

UDC: 330.1**DOI:** 10.5281/zenodo.15379751**OPEN GOVERNANCE AS A FACTOR OF DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT:
INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND UKRAINIAN PROSPECTS****Veronika Oleshchenko**

Candidate of Sciences in Public Administration, Associate Professor of the
Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Management,
Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University
ORCID: 0000-0002-1490-8875

Oksana Marukhlenko

Doctor of Science in Public Administration, Head of the Department of Management,
Faculty of Economics and Management,
Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University
ORCID: 0000-0001-8050-6615

Valentyna Rudenko

PhD in Economics, Associate Professor of the Department of Management
Faculty of Economics and Management,
Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University
ORCID: 0000-0001-9867-5951

Alla Panchenko

Candidate of Sciences in Public Administration, Associate Professor of the
Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Management,
Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University
ORCID: 0000-0001-9968-4921

Abstract. The article examines open government as an important factor of democratic development in the context of transformation processes in Ukraine, especially in the context of European integration and digitalization of public administration. A comprehensive analysis of the international experience of introducing open government in the United States, Denmark and Estonia and its adaptation to Ukrainian realities is carried out. Particular attention is paid to Ukrainian practices within the framework of participation in the OGP Local initiative,

analysis of achievements and problematic aspects. It is found that the effective implementation of open government can increase public confidence in government institutions, promote the development of e-democracy and improve the quality of public administration. Priority areas for improving open governance mechanisms to ensure sustainable democratic development of Ukraine are identified.

The aim of the study is a comprehensive analysis of international experience in the implementation of open government policy, in particular in the United States, Denmark and Estonia, with the further study of Ukrainian practices, problems and achievements in this area. Particular attention is paid to local initiatives within the framework of community participation in the OGP local program, as well as to identify directions for improving the mechanisms of open governance at the national and regional levels.

Keywords: open government, transparency, e-democracy, public participation, digital tools, accountability, local self-government.

Introduction. In today's world, the efficiency of democratic states increasingly depends on the level of transparency of government activities, their accountability, and their ability to engage in open dialogue with citizens. That is why the concept of open governance, which involves institutionalizing transparency, citizen participation, and innovative digital practices, has become one of the main tools of democratic governance in the 21st century.

For Ukraine, which is on the path of profound political, economic and social transformation, the issue of building an effective, transparent and accountable governance model is of particular importance. The current challenge - the full-scale armed aggression of the occupying country - further strengthens the need to implement mechanisms that contribute to the resilience of state institutions, increase public trust in the government and optimize communication between the state and citizens.

In this regard, a scientific problem arises: how, based on the best international practices, to adapt and improve domestic governance mechanisms so that they meet the challenges of today and at the same time become effective tools for modernizing Ukrainian public administration.

Thus, the article aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of modern models of open governance in the world and to find the best ways to implement them in the Ukrainian context, taking into account both the national and local contexts.

Literature review. The theoretical and practical aspects of open government implementation were studied in the works of Silenko A.O. and Kruk N.V. [1], in

particular, the scientists analyzed the experience of the United States and the EU in the functioning of electronic platforms, open data and transparency. The publications of Chukut S.A. and Poliarna V.L. on the experience of Denmark [3] describe the practice of using digital identities, e-mail and open portals. Based on the results of UNDP reports on e-governance in Estonia [2], an integrated approach to building digital interaction between the state and citizens was analyzed. Official documents of the US government (e.g., the National Action Plan [10]) contain information on the organizational structures and regulatory framework for the functioning of Open Government. The data of the UN report (EGDI) [12] confirm the improvement of Ukraine's position in the global e-government rankings. An analysis of the reporting documentation and Action Plans of the Open Government Partnership projects [4-9] makes it possible to analyze the status of fulfillment of commitments under the Open Government Initiative and promising areas. However, the scientific literature has not yet systematically studied the local level of implementation of open government principles, the impact of digital inequality on access to services, the problems of motivating citizens to participate in governance, as well as the human resources and infrastructure challenges that have been exacerbated during the war.

