

IMPROVING THE METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT IN THE HOUSING AND COMMUNAL SERVICES SYSTEM

Rakhimov K.E

PhD., Assoc. Prof.

Tashkent University of Architecture and Civil Engineering

ORCID: 0009-0004-3620-5312

q.rahimov1983@gmail.com

Annotation. This article examines the methodological foundations for introducing professional management in the housing and communal services system, with particular attention to the management of multi-apartment housing in Uzbekistan. The study analyzes national reforms, international facility management principles, common property governance theory, service charge transparency, and infrastructure governance approaches. The article proposes a six-block methodological framework that includes legal-institutional regulation, technical diagnostics, professional selection of management companies, service standards, digital transparency, and continuous improvement. The findings show that professional management should be based on measurable service quality, transparent budgeting, resident participation, and continuous performance evaluation.

Keywords: housing and communal services, professional management, multi-apartment buildings, facility management, management service companies, common property, digital transparency, service quality, resident participation Uzbekistan.

Introduction

The housing and communal services system is one of the most socially sensitive and economically significant sectors of urban development. It directly affects the quality of life of the population, the technical condition of residential buildings, the efficiency of utility infrastructure, and the level of public trust in local governance. In rapidly urbanizing countries, the management of multi-apartment housing is becoming increasingly complex because it involves not only routine maintenance but also financial planning, resident participation, technical inspection, service quality control, digital transparency, and long-term capital repair.

In Uzbekistan, this issue has gained particular importance in recent years. According to official information published by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, more than 7.1 million people currently live in over 44,000 multi-apartment buildings. These buildings are served by more than 900 management service companies and over 200 homeowners' associations, while self-management has been introduced in 856 buildings. At the same time, the official statement emphasizes that many management companies still operate mainly on the basis of mandatory contributions, and the number of entrepreneurs ready to invest in this sector remains limited. This indicates that the transition from a formal maintenance model to a professionally managed, performance-based system is still incomplete.

The adoption of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Management of Multi-Apartment Houses" created a legal basis for regulating relations in the management of multi-apartment buildings. The law defines the general purpose of regulating relations in this sphere and provides mechanisms such as management organizations, managers, homeowners' partnerships, open

competition for selecting management organizations, and responsibility for violations of legislation. However, legislation alone is not sufficient to ensure high-quality management. The sector also requires a scientifically grounded methodology that connects legal norms, institutional incentives, professional competence, financial sustainability, digital accountability, and service quality standards.

The relevance of this research is also confirmed by independent assessments. In 2025, the Yuksalish Movement reported that Uzbekistan had 42,072 multi-apartment buildings with over 1.4 million residential units; 38,689 buildings were serviced by 821 management service companies, 849 buildings by 157 homeowners' associations, 676 buildings were directly managed by property owners, and 1,405 buildings were maintained by various institutions and organizations. The study also analyzed 371 residential buildings and 109 management service companies, which shows that the sector has already reached a scale where professional standards and evidence-based evaluation tools are necessary.

The aim of this article is to develop methodological proposals for improving the introduction of professional management in the housing and communal services system. The article focuses on the case of multi-apartment housing management in Uzbekistan and integrates local reforms with international concepts of facility management, common property governance, service charge transparency, and infrastructure governance.

Literature review and methodology

The theoretical basis of professional housing management can be understood through several interrelated approaches: common property governance, facility management, institutional economics, service quality management, and infrastructure governance.

First, multi-apartment housing has the characteristics of a common property system. Staircases, roofs, basements, elevators, engineering networks, courtyards, and other shared facilities belong to all apartment owners collectively. This creates coordination problems: each owner depends on the behavior of others, while maintenance costs must be shared. Elinor Ostrom's theory of common property governance is highly relevant here. Ostrom demonstrated that collective resources can be managed successfully not only through state control or pure privatization but also through well-designed institutions, self-organization, monitoring, rules, sanctions, and conflict-resolution mechanisms. Cambridge University Press describes *Governing the Commons* as an important contribution to understanding how users can self-organize around common resources.

