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Measuring corruption in the construction sector in Uzbekistan: exploring links and correlations between national assessment tools and statistical data

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Abstract

This article focuses on analyzing the relationship between national mechanisms for assessing the effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts and judicial-legal statistics on corruption-related offenses in the construction sector of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Amid the active implementation of such instruments as performance rating systems, the electronic register of corruption-prone relations, and the openness index, there arises a need to verify their effectiveness through comparison with current law enforcement data. The aim of the study is to identify the existence and nature of correlations between formalized indicators of anti-corruption activity and statistical indicators reflecting the number of criminal cases related to corruption in the construction sector, as recorded in judicial-legal statistics. The empirical basis of the study includes data from the Anti-Corruption Agency, the General Prosecutor's Office, the Supreme Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as provisions of national legislation and international methodological sources. Methodologically, the work relies on legal, comparative-analytical, and descriptive statistical methods with elements of content analysis. The results of the analysis do not confirm the existence



of a stable direct correlation between the increase in formalized assessment indicators and a decrease in the level of corruption in the construction sector. In some cases, a simultaneous improvement in formal indicators and an increase in the number of detected criminal cases, convicted individuals, and the total amount of damage is observed. This dynamic may reflect both the intensification of law enforcement and oversight activities, and the limitations of existing approaches to measuring anti-corruption effectiveness. It highlights the need for a comprehensive reassessment of the applied evaluation tools, taking into account their ability to adequately reflect real changes in the level of corruption, rather than solely institutional efforts to contain it. The study concludes that existing assessment models should be revised in favor of integrated solutions combining quantitative and qualitative indicators, with an emphasis on behavioral, institutional, and law enforcement aspects.

Keywords: anti-corruption activity, assessment mechanisms, measurement tools, offense statistics, openness index, performance rating, corruption risk register

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1. Introduction

Since gaining independence in 1991, the Republic of Uzbekistan has embarked on a phased construction of a sovereign democratic state aimed at eliminating the developmental obstacles inherited from the command-administrative management system and centralized planning, and at transitioning toward a full-fledged market economy. Reforms targeting sustainable economic growth, the strengthening of the rule of law, and the development of an entrepreneurial environment have been accompanied by the need to prevent and overcome corruption-related phenomena typical of the transitional period. The First President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, I.A. Karimov, emphasized that such large-scale transformations are inevitably associated with the intensification of negative phenomena, including corruption and crime, which must be addressed as one of the key priorities of state policy [1].

In this context, Uzbekistan has started implementing a comprehensive anti-corruption policy based on the principles of legality, the primacy of citizens' rights, freedoms, and legitimate interests, openness and transparency, systemic approach, cooperation between the state and civil society, the priority of preventive anti-corruption measures, and the inevitability of responsibility.

A significant body of normative legal acts – ranging from the Criminal Code¹ and the Code of Administrative Responsibility² adopted in 1995 to special laws regulating entrepreneurial activity, property issues, and the fight against money laundering – has been enacted not merely to expand legislation quantitatively, but to establish a stable legal and institutional foundation for reducing crime rates, minimizing corruption risks, and enhancing the effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts.

¹ Criminal Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan. URL: <https://lex.uz/docs/111457> (accessed 24.07.2025)

² Code of Administrative Responsibility of the Republic of Uzbekistan. URL: <https://lex.uz/docs/97661> (accessed 24.07.2025)

Key milestones in the development of the national anti-corruption system include the ratification of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (2008)³, accession to the Istanbul Anti-Corruption Action Plan of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2010), and the adoption of Comprehensive Anti-Corruption Action Plans (2015, 2016). These steps marked the beginning of a transition from fragmented and declarative measures to an institutionalized policy of preventing and combating corruption.

Thus, the ratification of the UN Convention laid the foundation for the harmonization of national legislation with international standards. Accession to the Istanbul Action Plan provided momentum for the evaluation of the national system by independent international experts, ensuring external audit and reform recommendations. As a result, in 2017, the Law “On Combating Corruption”⁴ was adopted, systematizing the approach to anti-corruption actors, principles, and mechanisms.

From that point onward, anti-corruption policy in Uzbekistan took on a systemic character: annual State Programs began to include specific objectives aimed at the digitalization of processes, the elimination of corruption-prone norms, the strengthening of public oversight, and the development of compliance mechanisms.

These changes are evidenced both normatively—through new laws and by-laws—and in law enforcement practice: an increase in the number of criminal cases under Articles 210–211 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan⁵, a greater volume of recovered damages, and improved performance in international indices and ratings.

The consistent implementation of digital platforms, information and communication technologies, and open data systems has significantly expanded the toolkit for preventing and combating corruption-related offenses. Unified public service centers have been established, and automated registries and digital control environments have been introduced in the areas of public procurement, urban planning, education, and social protection.

By Presidential Decree of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. UP-6013 dated June 29, 2020⁶ the Anti-Corruption Agency was established with the aim of institutionalizing anti-corruption policy. The Agency was entrusted with functions related to the coordination of preventive activities, monitoring, anti-corruption education, as well as the organizational and analytical support of the National Anti-Corruption Council, serving as its secretariat. Simultaneously, the coordination system for anti-corruption actors was reorganized: the Republican Interdepartmental Commission was transformed into the National Anti-Corruption Council of the Republic of Uzbekistan, with the establishment of Territorial Councils to ensure institutional connectivity between the central and regional levels.

The establishment of the Anti-Corruption Agency and the National Council with its Territorial Councils, as well as the introduction of performance ratings, the Register of Corruption-Prone Relations, and the Openness Index, reflect the institutional shifts initiated within the framework of fulfilling these international commitments.

³ Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the Accession of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (New York, 31 October 2003) No. ZRU-158 of 7 July 2008. URL: <https://lex.uz/docs/1369507> (accessed 24.07.2025)

⁴ Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Combating Corruption No. ZRU-419 of 3 January 2017. URL: <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/3088013> (accessed 24.07.2025)

⁵ Criminal Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan. URL: <https://lex.uz/docs/111457> (accessed 24.07.2025)

⁶ Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on additional measures to improve the anti-corruption system in the Republic of Uzbekistan No. UP-6013 of 29 June 2020. URL: <https://lex.uz/docs/4875786> (accessed 24.07.2025)

The distribution of competencies among the key actors is based on a functional principle. The National Anti-Corruption Council serves as the strategic coordinator of anti-corruption policy, defining priority areas and mechanisms for interagency cooperation. The Anti-Corruption Agency is responsible for implementing preventive measures, including anti-corruption monitoring, risk assessment, analysis of normative legal acts, and the development of public indices. The General Prosecutor's Office is tasked with criminal prosecution and procedural oversight of corruption-related offenses; it includes a specialized Department for Combating Economic Crimes and Countering the Legalization of Criminal Proceeds. The State Security Service is responsible for identifying and investigating corruption offenses of high public danger and systemic nature. The Ministry of Justice coordinates efforts to reduce the corruption risks of regulatory frameworks, including the conduct of anti-corruption legal reviews. The Ministry of Internal Affairs conducts pre-trial investigations into general corruption-related criminal offenses.

The state programs approved by Presidential Decrees of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. UP-6257 dated July 6, 2021⁷, and No. UP-200 dated November 27, 2023⁸, serve as the programmatic foundation for interagency coordination and the implementation of unified approaches to corruption prevention. These documents encompass a comprehensive set of regulatory, institutional, and educational measures aimed at developing anti-corruption standards, digitalizing public administration procedures, expanding mechanisms of public oversight, and fostering a culture of intolerance toward corruption in society.

In addition, the entry into force of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. ZRU-860 of August 8, 2023, "On Anti-Corruption Review of Normative Legal Acts and Their Drafts"⁹, and the Law No. ZRU-931 of June 5, 2024, "On Conflict of Interest"¹⁰, has expanded the mechanisms for identifying and eliminating corruption-inducing factors and regulating conflicts of interest in public service. Another significant step was the launch in 2019 of the "Corruption-Free Sphere" project in the fields of capital construction and higher education, which was later extended to other key sectors.

Thus, by now, the Republic of Uzbekistan has established a stable institutional and regulatory framework for combating corruption, encompassing specialized bodies, digital tools for assessment and prevention, as well as formalized monitoring procedures. At the same time, as the tasks of anti-corruption policy become more complex and public demand for measurable outcomes increases, the importance of scholarly analysis of the correlation between nationally applied assessment mechanisms and latest data from law enforcement practice is growing.

This study pays particular attention to the construction sector as one of the most vulnerable areas to corruption risks, characterized by the scale of budgetary investments, the multiplicity of regulatory bodies, and a high level of administrative discretion. Comparing the dynamics of formal indicators of anti-corruption activity with statistical data in the construction sector gives it a chance to identify the degree of their alignment or divergence, which, in turn, may indicate the potential and limitations of existing approaches to measuring the effectiveness of anti-corruption policy.

⁷ Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on measures to create an environment of intolerance towards corruption, radically reduce corruption factors in public administration, and ensure wide public participation in this process No. UP-6257 of 6 July 2021. URL: <https://lex.uz/uz/docs/5495531> (accessed 24.07.2025)

⁸ Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on measures to further improve the anti-corruption system and enhance the effectiveness of public oversight over the activities of state bodies and organizations No. UP-200 of 27 November 2023. URL: <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/6676587> (accessed 24.07.2025)

⁹ Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on anti-corruption expertise of normative legal acts and their draft versions No. ZRU-860 of 8 August 2023. URL: <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/6561898> (accessed 24.07.2025)

¹⁰ Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on conflict of interest No. ZRU-931 of 5 June 2024. URL: <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/6952745> (accessed 24.07.2025)

The subject of this study is the analysis of the nature of the relationship between national assessment tools and statistics on detected corruption-related offenses in the construction sector. Based on a comparative approach, the study does not seek merely to state a discrepancy but aims to determine the level of correlation between these data sources in order to subsequently reflect on the methodological and practical implications for the anti-corruption governance system.

2. Literature Review

An analysis of anti-corruption policy assessment at the international level reveals the development of integrative approaches, in which quantitative statistical indicators are complemented by institutional and behavioral evaluations. One of the key initiatives in this field is the background paper prepared by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), titled “Framework for the Statistical Measurement of Corruption”¹¹, which has been presented in documents of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

This framework emphasizes the need to move beyond measuring the perception of bribery toward a comprehensive measurement of corruption using all available sources of information—both quantitative and qualitative—assessing not only direct and indirect impacts of corruption but also perceptions and experiences, legal instruments, and their application outcomes. UNODC draws attention to the lack of unified standards and proposes the development of global statistical foundations for measuring corruption.

From a practical standpoint, the OECD methodology (2022) [2] is based on a new set of public integrity indicators. The report emphasizes that the mere existence of strategies and agencies is not sufficient; what is critical is their actual implementation at the level of public institutions, as well as the presence of concrete metrics. It highlights difficulties in interagency coordination and the lack of feedback mechanisms between evaluation and enforcement measures.

Empirical studies confirm that the digitalization of governance contributes to reducing the level of administrative corruption, particularly when access to data is expanded and vulnerable procedures are automated. According to the review by Adam & Fazekas (2021) [3], the introduction of electronic platforms, open registries, and automated services does indeed reduce opportunities for corruption; however, such effects are observed only when there is an adequate institutional environment and when citizens have the capacity to use digital tools in practice.

A significant contribution to assessment methodology has been made by the U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre. In the work of Wathne (2022) [4], it is noted that the evaluation of anti-corruption measures requires a flexible and context-sensitive approach, as direct quantitative measurement of corruption is often not feasible. In a more recent review, Shipley (2024) [5] offers a critique of the dominant evaluation approach based on formal reporting, which fails to capture deeper changes—such as deterrence of corruption and institutional transformation.

Moreover, anti-corruption measures have not only institutional but also behavioral impacts. A field study in Uganda [6] demonstrated that when citizens gain access to information about standards and control mechanisms, they become active participants in oversight, thereby prompting a response from authorities. In contrast, merely informing officials about violations produced no effect, as it lacked accompanying elements of social accountability and transparency.

