

### ABSTRACT

*Effective public service delivery has been playing a key role in Azerbaijan. For this purpose, one-stop shop based service delivery centres called “ASAN service” have been established to function under the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan (SAPSSI). These well-equipped centres bring together entities to deliver services in a public-private partnership, keeping citizens’ needs at the centre of attention. Moreover, SAPSSI’s subordinate bodies also function in the field of digitalisation of public services and e-government, innovations, start-ups, and micro, small & medium enterprises (MSMEs).*

**Keywords:** public service delivery, e-government, digitalisation, innovations, start-ups, micro, small & medium enterprises

### INTRODUCTION

#### Need in quality public services and public administration reforms

In the past years, public administration reforms for improving service provision have gained substantial attention around the world. The public sector has been shaped by increased consumer demands, financial pressures, global investment competitiveness, public-sector reform initiatives, which have also led to the creation of new possibilities (PWC 2007). Thus, such matters as financial status, geographic location, management, and delivery strategies of public services are essential to the need for quality public service provision to meet the high expectations of citizens.

Due to these shifting demands, the public sector is urgently in need of defining its function, strengthening its consumer focus, and creating integrated models for service delivery. To achieve the desired advantages, these models should be more productive and effective in addressing citizens’ needs, which means that the needs of the citizens should be at the centre of every decision (PWC 2007).

Starting in 2012, the Government of Azerbaijan took consistent steps to reform and reinforce areas related to public service delivery through the adoption of a series of laws and regulations on civil service, ethical conduct of civil servants, anti-corruption, access to information, ICT, e-government, etc. The reforms in Azerbaijan were focused on institutional arrangements, structures, systems, and the introduction of innovative practices to make them more conducive to civic engagement.

As citizen-centric models of public service delivery have been at the core of public administration reforms in Azerbaijan, one of the most successful steps taken in the implementation of the reforms was the creation of the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan (hereinafter SAPSSI). SAPSSI was established by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan in July 2012, to provide high-quality public services to the citizens of Azerbaijan and promote innovations in this sphere. Its activity areas include public service delivery, digitalisation, innovations, and social projects.

SAPSSI is the central body of executive power that carries out the unified management of the “ASAN service” centres. It coordinates the functions of the employees of the state agencies to act at those centres, controls and provides periodic assessments, carries out mutual integration

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of databases of state agencies, accelerates the organisation of electronic services and improves the management system in this area. Moreover, SAPSSI directs activities of its subordinate bodies, such as “ABAD” in the field of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), “E-GOV Development Centre” for digitalisation, “Innovations Centres”, and “INNOLAND”, the latter focusing on start-ups and innovations among other.

#### ONE-STOP SHOP MODEL OF PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY

##### Establishment of the “ASAN service”

The incorporation into the public sector of New Public Management ideas has influenced how public services are provided. Private sector strategies that place the individual at the heart of the entire business operation, are being increasingly adopted by the governments around the world as a citizen-oriented model to ensure an effective delivery of public services (Huseynli, 2016). Several years earlier, citizen participation typically meant government-originating initiatives that enabled people to somehow engage in the public policymaking process (Cooper 2005).<sup>2</sup>

The goal for further optimising, simplifying, and aligning public services with citizens' demands and desires has led to the development of one-stop shop models of public service delivery. Adopting this approach, the Government of Azerbaijan has placed the citizen at the centre of its public administration policy initiatives. Thus, “ASAN service”,<sup>3</sup> overseen by SAPSSI, was established upon the initiative of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan as an integral part of the reforms in the public administration realm. This initiative adopts advanced management principles, and it has resulted in a fundamental change in the field of public service provision in our country.

Figure 1: Kurdamir “ASAN” Service Centre



The “ASAN service” centres are one-stop shop-based entities for providing public services. These centres bring together representatives of 11 government organisations and 30 private companies providing more than 300 services through a public-private partnership. At the same time, these centres also provide functional-auxiliary services, including banking, insurance, legal support, translation, and other services. There are 5 “ASAN service” centres in the capital city of Baku, and 15 across regions, while 7 more centres are planned to be opened soon.

