

**MECHANISMS OF INTERACTION BETWEEN
THE AKMOLA REGION MASLIKHAT AND THE SENATE OF KAZAKHSTAN**

by

Danagul Akshalova,
Karlygash Dadenova,
Nurlan Issakhanov,
Sayan Katrenov

Supervisor

Professor Serik Orazgaliyev

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Abstract

Recent political reforms in Kazakhstan have increased formal institutional linkages between local representative organs (maslikhats) and the national policymaking process; however, the reality of regional influence on the policy process is uneven. This study is aimed at analyzing the interaction mechanisms of Akmola Region Maslikhat and Senate of the Republic of Kazakhstan and also identifying the limitations that restrict their efficiency. Using the mixed-methods design, we combined a stakeholder survey with semi-structured interviews. Survey findings were moderately positive in terms of perceptions regarding communication reliability and mutual understanding, but weaker in terms of perceptions concerning clearly defined procedures for joint decision-making. Qualitative data shed light on this, finding that the nature of interaction is largely episodic, individual, and focused on information exchange, rather than coordinated follow up. Three cross cutting constraints regularly arise: lack of analytical and staffing capacity in maslikhats; lack of a common digital infrastructure to monitor requests and results; and advisory formats that spread responsibility and undermine accountability. An example vignette from Astana shows that both proximity and higher capacities can reduce transaction costs but that these factors do not substitute for institutionalized routines. The study concludes that strengthening Senate-Maslikhat interaction requires turning formal channels into consequential mechanisms through predictable consultation cycles, traceable feedback loops, and targeted capacity support. Recommendations include a unified e-platform for tracking initiatives, expanded Council participation with clearer mandates, and pilot joint working groups. Findings are indicative given the single region focus and limited Senate survey participation.

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1. Introduction

1.1.Problem statement

Recent political reforms in Kazakhstan suggest a continuing commitment to strengthening local governance in a wider agenda of decentralization. Local representative bodies (maslikhats) are supposed to act as channels for citizen participation and regional input in decision-making by public bodies. Formally, maslikhats are supposed to represent the will of the population in their territories, to develop measures for local development, and to control their implementation. In principle, these roles make them key institutions of local self-governing and democratic accountability.

In practice, though, we see a divergence between formal institutional design and actual intergovernmental interaction. Kazakhstan's system of governance is still highly centralized and maslikhats are often seen as extensions of the local executive (akimat), rather than representative bodies independent of it. Although the legislation gives maslikhats formal powers, such as the approval of local budgets, participating in the selection of akim (regional head) of the region, and initiating a vote of no confidence, these powers are seldom actually used as tools of oversight. It follows that there is thus a systematic pattern in which there are formal mechanisms but restricted practical influence and the representative functions of maslikhats go beyond the effective political and administrative tools that are at their disposal.

A further limitation is to do with the communication and feedback loops between the regional and national levels. Vertical linkages are provided by the election of Senators by maslikhats and Senate's Council on Interaction with Local Representative Bodies (hereafter – Council). Nonetheless, these channels are not fully institutionalized, and interaction is on an ad hoc basis. As a result, regional needs and initiatives do not translate consistently to national policies and national programs are not sufficiently attuned to local specificities. Additionally, limited accountability for follow up and tracking of outcomes without transparency contributes to a lack of understanding of outcomes, further strengthening the disconnect.

These shortcomings go beyond procedural issues. If the regional representative bodies fail to articulate priorities well or if they fail to gain responsive engagement from higher level institutions, policy effectiveness is reduced. Accordingly, the problem that this project is about is this: how to enhance the mechanisms of interaction between regional maslikhats and the Senate of Kazakhstan to reflect more effectively regional needs in the national policy making and implementation more sensitive to local realities. Interaction mechanisms are thought of as repeatable channels and routines that link regional and national actors and make regional input consequential. Three categories of

mechanisms are considered, namely, representation channels, consultation formats, and feedback and tracking routines.