In the context of housing and communal services, this means that professional management should not eliminate the role of residents; rather, it should institutionalize resident participation through contracts, general meetings, digital reporting, and feedback systems.

Second, the concept of facility management provides a practical foundation for professionalizing housing services. The International Facility Management Association defines facility management as an organizational function that integrates people, place, and process within the built environment to improve quality of life and productivity. Although this definition is often applied to commercial, public, or corporate buildings, it is equally relevant to residential buildings. A multi-apartment house is not merely a physical structure; it is a living environment that requires technical, social, financial, and organizational coordination.

Third, international standards also support the transition toward professional management. ISO 41001:2018 specifies requirements for facility management systems when an organization needs to demonstrate effective and efficient delivery of facility management, meet the needs of interested parties, and operate sustainably in a competitive environment. The standard is non-sector-specific and can be applied to public and private organizations regardless of size or location. This is important for Uzbekistan because professional management service companies can use

ISO-based principles to structure their internal processes: planning, service delivery, documentation, monitoring, corrective action, and continuous improvement.

Fourth, professional housing management must also be based on financial transparency. The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors' Service Charge Residential Management Code aims to improve standards, promote best practice, ensure reasonableness and transparency in service charge management, ensure timely budgets and year-end accounts, and reduce disputes. In Uzbekistan, this principle is especially relevant because one of the main weaknesses of the housing management system is the low level of trust between residents and management companies. Without transparent budgets and understandable service reports, even technically competent management may face resistance from residents.

Fifth, infrastructure governance literature shows that service quality depends not only on individual companies but also on the broader governance framework. The World Bank's Uzbekistan InfraGov report states that the country needs to translate strategic priorities into better services by ensuring needs-based investment prioritization, efficiency, and strategic coordination. It also identifies governance challenges such as fragmented investment planning, limited tools for value for money, and the importance of transparency and climate resilience. These findings are relevant to housing management because multi-apartment buildings are connected to wider urban infrastructure: water supply, heating, electricity, waste management, roads, drainage, and public spaces.

Local scientific studies also emphasize the need for reforming housing and communal services in Uzbekistan. For example, Primova and Mamatkulov's article on housing communal services reform discusses changes in financing and management approaches in the sector. Berdiyeva's work focuses on improving the management activities of private housing partnerships and highlights the role of professional management companies and modern information technologies.

Shaymukhamadieva's research analyzes advanced foreign experience in housing and communal services reform, which is important for adapting international practices to Uzbekistan's institutional environment.

The methodology of this article is based on qualitative comparative analysis, institutional analysis, and systems approach. The qualitative comparative analysis is used to compare traditional housing management with professional management. Institutional analysis is applied to study the interaction between residents, management companies, local authorities, and regulatory institutions. The systems approach is used because professional management cannot be reduced to one element; it is a combination of legal, financial, technical, digital, and social mechanisms. The proposed methodological framework is presented in (Table 1).

Results

The research shows that the introduction of professional management in the housing and communal services system should be based on six methodological blocks: legal-institutional regulation, technical diagnostics, professional selection of managers, financial and service planning, digital transparency, and continuous improvement.

Table 1

Proposed methodological framework for introducing professional management in housing and communal services

№	Methodological block	Main content	Practical implementation	Expected result
---	----------------------	--------------	--------------------------	-----------------

