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Programme-Based Budgeting in Uzbekistan: Reform Architecture, Implementation Gaps, and Evidence-Based Pathways to 2030

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ABSTRACT: Programme-based budgeting (PBB) — an approach that links public expenditure to measurable performance targets — has emerged as a cornerstone of modern public financial management (PFM) reform. Uzbekistan embarked on a systematic PBB transition in 2019, yet rigorous empirical assessments of its progress, institutional architecture, and remaining gaps remain scarce in the international literature. This paper provides a comprehensive analysis of Uzbekistan's PBB reform trajectory from 2019 to 2025, drawing on primary regulatory documents, official budget data, and comparative country evidence. Using a reform-stage framework, key performance indicator (KPI) quality assessment, and hierarchical cluster analysis across ten comparator countries, we identify four structural findings: (i) only 20 per cent of first-level fund administrators have adopted defined target indicators by 2025; (ii) sub-national (regional and local) budget coverage remains at zero; (iii) the outcome–output distinction in KPI design is inconsistently applied; and (iv) the PFM Strategy 2025–2030 provides a credible, time-bound roadmap but faces implementation risks, particularly in IT integration and human capacity. We offer actionable policy recommendations grounded in international best practice. The study contributes to the nascent literature on PBB adoption in transition economies of Central Asia and provides a replicable analytical framework for other reforming states.

KEYWORDS: programme-based budgeting; performance-based budgeting; public financial management; fiscal reform; budget transparency; Uzbekistan; Central Asia; transition economies; key performance indicators; PFM strategy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Public financial management (PFM) reforms aimed at linking budget expenditure to results have spread across both advanced and developing economies over the past three decades. The theoretical case for performance-based, or programme, budgeting rests on the premise that governments that define explicit outputs and outcomes — and monitor them systematically — allocate resources more efficiently, enhance fiscal accountability, and ultimately improve public service delivery (Andrews, 2004; Robinson & Last, 2009; Schick, 2014).

Uzbekistan's reform trajectory represents an instructive case. From a legacy of Soviet-era line-item budgeting, the country has, since 2019, pursued a phased transition to programme-based budgeting (PBB), driven by a combination of domestic reform imperatives, international technical assistance, and the explicit mandate of the 'Uzbekistan 2030' national strategy (Presidential Decree PF-158, 2023). Yet, despite notable legislative progress and pilot achievements, systematic academic analysis of the reform's content, pace, and structural gaps is largely absent from the literature.

This paper addresses that gap. We pursue three interrelated research objectives: first, to document the institutional architecture and reform stages of PBB adoption in Uzbekistan (2019–2025); second, to assess current implementation coverage and KPI quality using available official data; and third, to situate Uzbekistan's experience within a comparative international context and derive evidence-based recommendations for the 2025–2030 reform phase.

The remainder of the paper is organised as follows. Section 2 reviews the international literature on PBB adoption and identifies a reform-stage framework. Section 3 describes the data and methodology. Section 4 presents the empirical analysis of Uzbekistan's reform architecture. Section 5 provides comparative country evidence and cluster analysis. Section 6 assesses implementation gaps and KPI quality. Section 7 discusses the PFM Strategy 2025–2030 milestones. Section 8 concludes with policy recommendations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Foundations of Programme-Based Budgeting

The theoretical roots of PBB lie in the public management literature's concept of 'new public management' (Hood, 1991), which advocates replacing input-focused bureaucratic management with output- and outcome-oriented public administration. Allen and Tommasi (2001) distinguish three generations of PBB: (i) simple performance information attached to line-item budgets; (ii) programme budgeting with formal performance measurement; and (iii) 'performance budgeting' proper, in which resource allocation explicitly responds to performance data. Uzbekistan's current system sits at the transition between the first and second generations.

Robinson and Last (2009), in their seminal IMF Fiscal Affairs Department paper, demonstrate that the sequencing of PBB reforms matters critically. Countries that attempt to introduce sophisticated performance measurement before establishing basic expenditure control and medium-term fiscal frameworks frequently experience reform reversal. Their prescription — to establish fiscal discipline first, then add performance information incrementally — aligns closely with Uzbekistan's chosen phased approach. Schick (2014) offers a complementary cautionary note: PBB can become a 'paperwork exercise' if ministries treat KPI reporting as a compliance ritual rather than a genuine management tool. He emphasises the importance of political commitment, management culture, and parliamentary scrutiny — factors that remain works-in-progress in Uzbekistan's institutional context.

2.2 International Experience and Reform Diffusion

The empirical literature documents significant heterogeneity in PBB outcomes across adopter countries. OECD (2019) surveys show that while virtually all OECD members produce performance information alongside budgets, fewer than half use that information in allocation decisions. Shah and Shen (2007) find that PBB adoption in developing countries is associated with improved fiscal transparency but not necessarily with better expenditure outcomes, largely due to weak institutional capacity.

