



SOME ISSUES OF IMPROVING ARCHIVAL MANAGEMENT

Mirzaev Islomjon Khushnazar ugli

*teacher of the Pedagogical center of the Training Institute for Lawyers
under the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan*

islomjon@blglawfirm.net

In accordance with the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 171 dated March 19, 2025 “On measures for organizing the activities of the Institute for retraining and advanced training of legal personnel under the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan”, one of the main tasks of the Institute is to develop scientifically based proposals for the scientific, methodological and consultative support of the activities of justice bodies and institutions, the provision of legal services, forensic examination, archival work and office work sphere, as well as to further improve them by analyzing their areas of activity.


For this purpose, it is determined that the Institute will carry out work on developing proposals and relevant scientific and methodological manuals to improve the effectiveness of the activities of justice bodies and institutions, in particular, the field of archival work.

This thesis discusses some issues of improving the management of the archival sector in Uzbekistan and initial proposals will be put forward.

It is difficult to imagine the stages of human civilization’s development without taking into account economic, social, political, and legal relations, as well as the documents related to them. Since the advent of writing, which has existed for more than five thousand years, the practice of documentation has continuously developed. The document collections that have emerged in different regions of the world serve as an important resource for reconstructing the past and presenting it with richer content. In this regard, archival funds are an invaluable treasure that embodies the history, culture, and identity of any state.

The archival sphere of Uzbekistan has undergone significant reforms during the years of independence. However, bringing the sector in line with modern requirements remains one of the priorities of state policy. The main purpose of this report is to systematically analyze the management system of Uzbekistan’s archival sphere, study its historical development, examine its current legal and organizational foundations, identify existing problems and shortcomings, and develop scientific solutions and specific proposals based on international experience.

Archival work is not a product of the modern era; its roots go back to ancient times. The formation of archives began in the early stages of human history. The territory of Central Asia entered the process of state formation as early as the first quarter of the 1st millennium BC — during the Early Iron Age. Historical sources provide information about state associations such as Khwarazm, Sogdiana, Margiana (Mauri), Bactria (Bakhdi), Seistan



(Sakastana), and Arachosia (Kharkhusa), which give insight into political structures dating back to the 7th–6th centuries BC.

The history of archiving in the territory of Uzbekistan goes back to the distant past. With the emergence of the earliest states and the invention of writing, the practice of preserving documents was established. The khanates of Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand maintained special archives for storing state documents, which shows that archives were an integral part of public administration and the management of state affairs.

During the rule of Tsarist Russia (1865–1917), archival activities in Central Asia were disrupted. In particular, many archival documents relating to the Khiva and Kokand khanates were taken to Russia, which caused serious damage to Uzbekistan's historical heritage. Although some materials were returned to Tashkent after the 1960s, this situation demonstrates that the Uzbek archival system was once under external control and domination, which negatively affected the independent development of the national school of archivistics.

In the Soviet era (1917–1991), a centralized archival system was established. On May 20, 1931, the Central Department of Archival Work was created by the Central Executive Committee of the Uzbek SSR, within which the Central State Archive and the Archive of the October Revolution were formed. Although this period focused on strengthening the material and technical base of archives and developing human resources, archives largely remained under party and state control.

The years of independence ushered in a new era for the archival sphere of Uzbekistan. The adoption of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Archives” on April 15, 1999, strengthened the legal foundation of the sector. Later, Cabinet Resolution No. 101 of April 5, 2012, represented an important step toward improving archival work by establishing procedures for the collection, registration, storage, and use of archival documents.

The Presidential Resolution No. PQ-4463 of September 20, 2019, served as a programmatic foundation for the fundamental reform of the archival system. Under this resolution, the “Uzarchiv” Agency was established and entrusted with important tasks such as digitization, the development of electronic archives, and the reduction of service delivery times. The resolution also envisaged transferring the system from central management under the Cabinet of Ministers to the structure of the Ministry of Justice, which signified a serious approach aimed at strengthening the legal and regulatory foundations of the sector.

Furthermore, on the basis of the Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the National Archive of Uzbekistan was established; the Central State Archive of Kinofotofono Documents was reorganized into the National Archive of Kinofotofono Documents of Uzbekistan; the Central State Archive of Scientific-Technical and Medical Documents was transformed into the National Archive of Scientific-Technical and Medical Documents of Uzbekistan; and the Tashkent City State Archive was restructured as the Tashkent City Central State Archive.