			mechanism	
1	Legal and institutional basis	Formation of a clear legal and organizational framework for professional housing management	Standard management contracts, resident meeting procedures, responsibility matrix, competitive selection rules	Clear distribution of rights and responsibilities among residents, management companies and local authorities
2	Diagnostics of housing stock and communal services	Comprehensive assessment of the technical condition of multi-apartment buildings and related infrastructure	Building passport, technical inspection, inventory of common property, assessment of engineering networks	Objective identification of repair priorities and service needs
3	Selection of professional management organization	Choosing a qualified management company or professional manager based on transparent criteria	Open competition, qualification requirements, evaluation of staff, financial capacity and service experience	Increased quality of management and reduction of random or unqualified service providers
4	Service standards, KPIs and budgeting	Introduction of measurable service obligations and transparent financial planning	Annual service plan, maintenance budget, KPIs for cleaning, repairs, emergency response, elevators and safety	Better service quality, predictable expenses and improved financial discipline
5	Digital transparency and resident feedback	Ensuring open access to information and regular communication with residents	Digital platform, online reports, complaint tracking system, digital voting and resident satisfaction surveys	Increased resident trust and reduced information asymmetry
6	Audit, benchmarking and	Continuous monitoring and	Annual audit, public	Sustainable improvement of

	continuous improvement	comparison of management performance	ratings, comparison between buildings, analysis of complaints and satisfaction indicators	professional management quality
--	------------------------	--------------------------------------	---	---------------------------------

The first block is the legal and institutional basis. Uzbekistan already has a legal framework for managing multi-apartment houses. The law regulates relations in this field and provides mechanisms for selecting management organizations through open competition. However, the practical implementation of this framework requires more detailed methodological instruments. These include standard contracts between residents and management companies, minimum service packages, clear responsibility matrices, and model procedures for resident meetings.

The second block is technical diagnostics of the housing stock. Professional management must begin with a detailed assessment of the building's actual condition. This includes the roof, façade, basement, entrances, elevators, heating systems, water supply and sewage networks, electrical systems, fire safety, courtyard infrastructure, and energy efficiency. Without technical diagnostics, monthly payments are often calculated mechanically, while repair priorities are determined subjectively. A building passport and annual technical inspection should become mandatory elements of professional management.

The third block is the professional selection of management organizations. At present, Uzbekistan has more than 900 management service companies serving multi-apartment buildings. The existence of many companies is positive, but market quantity does not automatically ensure service quality. Therefore, selection criteria should include not only the proposed tariff but also professional experience, number of qualified staff, availability of emergency teams, financial discipline, digital reporting capacity, resident satisfaction indicators, and previous audit results.

The fourth block is the introduction of service standards, key performance indicators, and transparent budgeting. Professional management should be based on measurable obligations. For example, the management company should report how often entrances are cleaned, how quickly emergency requests are resolved, how maintenance funds are spent, how many preventive inspections are conducted, and what capital repairs are planned. This approach is consistent with international principles of facility management and service charge transparency.

The fifth block is digital transparency. The creation of electronic registers and digital platforms is essential for modern housing management. Uzbekistan has already moved toward digital regulation through registers of management bodies and online tools. Digitalization should allow residents to see monthly payments, debts, repair plans, contracts, procurement information, inspection results, and complaint status. This reduces information asymmetry between residents and management companies.

Table 2

Comparative characteristics of traditional and professional management in multi-apartment housing

Dimension	Traditional / fragmented management approach	Professional management approach
Decision-making	Decisions are often reactive and based mainly on complaints or emergency situations	Decisions are based on technical diagnostics, annual planning and service priorities

Financial management	Mandatory contributions dominate; reserve funds and long-term repair planning are weak	Transparent budget, arrears control, reserve funds and diversified service financing are introduced
Service quality	Service standards are unclear and difficult to measure	Service quality is measured through KPIs, response time, repair quality and resident satisfaction
Accountability	Residents receive limited information about expenses, contracts and completed works	Regular reports, open financial information, digital registers and audit results are provided
Technical maintenance	Repairs are often carried out after breakdowns or visible deterioration	Preventive maintenance, scheduled inspections and capital repair planning are applied
Resident participation	Participation is usually limited to complaints or occasional meetings	Residents participate through general meetings, digital voting, feedback systems and approval of service plans
Human resources	Shortage of certified managers, engineers and service specialists may be observed	Professional training, certification, ethical standards and specialization of staff are required
Use of digital tools	Digital systems are limited or used formally	Digital platforms are used for payments, complaints, reports, contracts and monitoring
Improvement mechanism	Problems may be repeated because lessons are not systematically analyzed	Audit, benchmarking, complaint analysis and resident satisfaction data support continuous improvement
Main outcome	Low trust, unstable service quality and weak long-term planning	Higher service quality, financial transparency, technical sustainability and resident trust