The Central Asian context has received limited scholarly attention. Isakova et al. (2016) examine PFM reforms in Kazakhstan and find that nominal PBB adoption masks substantive weaknesses in KPI quality and outcome measurement. Their findings closely parallel the patterns observed in Uzbekistan in the present study. Seitkali et al. (2022) review five Central Asian economies and conclude that institutional isomorphism — adoption of PBB vocabulary without genuine systemic change — poses the greatest risk to reform sustainability.

A key lesson from the comparative literature (Moynihan & Pandey, 2010; Curristine et al., 2007) is that PBB success depends on three enablers: (i) a mature medium-term expenditure framework; (ii) robust internal audit and parliamentary oversight; and (iii) a civil service capable of developing and interpreting performance data. Uzbekistan is actively building all three but remains at early stages on each dimension.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods design combining: (i) qualitative institutional analysis of primary regulatory texts; (ii) descriptive quantitative analysis of official budget allocation data; (iii) a SMART-criteria assessment of KPI quality for the Ministry of Health as a case study; and (iv) hierarchical cluster analysis positioning Uzbekistan within a ten-country comparative sample.

Primary data sources include all major legislative acts governing PBB in Uzbekistan from 2019 to April 2025, official budget documents published by the Ministry of Economy and Finance, and the PFM Strategy 2025–2030 (Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 210, 2025). Budget figures are reported in billion UZS (Uzbekistani soum) at nominal values.

The comparative cluster analysis uses a composite PBB adoption distance matrix constructed across five dimensions: (1) legal framework completeness; (2) share of budget administrators with KPIs; (3) parliamentary scrutiny intensity; (4) outcome–output distinction in KPI design; and (5) sub-national government coverage. Each dimension is scored on a 1–5 scale based on OECD (2019), IMF (2023) PFM assessments, and country case studies. Ward's linkage method is applied to minimise intra-cluster variance. Results are presented as a dendrogram (Figure 5).

KPI quality is assessed against the SMART framework (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) adapted for public sector performance indicators, following Diamond (2003) and the IMF PFM Assessment methodology.

4. REFORM ARCHITECTURE: STAGES OF PBB INTRODUCTION IN UZBEKISTAN

4.1 Institutional Foundation and Legal Framework

In Uzbekistan, the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MoEF) has been designated as the lead PBB authority. A dedicated department — 'Assessment of Budget Expenditure Efficiency and Introduction of Programme-Targeted Budget Planning Methods' — was established within the MoEF to coordinate all reform activities. The foundational legal instrument is Cabinet of Ministers

Resolution No. 4 (4 January 2024), which established the Regulation on Developing, Monitoring, and Evaluating Budget Programmes. This Regulation, comprising 8 chapters and 43 clauses, defines core PBB concepts (budget programmes, sub-programmes, outcome indicators, output indicators, input indicators) and prescribes the full programme development cycle.

Target indicator design principles embedded in the Regulation reflect international best practice: effectiveness (orientation toward final goals), clarity (indicators understandable to end users, not only specialists), objectivity (measurable, non-abstract), economic efficiency (minimal data collection cost), comparability (continuity across time and alignment with international indicators), transparency (citizen participation), and assessability (calculable mechanisms).

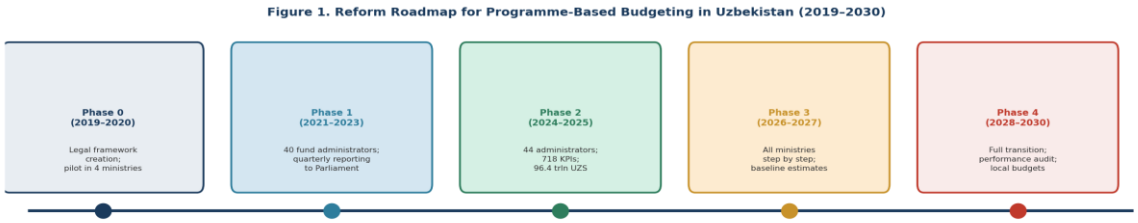


Figure 1. Reform Roadmap for Programme-Based Budgeting in Uzbekistan (2019–2030)

4.2 Phased Implementation: From Pilot to National Rollout

The reform has unfolded across four distinct phases, each characterised by expanding institutional scope, increasingly refined KPI methodology, and growing budget volumes covered (see Table 3 below). The pre-reform baseline consisted entirely of traditional line-item budgeting, offering no explicit link between resource allocation and performance outcomes.

Phase 0 (2019–2020) established the legal preconditions. Presidential Decree PQ-4555 (December 2019) mandated a pilot covering four ministries: Preschool and School Education, Health, Water Resources, and the Committee of Automobile Roads. During 2020, an analysis of efficiency of budgetary expenditures for 2018–2019 in these sectors was conducted jointly with experts from international financial institutions.