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Citizens can find information about the centres and the available services either on the official “ASAN service” website ([www.asan.gov.az](http://www.asan.gov.az)) and the social networks, e.g., Facebook, Twitter,

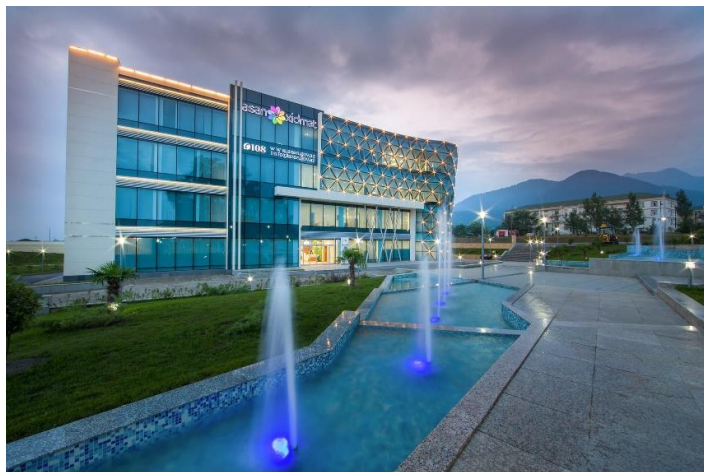
<sup>2</sup> Cooper states that there is a more grassroots effort now, as well as greater emphasis is placed on cooperation and deliberation, which has led to "the development of civic identity and the building of horizontal bonds among citizens through community organizations and engagement with government and business in the governance process".

<sup>3</sup> The acronym “ASAN” stands for “Azerbaijan Service and Assessment Network”, while the meaning of the word “Asan” is also “easy” in Azerbaijani. The “ASAN service” provides high-quality services based on good governance principles, efficiency, accessibility, transparency, comfort, and innovation.

Instagram, or through the 108 Call Centre, and the “ASAN service” mobile application.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, appointments can be made before visiting a centre, through the website, the mobile application or the 108 Call Centre, using an electronic integrated queue system.

With respect to provision of services, relevant state authorities are asked to make proposals which of their services can be allocated to the “ASAN service” centres as part of an inter-ministerial cooperation system. Quite often, to enable a more efficient and more comfortable

*Figure 2: Gabala “ASAN” Service Centre*



access to those services by citizens, SAPSSI is instructed to work with the relevant ministries and present proposals on the simplification of service delivery procedures, including reduction or elimination of required documents, which may be considered redundant, and shortening the service provision time.

Well-designed centres provide all the necessary facilities to make citizens feel comfortable when they visit them. They are

spacious, well-organised and citizen-oriented, and include small libraries, wheelchairs, Braille text for the persons with visual impairments, etc.

The citizen-centric approach of “ASAN service” brings together many service providers that supply public services at one site to rural populations effectively as they cannot otherwise access such services easily. Mobile services, which include 10 large well-equipped buses and 1 “ASAN train”, are operating by traveling to conveniently reachable locations in the regions and remote areas that do not have “ASAN service” centres. By paying an additional fee, intra-city mobile services enable citizens to receive services at work or a home address, or any other location they wish.<sup>5</sup>

*Figure 3: Mobile bus of “ASAN service”*



“ASAN service”, known as an innovative model, based on the one-stop-shop concept, has laid the foundation for an exceptional paradigm in increasing citizen satisfaction, reaching a remarkable 99.5% satisfaction rate. Furthermore, citizens can provide their feedback and suggestions, and voice their complaints through e-mail, and the “ASAN service” website and social media pages, as well as through the 108 Call Centre, and the Skype kiosks situated in the centres.

<sup>4</sup> To date, the “ASAN service” Facebook page has received more than 430,000 likes.

<sup>5</sup> However, in promoting social cohesion and solidarity, intra-city mobile services are available free of charge to all persons with disabilities and children with poor health.



Moreover, a dedicated department within SAPSSI utilises several tools for monitoring and

*Figure 4: "ASAN train"*



assessment of service provision levels, such as cameras recording the service process in the centres, or through the on-site presence of the department's representatives and surveys conducted among citizens. This department also collects and analyses statistical data on rendered services, citizen flow and applications, and its assesses the performance of service rendering officers, as well as it prepares periodical reports, investigates citizens' complaints and violations of service-related

rules and regulations by service rendering officers and takes necessary measures in that regard.