This study focuses on the Akmola Region Maslikhat as an appropriate case because it provides a suitable empirical setting for assessing how formal interaction mechanisms operate under regional conditions and how institutional constraints shape routine practice. It also allows to examine coordination issues which may be relevant in other areas; thus, the results might be more general.

1.2. Research objectives and research questions

The project therefore has four objectives: to outline the formal and informal mechanisms of interaction between the Senate and maslikhats using, as a primary case of study, the Akmola region; to identify key gaps and challenges limiting the effective cooperation (including limitations of communication, feedback, and capacities); to use limited illustrative information from Astana as a reference point for differences in interaction; and for the improvement of the Senate-Maslikhat interaction in accordance with the broader agenda of the governance reforms in Kazakhstan.

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What formal mechanisms govern interaction between the Senate and regional maslikhats, and how are they implemented in practice?
2. What challenges and gaps characterize Senate-Maslikhat interaction in Akmola Region?
3. What illustrative lessons from Astana can inform improvements in Akmola's interaction mechanisms, given the study's evidence base?
4. What institutional, procedural, or capacity-related changes do stakeholders propose to improve the effectiveness of intergovernmental interaction?

1.3. Structure of the thesis

The next chapter analyzes relevant theoretical and contextual literature on institutional design, intergovernmental relations, as well as on the role of maslikhats in Kazakhstan, including comparative perspectives. The methodology chapter outlines the mixed-methods design and explains data sources and case selection. The findings chapter reports survey results and interview-based thematic insights. The discussion interprets findings in relation to the literature and Kazakhstan's institutional framework. The conclusion summarizes the main contributions, presents recommendations, and notes limitations.

2. Literature review

This literature review draws together institutional theory, intergovernmental relations (IGR), and decentralization scholarship to explain what specific mechanisms of interaction support or impede regular, responsible interaction between regional representative bodies and national legislatures. The emphasis is on mechanisms as repeatable tools that transmit information, preferences, and accountability across levels, and on the conditions under which formal channels become usable in practice.

2.1. Interaction mechanisms and the gap between formal design and practice

In the case of multi-level of governance, interaction is not spontaneous. It is sustained by mechanisms that define patterns of interaction, such as who interacts with whom, by what authority, and with what consequences. For Senate-Maslikhat relations, the set of relevant mechanisms provides: representation channels (indirect senatorial selection by maslikhats), consultative and coordination formats (the Council of the Senate and associated working procedures) and accountability routines (feedback, follow-up and transparent outcomes tracking) (Tastanova, 2023; Senate of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, n.d.). Mechanisms, also, include enabling infrastructure: staffing, analytical support and information systems, that allow local representative bodies to take positions of actionable appeals.

Across these categories there is a constant tension between "rules on paper" and "rules in use" (Ostrom, 2005) institutional scholarship brings out. Formal structures may be adopted as an indication of legitimacy and responsiveness, while actual behavior is determined by informal norms, incentives and capacity for enforcement (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; North, 1990). Kazakhstan's maslikhats are a case in point, as the legal framework gives them formally important powers, such as the ability to vote on local budgets and to initiate procedures for no confidence of akims (heads of regional and local executive authorities), but, at the same time, as multiple analyses note, these instruments are hardly ever used to challenge the executive in practice (OECD, 2017). The result is a systematic pattern whereby there are formal mechanisms but limited practical influence, and the aspiration of representatives is higher than the effective political and administrative toolkit available to maslikhats (Ternovaya, 2018).

2.2. Theoretical lenses and expectations of the performance of mechanisms

Firstly, institutional theory emphasizes the tendency of institutionalized arrangements for oversight to become dis-jointed from practice in contexts that are characterized by a set of hierarchical norms and centralized appointment arrangements (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Bromley & Powell, 2012;

Scott, 2013). In such contexts, consultative platforms and oversight instruments might exist in form but not really be used, and deficiencies in implementation might go unarticulated or unaddressed (Bromley & Powell, 2012; North, 1990). From this perspective, one can think of the functionality of a mechanism only if it generates predictable routines: issues are raised through established channels, transformed into workable suggestions, and there is a clear expectation of follow-up and accountability. On the other hand, when outputs are non-binding, responsibilities are diffused, and compliance is largely a matter of individual goodwill as opposed to institutional accountability, processes assume a ceremonial quality (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