Phase 1 (2021–2023) expanded the pilot base. By the formation of the 2022 State Budget, target indicators for 40 primary fund-distributing bodies were reflected, and quarterly evaluation by internal audit services was introduced, with annual assessment by the Accounts Chamber.

Phase 2 (2024–2025) marks a significant quantitative leap. Presidential Decree PQ-455 (December 2024) approved target indicators for 44 primary fund-allocating bodies covering 718 budget expenditure lines. For 2025, 96.4 trillion UZS was allocated across 125 budget programmes.

Table 1. Stages of Implementing Programme-Based Budgeting in Uzbekistan (2019–2030)

Stage / Period	Key Regulatory Acts	Main Achievements	Limitations Identified
Pre-reform (before 2019)	Traditional line-item budgeting (Budget Code of RUz)	Established expenditure classification; predictable allocation	No performance link; limited accountability; no KPIs
Phase 0 (2019–2020)	Presidential Decree PQ-4555 (Dec 2019); Law URQ-660 (Dec 2020)	Legal amendments; pilot in 4 ministries (Health, Education, Roads, Water)	Pilot scope limited; KPI quality inconsistent
Phase 1 (2021–2023)	Presidential Decrees PQ-73 (2021), PQ-422 (2023)	40 fund administrators; Accounts Chamber annual review; parliament reporting	No local budget coverage; outcome vs. output confusion
Phase 2 (2024–2025)	Cabinet Resolution No. 4 (Jan 2024); PQ-455 (Dec 2024)	44 administrators; 718 KPIs; 96.4 trln UZS via 125 programmes	Only 20% of administrators covered; regional gap persists

Phase 3 (2026–2027)	PFM Strategy 2025–2030 (CMR No. 210, Apr 2025)	All ministries to adopt budget programmes; baseline estimates introduced	Methodology guides still in draft; IT integration incomplete
Phase 4 (2028–2030)	PFM Strategy milestones	Full national + local coverage; performance audit; IT audit	Implementation risk at sub-national level; capacity gaps

Source: Author's elaboration based on primary regulatory documents and official MoEF data (2019–2025).

4.3 Budget Programme Structure: Ministry of Economy and Finance

For the first time in Uzbekistan's fiscal history, the preliminary list of budget programmes of two pilot ministries — the MoEF and the Ministry of Agriculture — was developed for the period 2025–2027. Tables 1 and 2 present these programme structures.

Table 2. Budget Programme List of the Ministry of Economy and Finance, 2025–2027 (billion UZS)

No.	Budget Programme	Forecast 2025	Budget Est. 2026	Budget Est. 2027
Budget Programmes for Current & Other Expenditures of the Ministry of Economy and Finance				
	Total Current Expenditures	**73,845.4**	**85,126.3**	**93,638.6**
I.	**Central Apparatus (Total)**	**469.1**	**506.1**	**556.6**
	Administrative Management	118.4	127.7	140.5
	Ensuring Macroeconomic Stability	76.3	82.3	90.5
	Tax-Budget Policy & Fiscal Stability	135.4	146.1	160.7
	Centralised Investments & Urbanisation	55.1	59.5	65.4
	Public Procurement & Digital Technologies	30.8	33.2	36.5
	State Assets & PPP Coordination	20.6	22.2	24.4
	Socio-Economic Development of Regions	32.5	35.1	38.6
II.	**Subordinate Organisations (Total)**	**73,376.3**	**84,620.2**	**93,082.0**
	Geodesy, Cartography & Land Management	169.4	180.0	194.0
	Management of State Reserves	159.4	212.6	239.5
	Sectoral Markets & Labour Research	12.0	13.0	14.4
	State Data Integrity Monitoring	17.7	17.9	19.1
	State Budget Treasury Execution	59.9	68.7	75.5
	Research in Tax-Budget Sector	18.2	23.9	26.1
	Professional Development Activities	14.2	15.2	16.7
	Administrative Building Utilisation	34.7	36.2	38.7
	Pension Provision	72,888.0	84,052.8	92,458.2
III.	**Capital Investments**	**0**	**0**	**0**

Source: Ministry of Economy and Finance of the Republic of Uzbekistan; author's presentation.

Table 3. Budget Programme List of the Ministry of Agriculture, 2025–2027 (billion UZS)

No.	Budget Programme	Forecast 2025	Budget Est. 2026	Budget Est. 2027
	Ministry of Agriculture – Total	**2,461.5**	**2,680.5**	**2,948.5**
I.	**Central Apparatus (Total)**	**1,428.1**	**1,543.7**	**1,698.1**
	Administrative Management	74.3	81.7	89.9
	Agricultural Production Support	115.8	127.4	140.1
	State Support for Agrarian Sector	458.8	492.9	542.2
	Science, Education & Advisory Services in Agriculture	717.7	789.5	868.4
	Digitalisation of Agriculture	61.6	52.4	57.6
II.	**Subordinate Organisations (Total)**	**1,033.4**	**1,136.7**	**1,250.4**
	Veterinary & Livestock Development	526.0	578.6	636.5
	Sericulture & Wool Industry	28.3	31.1	34.2
	Plant Quarantine & Protection	294.4	323.9	356.3
	Agricultural Services Provision	150.0	165.0	181.5
	UzAgroInspection	34.7	38.1	41.9
III.	**Capital Investments**	**0**	**0**	**0**

Source: Ministry of Economy and Finance of the Republic of Uzbekistan; author's presentation.

