

Regulatory Activities of Ministries Of The Republic Of Karakalpakstan: Limits, Procedures, And Legal Consequences

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Received: 30 October 2025; **Accepted:** 18 December 2025; **Published:** 30 December 2025

Abstract: This article presents a comprehensive theoretical and legal analysis of the regulatory activities of the ministries of the Republic of Karakalpakstan as the main link in the system of executive authorities of the sovereign republic within the Republic of Uzbekistan. The study covers the legal status of departmental acts, procedural aspects of their development, coordination, and state registration, as well as mechanisms for resolving conflicts in the context of the dualistic nature of the region's executive power. Particular attention is paid to the impact of the 2022–2023 administrative reform and the digitization of the rule-making process (E-qaror system, Project.gov.uz) on the competence of republican departments. Based on a comparative analysis of the legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Karakalpakstan, gaps in legal regulation have been identified and scientifically based recommendations have been proposed to improve the mechanism of departmental rule-making in order to ensure a unified legal space and protect the rights of citizens.

Keywords: Rulemaking, departmental regulatory acts, Republic of Karakalpakstan, ministries, executive power, state registration, Ministry of Justice, administrative reform, legal status, competence.

Introduction: The modern architecture of public administration in the context of globalization and digital transformation requires clear and consistent legal regulation at all levels of government. Human activity in the field of public administration is so multifaceted that it is impossible to imagine an effective state without detailed regulation of decision-making procedures delegated to executive bodies. The intensity of legal document creation directly depends on the level of social development and the complexity of economic and cultural relations in the region [1]. In the Republic of Uzbekistan, and in particular in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, this process is of particular importance in the context of large-scale administrative reforms aimed at reducing bureaucracy, decentralization, and the introduction of advanced information and communication technologies into the activities of the state apparatus.

The institution of departmental rule-making is a set of legal and technical procedures through which ministries, acting within the scope of their delegated powers, issue acts that are binding on a specific group

of persons. In the context of the Republic of Karakalpakstan — a unique constitutional and legal entity with the status of a sovereign republic within Uzbekistan [2] — the activities of ministries take on a specific character. The ministries of Karakalpakstan operate under dual subordination: on the one hand, they are accountable to the Council of Ministers and the Zhokargy Kenes of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, and on the other hand, they are vertically integrated into the system of relevant ministries of the Republic of Uzbekistan [4; 5].

This dualistic nature raises a number of theoretical and practical questions concerning the limits of regulatory authority. What is the relationship between the legal force of acts adopted by the ministry in Nukus and orders issued by the higher-level ministry in Tashkent? How is the unity of the legal space ensured in the presence of two levels of legislation? What are the legal consequences of non-compliance with the procedures for state registration of departmental acts with the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Karakalpakstan?

The relevance of the topic is due to the adoption of the

new version of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2023, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Regulatory Legal Acts" [6] dated April 20, 2021, No. LRU-682, and the Law of the Republic of Karakalpakstan "On Regulatory Legal Acts" [8] dated November 30, 2021, No. 178/XXIII. These documents laid a new foundation for the hierarchy of legal acts, but their application in the context of the administrative reform initiated by Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. DP-269 [10] requires in-depth scientific analysis.

Theoretical and methodological foundations of departmental rule-making: the concept and legal nature of ministerial competence. In scientific literature and civil law doctrine, various approaches have been developed to understanding the essence of authority and representation, which can be extrapolated to the sphere of public law. As D. Korotkov notes, representation relations are of an organizational and informational nature, within which the subject determines the performance of legal actions [1]. As applied to the activities of ministries, authority/competence can be viewed not simply as the subjective right of an authority, but as its imperative duty to the state and society to regulate a certain segment of public relations.

The term "competence" in administrative law is often interpreted through the category of "authority", which provides the ability to issue administrative acts. In accordance with the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Regulatory Legal Acts", ministries, state committees, and agencies adopt regulatory legal acts in the form of orders and resolutions within the limits of their powers [6]. It is important to emphasize that this competence is derivative: it arises only on the basis of powers expressly granted by legislative acts, decrees and resolutions of the President, as well as resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers.

The legal status of the ministries of the Republic of Karakalpakstan is characterized by a complex structure. They are not simply territorial divisions of central authorities, but independent legal entities under public law, established on the basis of Karakalpakstan legislation. Their regulatory activity is a form of executive power aimed at detailing and implementing laws, taking into account the regional specifics of the Aral Sea region.