Secondly, IGR theory addresses the problem of interaction in terms of vertical coordination, bargaining and implementation across levels (Wright, 1988; Agranoff & McGuire, 2004). Effective IGR generally demands arenas for negotiation (councils, committees) to be stable, communication channels to be clear, and procedures for managing intergovernmental disagreement and monitoring (Wright, 1988). Senate's Council is intended as such an arena and is tasked with developing proposals for improving legislation on local governance, as well as supporting the Senate's engagement with maslikhats (Senate of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2007/2017). Yet IGR theory also means that it is not sufficient for there to be a council. By having a coordinating body that is explicitly advisory in nature and where the membership is dominated by actors at national-level, or not fostering responsibilities for its implementation, its impact may be informational instead (Schnabel, 2017; Schnabel & Hegele, 2021). Analyses of council documents available indicate that problems can be discussed without clear assigned responsibilities, or without systematic articulation of implementation gaps. This pattern is consistent with coordinating structures lacking enforceable follow up measures.

Thirdly, research on collaborative governance places an emphasis on the potential value of involving local representatives in joint problem-solving and policy development. By bringing the local knowledge into the early stages of the policy cycle, working groups that have maslikhat deputies involved in the legislative drafting process can in theory boost implementability and reduce information asymmetries (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012). Yet collaborative governance is conditional. It assumes recurring interaction, clarity of procedures and trust-building as the result of open, rule-governed co-operation (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Thomson & Perry, 2006). For hierarchical unitary types, joint formats are likely to persist as consultation where process design does not develop clear decision pathways and responsibilities (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Fung, 2006). Also lacking in analytical and administrative capacity, local participation is also often only symbolic (Arnstein, 1969).

Taken together, these lenses are suggestive of a way of evaluating the performance of mechanisms not by reference to their formal design per se, but to the routines they engender in practice: structuring agenda setting, clarity of responsibility, verifiability of outputs and follow-up accountability. They also suggest that mechanisms are likely to become ad hoc, person-dependent interaction, where incentives favor compliance with executive authority, or where there are no consequences for non-responsiveness.

2.3. Decentralization, accountability, and the capacity precondition

Decentralization scholarship complements the mechanism perspective in explaining when the local representative bodies can make vertical interaction consequential. There are conventional typologies distinguishing between deconcentration (administrative relocation), delegation (transfer of powers to semi-autonomous organizations) and devolution (transfer of power to elected local governments). In such cases, the accountability gains related to decentralization are generally associated with devolution and high levels of local discretion, particularly when local authorities have powers that are matched with resources and responsibilities (OECD, 2019; Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007). Empirical work has further found that fiscal autonomy is an important transmission belt for accountability and trust: local discretion over revenues and spending can help to strengthen responsiveness and public trust more than spending decentralization alone (Martinez-Vazquez, Lago-Peñas, & Sacchi, 2017). At the same time, scholars point to the fact that decentralization without competent institutions, sufficient resource bases and enforcement mechanisms can lead to increased disparities or weak governance (Prud'homme, 1995; Kyriacou, Muinelo-Gallo, & Roca-Sagalés, 2015).

Such findings point to the fact that the effectiveness of interaction mechanisms depends not so much on whether they are formally there, but rather on how autonomy and capacity actually is given to local representative institutions. For Senate-Maslikhat interaction, the implication is direct. Representation mechanisms and consultative channels have only a meaningful role to play if maslikhats are able to credibly articulate regional preferences, scrutinize implementation and keep the follow-up going over time. Where the autonomy and capacity of actors is limited, vertical interaction is likely to be sporadic and occur through informal networks, leaving outcomes uncertain and not creating incentives for greater responsiveness at higher levels of government (OECD, 2017). The decentralization of Kazakhstan has been centrally managed and gradual, such as decentralization of election structures of the rural akims and following a more general set of roadmaps for local governance with the aim of being accountable. However, the literature also notes that formal reforms

do not automatically translate into empowered representative oversight as long as executive dominance and resource dependence remain in place (OECD, 2017; Government of Kazakhstan, 2021).