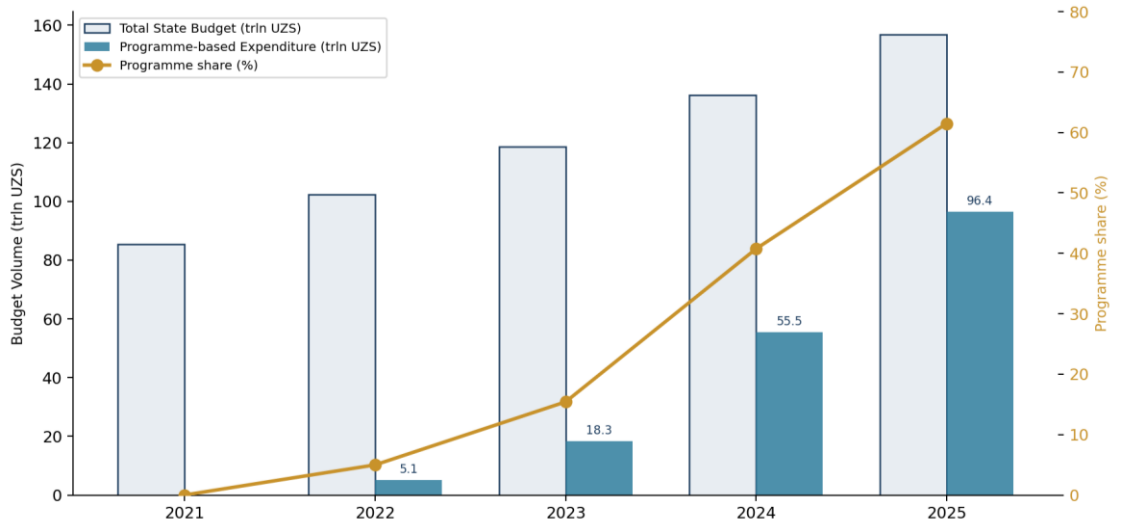


Figure 2. State Budget and Programme-Based Expenditure Dynamics in Uzbekistan (2021–2025) (Note: 2025 figures are approved estimates; prior years are actuals. Source: MoEF; author's calculations.)

4.4 Logic Model of Programme Budgeting

The PBB system in Uzbekistan can be represented as a logic model linking inputs (budget allocations, staff, IT systems) through activities (programme design, monitoring, internal audit) to outputs (approved programmes, KPI sets), outcomes (spending efficiency, accountability), and long-run impacts (fiscal sustainability, improved public services). This causal chain, illustrated in Figure 6, provides the evaluative framework against which current implementation gaps are assessed in Section 6.

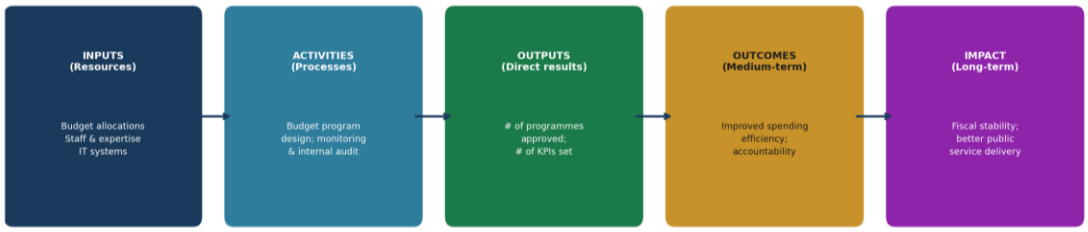


Figure 3. Programme Budgeting Logic Model: From Inputs to Impact

5. COMPARATIVE INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE AND CLUSTER ANALYSIS

5.1 Country Benchmarking

To contextualise Uzbekistan's reform experience, we examine nine comparator countries across three regional clusters: advanced OECD adopters (Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, USA, New Zealand), middle-income Asian adopters (South Korea, Malaysia), and post-Soviet transition economies (Russia, Kazakhstan). Table 4 summarises key characteristics across each country.