The citizen-centric approach of "ASAN service" is not only limited to public service delivery, as it also gives the citizens the opportunity to have a volunteering experience at the centres. Volunteering in "ASAN Service" is a great opportunity for young and enthusiastic people between 17–25 years, who are eager to pursue their first work experience. To date, more than 24,000 volunteers have been involved in the work of the "ASAN Service" Centres, and more than 2,500 have been employed subsequently by the "ASAN Service" and relevant ministries.<sup>6</sup> However, volunteering is not limited to the youth only, as there are nearly 50 elderly volunteers as well. Additionally, out of the total of 24,000 volunteers, 60 are disabled persons.

Staff of SAPSSI, its "ASAN service" centres, subordinate bodies and private organizations are regularly involved in training programmes delivered by the "ASAN Training Centre". Moreover, alongside training at a local level, tailored special training packages are also offered to the international partners. Training programmes on improving public service delivery, human resource management, monitoring and assessment, public relations, etc. have been conducted for officials of several countries such as Afghanistan, Indonesia, Morocco, Montenegro, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, as well as for several regions of the Russian Federation, etc. Additionally, due to the current situation with the global pandemic, these training programs have continued to be conducted online. The purpose of the training programmes is to enhance the skills and knowledge of government employees in the field of public management, as well as stress, time, and conflict management, effective communication, protocol, etc. in order to achieve the highest rate of customer satisfaction.

Introducing a merit-based recruitment system, inculcating the values of professionalism and integrity, developing skills and leadership qualities, and applying a performance-based appraisal system are pivotal in terms of raising the quality of public service delivery.

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<sup>6</sup> Young people that participate in the "ASAN School" volunteering training programmes gain theoretical knowledge, which then utilise during their internship at the "ASAN service" centres. Once volunteers complete their service, they are awarded a certificate and a reference letter.

Therefore, SAPSSI applies a performance-based motivation scheme to reward public servants in "ASAN service" centres.

Moreover, in order to serve the public with information on the public sector and enhance citizens' awareness of public services, their rights and obligations, "ASAN Radio" was established in 2015 as the first-ever and unique radio specialised in the field of public services. "ASAN Radio" is a primary source of information for citizens on the activities of "ASAN service" centres and projects that they implement. It also provides news and information on the public sector, the social and economic life of people and prepares and delivers cultural programmes that inform, educate, enlighten, and enrich the public.

## DIGITALISATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

### "E-GOV Development Centre"

Public service needs to spearhead innovations to deal with complex challenges. The priorities of the SAPSSI include harnessing disruptive technologies to serve the citizens more effectively and efficiently, moving from the one-stop shop to a non-stop shop model, where "the citizen does not have to perform any action or fill in any forms to receive government services" (Scholta et al. 2019). For that purpose, the "E-GOV Development Centre" was established, a public legal entity under SAPSSI.<sup>7</sup>

The Centre's functions include the development, administration, and integration of the e-Government Information System (EGIS), the creation of products and services within a single EGIS, building or adopting systems of state importance, implementing public-private partnership projects, and providing advice and support for digital projects. By the end of the first quarter of 2021, more than 100 organisations, including government institutions and their subordinates, as well as private organisations, have joined the EGIS. In the field of e-services, G2G, G2C, G2B services are developed and made available to citizens to use. As the primary users of these e-services are the Azerbaijani citizens, surveys are regularly administered among the population. Based on the results of these surveys, existing e-services are improved, and new services are introduced.

*Figure 5: E-Gov Development Centre*



In June 2019, a new personal cabinet-based e-government portal – "my-Gov" - was launched. This portal, along with mobile applications launched in 2021 offer digital solutions in obtaining references from different sources, and accessing documents and information provided by government institutions through mobile devices, while allowing single-on access

<sup>7</sup> Presidential Decree No 1885 "On about e-government development and measures related to transition to digital government" (14 March 2018).

to government portals, regulating access to personal data, and eliminating data deficiencies in information systems.