¹¹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2023). Statistical framework to measure corruption in accordance with the UN Convention against Corruption. URL: https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/statistics/corruption/UNODC_Statistical_Framework_to_measure_corruption.pdf (accessed 24.07.2025)

Contemporary assessments emphasize the importance of distinguishing between formal anti-corruption measures and their actual behavioral impact. Mugellini et al. (2021) [7], based on a systematic review of 29 RCT studies, demonstrate that sustained reductions in corruption are primarily achieved when institutional measures are combined with mechanisms of enforcement, transparency, and participation. In contrast, stand-alone measures—such as codes of conduct or information campaigns—without consequences fail to produce lasting effects.

Of particular interest is the study by Transparency International (2021) [8], which introduces an approach to evaluating anti-corruption effectiveness through the so-called impact matrix. Unlike traditional models that focus primarily on measuring activity (e.g., the number of events, programs, or legal acts), this approach emphasizes behavioral change and long-term outcomes. This is especially relevant for analyzing initiatives such as the “Corruption-Free Sphere” project in the construction sector, where immediate results may not be readily visible but are significant in terms of transforming practices.

At the same time, it is important to note that Transparency International primarily relies on perception-based indices, which are derived from aggregated expert and survey data. This inherently limits their applicability for accurately assessing changes within specific sectors. Consequently, there is a need to complement such approaches with other empirically verifiable sources—including judicial and legal statistics and internal risk management indicators.

The sectoral approach is exemplified in the work of Adam & Fazekas (2023) [9], which provides a systematic analysis of corruption risks at all stages of infrastructure projects—from planning and design to tendering and operation. The study concludes that digital tools (such as e-procurement and open data), public oversight, and the disclosure of contractors’ interests have a deterrent effect.

The construction sector is often regarded as one of the most vulnerable to corruption. This is attributed to the high degree of administrative discretion, the multiplicity of contracts, and significant public budget involvement. According to Zarghami et al. (2024) [10], the construction industry is characterized by persistent self-reinforcing cycles of corruption, creating a closed system among participants, weak oversight, and economic incentives. Such a structure necessitates targeted analysis and evaluation of specific anti-corruption measures at the sectoral level.

In Uzbekistan, the growing digitalization, the activation of institutional mechanisms, and increasing public engagement create favorable conditions for strengthening anti-corruption policy. However, as Santiso (2022) [11] emphasizes, sustainable outcomes are achieved only when digital solutions are integrated into a broader context of managerial transparency, open data practices, and the development of analytical capacities among oversight actors.

3. Methods

This study is based on a comprehensive approach combining legal, comparative-analytical, and descriptive statistical methods, supplemented by elements of content analysis of normative documents, programmatic acts, and expert sources.

The following assessment indicators, characterizing institutional-level anti-corruption efforts, were used: score-based values of the performance rating of public authorities in combating corruption (in accordance with Presidential Resolution No. PP-81 dated January 12, 2022¹²); data from the register of corruption-prone relations (within the framework of the “E-Anticorruption”

¹² Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on measures to introduce a rating assessment system for evaluating the effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts No. PP-81 of 12 January 2022. URL: <https://lex.uz/docs/5819323> (accessed 24.07.2025)

project¹³); indicators of the Openness Index (Presidential Decree No. UP-154 dated June 14, 2022¹⁴); values of international indices and ratings.

On the other hand, empirical data included official judicial and legal statistics on: the number of criminal cases related to corruption offenses in the construction sector; the number of individuals held criminally liable; the amount of damage caused and recovered (according to the data of the General Prosecutor's Office¹⁵ and the Supreme Court for the years 2020–2024¹⁶).

The hypothesis of this study assumes that the effective functioning of national anti-corruption mechanisms should result in consistent changes in both formal institutional indicators and actual judicial practice. In other words, as assessment indicators improve, there should be either a stabilization or a decrease in the number of criminal cases, the scale of damages, and the number of convicted individuals in the construction sector.

The analytical framework of the study does not imply a mechanical dependency between indicators but is based on a correlation–causation approach: discrepancies (e.g., an increase in rating scores accompanied by a rise in the number of cases and damages) may indicate either improved detection or limitations of existing indicators, which may capture only formal efforts.

Accordingly, the potential interpretations of the results include:

- data convergence (assessment indicators and judicial statistics move in the same direction—as a sign of effectiveness);
- divergence (opposite trends between evaluation scores and factual outcomes—as grounds for reconsidering the evaluation methodology);
- inertial gap (a time lag between the implementation of measures and their statistical effects);
- latent detection growth (statistical improvement due to intensified supervisory and investigative efforts, rather than an actual reduction in corruption as a phenomenon).

This approach enables not only quantitative analysis but also the development of a qualitative interpretation of the results, grounded in the institutional and behavioral characteristics of the sector under study.

4. Results and Discussion

To assess whether Uzbekistan is effectively combating corruption, it is necessary to refer to international anti-corruption rankings and indices. For a more objective and reliable result, multiple sources should be considered simultaneously.

The Rule of Law Index developed by the World Justice Project (WJP) is examined below. Within this index, the indicator of interest is the absence of corruption. In 2015, Uzbekistan's score on this indicator was 0,34, ranking 87th out of 102 countries. By 2025, the score had improved to 0,47, with Uzbekistan ranking 67th out of 143 countries (see Fig. 1).

¹³ E-anti-corruption Open Platform. URL: <https://e-anticor.uz/en/> (accessed 24.07.2025)

¹⁴ Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on measures to introduce a system for improving and assessing the level of openness of activities of state bodies and organizations No. UP-154 of 14 June 2022. URL: <https://www.lex.uz/uz/docs/6066514> (accessed 24.07.2025)

¹⁵ General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Official Telegram channel. URL: <https://t.me/uzbprokuratura> (accessed 24.07.2025)

¹⁶ Data obtained through official requests submitted to the Supreme Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan

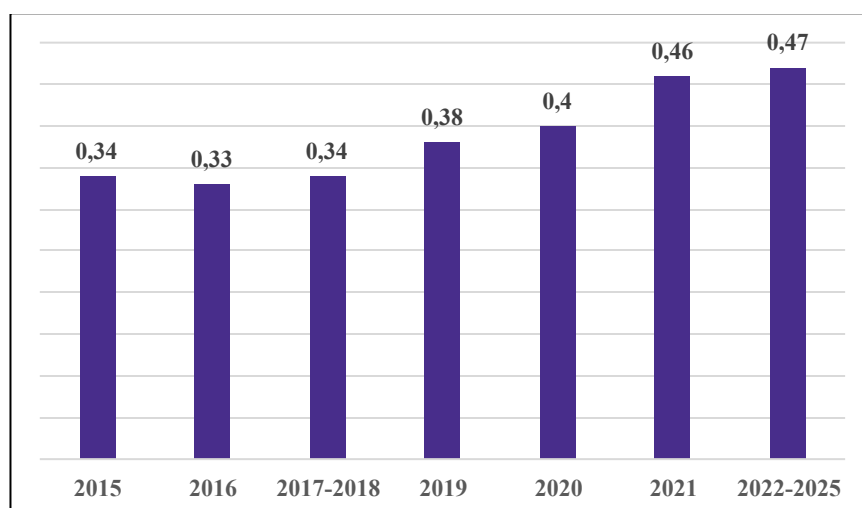


Figure 1. Dynamics of the “Absence of Corruption” Indicator for Uzbekistan

Source: World Justice Project. Rule of Law Index. URL: <https://worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index/> (accessed 25.07.2025)

In the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) by Transparency International, Uzbekistan scored 17 points in 2012, ranking 170th out of 176 countries. By 2024, the score had increased to 32 points, with the country ranking 121st out of 180 countries (see Fig. 2).

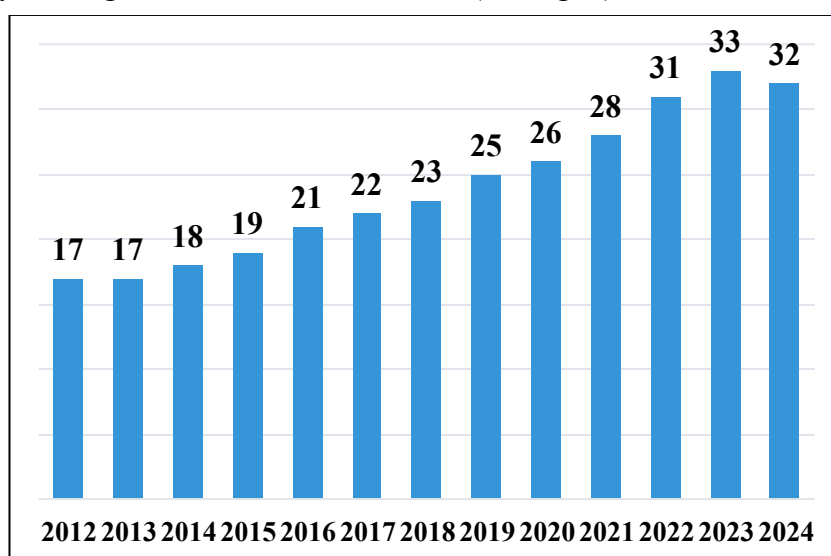


Figure 2. Dynamics of Uzbekistan in the CPI

Source: Transparency International. Corruption Perceptions Index. URL: <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/> (accessed 25.07.2025)

Attention is also drawn to the indicators of government effectiveness within the World Bank Group’s Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) study. Within this framework, the key indicator for our analysis is Control of Corruption, which stood at -1.39 in 2011 and improved to -0.81 in 2023 (see Fig. 3).

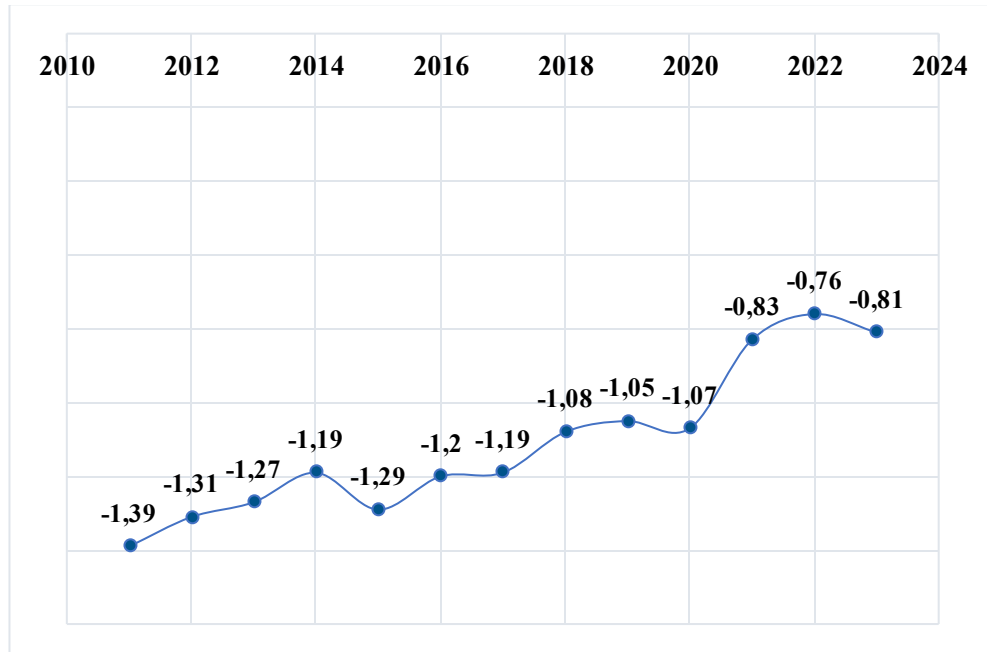


Figure 3. Dynamics of the “Control of Corruption” Indicator for Uzbekistan within the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI)

Source: World Bank. Worldwide Governance Indicators: Interactive data access. URL:

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/worldwide-governance-indicators/interactive-data-access> (accessed 25.07.2025)

Consideration is also given to the TRACE Bribery Risk Matrix, in which the principal indicator examined is the bribery risk score. In 2016, Uzbekistan scored 78, ranking 177th out of 199 countries. By 2024, the score had improved to 57, with a rank of 134th out of 194 countries (see Table 1).