2.4. Maslikhats in Kazakhstan

Maslikhats are local elected representative bodies that continue to have constitutional power to represent the population and control the implementation of measures linked to common state interests. They approve local development plans and budgets, control program implementation and may start a no confidence procedure against akims (Republic of Kazakhstan, 2001). In principle, this mandate makes maslikhats an institutional link between citizens and the state and by extension, as potential agents of regional priorities into national legislative deliberation (Dosmagambetova, 2021; Januzakova, 2007).

Kazakhstan-focused scholarship in public administration is nonetheless coming to a similar conclusion: the formal power of maslikhats is weakened by the dominance of executives, dependence on resources, poor analytical capacity, and low incentives to challenge akimats (Amandykova, 2011; Dosmagambetova, 2021; Tasybaeva, 2019; Zhumashov, 2023). Analyses indicate a hierarchical nature of the political culture in which akims are seen to be the President's representatives, which renders confrontation politically sensitive and costly (Republic of Kazakhstan, 2001; Januzakova, 2007). Maslikhats also do not have independent bureaucratic infrastructure and rely on executive resources for administrative support and information, which may discourage monitoring (Tasybaeva, 2019; Dosmagambetova, 2021). In the academic space it also seems that maslikhats tend to often rely on the regional programs designed by executives and have minimal agency to affect the ways these programs are implemented, perpetuating a formal-practical gap (Zhumashov, 2023; Januzakova, 2007). Case based work likewise identifies a lack of autonomy as well as inconsistent citizen engagement as persistent limitations for maslikhats as institutions of local self-governance (Zhumashov, 2023; Januzakova, 2007). International diagnostic work is in broad agreement with these patterns, emphasizing capacity and accountability bottlenecks in the multi-level governance setting in Kazakhstan (OECD, 2017).

These conditions have predictable effects for the interaction mechanism set. For the representation mechanism, the Senate of Kazakhstan is partially formed through indirect elections by maslikhat deputies, which should in principle translate regional opinions into national legislating. Yet the accountability linkage is weak if senatorial selection is low competition, if senators face no standardized obligation to report back to their electors and if maslikhats are without levers to sanction

non- responsiveness (OECD, 2017). In these kinds of settings, indirect election is exclusively a formal channel of representation without ensuring vertical continuity of responsiveness.

For advisory and coordination mechanisms, the Council of the Senate offers a formal platform for dialogue and recommendations for legislative reform. Its advisory status and composition, however, make it impossible to produce meaningful results, unless the Senate authority would make it institutional and its suggestions would translate into legislative agendas, committee work or administrative decisions (Senate of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2007/2017). Meeting materials indicate that although cooperation is always supported as a principle, concrete deficiencies are dealt with cautiously and there may be only limited follow up, which is in line with consultative mechanisms that are weakly tied to enforcement and transparent monitoring of implementation.

For accountability and feedback mechanisms, scholarship and policy assessments identify a "missing loop": even when issues are raised through formal channels, responsibility for follow-up is vague and there is a lack of clear transparent tracking, which creates uncertainty about outcomes and undermines the incentives to remain engaged in the process (OECD, 2017; Zhumashov, 2023). Related local governance mechanisms that are designed to enhance participation and oversight have similar vulnerabilities. Public Councils had been introduced as consultative bodies to bring in more citizen input and oversight and had been active in discussing issues and listening to appeals. Yet current assessments point to a lack of transparency in deliberations and uncertainty over impact on decisions, suggesting that consultation without clear feedback and accountability may not have much governance value (KISI, 2017; Republic of Kazakhstan, 2015; Makulbayeva, 2024). Participatory tools may have a role to play in strengthening oversight by representatives, though these cannot compensate for empowered representative mechanisms if the latter is structurally limited (KISI, 2017; OECD, 2017).