*Figure 6: "My Gov"*

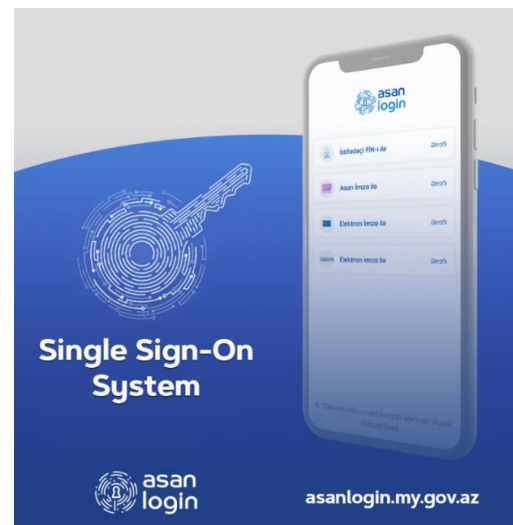


Solutions such as the digital portfolio were created in the personal cabinet-based e-government portal. The digital portfolio contains up to date personal information for citizens. This application can provide proactive notifications of changes in personal data, and it has a feedback module to manage data accuracy through access to integrated government portals. The application can also issue permissions and monitor the status of personal data sharing.

The number of users of the "my-Gov" portal increased ten times between 2019 and 2020. The portal provides 700 e-services and it accepted more than 500,000 registrations for e-services.

In turn, the **"ASAN Login" Single Sign-On System** was created as a unified solution to the challenges of different portals, such as the need to remember different usernames and passwords, the inability to register without a mobile number associated with a personal identification number, and the lack of access between service portals and remote authentication systems. "ASAN Login" eliminates the need to remember many usernames and passwords and thus it minimises the risk of data leakage. A citizen, once registered in "ASAN Login", can easily access the portals of all integrated organisations and apply for any service they provide. By the end of the first quarter of 2021, access to more than 52 e-services is provided through this system.

*Figure 7: ASAN login*



*Figure 8: ASAN pay*



The **"ASAN pay" system** has been established as a tool for directly informing citizens about state payments, electronic payment of duties and other state fees, and the formation of protocols by state bodies in an electronic environment. The system provides its services to the public, on a 24/7 basis, through a web portal, a mobile application and payment terminals. Thus, it relieves citizens from the loss of time and resources, as well as the need to wait in line.

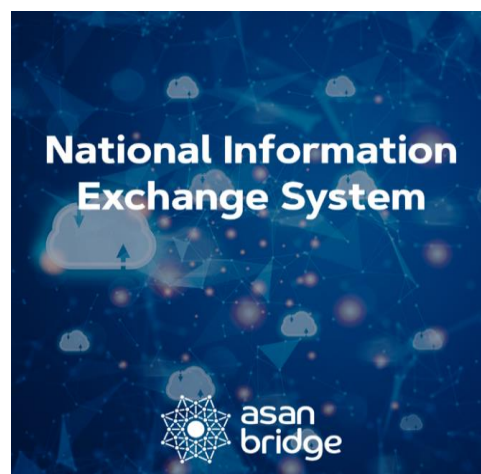
Statistics reflect that more than 300 organisations have been integrated into the "ASAN pay" system and more than 670 services are provided (1<sup>st</sup> quarter



2021). Through this system, it is possible to pay administrative fines, duties, taxes, customs levies, as well as make court and justice payments.

The concept of digital and modern government requires effective management of large amounts of information. Each government agency stores and manages its own information. However, in order to better serve the citizens, various agencies must constantly transmit the necessary information to each other safely and quickly. The National Information Exchange System “**ASAN Bridge**” - an integrated module of EGIS - provides coordination of state information resources and systems, as well as fast, stable and secure exchange of information between those resources and systems.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the “**ASAN Bridge**” has certain significant functionalities such as centralised management of relevant permits when transferring information from one institution to another, receiving and transmitting all types of services, versioning of services in order to increase the stability of transmitted services, division of services into sub-services and thus enabled to transfer only the necessary information between the parties involved in a transaction.

Figure 9: ASAN Bridge



Another essential project of "E-GOV Development Centre" - “**ASAN Visa**” has been created to simplify the visa issuance procedure for foreigners and stateless persons planning on coming to Azerbaijan. “**ASAN Visa**” system’s directions include electronic visa issuance through the online portal of [www.evisa.gov.az](http://www.evisa.gov.az), and provision of visa issuance upon arrival at International Airports of Azerbaijan. People who plan visiting Azerbaijan can apply for an electronic visa before coming to the country. Only the details of national passports of individuals wishing to visit Azerbaijan are required during the application process for the electronic visas. Depending on the applicant's choice, visas can be issued within 3 days or 3 hours.