Table 4. Comparative Analysis of Programme-Based Budgeting Adoption: Ten Countries

Country	PBB Model	Year Adopted	Coverage (%)	Parliament Role	Key Lessons for Uzbekistan
Australia	Accrual-based performance	1999	100%	Strong	Integrate performance data into budget documents; use independent review bodies
Canada	MRRS / Departmental Plans	2000	100%	Strong	Biannual parliamentary reporting of KPIs; clear outcome–output hierarchy
United Kingdom	DEL/AME + SR framework	2000	100%	Moderate	Spending Reviews link 3-year budgets to strategic priorities
USA	GPRA / GPRA-MA	1993/2010	100%	Moderate	Agency strategic plans mandatory; cross-agency priority goals
South Korea	Top-down + programme budgeting	2007	100%	Strong	Fiscal rules binding; sunset review of every programme
Malaysia	Modified Budgeting System	1990	~85%	Moderate	Early adopter in Asia; phased subnational rollout model
Russia	Programme budgeting (FB)	2014	~70%	Weak	Formal adoption without full performance culture; useful cautionary case
Kazakhstan	State planning integration	2017	~60%	Moderate	Closest to Uzbekistan; KPI quality remains a challenge
Uzbekistan	Emerging PBB system	2019	~20%	Developing	Must accelerate local budget coverage and KPI quality assurance

Sources: OECD (2019); IMF PFM assessments; World Bank PEFA reports; national ministry reports; author's compilation.

5.2 Hierarchical Cluster Analysis

Figure 5 presents the dendrogram produced by Ward's hierarchical linkage clustering of the ten-country sample based on the composite PBB adoption distance matrix. Three structurally distinct clusters emerge.

Cluster I (OECD Advanced): Australia, Canada, UK, USA, and New Zealand form a tightly grouped cluster reflecting complete legal and operational PBB adoption, strong parliamentary scrutiny, and mature outcome–output KPI hierarchies. These countries represent the normative benchmark.

Cluster II (Asian Middle-Income): South Korea and Malaysia cluster together, reflecting substantial but not complete PBB adoption, strong legal frameworks, and partial sub-national coverage. Their experience is most transferable in terms of sequencing (Korea's top-down budgeting caps combined with programme structure) and phased rollout (Malaysia's subnational expansion model).

Cluster III (Post-Soviet Transition): Russia, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan cluster most closely among themselves, reflecting shared institutional legacies (Soviet-era line-item budgets, weak parliamentary scrutiny traditions) and similar reform sequencing challenges. Uzbekistan is most distant from Kazakhstan within this cluster, reflecting Kazakhstan's earlier start and greater administrative capacity; however, the proximity signals that Kazakhstan's experience — including its KPI quality challenges documented by Isakova et al. (2016) — is directly applicable to Uzbekistan's reform design.

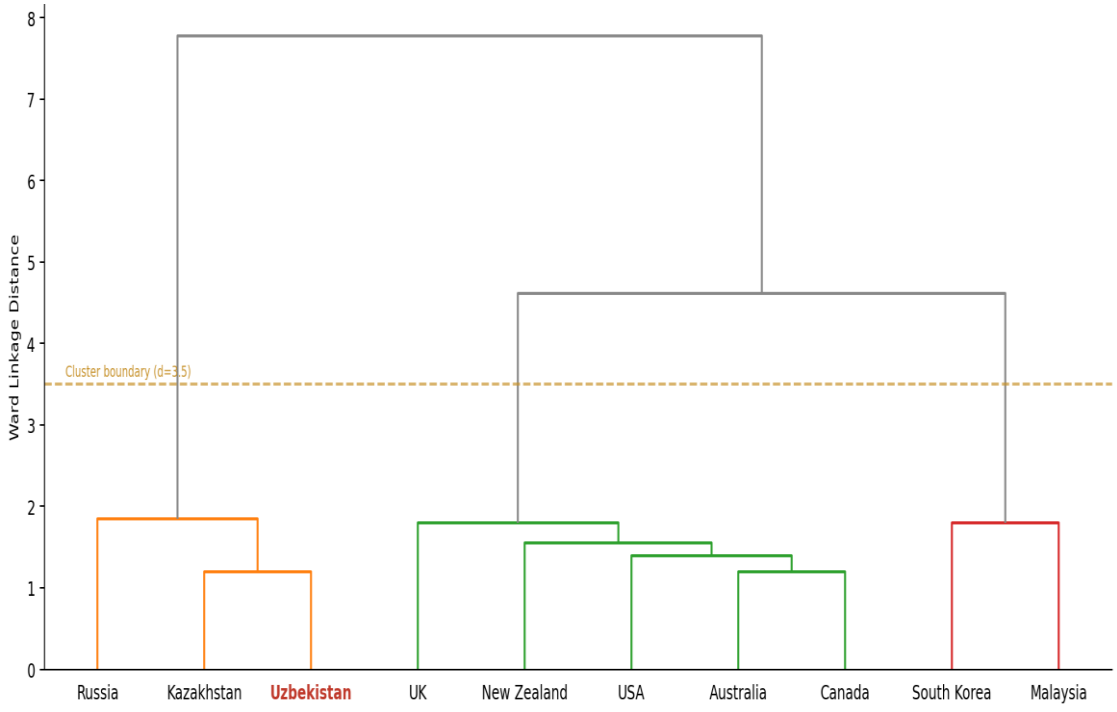


Figure 4. Hierarchical Cluster Dendrogram: Countries by Stage of Programme-Based Budgeting Adoption (Ward Linkage; composite PBB implementation index, 5 dimensions, 2024 data)