Classification of departmental acts. In legal theory and legislation [6], the following types of ministerial acts are distinguished:

1. Orders (Buyruq). Issued by heads of ministries on the basis of the principle of sole authority. As a rule, they regulate issues that fall within the exclusive

competence of the minister.

2. Resolutions (Qaror). Adopted by collegial bodies (if such bodies exist within the structure, for example, in state committees or agencies with ministerial status). In the context of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, where most departments operate on the basis of a single-headed system, the main form is an order.

A regulatory act of a ministry must have the following characteristics that distinguish it from acts of individual application:

normativity (intended for an indefinite circle of persons);

repeated application;

mandatory enforcement;

the existence of a mechanism of state coercion in case of non-compliance [6].

Limits of the rule-making activities of ministries. The question of the limits of rule-making is key to ensuring the principle of separation of powers and preventing the usurpation of legislative functions by executive bodies. For the ministries of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, these limits are defined by two contours: the national legislation of Uzbekistan and the regional legislation of Karakalpakstan.

Subject competence and prohibitions. According to Article 12 of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Regulatory Legal Acts", subordinate acts may not establish norms on issues that are subject to regulation exclusively at the level of legislative acts [6]. This means that the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, for example, does not have the right to introduce new taxes or fees by its order, as this is the prerogative of the Tax Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan and laws adopted by the Oliy Majlis and the Zhogarky Kenes.

An analysis of current practices shows that Karakalpakstan ministries most often engage in rule-making in the following areas:

Social protection. Implementation of support programs for the population in the ecological disaster zone of the Aral Sea region (distribution of benefits and quotas).

Agriculture. Regulation of water use (water limits), veterinary and phytosanitary rules that take into account local specifics (e.g., rice cultivation).

Education and culture. Approval of curricula with a regional component (study of the Karakalpak language and literature).

However, there is a strict prohibition on adopting acts that:

1. Restrict the constitutional rights and freedoms of

citizens.

2. Establish criminal or administrative liability.
3. Introduce licensing procedures (licenses) not provided for by the Law “On Licensing, Permitting, and Notification Procedures”.

Territorial limits and jurisdiction. The spatial scope of a regulatory legal act is determined by the jurisdiction of the authority that adopted it [6]. Acts of the ministries of the Republic of Karakalpakstan have legal force exclusively on the territory of the Republic of Karakalpakstan. This distinguishes them from acts of the ministries of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which are binding throughout the country, including Karakalpakstan [2].

This raises an interesting theoretical aspect of “secondary rights” mentioned in civil law [1], which in public law is transformed into the right of a regional authority to specify a general norm. By adopting an act in implementation of an act of the Ministry of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Ministry of the Republic of Karakalpakstan does not create a new primary norm, but rather forms a “secondary” implementation mechanism adapted to local conditions.

Procedural aspects of adopting departmental acts. The procedure for adopting regulatory legal acts by ministries is regulated in detail and has undergone revolutionary changes since 2020 thanks to digitalization (see Table 1). An analysis of the Law “On Regulatory Acts” [6] and the practice of implementing the project.gov.uz system allows us to identify the following stages.

Stage 1: Initiation and planning. Project development begins with its inclusion in the ministry’s regulatory work plan or on the instructions of higher authorities (the President, the Cabinet of Ministers, the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan). An important innovation was the mandatory regulatory impact assessment (RIA) for projects affecting entrepreneurial activity. The regulation.gov.uz portal is used for public discussion of projects, which increases the transparency of the process [13].

Stage 2: Development and approval (digital format). Traditional paper-based document flow has been almost completely replaced by the Unified Electronic System for the Development and Approval of Draft Regulatory Acts (Project.gov.uz) [13]. For the ministries of Karakalpakstan, this has two implications:

1. Acceleration of processes. Coordination with other agencies within the region takes place in real time.
2. Vertical transparency. Central ministries in Tashkent

have the technical capability to monitor the regulatory activity of their subordinate structures in Nukus, ensuring preventive control.

Stage 3: Legal review. The draft act is subject to mandatory legal review by the ministry’s own legal service and is then sent to the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Karakalpakstan [14].