#### **SUPPORT FOR START-UPS AND INNOVATIONS**

##### **"Innovations Centre", "ASAN Communal" and "INNOLAND"**

The introduction of innovation in public service delivery is a priority for the Azerbaijani Government in the framework of its modernisation efforts. Thus, the “**Innovations Centre**” was established in 2013 under the SAPSSI envisioned as a pioneer in the developing and building an innovation ecosystem. The Centre aims at making innovations accessible to everyone, and everywhere in Azerbaijan. Introducing innovations in public service delivery and new innovative business solutions for both private and public entities, as well as establishing and improving information systems, and supporting start-ups are an integral part of the “**Innovations Centre**” mandate.

Through “**ASAN Communal**” Centres close to 50 utility services are offered in a one-stop-shop format and around 2,000 citizens receive public and private utility services daily. To date,

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<sup>8</sup> The “**ASAN Bridge**” system which eliminates dependence on physical equipment (cards, tokens, etc), can work on all operating systems. The system also allows for problem detection within the system, and promptly eliminates it through its monitoring module.

close to 2 million applications have been received by "ASAN Communal" centres. Currently, there are 2 "ASAN Communal" Centres, and 2 more are planned on being opened.

Innovating public service delivery has an immediate impact at a nationwide scale, affecting

*Figure 10: "INNOLAND" Incubation and Acceleration Centre*



the wellbeing of millions of people. Starting from 2018, the "Innovations Centre" enhanced its operations for developing the start-up ecosystem by providing a favourable environment, funding opportunities and practical tools to the early-stage entrepreneurs. In addition, the "INNOLAND" Incubation and Acceleration Centre offers a creative, dynamic and collaborative Co-Working environment for innovative companies, and incubation and

acceleration programmes for start-ups.

The "Innovations Centre" also fosters regional development of start-up and innovation ecosystems and it supports private sector innovative start-ups and SMEs. In 2019, two regional branches of "INNOLAND" Incubation and Acceleration Centre were opened in Sheki and Shamakhi city. Through these regional branches and partnerships with other local players, the "Innovations Centre" implements several projects for encouraging the development of tech start-ups in the regions through strengthening local capacity.

In this context, the "Innovation Centre" opened its Innovations House in Silicon Valley in 2020 to meet the growing demand of the national start-up ecosystem for access to the international market. It also founded the worldwide Azerbaijani Tech Diaspora in order to support local start-ups. The Innovations House connects the start-up ecosystem of Azerbaijan with the Silicon Valley and helps Azerbaijani start-ups to expand their products and services to foreign markets and participate in different acceleration programmes in Silicon Valley as well as raise investment capital. The Tech Diaspora is established to further strengthen the ties between the Azerbaijani start-up ecosystem players living in different countries of the world, and Azerbaijanis working in the field of innovative technologies.

Cultivating skills, supporting people and companies to accelerate the digital transformation process, improving lives and businesses are currently the focus areas of the "Innovations Centre". In 2019, the "Innovations Centre" organised a Start-up Fest, which is the first in a series of events dedicated exclusively to start-ups. The purpose of this annually organised event is to bring together young tech entrepreneurs, angel investors, corporations, government organisations, universities, media, and international guests from different countries aimed at making a positive contribution to the Azerbaijan ecosystem by creating opportunities for experience exchange.

In 2020, the Innovation Centre organised more than 100 local and international events on technological innovation in the fields of finance, tourism, agriculture, technology, information security, which was attended by more than 8,000 participants. In 2021, the "Innovations Centre" together with SAPSSI and the global venture capital firm "500 Start-ups" launched



Azerbaijan the "500 ASAN Start-up Programme" to provide world-class programming and mentorship services to the early-stage entrepreneurs in Azerbaijan.

## SUPPORT FOR MSMEs

### "ABAD" public legal entity

Alongside the "Innovations Centre", the creation of the "ABAD" public legal entity was one of the crucial steps taken to improve MSMEs in the country.<sup>9</sup> The main purpose of establishing this organisation was to carry out socially-oriented projects aimed at ensuring the active participation of the citizens in the socio-economic life of the county, developing micro, small, and medium entrepreneurship, raising the employment rate of the population and supporting the formation of competitive family businesses in the country. The "ABAD" implements assistance projects for family businesses engaged in handcrafting and food production.