Capacity limitations add to mechanism performance. Many maslikhat deputies serve on a part-time basis and have limited access to professional staff to support their work, which lowers their capacity to prepare detailed proposals, assess the budget implications of decisions or systematically monitor the programs of the executive (Tasybaeva, 2019; Amandykova, 2011; OECD, 2017). Recent practices may help over time to increase visibility and accountability, for example, increased transparency through streamed sessions and evaluation initiatives, however these steps do not necessarily address the underlying connection between representation, follow-up and enforceable responsiveness (OECD, 2017). In combination, the literature suggests that the mechanisms of

interaction between the Senate and Maslikhat in Kazakhstan exist and are periodically triggered, but it is within structural constraints that interaction tends to be more episodic consultation rather than routinized and outcome-oriented coordination.

2.5.Comparative reference points and transferable mechanism principles

Comparative experience is useful here as design logic. In the United States, territorial representation is inherent in the Senate and committee-centered policymaking provides formalized venues within which subnational impacts and resource allocations are discussed and negotiated (U.S. Constitution, art. I, §3; U.S. Senate, n.d.), which may produce substantial incentives for national legislators to alter regional concerns into policy concerns (Evans, 2011; Krehbiel, 1991). While the institutional design of Kazakhstan is different, there is a case from the United States that shows how institutional process and committee mandate, and budgetary leverage, can inject regional concerns into the national decision making process (Mayhew, 2004; Shepsle & Weingast, 1987).

France provides a contrary example from a unitary state with a strong central tradition but institutionalized vertical coordination mechanisms created through decentralization. State region planning contracts and planning routines can offer predictable ways to have inter-level dialogue, particularly in contexts of crisis where coordination and information flow is crucial (Cole, 2012; Committee of the Regions, n.d., Du Boys et al, 2022). Mechanism-wise the comparative message is the same in all the systems: routinization (regular forums and procedures), it is enforceable follow up (clear responsibility and reporting requirements) and it is transparent tracking that separates symbolic consultation from consequential coordination (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012). These principles are analytically relevant to Kazakhstan because they specify how vertical interaction can be institutionalized even in unitary settings, provided that procedural design and accountability infrastructure are sufficiently robust.

2.6.Research gap

Despite the formal powers of maslikhats in Kazakhstan, existing literature offers limited empirical analysis of how specific interaction mechanisms linking regional representative bodies to the national legislature operate under routine conditions, and why their effects remain uneven. In particular, the scholarship rarely traces the full pathway from formal channels (indirect senatorial selection, advisory councils, and consultations) to follow-up, accountability, and policy uptake, or isolates the institutional and capacity constraints that cause these mechanisms to function as symbolic consultation rather than usable governance tools. This gap motivates a focused examination of Senate-

Maslikhat interaction to identify which mechanisms exist, how they are implemented in practice, and what conditions would make them reliably consequential.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The study used a mixed-methods design in the study, which implies both quantitative and qualitative analytical methods. research design, which incorporates quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis. The quantitative part estimated the frequency of communication, satisfaction rates, and perceived performance, whereas the qualitative one provided profoundness and contextualization of the results, defining the institutional and procedural peculiarities and reasons of the success or failure of a certain interaction mechanism.

The general design is one that can be referred to as sequential exploratory. To gather the data, a structured questionnaire was administered to the stakeholders involved in the interaction between Senate and Maslikhat; furthermore, semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations were conducted to get a qualitative input. The survey provided a point of reference including the frequency of deputy communications and ratings of current mechanisms on which the interview protocols were developed, enabling the interviews to inquire about the reasons behind the patterns, as identified in the survey. This chain is necessary to make sure that the larger trends are viewed in terms of personal experience and institutional procedures.