The sixth block is audit, benchmarking, and continuous improvement. Professional management should not be evaluated only at the moment of contract signing. It must be assessed continuously. Annual audits, resident satisfaction surveys, complaint analysis, comparison between buildings, and public ratings of management companies can create incentives for quality improvement. Benchmarking is especially important because residents need comparable information to understand whether their management company is performing well. The comparative characteristics of traditional and professional management are shown in (Table 2).

The results suggest that the methodological foundation of professional management should not be limited to administrative instructions. It should operate as a full management cycle: diagnosis → planning → contracting → implementation → monitoring → evaluation → improvement. This cycle allows housing management to move from reactive maintenance to preventive and strategic management.

Discussion

The transition to professional management in housing and communal services is not simply a technical reform. It changes the relationship between residents, service providers, and public authorities. In the traditional model, residents often perceive monthly contributions as a

compulsory payment with unclear results. Management companies, in turn, may lack incentives to improve quality if residents do not have access to transparent performance data. Local authorities may become involved only when conflicts or complaints increase. This model produces a cycle of distrust.

Professional management should break this cycle by introducing clear rules, measurable service obligations, and transparent information flows. International practice shows that professional property and facility management requires a balance between managerial autonomy and accountability. Management companies need enough autonomy to organize services efficiently, but residents must have the right to monitor, evaluate, and replace poor performers.

One of the key methodological issues is the role of residents. Professional management does not mean that residents become passive consumers. Since common property belongs to apartment owners collectively, resident participation remains essential. Ostrom's theory of common property governance suggests that sustainable management depends on clearly defined rules, monitoring, collective decision-making, and conflict-resolution mechanisms. Therefore, the proposed methodology should include regular resident meetings, digital voting, accessible financial reports, and mechanisms for resolving disputes before they escalate.

Another important issue is financial sustainability. Official information indicates that many management companies in Uzbekistan still rely mainly on mandatory contributions, while private investment in the sector remains limited.

This creates a narrow financial base. To solve this problem, management companies should diversify their services: technical maintenance, energy audits, minor repairs, landscaping, security services, waste management coordination, parking management, and consulting for capital repairs. However, diversification should not lead to hidden charges. Each additional service must be contractually defined and approved by residents.

The third issue is professional competence. The sector needs certified managers, engineers, accountants, customer service specialists, and digital platform operators. A management company cannot be professional if it only collects contributions and responds to emergency complaints. It must have internal procedures, trained personnel, safety protocols, and documented workflows. ISO 41001 can be used as a methodological reference because it requires organizations to demonstrate effective and efficient facility management and meet the needs of interested parties.

The fourth issue is service quality measurement. In many housing systems, residents complain not only about poor service but also about the absence of objective criteria for evaluating service. Therefore, the following key performance indicators can be recommended for Uzbekistan's housing and communal services system:

Service response time should measure how quickly the management company reacts to emergency and non-emergency requests. Preventive maintenance indicators should measure how many scheduled inspections and repairs are completed. Financial transparency indicators should measure the timeliness of budgets, reports, and year-end accounts. Resident satisfaction indicators should measure trust, complaint resolution, and perceived quality. Technical condition indicators should measure changes in the state of shared property. Energy efficiency indicators should measure reductions in heat loss, electricity consumption in common areas, and water leakage.

The fifth issue is digitalization. Digital platforms can increase transparency, but digitalization must not become formal. A platform is useful only if it contains accurate and updated data. Residents should be able to see the management contract, tariff calculation, monthly income and expenditure, repair schedules, procurement information, complaint history, and audit results. Digital feedback should also be integrated with real managerial decisions. If residents submit complaints online but no corrective action follows, digital tools will not increase trust.