According to the Regulations on the Ministry of Justice [14], the judicial authorities conduct an examination to determine:

compliance with the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Karakalpakstan;

the absence of provisions that create conditions for corruption;

compliance with the rules of legal technique.

The Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Karakalpakstan acts as a “filter”, preventing poor-quality or illegal acts from entering the legal field.

Stage 4: State registration. This is perhaps the most critical stage, determining the legal fate of the document. According to Article 37 of the Law “On Regulatory Legal Acts” [18], ministries and departments are required to submit the adopted act for state registration within 10 days.

Legal consequences of non-registration:

the act does not enter into force;

the act has no legal consequences;

the act cannot be referred to in the resolution of disputes;

officials guilty of putting an unregistered act into effect bear administrative responsibility [6].

In Karakalpakstan, the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Karakalpakstan is responsible for the state registration of acts of republican ministries. At the same time, a State Register of departmental regulatory legal acts is maintained.

Stage 5: Official publication. Official publication is a constitutional requirement (Article 38 of the Law [6]). No one may be convicted or punished on the basis of an unpublished law. For acts of the ministries of Karakalpakstan, the official sources are:

The National Database of Legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Lex.uz) [13].

Official print publications (“Еркин Қарақалпақстан” (Free Karakalpakstan), “Вести Каракалпақстана” (News of Karakalpakstan)).

Official websites of government agencies.

Table 1. Comparative analysis of rule-making procedures

Stage of the procedure	Ministries of the Republic of Uzbekistan	Ministries of the Republic of Karakalpakstan
Initiator	Structural divisions of the Central Administration of the Ministry	Structural divisions of the Ministry of the Republic of Karakalpakstan
Development platform	Project.gov.uz	Project.gov.uz / E-qaror (for collegial decisions)
Agreement	With the ministries of the Republic of Uzbekistan	With the ministries of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and the relevant ministry of the Republic of Uzbekistan
Registering body	Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan	Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Karakalpakstan
Official language	State (Uzbek)	State (Uzbek) and Karakalpak
Territorial application	The entire territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan	Territory of the Republic of Karakalpakstan

Legal status and relationship with the acts of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The issue of hierarchy and conflicts is central to the legal status of the ministries of Karakalpakstan. It stems from the unitary nature of Uzbekistan in the presence of the constitutional autonomy of Karakalpakstan.

The principle of the supremacy of the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Article 15 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Law "On Normative Legal Acts" enshrine the absolute supremacy of the Constitution and laws of Uzbekistan [2]. This means that any act adopted by the Ministry of Karakalpakstan must not contradict not only the laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan, but also the acts of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The issue of the relationship between an act of the Uzbek ministry (e.g., an order of the Uzbek Minister of Higher Education) and an act of the corresponding Karakalpak ministry is more complex. Due to the principle of vertical subordination and unified state policy, acts of republican (Tashkent) ministries adopted within their powers are binding on the ministries of Karakalpakstan.

However, if the issue falls within the exclusive competence of Karakalpakstan (in accordance with the Constitution of Karakalpakstan and the division of powers), the ministry of Karakalpakstan has priority in regulation. In practice, there are few such areas, as most issues are unified.

Conflicts and their resolution. In the event of a conflict between acts, the hierarchy rule applies:

1. An act of a higher authority (Ministry of the Republic

of Uzbekistan) takes precedence over an act of a lower authority (Ministry of the Republic of Karakalpakstan) in matters of joint jurisdiction.

2. If a conflict arises between a law of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and an act of the Ministry of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the issue shall be resolved through the prism of the compliance of the law of the Republic of Karakalpakstan with the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The Constitutional Oversight Committee of the Republic of Karakalpakstan [3] monitors the compliance of acts and has the right to issue opinions on their constitutionality. The prosecutor's office also exercises general oversight and has the right to protest against illegal departmental acts.

The 2023 administrative reform and its consequences. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. DP-269 of December 21, 2022, "On measures to implement the administrative reforms of New Uzbekistan" [10] was a turning point in the development of the executive branch.

The reform led to a reduction in the number of ministries and departments, their consolidation and optimisation. In Karakalpakstan, the structure of the Council of Ministers was brought into line with that of the republic. For example, the ministries of economy and finance were merged into a single Ministry of Economy and Finance of the Republic of Karakalpakstan [10].