3.2. Research Setting and Case Selection

The case study was centered on the Akmola region Maslikhat and its relations with the Senate of Kazakhstan with a small illustrative vignette of Astana. Akmola Region was selected as one of the main cases due to several reasons. Firstly, it characterizes the unitary nature of Kazakhstan presenting a representative background of the regional governance concerns. Second, the research team had access to key informants in the Maslikhat of Akmola, which helps in collection of data. Third, the administrative center of the region, Kokshetau, is geographically located close to Astana, which makes it possible to conduct the field visit in a more practical way and observe the field visit of the Senate or common events in the area.

Astana was also added due to two restricted reasons. In the first place, being the national seat of Parliament it gave admission to the members of the Senate and their staff, and permitted them to observe what was going on in the Council of the Senate. Second, Astana was an exemplary vignette of capital-city coordination practices when needed, which could promote a better follow-up. The study

does not claim a systematic comparison between Akmola and Astana, and any references to Astana are treated as non-generalizable given differences in resources and political context.

The research took place in two major places, namely, Astana and Kokshetau. The fieldwork in both locations involved formal meetings and where possible direct observation of sessions where Senate and Maslikhat participants were involved.

3.3.Units of Analysis

Individual actors and institutional processes were defined as the key units of analysis for the study. On the micro level, it was analyzed at the individual level of inter-level relationships, that is, among members of the Senate, deputies of the Akmola Regional Maslikhat, and relevant administrative members. At the macro level, the analysis involved the formal procedures, administrative arrangements and joint activities. The behavioral aspect, which is how the participants talk during meetings, who talks and who listens and what results as a follow-up action, was recorded in observations where possible.

3.4.Sampling Strategy

The qualitative part used selective sampling, which is indicative of the clearly defined population of participants of the interaction between senate and Maslikhats in the Akmola region. Members were sampled as per the institutional role and as the participants in intergovernmental communication processes. The snowball sampling then revealed other pertinent participants. Seven semi-structured interviews were carried out.

A larger elite audience was the focus of the quantitative survey, which was sent to the deputies of the Akmola Maslikhat and select members of the Senate that dealt with regional matters. Since the study was exploratory, the analysis of the survey was limited to the descriptive statistics.

3.5.Data Collection Methods

- **Survey:** The questionnaire was carried out using electronic resources through Google Forms. Coordination was made on the basis of Akmola Maslikhat office and on personal assistants of senators. The number of items was approximated to be 30 where they were split into subcategories of interaction frequency, satisfaction ratings, perceived barriers, and optional recommendations. Particular reform proposals were sought in Section 7. The survey provided a quantitative data with a few qualitative remarks due to the open-ended questions.

- **Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted in person in Kokshetau and Astana, except one which was done via a video call. Each interview lasted between 30 to 50 minutes and was based on a loose guide covering experiences of cooperation, communication patterns,

challenges, and suggestions of improvements. Respondents were allowed to talk freely; through informed permission, the interviews were audio-recorded to be transcribed accurately.

- **Observation:** It was not possible to observe directly because of the rare formal joint Senate-Maslikhat meetings. However, the team noted two related events: a maslikhat meeting whereby a visiting senator was briefing on legislation, as part of a larger Senate outreach project; and a longer Senate Council meeting in Astana (April 2025) in which high-ranking officials and foreign partners deliberated on the national-level interaction framing. Field notes were used to record patterns of dialogue, roles of speakers, types of questions and general tone. The maslikhat session mainly followed the formal and unilateral style where the senator was the main talking person and the deputies were the main listeners with little and careful questioning. Cooperation, the recent reforms and the role of maslikhats as agents between the citizens and the state were also stressed at the Council meeting by the Chair Maulen Ashimbayev, and a UNDP representative. Such observations helped to enhance the qualitative analysis through providing some contextual insights on communication styles and power dynamics.

3.6.Data Analysis

The quantitative survey data were only analyzed on the framework of descriptive statistics. The answers were analyzed using Excel, frequencies, percentage distributions, and mean scores of scale indicators were calculated. Key variables were compared with simple cross-tables of the responses of Maslikhat deputies and senators. The small sample size meant that no statistical significance testing was done, and the results were provided in the form of narration. One of the exceptions was a Likert scale factor analysis of perceived interaction effectiveness, which indicated there was a single common factor.