6. IMPLEMENTATION GAPS AND KPI QUALITY ASSESSMENT

6.1 Coverage Gap: The 20 Per Cent Problem

The most critical structural gap in Uzbekistan's current PBB system is the profound administrative coverage shortfall. As of 2025, only 44 of the approximately 220 first-level budget fund administrators (roughly 20 per cent) have defined target indicators for their budget-funded activities. The remaining 80 per cent continue to operate under traditional line-item budgeting. At the regional (oblast and district) level, transition of local budget recipients to PBB and the formulation of target indicators have not yet commenced.

This coverage gap has significant fiscal implications. Regions account for a substantial share of consolidated public expenditure — particularly in education, healthcare, and infrastructure — yet remain entirely outside the performance accountability framework. Figure 4 illustrates the coverage shortfall and the governance-level distribution of currently approved KPIs.

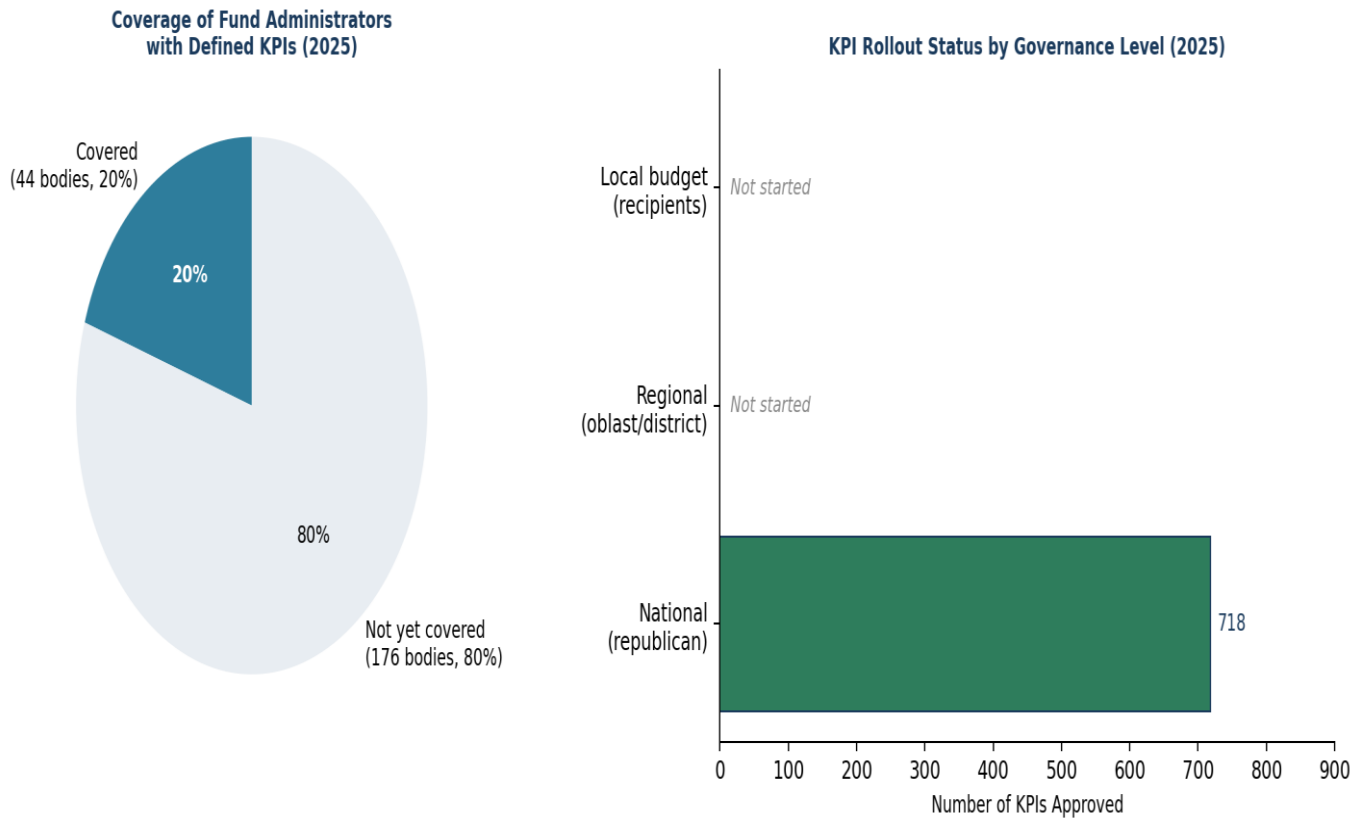


Figure 5. Implementation Gap Analysis: Programme Budgeting Coverage in Uzbekistan (2025) (Left: administrator-level coverage; Right: KPI rollout by governance tier. Source: MoEF; author's calculations.)