Table 1. TRACE Bribery Risk Matrix

Year	Rank	Risk score	Domain 1: Interactions with Government	Domain 2: Anti-bribery Deterrence and Enforcement	Domain 3: Governmental and Civil Service Transparency	Domain 4: Capacity for Civil Oversight
2016	177/199	78	74	53	84	68
2017	189/200	73	66	48	80	87
2018	177/200	69	70	46	75	78
2019	181/200	73	69	66	76	79
2020	150/194	60	58	62	55	66
2021	147/194	59	52	70	58	64
2022	131/194	58	48	69	63	64
2023	130/194	58	49	71	58	64
2024	134/194	57	50	67	58	64

Source: TRACE International. TRACE Bribery Risk Matrix. URL: <https://www.traceinternational.org/trace-matrix> (accessed 25.07.2025)

Determining the actual level of corruption in the Republic of Uzbekistan represents a methodologically complex task, given the high level of latency of corruption offenses and the

limited availability of direct quantitative measurement tools. International indices—such as the Corruption Perceptions Index by Transparency International and the Rule of Law Index by the World Justice Project—are primarily based on expert and reputational assessments which, despite their strong international legitimacy, predominantly capture perceptions and institutional expectations rather than actual offenses.

An analysis of the reports issued by these organizations shows that the recent positive trends in Uzbekistan's scores are explained not so much by a reduction in corruption per se, but rather by reforms of the legal framework, the strengthening of institutional transparency mechanisms, the digitalization of public services, the expansion of public accountability, and increased citizen awareness. For example, Transparency International, in explaining the rise of Uzbekistan's CPI score, specifically points to efforts to simplify administrative procedures, launch electronic platforms, and establish public registries. At the same time, the reports also highlight persistent challenges, including problems with access to information, media independence, and the effectiveness of oversight mechanisms.

Therefore, the interpretation of positive shifts in international indices requires consideration of their methodological limitations and the analytical comments provided by the compilers themselves. Rising index values should not be viewed as a straightforward indicator of reduced corruption, but rather as a reflection of efforts aimed at institutional rethinking of governance mechanisms and increasing transparency.

The development and implementation of effective anti-corruption policy is in line with international obligations arising from the provisions of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)¹⁷. In accordance with Article 5, paragraph 3, and Article 61 of the Convention, States Parties are required to conduct regular evaluations of anti-corruption measures, analyze trends, ensure the collection and exchange of statistical and analytical information, and monitor the effectiveness of actions taken.

This approach is codified in the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Combating Corruption,” which stipulates that anti-corruption programs must be developed based on an analysis of the state and trends of corruption. Systematic monitoring, data collection and analysis, and evaluation of the effectiveness of anti-corruption mechanisms are entrusted to the National Anti-Corruption Council, the Anti-Corruption Agency, the General Prosecutor's Office, the State Security Service, the Ministries of Internal Affairs and Justice, as well as the Department for Combating Economic Crimes. Monitoring is carried out within the framework of interagency cooperation with the participation of civil society institutions, the media, and citizens, including through scientific, sociological, and specialized studies.

By Presidential Resolution of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PP-81 dated January 12, 2022¹⁸, a performance rating system was introduced to assess the effectiveness of public authorities and organizations in combating corruption. The evaluation is conducted on a 100-point scale across five key areas: the development of legal and institutional frameworks for anti-corruption activities; implementation of mechanisms for assessing and mitigating corruption risks; personal anti-corruption stance of leadership; employee awareness and training; and the effectiveness of informational and educational efforts.

¹⁷ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. United Nations Convention against Corruption. URL: https://www.unodc.org/documents/brussels/UN_Convention_Against_Corruption.pdf (accessed 24.07.2025)

¹⁸ Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on measures to introduce a rating assessment system for evaluating the effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts No. PP-81 of 12 January 2022. URL: <https://lex.uz/docs/5819323> (accessed 24.07.2025)

The results are classified as “good” (81–100 points), “satisfactory” (55–80 points), and “unsatisfactory” (below 55 points). The assessment is conducted via the electronic platform E-Anticor.uz¹⁹, ensuring transparency and involving an expert group with representatives of civil society. Organizations that receive an unsatisfactory rating are required to implement corrective measures; a repeated low score within two years entails disciplinary liability for the head of the institution.

According to the performance ratings of public authorities in the field of anti-corruption, the Ministry of Construction and Housing and Communal Services of the Republic of Uzbekistan demonstrated positive dynamics during the analysis period.

In 2021, the Ministry received an unsatisfactory rating of 49 points out of 100, ranking 16th out of 24 assessed organizations. This indicated deficiencies in the organization of anti-corruption activities, particularly in internal control, risk prevention, and awareness-raising efforts.

In 2022, no official assessment was conducted, preventing the identification of interim changes in dynamics.

In 2023, the ministry showed significant improvement, receiving a satisfactory rating of 71 points and ranking 59th out of 95 institutions included in the rating. This reflected intensified efforts across key evaluation areas, including the implementation of anti-corruption mechanisms, staff training, and risk reduction.

By the end of 2024, the Ministry of Construction and Housing and Communal Services achieved a high rating of 86 points, classified as “good,” ranking 19th out of 102 organizations. This result indicates consistent efforts to address previously identified shortcomings, strengthen the institutional foundations of anti-corruption policy, and improve the effectiveness of internal control. The improvement in ranking, despite the increase in the number of evaluated entities, confirms the rapid pace and quality of reforms within the ministry (see Table 2).

Table 2. Dynamics of the Position of the Ministry of Construction and Housing and Communal Services within the Performance Rating System for Anti-Corruption Efforts

Year	Result	Score	Rank
2021	unsatisfactory	49/100	16/24
2022	-		
2023	satisfactory	71/100	59/95
2024	good	86/100	19/102

Source: E-anti-corruption Open Platform. URL: <https://e-anticor.uz/en/> (accessed 26.07.2025)

By Presidential Resolution of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PP-240 dated May 11, 2022²⁰, a comprehensive set of measures was approved to strengthen the prevent corruption in public administration. The document introduced the E-Anticorruption project, which mandates corruption risk assessments in organizations with more than 50% state ownership, the maintenance of an electronic register of corruption-prone relations on the E-Anticor.uz platform, the development of risk maps, and their annual evaluation. Responsibility for conducting the assessments is assigned to the heads of organizations. The initiative also includes the

¹⁹ E-anti-corruption Open Platform. URL: <https://e-anticor.uz/en/> (accessed 24.07.2025)

²⁰ Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on measures to improve mechanisms for eliminating corruption risks in public administration and expanding public participation in this field No. PP-240 of 11 May 2022. URL: <https://lex.uz/docs/6000287> (accessed 24.07.2025)

implementation of automated HR systems, the launch of a virtual training platform, and the execution of a comprehensive risk management program.