Thematic analysis was used in qualitative analysis of interviews. Following the coding, inductive methods revealed the repetitive ideas and issues mentioned by several respondents. Primary codes were then combined into larger thematic groups. Each theme is represented by representative citation. In order to increase the reliability, data triangulation was carried out by comparing the findings of the interviews with the results of the surveys and observational media. Interestingly, observational data has supported the use of interview assessments during the observation of the hierarchical nature of interaction, the dominance of formal communication, and the explicit positions stated in the open speeches. At all stages of the study, the principles of research ethics were maintained.

4. Findings

4.1.Quantitative Findings: Survey Results

The survey sample is dominated by maslikhat deputies, who account for almost half of the participants (48%), followed by administrative and support staff (33%). This means that the quantitative results primarily reflect the perceptions of actors working in regional representative bodies and their staff. Other categories such as civil servants, chief experts, media representatives, academics, senators are significantly less represented (usually 1-3% each), yet their representation adds to the institutional diversity as well as national and expert perspectives (Figure 1 in Appendix 2). Consequently, the conclusions of the survey must be viewed as primarily the regional side perceptions of the workings of mechanisms of Senate-Maslikhat interaction while the Senate side perceptions are gained more selectively through interviews, observation and limited responses from the senate side to the survey.

This survey was attended by the respondent with the skewed educational attainment to higher education level, with 55.2% having master's degree and 34.5% holding bachelor's degree. Additionally, three of the respondents were doctors or PhDs, indicating that the study participants have high academic qualifications and professional competence (Figure 2).

4.1.1.Effectiveness of Interaction between the Senate and Maslikhats

The results of the survey show that the interaction between the Senate and maslikhats is seen as functional, but institutionally underdeveloped: the average scores for all indicators vary between 3.23 and 3.87 on a five-point scale (Figure 3). The most favorable scores were obtained in terms of personal satisfaction, mutual understanding and the reliability of communication; this indicates a generally positive, though fluid, perception. At the same time, the lowest score for joint decision-making procedures indicates a significant weakness in formalized and predictable coordination mechanisms which are replaced largely by informal practices.

The distributions of responses are marked by a high degree of heterogeneity: there are large standard deviations and asymmetries, suggesting that there are uneven experiences among different groups of respondents. Approximately half of the respondents are of the view that the existing communication channels are reliable and timely, which is in favor of their operation. Conversely, the large share of neutral answers (36.1%) indicates considerable uncertainty. Negative assessments (13.9%) do not dominate but are not absent; it shows that interaction is still difficult for a certain subset of respondents. The massive "neutral zone" highlights the importance of continuing to increase transparency, predictability and regularity of communications (Figure 4). Moreover, the fact that the

majority of the respondents perceive the existence of clear procedures for joint decision-making in a neutral light can be deduced from the distribution of their responses. The largest group chose the "neutral" option (42.9, n = 30) indicating either uncertainty or lack of information and practical experience to assess the transparency of such procedures (Figure 5). It is important to mention that the strengthening of procedural rather than structural mechanisms of interaction is preferred: the respondents point out the importance of permanent coordination organizations, frequent joint meetings (Figures 6 and 7), and more precise rules, while digital tools and more active communication are secondary but additional elements.

Analysis of types of desired interactions provides evidence of predominance of practical mechanisms and procedures. The most popular formats of interaction at the face-to-face level, including the frequent inclusion of regional issues in the discussion and decision-making processes, are the one used regularly and the digital tools and its alternative formats have a secondary role (Figure 9). Furthermore, most respondents do not identify structural reforms as a priority, which correlates the higher effectiveness of interactions with explanation and improvement of existing procedures and rules and implies a focus on gradual and evolutionary institutional change (Figure 10). In addition, forums and seminars as formats are, in general, viewed with suspicion, especially among maslikhats. This observation accords with the qualitative comments where their practical usefulness is questioned, and they are seen more as formal than truly effective platforms. Digital platforms (e.g. the Electronic Maslikhat) are the main subject of representatives of the senate, the level of interest of maslikhats and other organizations is less, as in this case, alternatives are badly needed. It is worth pointing out (repeat) that maslikhat representatives are also keen on optimizing the system via a particular electronic platform that would enable them to take certain requests of the region to their logical conclusion. This suggests a divergent of expectations: at a national level, there is a higher focus on technological solution as compared to the local level (Figure 8).