The sixth issue is the integration of housing management with broader urban policy. Multi-apartment buildings are part of the urban infrastructure system. Poor building management affects energy consumption, sanitation, waste collection, neighborhood safety, and the visual appearance of cities. The World Bank's infrastructure governance analysis for Uzbekistan emphasizes the importance of needs-based prioritization, value for money, strategic coordination, transparency, and resilience. These principles should also guide the management of residential buildings.

The seventh issue is the creation of a competitive but regulated market. Competition can improve service quality, but only if residents have real choice and reliable information. If management companies are selected without resident participation or if contracts are unclear, competition becomes formal. Therefore, open competition should be supported by public ratings, minimum qualification requirements, complaint statistics, and standardized comparison tools. The law already provides for open competition in selecting management organizations, but methodological guidelines are needed to make this mechanism effective in practice.

In this context, the proposed methodological approach can be summarized as follows: professional management should combine resident-centered governance, transparent finance, technical competence, digital accountability, and continuous quality improvement. This combination is necessary because the weaknesses of the housing and communal services system are not isolated; they are interconnected. Poor technical diagnostics leads to irrational budgeting. Weak budgeting leads to incomplete repairs. Lack of reporting leads to distrust. Distrust leads to non-payment. Non-payment weakens the financial capacity of management companies. As a result, service quality declines further. A professional methodology must address the whole cycle.

Conclusion

The housing and communal services system of Uzbekistan is entering a new stage of development in which professional management is becoming a key condition for improving service quality, protecting common property, and increasing residents' trust. The existence of more than 44,000 multi-apartment buildings and more than 7.1 million residents living in them shows the social scale of the issue. The legal framework has already been established through the Law "On Management of Multi-Apartment Houses", but the effectiveness of this framework depends on methodological implementation.

The article argues that professional management should be introduced through a systematic methodology consisting of six main components: legal-institutional basis, technical diagnostics, professional selection of managers, service standards and transparent budgeting, digital accountability, and continuous improvement. This approach transforms housing management from reactive maintenance into a planned, measurable, and resident-oriented system.

The research also shows that international concepts such as facility management, ISO 41001, service charge transparency, and common property governance can be adapted to Uzbekistan's conditions. However, adaptation should consider local realities: the level of resident participation, payment discipline, condition of the housing stock, capacity of management companies, and the evolving role of public authorities.

The practical significance of the article lies in the proposed methodological framework. It can be used by management service companies, local authorities, homeowners' associations, researchers, and policymakers. The framework can also serve as a basis for developing model contracts, service quality indicators, digital reporting standards, and certification programs for professional housing managers.

References:

1. Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. LRU-581. On Management of Multi-Apartment Houses. Adopted on November 7, 2019.

2. President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Upcoming tasks in the sphere of managing multi-apartment houses determined. January 14, 2026.
3. Yuksalish Movement. Managing Multi-Storey Housing: Public Perspectives and Systemic Challenges. 2025.
4. ISO. ISO 41001:2018 Facility management — Management systems — Requirements with guidance for use.
5. International Facility Management Association. What is Facility Management?
6. Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. Service Charge Residential Management Code.
7. Ostrom, E. Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action. Cambridge University Press, 1990.
8. World Bank. Central Asia Uzbekistan Infrastructure Governance Assessment Report. 2023.
9. Primova, Sh. K., & Mamatkulov, M. Sh. Reform of Housing Communal Services in Uzbekistan. American Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences, 2023.
10. Berdiyeva, D. A. Improvement of the Management System of Housing and Communal Services in Uzbekistan. ACADEMICIA, 2021.
11. Shaymukhamadiev, Kh. I. Advanced Foreign Experience in the Implementation of Reforms in Housing and Communal Services. International Conference on Studies on Applied Sciences and Education, Berlin, 2022.
12. Kabus, J. Modern Management Methods in the Area of Public Housing Resources. Sustainability, 2023.