The current state of the archival sector is directly connected with its historical stages of development. The existence of archives during the khanate period, their removal during the colonial era, and the creation of a centralized but ideologically controlled system during the Soviet period constitute the roots of many of today's problems. The 2019 resolution marked a strategic turning point for Uzbekistan's archival sector, as it introduced modernization and digitization into the system.

Legal and organizational foundations of archival management

The current legislation regulating the archival sphere of the Republic of Uzbekistan has been shaped through consistent and gradual reforms. The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Archives" serves as the main legal framework governing this sphere. It sets out the rules for the ownership, preservation, collection, registration, and use of documents, thereby consolidating the fundamental principles of archival work.

The implementation of this Law has been ensured and improved through Presidential decrees and Cabinet resolutions. In particular, the Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 101 of April 5, 2012, approved several regulations for the implementation of the Law "On Archives," including the procedure for forming the state catalog of the National Archival Fund. The Presidential Resolution No. PQ-4463 of September 20, 2019, established the "Uzarchiv" Agency and assigned it a number of important tasks, including the requirement that, starting from January 1, 2020, documents submitted to archives must include electronic and insurance copies. This step was fundamental in ensuring the integrity of archival collections and their preservation for future generations.

The "Uzarchiv" Agency operates under the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan as a state governing body. Its structure includes three national archives, 14 regional departments, 101 state archives, and 120 personnel record archives. Within the central office of the Agency, departments for organizational and methodological work, information technologies, electronic archives, and records management are functioning. In addition, under the 2019 resolution, new institutions such as the Scientific-Methodological Center for Professional Development in Archival Work and Records Management, and the Fund for the Development of Archival Work were created. These structures aim to strengthen legal oversight and transparency in the field. The legal expertise of the Ministry of Justice contributes to reinforcing the regulatory foundations of archival work.

The National Archival Fund is compiled in accordance with legislative acts, and its integrity is preserved. In addition to the state-owned part, this fund also includes non-state and personal archives. Archival reforms have been carried out not all at once, but gradually and systematically. First, the main law was adopted in 1999; later, by the new Law, by the 2012 resolution, subordinate legal acts were approved; and finally, with the Presidential Resolution of 2019, comprehensive reforms were initiated. This demonstrates the state's long-term strategy aimed at the development of the sector.





Problems and Shortcomings

Despite the strengthening of the legal framework in the field of archival work in Uzbekistan, a number of systemic problems and shortcomings are observed in practice. Some of these are related to material and technical resources as well as infrastructure. Archival buildings and storage facilities are outdated, lacking modern conditions and sufficient space for document preservation. Modern technical equipment for digitization is insufficient, and the available equipment is outdated or malfunctioning. Moreover, there is a shortage of methodological guidelines and practical instructions necessary to facilitate the processes of preservation, protection, and utilization of documents.

Issues related to human resources are also among the most pressing problems. The archival system faces a significant shortage of qualified specialists. One of the main reasons for this is the low salaries of archival employees and the insufficient level of their social protection. Another critical issue is the lack of higher education programs specializing in archival studies, which means there is no dedicated system for training professionals in this field. Consequently, opportunities for internships abroad and professional development courses for archivists remain limited.

These problems are closely interconnected. For instance, the shortage of qualified specialists is directly linked to low salaries and the absence of specialized professional education. In turn, this situation slows down technological processes such as digitization and hinders the development of methodological guidelines.

Systemic challenges also exist in the digitalization and preservation of documents. The process of converting records into electronic form has been progressing slowly. Although specialized software programs have been developed, methodological guidelines and practical measures are still required to accelerate the process. The electronic records storage system has not been sufficiently developed, which creates serious obstacles in ensuring long-term preservation of digital documents. Despite the Presidential decree outlining advanced ideas and concrete objectives—such as digitalization, establishing a unified system, and creating new centers—serious difficulties remain in implementing these goals in practice. This demonstrates that establishing a legal framework alone is not sufficient; adequate financial, technical, and human resources must be ensured to implement it effectively.

Moreover, although proposals to create a unified “Archival Affairs” information system exist, its full implementation has not yet been completed. Another problem is the lack of a unified network connection between archives, which further complicates the process.

Analysis of foreign experience in archival management

The experience of developed countries in managing archival affairs can serve as an important benchmark for Uzbekistan. For instance, the United States National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) operates under the Federal Records Act, which establishes a unified records management system for federal agencies. NARA is responsible for appraising the value of records, determining retention periods, and ensuring the permanent



preservation of documents. It functions as a centralized system, managing the records of all federal agencies.