Out of 110 registered types of relationships and procedures evaluated under the E-Anticorruption project and reflected in the register,

- 96 were classified as low-risk,
- 13 as medium-risk, and
- only 1 as high-risk.

This distribution indicates, on the one hand, a sufficient level of formalization and manageability in most administrative processes within the Ministry of Construction. The presence of only one high-risk area may be associated with specifically identified corruption vulnerabilities (e.g., in licensing, tender procedures, or the commissioning of construction projects). The medium-risk segment requires particular attention, as it includes more than a dozen processes that, if not properly controlled, could potentially escalate into critical zones.

Overall, the risk distribution demonstrates that the Ministry has taken steps to implement internal anti-corruption control mechanisms, including through digitalization and procedural transparency. At the same time, the presence of even isolated high-risk areas underscores the need for regular updates to risk maps and targeted strengthening of preventive measures in the identified zones.

By Presidential Decree of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. UP-154 dated June 14, 2022²¹, a system for assessing the level of openness in the activities of public authorities and organizations was introduced. As of August 1, 2022, the Openness Index has been implemented, covering public institutions, unitary enterprises, and companies with more than 50% state ownership. The evaluation is conducted on a scale from 0 to 100 points, based on criteria that reflect the level of informational transparency, data accessibility, electronic reporting, and engagement with the Public Council. Based on the results, categories are assigned: “green” (high level), “yellow” (medium level), and “red” (low level), with subsequent incentive or corrective measures. Results are published on the platform index.anticorruption.uz. The Decree also provides for the creation of an interagency commission and amendments to legislation to expand the list of socially significant information subject to public disclosure.

An analysis of the Openness Index results for the Ministry of Construction and Housing and Communal Services of the Republic of Uzbekistan for the period 2022–2024 shows uneven but overall positive dynamics.

In 2022, the Ministry received 63.92 points, ranking 34th out of 86 organizations. This reflected a medium level of transparency and compliance with key requirements regarding the publication of socially significant information, access to electronic services, and reporting.

However, in 2023, performance declined significantly—falling to 52.06 points and 81st place out of 103, corresponding to the “yellow” category.

In 2024, the Ministry demonstrated significant improvement: 81.3 points and 25th place out of 98, corresponding to the “green” category—high level of openness. This suggests that organizational and technical measures were implemented to address previously identified shortcomings.

²¹ Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on measures to introduce a system for improving and assessing the level of openness of activities of state bodies and organizations No. UP-154 of 14 June 2022. URL: <https://www.lex.uz/uz/docs/6066514> (accessed 24.07.2025)

Thus, despite a temporary setback in 2023, there is an overall positive and stable trend, with the level achieved in 2024 reflecting a high degree of compliance with the requirements of Decree No. UP-154 and best practices in transparency and accountability (see Table 3).

Table 3. Dynamics of the position of the Ministry of Construction and Housing and Communal Services within the Openness Index

Year	Score	Rank
2022	63.92	34/86
2023	52.06	81/103
2024	81.3	25 / 98

Source: The Openness Index. URL: <https://index.anticorruption.uz/ru/rating> (accessed 26.07.2025)

Attempts to measure the level of corruption are impossible without taking statistical data into account. A comprehensive analysis requires coverage of both the entire territory of the country and the construction sector in particular. In this regard, statistics on official misconduct at the national level acquire special significance (see Fig. 4), reflecting the dynamics of holding public officials criminally accountable, as well as the amount of damage caused and the level of recovery during the pre-trial investigation phase (see Table 4).

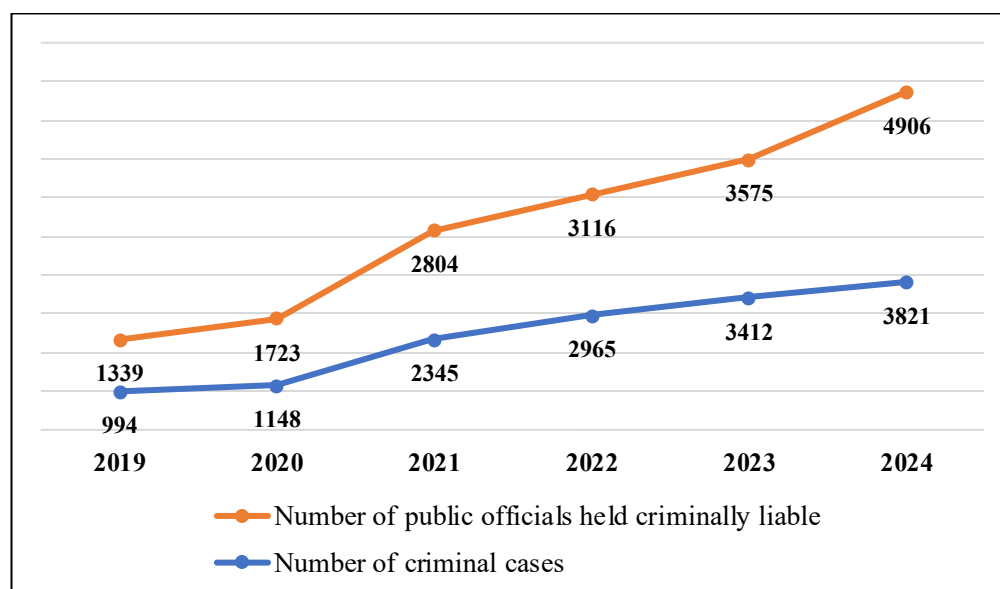


Figure 4. Statistics on official misconduct (at the National level)

Source: General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Official Telegram Channel. URL: <https://t.me/uzbprokuratura> (accessed 27.07.2025)

The statistics reveal a rapid increase in the number of official misconduct cases throughout the specified period. The growth in the number of criminal cases in 2020 compared to 2019 was 15.49%, while the number of public officials held criminally liable increased by 28.67%. In 2021, the respective growth rates were 104.26% and 62.73%; in 2022–26.43% and 11.12%; in 2023–15.07% and 14.73%; and in 2024–11.98% and 37.23%, respectively.