6.2 KPI Quality: A SMART Assessment

Beyond coverage breadth, the quality of target indicators already in use varies considerably. Table 5 presents a SMART quality assessment for selected KPIs from the Ministry of Health's programme portfolio — one of the most advanced fund administrators in the Uzbekistan system. Figure 3 illustrates the composition of indicator types across the main fund administrators.

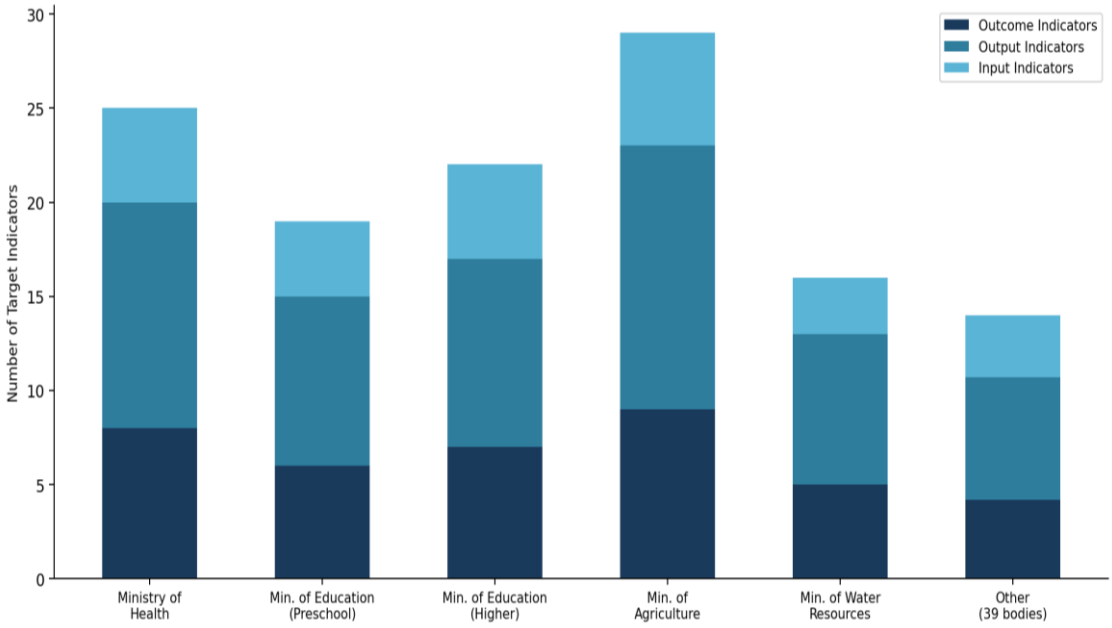


Figure 6. Structure of Target Indicators by Type Across Selected Budget Administrators (2024–2025) (Note: Values are illustrative approximations based on available MoEF documentation; Source: Author's elaboration.)

Table 5. SMART Quality Assessment of Target Indicators: Ministry of Health (2024–2025)

Indicator	Type	Measurable?	Time-bound?	Outcome- linked?	SMART Score
Vaccination coverage rate (%)	Outcome	Yes	Yes	Yes	**High**
No. of children vaccinated	Output	Yes	Yes	Partial	**Medium-High**
Vaccine procurement volume (units)	Input	Yes	Yes	No	**Medium**
Early detection of hereditary diseases (%)	Outcome	Yes	Yes	Yes	**High**
No. of screening tests conducted	Output	Yes	Yes	Partial	**Medium-High**
Hemodialysis session hours per patient	Output	Yes	Yes	Partial	**Medium**
Endocrinological prevention coverage (%)	Outcome	Yes	Partial	Yes	**Medium-High**
Capital investment absorption rate (%)	Input	Yes	Yes	No	**Medium**

Source: Author's assessment based on MoEF methodological guide and Ministry of Health budget programme documentation.

The assessment reveals three recurrent quality deficiencies across the broader KPI portfolio: (i) input indicators are sometimes presented as performance indicators, conflating resource use with results; (ii) outcome indicators frequently lack baseline values and counterfactual reference points, making impact attribution impossible; and (iii) indicators for sub-programmes are often aggregated to the programme level, masking implementation heterogeneity.

7. PFM STRATEGY 2025–2030: ROADMAP ASSESSMENT

The Strategy for Improving the State Financial Management System in 2025–2030, approved by Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 210 (April 8, 2025), advances Uzbekistan's PBB reform to a qualitatively new phase. The Strategy encompasses 16 goals in Section V, 45 tasks, and 96 specific activities.