The National Archives of the United Kingdom (TNA) seeks to transform itself into a “digital archive by instinct and by design.” TNA places great emphasis on preserving digital documents, shaping digitalization policies, and developing technical standards. They require compliance with specific technical standards in digitalization—such as 300 PPI resolution, and the use of JPEG2000 or TIFF formats—to ensure the quality and integrity of documents. In addition, they recommend using tools like DROID to verify the integrity of digital records.

The German Federal Archives (Bundesarchiv), which reports directly to the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and Media, represents a high-ranking federal institution. In 2019, it established a dedicated Information Technology (IT) department to address the needs arising from digital transformation. This division focuses on planning and developing archival information technologies and creating digital archives.

International experience shows that modern archival practice requires a shift from merely storing documents to managing digital assets. While Uzbekistan has already initiated this process, the example of the United Kingdom demonstrates the importance of introducing clear technical standards (such as resolution and formats) for digitalization. These measures are crucial to ensure the quality and long-term preservation of digital copies in Uzbekistan’s archives. Furthermore, the status of archives in Germany and the United States—as high-level federal institutions under cultural or administrative bodies—illustrates the recognition of archival affairs as an essential element of state policy, ensuring their independent and effective functioning.


Scientific solutions and recommendations for improving the archival sector

To further develop Uzbekistan’s archival sector, it is essential to address existing shortcomings and implement a set of scientific solutions and concrete recommendations based on international best practices.

First and foremost, it is necessary to develop by-laws that establish mandatory technical standards for the digitalization and electronic storage of records. Drawing on the experience of the UK National Archives (TNA), these standards should clearly define the minimum resolution of digital copies (e.g., 300 PPI for standard documents), file formats (JPEG2000, TIFF), and metadata requirements. This will guarantee both the quality and long-term preservation of digital collections. In addition, it would be advisable to legally define the status of a unified information system, such as the “National Archival Fund Electronic System.”

Following the model of the German Federal Archives (Bundesarchiv), it is recommended to expand and strengthen the powers of a dedicated “Digital Archives and Information Technologies” department within the “Uzarchiv” agency. The responsibilities of this department should not be limited to implementing digitalization but also include planning and developing archival information technologies and introducing electronic document





storage systems. Furthermore, strengthening anti-corruption mechanisms—beyond hotlines, by introducing systematic monitoring tools—will contribute to increasing transparency in management.

It is advisable to make the use of tools such as DROID, as practiced in the UK, mandatory in the digitalization process. Such tools enable the verification of file integrity (checksums) and format compliance. A phased approach to digitalization—starting with the most important and unique archival collections—can significantly improve efficiency. Accelerating the development of a unified “Archival Affairs” information system and connecting all archives to it will broaden access to archival collections and simplify their management.

Reintroducing undergraduate and graduate programs in “Archival Studies” at higher education institutions is a fundamental step to addressing the shortage of qualified specialists. Establishing regular short-term internships for archival staff in collaboration with partners such as South Korea (KOICA), as well as other developed countries (the US, UK, Germany), will enable Uzbekistan to adopt best practices. At the same time, increasing the salaries and strengthening the social protection of archival employees will enhance their professional commitment and motivation to remain in the sector.

Conclusion

An analysis of archival management in Uzbekistan demonstrates that the sector has undergone important stages in its historical development. While a solid legal and institutional foundation for improvement has been established, serious problems remain in areas such as infrastructure, human resources, and digitalization. These challenges are deeply interlinked. International experience highlights the priority of digital transformation, the adoption of clear technical standards, and the training of professional specialists.

The recommendations presented in this report—particularly the reintroduction of archival studies programs, the establishment of precise digitalization standards, the optimization of organizational structures, and the expansion of international cooperation—will contribute to raising Uzbekistan’s archival sector to global standards. A phased implementation of these solutions will ensure the integrity of archival collections, facilitate their effective use, and preserve the nation’s historical heritage for future generations. Future research should focus on mechanisms for practical implementation, the identification of financial resources, and the regulation of various archival systems (including private and non-state archives).

References

1. <https://archive.uz/>
2. Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan from 15.06.2010 y. № LRU-252 “On Archives”.



3. Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, from 20.09.2019 y. № RP-4463 “On the improvement of the activities of the “Uzarhiv” Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan”.

4. Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 171 dated March 19, 2025 “On measures for organizing the activities of the Institute for retraining and advanced training of legal personnel under the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan”.

5. Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. RP-3666 dated April 13, 2018.