Methodology. To achieve this goal, a number of methods of scientific knowledge were applied. The method of analysis and synthesis allowed to systematize the key theoretical approaches to the concept of open government. Comparative legal analysis was used to compare regulatory approaches in the USA, Denmark, Estonia and Ukraine. Content analysis covered the study of official documents, reports, strategies and open data portals. The systematic approach allowed to cover the phenomenon of open governance as a holistic management mechanism. Additionally, empirical data from international rankings, including the EGDI (E-Government Development Index) and information from the OGP local (open Government Partnership at the local level), were used.

The study examined in detail the effective models of open government in the United States (Platform Data.gov, Freedom of Information Act, Public consultation system), Denmark (Digital Denmark, NemID, MitID, Borger.dk), Estonia (e-Estonia, Mobile-ID, X-Road, I-voting). These models demonstrate a high level of integration of digital services into the daily functioning of the state and close interaction with citizens. In Ukraine, there has been a positive dynamics in the field of open governance in recent years: The portals “Action”, Prozorro, “Public Budget”, electronic petitions have been created and successfully functioning, as well as the Action Plan within the framework of the open Government Partnership for 2023-2025. Six Ukrainian communities participate in the OGP local initiative,

implementing e-democracy and open data tools. At the same time, the study revealed key problems: Low level of digital literacy among the population, limited protection of personal data, technical instability of digital infrastructure (especially in martial law), insufficient number of trained it personnel and low motivation of citizens to participate in management.

Main Part. In 2012, Ukraine joined the Open Government Partnership, a global initiative that aims to ensure transparency of government activities, citizen participation in decision-making, accountability of government agencies, and the introduction of innovative digital technologies in the interaction between citizens and the state. Many countries have already successfully implemented and continue to implement open government tools, ensuring interaction between the state and society.

In the modern world, the above principles of the Open Government Initiative are fundamental to the development of the democratic world. Implementation of these principles through viable tools will increase the degree of public trust in the government, reduce corruption and improve the level of public services. The study of the best international practices of implementing open government tools will contribute to the development of effective mechanisms in Ukraine. Our study analyzed the open government practices of the United States and the European Union (Denmark and Estonia), which are ranked first according to the E-Government Development Index (EGDI) [12]. According to the aforementioned ranking, which reflects an assessment of the level of government openness, Ukraine ranks 30th in 2024, up from 46th in 2022. These indicators show that Ukraine is heading in the right direction in terms of implementing the concept of open government, so it is important to study promising practices and identify the range of problems that are obstacles in this direction for further development.

The implementation of the concept of open government in the United States has a long history, which dates back to 1995 with the introduction of electronic document management [1, p.77]. The Open Government Initiative with its fundamental principles was officially established in 2009. As of 2024, the U.S. government has developed a number of government initiatives and programs, among which it is worth mentioning: The National Open Government Action Plan [10], the creation of the Open Government Federal Advisory Committee [13], the creation of the Data.gov open data platform, the openPetition petition platform, and initiatives of various agencies such as USAID. The US open governance tools are quite simple and understandable for citizens, such as the announcement of events and discussions on policy development, in which citizens are invited to participate. In terms of ensuring the principle of transparency and accountability, this principle is legally enshrined in

the Freedom of Information Act, which establishes the right of citizens to request and receive federal documents. In addition, official documents and regulations are publicly available in the Federal Register (the official journal of the US Federal Government).

According to the latest data from the European Commission, 80.8% of citizens and 89% of businesses in Denmark interact with government agencies through Internet portals [3, p.144]. Among the open governance tools introduced by Denmark are: the introduction of the national strategy “Digital Denmark”, digital signature (NemID, MitID), with the help of which citizens can carry out financial transactions and legally significant actions, a single portal of public services (Borger.dk), the rejection of paper correspondence and the creation of a nationwide e-mail system (Digital Post), and a healthcare portal (Sundhed.dk). Access to public information is ensured by the Law on Access to Public Administrative Information and a number of public open portals with public information.

Among the digital tools of Estonia's open government are: the e-Estonia program, which provides access to electronic public services for all citizens, the electronic identification system for citizens that provides access to public services (ID-card, Mobile-ID), the data exchange platform between public and private institutions (X-Road), the official state portal with various electronic services (Eesti.ee), and the electronic voting system (I-Voting) [2]. These digital tools provide full access to information, ensuring transparency and accountability of public authorities.