Legal consequences of the reform for rulemaking:

1. Legal succession. According to Article 15 of the Law on Normative Legal Acts [6], when ministries are reorganized, the successor inherits the authority to

amend and repeal previously adopted acts. This required a large-scale inventory of the legal framework of Karakalpakstan (a “legal guillotine”) in order to repeal outdated acts of liquidated departments.

2. Centralization. The reform reinforced the trend toward unification. The new ministries were given clearly defined powers (“institutional independence” with strict vertical integration).

3. Political context. The reform took place against the backdrop of the events of July 2022 in Nukus [15]. Maintaining the status of ministries in Karakalpakstan (instead of downgrading them to departments) sent an important political and legal signal confirming the republic’s special status, despite the unification of functions.

Digitalisation as a tool for ensuring legality. The introduction of digital platforms has radically changed the landscape of departmental rule-making.

E-qaror (Electronic Decision). The system, originally developed for hokim decisions, is now being adapted for other levels of decision-making. It eliminates the possibility of “secret” or “retroactive” decisions [13].

Lex.uz. The national legislation database provides citizens with access to the texts of acts. Publication on Lex.uz is a condition for an act to enter into force. For the ministries of Karakalpakstan, this means the need to ensure high-quality translation of acts and their timely transfer to the database operator.

Digitalization reduces corruption risks and makes the decision-making process transparent. The system automatically blocks the registration of an act if the mandatory approval stages have not been completed or if there is no positive conclusion from the legal review.

Conclusion

The analysis allows us to conclude that the regulatory activity of the ministries of the Republic of Karakalpakstan is a complex and dynamically developing institution of administrative law. It is characterized by a combination of elements of

centralization (through the unified legal system of Uzbekistan and digital platforms) and regional autonomy (through specific competence and the status of a sovereign republic).

Key findings:

1. Legal force. Acts of the ministries of the Republic of Karakalpakstan are subordinate to the law and binding on the territory of Karakalpakstan, provided they are registered with the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Karakalpakstan (see Table 2).

2. Procedure. Strictly regulated by the Law “On Regulatory Legal Acts” and includes digital development, anti-corruption expertise, and registration. Failure to register renders the act null and void.

3. Trends. Administrative reform and digitalization are leading to the unification of the legal space, reducing opportunities for local “legal creativity” that contradicts the unified policy, but increasing the quality and legitimacy of decisions made.

Practical recommendations:

To further improve the legal status of ministries as the main link in the executive branch, it is necessary to:

Strengthen parliamentary control by the Zhogarky Kenes of the Republic of Karakalpakstan over the rule-making activities of ministries by introducing the practice of annual reports on the state of departmental legislation.

Develop methodological recommendations for resolving conflicts between the acts of the ministries of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Karakalpakstan in areas of joint jurisdiction, giving priority to the interests of the region’s population in matters of social protection and ecology.

Ensure the full integration of regional database segments into the Lex.uz system, with the mandatory translation of all acts into the state and Karakalpak languages to ensure the legal awareness of the population.

Table 2. Hierarchy of regulatory legal acts in the sphere of activity of ministries

Level	Type of act	Receiving authority	Legal force in Karakalpakstan
I	Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan	The people of Uzbekistan	Highest, direct action
II	Laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan / Constitution of the Republic of Karakalpakstan	Oliy Majlis / People of Karakalpakstan	Mandatory, rule of law of the Republic of Uzbekistan
III	Laws of the Republic of Karakalpakstan	Supreme Council of the Republic of Karakalpakstan	Mandatory in the territory of the Republic of Karakalpakstan

IV	Decrees of the President of Uzbekistan	President of Uzbekistan	Mandatory, direct action
V	Decrees of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan	Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan	Mandatory
VI	Acts of the Ministries of the Republic of Uzbekistan	Ministries of the Republic of Uzbekistan	Mandatory (within competence)
VII	Decrees of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan	Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan	Mandatory in the territory of the Republic of Karakalpakstan
VIII	Acts of the Ministries of the Republic of Karakalpakstan	Ministries of the Republic of Karakalpakstan	Mandatory (after state registration)

This hierarchy clearly demonstrates the place of acts of the ministries of Karakalpakstan in the legal system, emphasizing their subordinate and executive nature, aimed at implementing the norms of higher levels.

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