Table 6 maps the Strategy's key PBB-related milestones against their stated deadlines, implementation status, and responsible bodies. Our analysis identifies the September 2028 'efficiency evaluation methodology' milestone as the highest-risk item: without a credible, agreed-upon methodology for ex-post programme evaluation, the entire KPI reporting edifice risks becoming a compliance exercise rather than a decision-support tool — precisely the 'paperwork PBB' failure mode identified by Schick (2014).

Table 6. PFM Strategy 2025–2030: Key PBB Milestones and Implementation Assessment

Deadline	Key Action	Status	Implementing Body
Dec 2025	Methodology for baseline expenditure evaluation; rules for budget requests within Fiscal Strategy limits	In progress	MoEF
Mar 2026	Methodological guide for financial assessment of new legislative proposals; Budget Module–Capital Investment integration	Planned	MoEF / Cabinet
Jun 2026	Rules for consolidated budget balance preparation	Planned	MoEF
Jan 2026	Transition to financing based on permanent expenditure estimates	Planned	MoEF / Treasury
Mar 2027	Review of delegated powers between national and local budgets; internal control concept	Planned	MoEF / Regions

Sep 2028	Methodology for evaluating efficiency and effectiveness of programme expenditures	Planned	MoEF / Accounts Chamber
Sep 2029	Local budget organisations to develop and report on budget programmes	Planned	Regions / MoEF
Sep 2030	Full local budget programme formation; performance audits and IT audits in internal audit services	Planned	Accounts Chamber / Regions

Source: Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 210 (April 8, 2025); author's elaboration and risk assessment.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has documented, analysed, and critically assessed Uzbekistan's programme-based budgeting reform from its inception in 2019 through to the current reform horizon of 2030. Four principal conclusions emerge.

First, Uzbekistan has built a credible legal and institutional foundation for PBB remarkably rapidly, moving from no enabling legislation in 2018 to a comprehensive Regulation (CMR No. 4, 2024) and a multi-year PFM Strategy (CMR No. 210, 2025) within six years. The political commitment, as evidenced by the explicit 2030 mandate in the 'Uzbekistan 2030' strategy, is genuine and high-level.

Second, operational coverage remains critically low. The 20 per cent administrative coverage rate and zero subnational coverage constitute the most urgent implementation gap. Without accelerated rollout, the analytical promise of PBB — cross-programme prioritisation and resource reallocation based on performance — cannot be realised.

Third, KPI quality, even among pioneer ministries, is uneven. The confusion between input, output, and outcome indicators, and the absence of baselines and counterfactuals, undermine the performance information's decision-support value. International experience (Robinson & Last, 2009; Diamond, 2003) suggests that KPI quality assurance requires a dedicated institutional function — a role the Accounts Chamber of Uzbekistan could assume with appropriate mandate expansion.

Fourth, Uzbekistan's cluster position — closest to Kazakhstan among post-Soviet states, but substantially distant from OECD adopters — defines both the relevant peer benchmark and the achievable 2030 reform frontier. A realistic 2030 ambition is 80–90 per cent national administrative coverage with high-quality KPIs, and the initiation of meaningful subnational PBB rollout in at least the three largest regions.

On the basis of these findings, we advance five targeted policy recommendations:

1. Prioritise subnational KPI rollout from 2026: The PFM Strategy's September 2029 deadline for local budget programme development is too late. We recommend initiating a voluntary pilot in three oblasts by 2026, leveraging the Ministry of Health's accumulated experience as a technical model.
2. Establish a National KPI Quality Assurance Unit: Assign the Accounts Chamber or a dedicated MoEF unit the statutory mandate to certify and annually review the SMART quality of all approved KPIs, with results published in the annual Budget Execution Report.
3. Invest in IT integration urgently: The Budget Module–Capital Investment Information System integration (due March 2026) is a technical prerequisite for meaningful cross-programme analysis. Delays risk the 'garbage in, garbage out' failure mode where manual KPI reporting undermines data integrity.
4. Adopt a parliamentary reporting calendar aligned with international practice: Move from annual to biannual parliamentary review of KPI implementation reports (Canada model), with all reports publicly available on the MoEF website.
5. Develop a rigorous programme evaluation methodology by 2026 (not 2028): Accelerate the development of ex-post evaluation standards. We recommend adopting the IMF Public Investment Management Assessment framework adapted to Uzbekistan's institutional context, with piloting in two ministries by end-2026.

Uzbekistan's PBB reform is at a critical juncture. The legal architecture is in place; the political will is explicit; and international technical assistance remains available. The remaining challenge is primarily one of implementation pace, institutional capacity, and quality assurance. This study provides an evidence-based roadmap and a replicable analytical framework applicable to other reforming states in Central Asia and beyond.

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Declaration of Competing Interests

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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