Among the achievements of open government to date in these participating cities are the following:

1. Vinnytsia: In 2020, Vinnytsia was ranked among the five most transparent cities in Ukraine by Transparency International. The city is actively implementing open government practices, in particular through a CSO support program, budgets for community and school initiatives, a competition for environmental projects, and the creation of a content hub for cross-sectoral dialogue. In 2020-2021, a memorandum was signed and the Strategy for Partnership with Civil Society was approved, which enshrines joint planning and implementation of initiatives. All these measures are aimed at increasing transparency, participation, and cooperation in city governance [8].

2. Ternopil: The Ternopil City Council is actively implementing e-governance tools, including an electronic document management system, the Ternopil Citizen's Office, an open data portal, an electronic ticket, a video surveillance system, and e-democracy services. The city has been repeatedly recognized for its digital

transformation: wins in the Open Data City Award, the City Transparency Ranking, the Ministry of Digital Transformation's distinction, and awards at the Kyiv Smart City Forum. Ternopil is consistently ranked among the leaders in e-democracy and innovation in municipal governance [7].

3. Khmelnytskyi: Khmelnytskyi is one of the leaders in government openness and e-democracy implementation. The city has tools for electronic appeals, petitions, participatory budgeting, and the MyCity web portal. A geographic information system and a geoportal of the urban planning cadastre were introduced as part of the USAID project. To further develop digital services, the Digital Development Program for 2021-2025 was approved [4].

4. Kyiv: Key achievements: Creation of open data panels on the official website of the KCSA, Creation of the Vcentri HUB network of open public spaces; and creation of the Register of Civil Society Institutions platform, Implementation of digital tools such as electronic petitions and online surveys in the Kyiv Digital application [5].

5. Orzhytsia: The Orzhytsia community actively uses public consultations on local issues, including starostas, street renaming, and school optimization. A strategic session was held to develop the Community Development Strategy until 2027. Social and environmental projects are being implemented in partnership with CSOs and international organizations. The community is also participating in a pilot project of the Ministry of Social Policy to support veterans, IDPs, and volunteering [6].

6. Zvyagel: The Zvyagel community has approved a Development Strategy for 2024-2030, developed jointly with residents, businesses, CSOs, and with the support of the Council of Europe. A Monitoring Committee was established to implement it. A Citizens' Assembly was held on the topic of creating public spaces, which became the basis for the Open Government Action Plan. As a result, the creation of eight initiative groups and a public organization was initiated to further implement open government [9].

The participation of Ukrainian cities in the open government initiative demonstrates the gradual transformation of local government towards transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement. Each community - from megacities to rural communities - is implementing unique tools for e-democracy, strategic planning, and partnership with the public. The successful practices of Vinnytsia, Ternopil, Khmelnytskyi, Kyiv, Orzhytsia, and Zvyagel demonstrate the high potential for open governance as a tool for building trust in government, improving governance efficiency, and sustainable development of territories.

Having studied the experience of the United States, Denmark and Estonia in implementing open governance tools, the following tools can be borrowed for implementation in Ukraine:

1. US experience: a) Public online tracking of the legislative process (e.g., GovTrack.us). Ukraine has a VRU portal, but it is not interactive and does not allow subscription to draft laws or notifications of changes. The introduction of such a tool that would allow citizens to track the status of any bill (who submitted it, how MPs voted, what amendments were made) would strengthen the political responsibility of MPs and increase the accountability of the parliament; b) Regulations.gov - a platform for commenting on draft government decisions, where citizens can directly comment on draft regulations, and authorities are obliged to respond publicly.

2. Denmark's experience: a) Unified digital identification system for life, which is used for all public services, banking, e-commerce, education, healthcare, etc. Ukraine has "Diia.Signature", but integration with banks, hospitals, educational institutions is still limited; b) Portal of public statistics on processing requests for public information (similar to Offentlighedsportalen).

3. Experience of Estonia: a) electronic voting in elections (in Estonia since 2005); b) Interagency data exchange platform (for example, X-Road), which unites various registers (banks, taxes, police).