Table 4. Damage Caused and the Share Recovered During the Pre-Trial Investigation

Year	Damage Caused (UZS, T/B)	Damage Recovered (UZS, T/B)	Share Recovered (%)
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2019	1.854 T	1.746 T	94.1
2020	500.102 B	355.754 B	71
2021	913.7 B	714.8 B	78.2
2022	1.012 T	847 B	83.6
2023	1.546 T	1.310 T	84.7
2024	3.608 T	2.343 T	65

Source: General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Official Telegram Channel URL: <https://t.me/uzbprokuratura> (accessed 27.07.2025)

An analysis of the presented data on damage caused and recovered in cases of official misconduct from 2019 to 2024 reveals several key trends.

First, there is a steady increase in the amount of damage inflicted on the state. In 2019, it amounted to 1.854 T UZS (*T – trillion*), while by 2024 this figure had more than doubled, reaching 3.608 T UZS. A particularly sharp spike was recorded in 2024, when the damage volume increased by nearly 2.3 times compared to the previous year.

Second, the level of damage recovery at the pre-trial investigation stage shows fluctuations, indicating instability in the mechanisms for recovering embezzled or misappropriated funds. The highest recovery rate was observed in 2019–94.1%, while the lowest was in 2024–65%. The decline in recovery efficiency in recent years is especially notable against the backdrop of a sharp rise in overall damage. For instance, while in 2024 the amount of recovered damage reached 2.343 T UZS – the highest absolute figure for the entire period–the proportion of recovery relative to the damage caused was the lowest over six years.

This dynamic may reflect, on the one hand, improved detection of large-scale corruption schemes, and on the other, a weakening of mechanisms for ensuring compensation or the increasing complexity of asset recovery in major violations. In this context, additional measures are needed to strengthen procedural mechanisms for asset seizure, effectively apply civil claims within criminal proceedings, and enhance interagency cooperation in recovering damages.

For a deeper understanding of sector-specific corruption patterns, it is advisable to refer to judicial and legal statistics in the construction sector. This industry is traditionally characterized by a high degree of vulnerability to corruption risks. An analysis of both quantitative and qualitative indicators of offenses in the construction field makes it possible to track the dynamics and scale of the issue and assess the effectiveness of preventive and enforcement measures implemented within the framework of national anti-corruption policy.

An analysis of judicial and legal statistics on corruption-related offenses in the construction sector for the period 2020–2024 (see Fig. 5) enables the identification of trends in criminal liability and the total number of cases reviewed by courts.

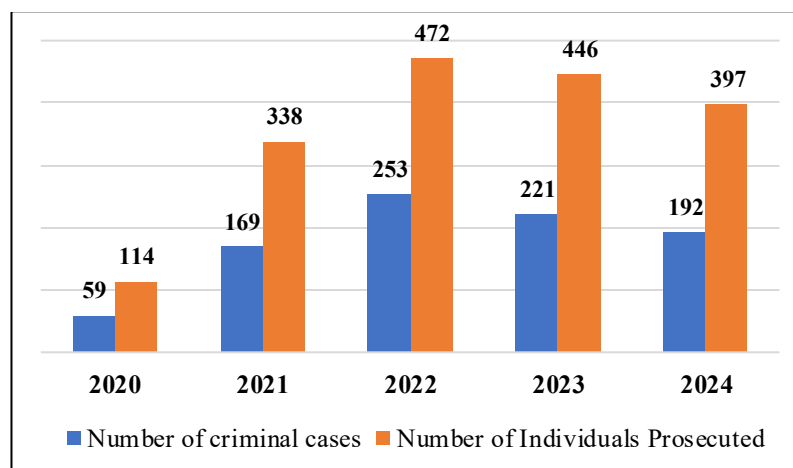


Figure 5. Judicial and Legal Statistics on Corruption-Related Offenses in the Construction Sector

Source: The data were obtained through official requests submitted to the Supreme Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (received 17.07.2025)

In 2020, 59 criminal cases were reviewed, resulting in 114 individuals being held accountable. In 2021, these figures increased more than two and a half times—to 169 cases and 338 convicted persons—likely reflecting heightened attention to corruption in the construction sector, improved detection, and the transfer of more complex and voluminous cases to court.

The highest number of cases was recorded in 2022—253 cases, with 472 individuals found guilty and prosecuted. This peak may reflect both intensified oversight and an active phase of anti-corruption measures in the construction sector, as well as a cumulative effect of case transfers to the judiciary.

In subsequent years, a moderate decrease in judicial workload is observed: 221 cases and 446 individuals in 2023, and 192 cases and 397 individuals in 2024. Despite this decline, the figures remain significantly higher than in 2020, indicating the persistent scale of the problem.

The reduction in the number of cases reviewed may signal a stabilization due to preventive measures, tightened internal controls, and increased certainty of punishment. At the same time, the stable number of convictions shows that corruption offenses in the construction sector remain systemic and require ongoing attention, including the improvement of law enforcement practices, the implementation of compliance mechanisms, and enhanced transparency in urban planning, licensing, and contracting procedures.

An analysis of judicial statistics on material damage caused and recovered in corruption-related cases in the construction sector for 2020–2024 (see Table 5) demonstrates both significant growth in the scale of detected offenses and fluctuations in the effectiveness of damage recovery.

Table 5. Damage Caused and the Share Recovered

Year	Damage Caused (UZS, B)	Damage Recovered (UZS, B)	Share Recovered (%)
2020	41.337	16.953	41
2021	59.881	44.602	74.5
2022	82.616	69.144	83.7
2023	100.191	80.366	80.2
2024	294.112	157.462	53.5

Source: The data were obtained through official requests submitted to the Supreme Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (received 17.07.2025)

In 2020, the total amount of damage established in court cases reached 41.337 B UZS (*B –billion*), of which only 16.953 B UZS was recovered, representing 41%. This figure reflects the initial stage of intensified efforts to document damage in the construction sector but also indicates limited capacity or weak organization of enforcement at that time.