Being the country's prominent national network for advancing family businesses, "ABAD" aims at accelerating entrepreneurial development and thus increasing capacity of the MSMEs and helping to ensure the sustainability of new start-ups. Through its multifaceted activities, "ABAD" addresses the challenges that prevent and impede the development of community-based family businesses and rural entrepreneurship. Operating on the one-stop shop principle, the "ABAD" renders services from A to Z to family households that lack the required knowledge and professional skills. Business planning, marketing, training courses, branding, design and packaging, financial accounting and legal assistance are among these services. A person starts their journey with "ABAD" through the portal [www.abad.gov.az](http://www.abad.gov.az).

"ABAD"'s main innovative approach is the "ABAD" factories that are fully equipped with cutting-edge machinery and families can work there on shifts free of charge. However, the production equipment belongs to "ABAD" and the production process is supervised by ABAD's technicians. Additionally, the fast and easy legal support of "ABAD" is making this project, even more, one of a kind. Technical equipment for qualitative production and subsequent effective distribution of final products to the stores are also activities carried out by "ABAD". In other words, "ABAD" assists citizens who want to kick-start their business

with a plain idea and get access to the eye-catching store shelves.

For building each family business whether it is engaged in the production of food or crafts, the "ABAD" team accompanies each family, and learns and grows with them together. The organisation of the sales is the final, and crucial step of the support "ABAD" provides to family businesses. For this,

*Figure 11: "ABAD"'s Ethno-boutique*



"ABAD" signs contracts with retail agents (supermarkets).<sup>10</sup>

"ABAD" joined the UN-WEPs platform for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace, and the community. "ABAD" has also joined

<sup>9</sup> The "ABAD" public legal entity, run by SAPSSI, was established by the Presidential Decree No 1047 (23 September 2016).

<sup>10</sup> The products of "ABAD" families are all-natural and do not contain any chemical additives, they are offered for sale under the "ABAD" brand and with a special design individually tailored for each family business. The range of "ABAD" products includes artisanal foods and handicrafts such as sausage, cheese, dried fruit, jams and canned vegetables, tea, flour, beverages, woodwork, carpets, and all kinds of souvenirs.

the world's largest corporate sustainability (a.k.a. corporate social responsibility) initiative, the UN Global Compact, a non-binding United Nations pact to encourage businesses worldwide to adopt sustainable and socially responsible policies and to report on their implementation.

The “ABAD” model was presented at the “UN Public Service Forum” in The Hague, Netherlands in 2017. The Republic of Kazakhstan showed interest in applying the “ABAD” model, and as a result, it has been successfully implementing in the Turkistan region of Kazakhstan since July 2019 based on the Protocol of Intention signed between the two sides on cooperation in the field of development of micro-business for handicraft. Furthermore, some segments of the “ABAD” project have also been adopted by certain provinces of Indonesia since 2017.

With the belief of “knowledge is gained through experience”, “ABAD” is pleased to bring its members into contact with professional local and foreign experts. To date, jam, confectionery, dairy, financial management, and marketing experts have trained “ABAD” producers at Balakan city “ABAD Regional Centre”, at Guba city “ABAD Factory”, and “ABAD” staff at its headquarters.

Achieving economic diversification, maintaining a high development pace of the non-oil sector, increasing competitiveness, minimising urban and rural disparities, enhancing export possibilities and investing in regional development has long been on the agenda of the Government of Azerbaijan. Thus, the “ABAD” Concept has focused on the processing of agricultural products and handicrafts in its efforts to develop the non-oil industry sector by implementing a series of complex measures to create and increase the productivity of new enterprises through the application of modern technologies.

*Figure 12: Guba “ABAD Factory”*



## **“ASAN” IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA**

### **International achievements**

“ASAN service” has received numerous awards and international standard certificates in recognition of its high-quality work and achievements in the delivery of public services. First and foremost, the “ASAN service” was the recipient of the 2015 United Nations Public Service Award (United Nations Public Administration Network, 2015).<sup>11</sup> The United Nations Public Service Award is the most prestigious international recognition of excellence in public service. On 24-26 June 2019, SAPSSI organised the UN Public Service Forum in Baku, which was attended by 800 delegates from more than 100 countries, Azerbaijan received a UN “Special award for advancing public service through the application of digital government”.

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<sup>11</sup> It was the result of a contest that lasted between November to May 2015 that considered several hundred initiatives from around the world.