Conclusions. As already noted above, Ukraine demonstrates positive results in the implementation of open government tools. The list of such tools includes: the Action Plan for 2023–2025 within the framework of the Open Government Partnership Initiative, the Action portal with expanded functionalities for receiving electronic government services, the ability to sign and submit electronic petitions on the website of the official online representation of the President of Ukraine, the Prozorro electronic public procurement system, the Public Budget e-democracy platform, the official platform for electronic consultations - Public Consultations.

But, despite the positive dynamics, there are a number of problems in the implementation of open government in Ukraine. In our opinion, the list of problems and further future scientific research should include: digital and cognitive inequality (level of digital literacy), which significantly affects the quantitative and qualitative indicators of the use of electronic government services and the level of awareness of citizens; insufficient level of personal data protection; reliability and stability of the functioning of digital infrastructure in war conditions; personnel shortage of IT specialists; low level of motivation of citizens to participate in public affairs.

In our opinion, solving these problems will strengthen the process of implementing tools and principles of open governance, activate the number of

citizens (especially young people) in the processes of state formation, reduce the negative aspects of public policy (bureaucracy, corruption, bribery, nepotism), increase citizens' trust in the state, and improve the quality of public services.

Discussion. Improving the efficiency of the implementation of the concept of open governance in Ukraine requires a comprehensive approach. Priority areas include: Activation of digital education of the population, in particular through integration into the system of formal and informal education; strengthening of information campaigns promoting open services; improvement of regulatory and legal mechanisms for personal data protection; Development of the personnel potential of the authorities in the it sector; support for public initiatives that promote youth participation in decision-making processes. These steps can be the key to increasing citizens' confidence in the state and ensuring a qualitative transformation of public administration based on the principles of openness and accountability.

References

1. Silenko A.O., Kruk N.V. (2020) Vidkrytyi uriad: dosvid Spoluchenykh Shtativ Ameryky ta yevropeiskykh krain [Open government: the experience of the United States of America and the European region]. Aktualni problemy polityky - Current Policy Issues. Vol. 65. P. 76–82. [in Ukraine]
2. Uspikhy Elektronnoho Vriaduvannia: Dosvid Estonii Dlia Ukrainy [E-Governance Successes: Estonia's Experience For Ukraine]. PROON v Ukraini. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/uk/ukraine/press-releases/uspikhy-elektronnoho-vriaduvannia-dosvid-estoniya-dlya-ukrayiny> (accessed March, 17 2025)
3. Chukut S.A., Poliarna V.L. (2016) Krashchi yevropeiski praktyky vprovadzhennia elektronnoho uriaduvannia: dosvid Danii [Best European Practices of E-Government Implementation: Danish Experience]. Investytsii: praktyka ta dosvid - Investments: practice and experience. № 24. P. 140–145. [in Ukraine]
4. Action plan – Khmelnytskyi, Ukraine, 2021 – 2025. Available at: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/action-plan-khmelnytskyi-ukraine-2021-2025/> (accessed March, 17 2025)

5. Action plan – Kyiv, Ukraine, 2025 – 2026. Available at: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/action-plan-kyiv-ukraine-2025-2026/> (accessed March, 17 2025)
6. Action plan – Orzhytsia, Ukraine, 2025 – 2026. Available at: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/action-plan-orzhytsia-ukraine-2025-2026/> (accessed March, 17 2025)
7. Action plan – Ternopil, Ukraine, 2021 – 2023. Available at: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/action-plan-ternopil-ukraine-2021-2025/> (accessed March, 17 2025)
8. Action plan – Vinnytsia, Ukraine, 2021 – 2025. Available at: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/action-plan-vinnytsia-ukraine-2021-2025/> (accessed March, 17 2025)
9. Action plan – Zviahel, Ukraine, 2025 – 2026. Available at: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/action-plan-zviahel-ukraine-2025-2026/> (accessed March, 17 2025)
10. Fifth U.S. Open Government National Action Plan. Available at: <https://www.gsa.gov/governmentwide-initiatives/us-open-government/resources/fifth-us-open-government-national-action-plan> (accessed March, 17 2025)
11. Open Government Partnership. Available at: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/members/ukraine/> (accessed March, 17 2025)
12. UN E-Government Survey 2024. Available at: <https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/en-us/Reports/UN-E-Government-Survey-2024>. (accessed March, 17 2025)
13. U.S. General Services Administration. Available at: <https://www.gsa.gov/> (accessed March, 17 2025)