In 2021, improvements were observed both in the volume of identified embezzlements and in damage recovery: 44.602 B UZS was recovered out of 59.881 B UZS (74.5%). The nearly twofold increase in recovery compared to the previous year may indicate a more effective legal strategy, enhanced enforcement of judgments, and the application of securing measures.

In 2022, recovery efficiency peaked: of 82.616 B UZS in damage, 69.144 B UZS was reimbursed, amounting to 83.7%. Similarly, in 2023, the recovery rate remained high at 80.2%, with the total damage amount rising to 100.191 B UZS. These two years can be regarded as the most effective in ensuring actual compensation to the state.

However, in 2024, despite an unprecedented increase in detected damage to 294.112 B UZS (more than 2.9 times the previous year's figure), the recovery rate significantly dropped to 53.5%. Although 157.462 B UZS was recovered—the highest absolute amount on record—this indicates a decline in the percentage of funds restored. This may be related to larger and more complex crimes, difficulties in asset detection, involvement of affiliated individuals and legal entities, or gaps in mechanisms ensuring enforcement of court decisions.

Thus, the overall trend demonstrates a substantial increase in the scale of detected corruption in the construction sector, while the capacity for damage recovery in recent years faces certain limitations. This underscores the need to strengthen procedural mechanisms for asset seizure and return, as well as preventive control over fund flows in infrastructure projects.

Based on the analysis of the results achieved by the Ministry of Construction and Housing and Communal Services of the Republic of Uzbekistan within the framework of national assessment mechanisms, as well as the comparison of these data with official judicial and legal statistics, it can be concluded that there is a methodological gap between assessment tools and statistical data on corruption offenses in the construction sector.

From 2021 to 2024, the ministry consistently improved its positions in the performance rating system: from an “unsatisfactory” score (49 points in 2021) to a “good” level (86 points in 2024), alongside an expansion in the number of evaluated organizations. Within the register of corruption-prone relations created under the E-Anticorruption project, a significant portion of the ministry's processes (87.3%) are classified as low risk, with only one item categorized as high risk. The Openness Index also shows growth—from 52.06 points and a “yellow” category in 2023 to 81.3 points and a “green” category in 2024.

Against this backdrop, judicial and legal statistics for the construction sector show an opposite picture. The number of corruption-related cases reviewed by courts remains consistently high: from 59 cases in 2020 to 192 in 2024, with the number of prosecuted individuals rising from 114 to 397 respectively. Particularly notable is the sharp increase in damage established in these cases: from 41.337 B UZS in 2020 to 294.112 B UZS in 2024 (more than a sevenfold increase). At the same time, the damage recovery rate declined from 83.7% in 2022 to 53.5% in 2024.

This dynamic indicates a divergence between national measurement mechanisms and statistical data. High scores in the Openness Index and performance ratings, as well as the formally low risk level recorded in the register, are not accompanied by a reduction in the number of offenses or an improvement in damage recovery rates. This points to the absence of a direct correlation between

assessment tools and judicial statistics and highlights the limitations of formal indicators in reflecting the actual state of affairs.

Formally, these data may be interpreted as a sign of limited effectiveness of preventive measures or, alternatively, as a consequence of intensified supervisory, control, law enforcement, and judicial functions of the state, rather than an increase in corruption itself.

In this context, it is important to note that the lack of a linear relationship between assessment tools and judicial statistics does not necessarily indicate inefficiency of the former. Rather, it underscores the different nature of these data sources: indices and registers capture institutional efforts aimed at eliminating the causes and conditions of corruption, whereas judicial statistics reflect the system's response to offenses already committed. Thus, the data may not contradict but complement each other to provide a more comprehensive picture.

Nevertheless, the identified gap between improved assessment scores and increased judicial-legal consequences calls for scientific and practical reflection. It may result from a temporal lag between measures and their effects, insufficient integration of monitoring mechanisms with actual sanctions and legal outcomes, and the absence of an effective feedback system between evaluation results and policy-management decisions.

Consequently, a promising task for further research is the revision of the methodology for assessing anti-corruption effectiveness. This involves the implementation of integrated models combining quantitative indicators (statistics, damage figures) and qualitative indicators (social effects, compliance practices, behavioral changes), enabling a more objective evaluation of both the effectiveness and vulnerabilities of individual sectors, including construction.

5. Conclusion

The conducted study revealed the existence of a methodological gap between the results of national measurement mechanisms for assessing anti-corruption activities and judicial-legal statistics on corruption offenses in the construction sector.

Despite positive trends in formal indicators—including increased scores in the performance rating, improved position in the Openness Index, and the predominance of low-risk processes in the register of relations—judicial practice demonstrates a relatively high level of corruption, reflected in the number of cases reviewed, the number of individuals prosecuted, and the scale of the damage caused.

The analysis confirms that institutional efforts to formalize anti-corruption mechanisms and implement digital solutions in public administration yield positive outcomes at the normative and organizational levels. However, these efforts have yet to be consistently accompanied by a reduction in corruption manifestations within judicial practice. This situation may be explained by a temporal gap between the implementation of reforms and their effects, as well as insufficient connectivity between evaluation, monitoring mechanisms, and actual law enforcement.

The conclusions drawn in the course of this research affirm the need to improve approaches to assessing anti-corruption policy at the sectoral level. It is recommended to implement integrated models combining institutional, behavioral, and statistical indicators, with mandatory feedback loops between monitoring results and the adjustment of anti-corruption measures. Particular attention should be paid to uniting preventive and proactive strategies, strengthening the independence of monitoring bodies, and increasing the significance of judicial statistics within the national system for evaluating the effectiveness of anti-corruption activities.

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Data Availability Statement: The data supporting the findings of this study are derived from publicly available sources cited throughout the article, including the international indices (WJP Rule of Law Index, Transparency International CPI, World Bank WGI, TRACE Bribery Risk Matrix) and the national open platforms of the Republic of Uzbekistan (e-anticor.uz and index.anticorruption.uz). The judicial and legal statistics on the construction sector were obtained through official requests submitted to the Supreme Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan and are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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