karakalpakstan.

In accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Article 11 of the Constitution of the Republic of Karakalpakstan enshrines the provision that the system of state power is based on the principle of the separation of powers into legislative, executive and judicial branches.

The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan is defined in the Basic Law as the supreme executive and administrative body of state power of the Republic of Karakalpakstan. It ensures the effective functioning of the economy and the social and spiritual spheres, and oversees the implementation of the laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan and other decisions of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan; decrees, resolutions, and orders of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan; resolutions and orders of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan; the laws of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and other decisions of the Jokargy Kenes of the Republic of Karakalpakstan; and resolutions of the Presidium of the Jokargy Kenes of the Republic of Karakalpakstan.

4. Discussion

The Constitution of the Republic of Karakalpakstan contains no articles defining the main areas of the Government's activity. Its competence is established by the Law "On the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan."

However, the current Constitution does specify in detail the role of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan. The Chairman directs the government's activities and takes measures to ensure the effective exercise of its powers; submits to the Jokargy Kenes of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, and in the period between sessions to its Presidium, candidates for the appointment and dismissal of Deputy Chairmen and members of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan; allocates duties among the Deputy

Chairmen of the Council of Ministers, with subsequent approval by the Presidium of the Council of Ministers; submits to the Jokargy Kenes of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, and in the period between sessions to its Presidium, proposals for the establishment and abolition of ministries, state committees, and other state administrative bodies of the Republic of Karakalpakstan; submits to the Chairman of the Jokargy Kenes of the Republic of Karakalpakstan candidates for the appointment and dismissal of district and city khokims and their deputies; presides over meetings of the Council of Ministers and its Presidium; ensures collegiality in the work of the Council of Ministers; and makes decisions on individual matters of state and economic administration that do not require consideration at a meeting of the Council of Ministers or its Presidium.

When describing the competence of the Council of Ministers, the powers of the Government in the spheres of economic, socio-cultural, and administrative-political activity are typically outlined. In addition to this traditional classification, academic literature proposes another framework that, in our view, allows for the full scope of the Government's competence to be revealed. With a certain degree of adaptation, we can use this framework to describe the competence of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan.

The Law of the Republic of Karakalpakstan "On the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan," dated January 29, 1998, defined the main powers of the Council of Ministers in the sphere of economic and socio-cultural development in only a single provision, Article 11. Under the Law of the Republic of Karakalpakstan dated March 19, 2022, Article 10 of the Law "On the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan" was issued in a new version. It lists the Government's powers specifically by industry and sphere of activity in 17 clauses.

The system of ministries in the Republic of Karakalpakstan constitutes an institutionally established framework of central executive bodies that conduct state administration in specific sectors. From the perspective of administrative law, their classification is based on the criteria of competence, the nature of their managerial functions, their subject matter, and their place within the public administration mechanism.

Thus, the classification by subject of administrative competence (the sectoral criterion):

Ministries of Economic Management - responsible for state regulation in the spheres of economy, industry, and natural resources: Ministry of Investments, Industry, and Trade of the Republic of Karakalpakstan; Ministry of Economy and Finance of the Republic of Karakalpakstan; Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Karakalpakstan; Ministry of Water Resources.

It should be noted that these bodies implement regulatory, coordinating, and oversight functions in the sphere of economic management. Their authority extends to licensing, permitting procedures, financial control, the development of subordinate legislation, and the management of state resources. This is a typical example of sectoral public administration.

In accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the position of Minister of Economy and Finance is concurrently held by the First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers. This approach to public administration demonstrates a functional unification, where both administrative-sectoral powers (leading the ministry) and senior political functions (deputy head of government) are consolidated in a single individual.

The appointment procedure (approval by the Jokargy Kenes upon the recommendation of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers) and the dual system of accountability (to both the parliament and the head of government) reflect the regional model of checks and balances. Parliamentary oversight of the activities of the official in charge of the economic bloc ensures the transparency of decisions made and the legitimacy of the executive branch.

The implementation of state policy by the First Deputy Chairman is distributed across four key strategic directions (vectors of development):

Macroeconomic and Fiscal Stability: The authority for macroeconomic analysis, forecasting, and budgeting underscores the body's role as the region's primary economic regulator. The special focus on "reducing the shadow economy" indicates a priority of expanding the local tax base to reduce Karakalpakstan's budget dependency on subsidies (subventions).

Institutional Transformation and Market Mechanisms: Responsibilities related to privatization, the transformation of state assets, and the development of public-private partnerships (PPPs) signify a shift from

rigid command-and-control management toward economic liberalization. The implementation of PPP mechanisms makes it possible to attract private investment into social and infrastructural projects, thereby reducing the burden on the state budget.

Inclusive Growth and Social Adaptation: The integration of functions for ensuring employment, reducing poverty, and supporting entrepreneurship reflects a model of inclusive economic growth. The regulation of land relations at the highest executive level serves as a key instrument for the equitable redistribution of economic resources, which is critically important for an agro-industrial region.

Program-Based Management Method: The obligation to develop and implement "roadmaps" demonstrates the adoption of project management principles in the activities of the executive branch. This reorients the work of the state apparatus from standard processes toward achieving specific, measurable, and time-bound results.

In our view, combining the positions of Minister and First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers optimizes the speed of decision-making in the financial and economic sphere. The structure of authority shows that the executive power of Karakalpakstan possesses all the necessary legal levers for the comprehensive management of economic processes in the region. The legislative enshrinement of project-based methods ("roadmaps") increases the leadership's personal responsibility for the final outcomes of the sovereign republic's socioeconomic development.

5. Conclusions

The executive authorities of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, led by the Council of Ministers, possess a unique dual status. They combine the autonomy of a sovereign republic with firm integration into the unified vertical of Uzbekistan's state administration. The core of their socio-economic powers today is focused on overcoming the consequences of the environmental crisis in the Aral Sea region, modernizing infrastructure, attracting investment, and ensuring employment. The inclusion of the Chairman of Karakalpakstan's Council of Ministers in Uzbekistan's Cabinet of Ministers serves as the primary legal mechanism for harmonizing regional interests with national policy.

Despite positive trends, the effective exercise of these powers is constrained by several systemic problems.

These include the partial duplication of functions between Uzbekistan's central ministries and Karakalpakstan's agencies, the regional budget's high dependency on central government subsidies, and a local shortage of qualified personnel to implement digital governance models. These factors create bureaucratic barriers and slow down the process of making important socio-economic decisions. To optimize public administration, it is necessary to clearly delineate the powers between the ministries of Uzbekistan and the corresponding agencies of Karakalpakstan, eliminating redundant procedures.

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