The State Agency has been actively engaged in practical cooperation and partnerships and has been developing relations with international agencies and other similar entities. High-level foreign dignitaries visiting Azerbaijan have been using the opportunity to visit the “ASAN service” centres to personally get acquainted with the unique Azerbaijani model of public service delivery mechanism. So far, the “ASAN service” centres have hosted more than 900 official delegations. Furthermore, as a holder of the United Nations Public Service Award, the “ASAN service” has received the attention of countries – as best practice - wishing to modernise their public service delivery systems based on the “ASAN service” model. Therefore, Memorandums of Understanding with more than 15 states, such as Italy, France, Korea, Turkey, Montenegro, Morocco, Indonesia, Afghanistan, Uganda, etc. and several international organisations (ICESCO and UCLG-Africa) have been signed.<sup>12</sup>

**Figure 13: 2015 United Nations Public Service Award for “ASAN”**



In this regard, Afghanistan has established a one-stop shop entity for rendering public and private services on the basis of the “ASAN Service” model of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The first “ASAN Khedmat” Centre was launched in Kabul, in January 2019.

SAPSSI has also been awarded with international certificate ISO: 9001:2008 standards associated with the quality management of “ASAN service” centers.<sup>13</sup> Application of quality management systems in SAPSSI means that every action in “ASAN service” complies with rules and mechanisms of transparency.

In 2014, SAPSSI and Sabirabad “ASAN service” center was awarded with another international certificate in accordance with OHSAS 18001: 2007 standards. The main requirement of the standard was establishment of safe

administrative buildings and a healthy work environment at the centers, provision of effective, transparent and efficient services by employees, as well as taking all the necessary measures for the safety of the citizens.

**Figure 14: 2019 United Nations Public Service Forum in Baku**



<sup>12</sup> “ASAN service” and a number of its projects (ASAN Pay, ASAN Mektub, ASAN Kadr) have been included as best practices on the United Nations South-South Cooperation Mechanisms and Solutions portal.

<sup>13</sup> ISO is an international certification organization that develops international standards.



In March 2018, the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) overwhelmingly adopted a resolution initiated by the Azerbaijani Government.<sup>14</sup> The purpose of the resolution is to encourage the "transparent, accountable and efficient public services delivery" principle within the UN system, based on the "ASAN service" concept, which is one of the most important achievements of Azerbaijan in fighting corruption. It also recognises the United Nations Public Service Award, received by "ASAN service", as the most prominent international recognition of excellence in public service within the United Nations system and encourages United Nations entities and other international organisations to continue to promote and reward such initiatives and their replication.

On October 25, 2018 a cooperation agreement was signed between ICESCO and SAPSSI. According to the Cooperation Program, the "ASAN award of ICESCO" for advanced governance has been established. "ASAN award of ICESCO" will be presented for experiments reflecting innovations in member states of ICESCO.

SAPSSI has not only introduced a new model of public service delivery unique in itself, but

*Figure 15: Signing of the Declaration of Intent on the establishment of ASAN International Association*



has also been sharing this great experience with other countries. The Declaration of Intent on the establishment of ASAN International Association of Public Service Delivery Entities was signed during the UN Public Service Forum in Baku in June 2019. The document was signed by representatives of Azerbaijan, Turkey, Morocco, Montenegro, Indonesia, Afghanistan, Uganda, and the United Arab Emirates. The aim of ASAN International Association is to establish unique cooperation in

the provision of public services between partners, create an institutional network of experts and specialists to discuss current problems and important issues for effective management in the relevant field.

## CONCLUSION

Since the establishment of SAPSSI in 2012, the public service delivery sphere of Azerbaijan has undergone major improvements. Internationally recognised as one of the best practices in the public service delivery arena, one-stop-shop based "ASAN service" centres bring together entities to deliver services in a public-private partnership, keeping citizens' needs at the centre of attention. The service has proven itself through the increase of service satisfaction rates, the decrease of excess bureaucracy, reduction of corruption, etc. The smooth transition from one-stop-shop to non-stop-shop has also brought extra convenience for citizens, as digital services have become available one click away through electronic devices. Moreover, Azerbaijani government's special attention to innovations, start-ups and MSMEs have a significant impact on the development of the economy, the development of the private sector in Azerbaijan and increasing the employment rate and living standards of the citizens. The international

<sup>14</sup> "Promoting human rights and Sustainable Development Goals through transparent, accountable and efficient public services delivery".

experience of SAPSSI shows the adaptability of the Azerbaijani models of service delivery in foreign countries as well.

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