The level of training activities is rated highly positively (Figure 11), with a vast majority affirming direct practical value, which gives a sense of how important capacity building is in increasing inter-institutional cooperation. Nonetheless, the results also indicate that it may be worthwhile to further tailor training material to specific coordination issues. Overall, it could be concluded that the key priorities of respondents concern joint strategic planning (Figure 12), early involvement of maslikhats and stable platform for meaningful dialogue and there is wider support for further institutionalizing of procedures to make Senate-Maslikhat interaction more sustainable rather than radical institutional reform.

4.2. Qualitative Findings: Interview Insights

This section synthesizes insights from the semi-structured interviews and observation, clustered into five thematic findings that emerged inductively from the data: institutional design, communication infrastructure, capacity and analytics, interaction routines and reform proposals. Direct quotes of participants are presented to illustrate each theme (translated to English where originally in Kazakh or Russian). These themes reflect the views of those "on the ground" in the Senate-Maslikhat relationship, and they provide context and explanation for the quantitative patterns that were described above.

4.2.1. Institutional Design

The data obtained suggest the asymmetry between the declared institutional goals of maslikhats and the real limits of their powers, which brings into existence a gap between their legal functions and real mechanisms of influence. The perception of maslikhats as predominantly institutional extensions of the existing system of control, rather than as representative bodies with own authority is accompanied by consistent assessments of respondents in this regard, which indicate a discrepancy between their formally defined roles and a lack of practical means of influence at their disposal. One maslikhat deputy said this: "On paper we have a lot of say; we approve budgets, we can even fire the akim, but in reality we just don't."

Interviewees advocated clearer channels in the statute and enhanced powers to bring the input of maslikhat up a notch. For instance, one of the recommendations was to introduce a formal procedure by which maslikhats can initiate legislation in the Senate. "Right now if we have a proposal for a change in the law, we have to lobby a senator or a deputy in the Mazhilis to put it forward, we can't put it forward directly," commented one committee head. "Why not let a maslikhat, perhaps through the Senate, to officially propose legislative amendments?" This would require constitutional or legal changes, but the idea is to have an institutional pathway for bottom-up lawmaking comparable to petitions, or regional legislative initiatives in some countries.

Another frequently mentioned was the limited scope of appointment/confirmation powers. Beyond akims, maslikhats do not confirm any other important local officials, including heads of regional departments. Several interviewees suggested increasing the voice of maslikhats in the appointment or evaluation of local executives in order to increase their capacity to exercise oversight.

Notably, several participants cited a pending Law on Local Self-Government – a draft concept that was to further delineate local powers, sometimes referred to as the new LSG law. They said they hoped its passage would help clarify competencies and strengthen oversight. However, at the time of

research, this law had been in discussion for years without enactment. "We have been hearing about a new law to empower the local councils, still nothing. We need that clarity, lamented one maslikhat secretary. The overall sentiment in this theme is that the drive for representation (what is really an influential local voice) exceeds the legal tool kit that is currently available to us. The formal design of institutions has not caught up with the rhetoric of local empowerment.

4.2.2. Communication Infrastructure

The predominant issue that appeared across the interviews was the lack of a unified digital platform for Senate-Maslikhat interactions. Interviewees said draft proposals and follow ups frequently get lost in email chains and personal networks. All the interviewed agreed that there is a lack of system level visibility. Neither deputies nor citizens can easily check on progress on intergovernmental requests. One analogy was: "It's like sending a package without sending a tracking number." Without an integrated e-platform for example an e portal accessible to all maslikhats and Senate to log the issues and monitor the responses, institutional memory is lost with each convocation or personnel change. New members of maslikhat may not be aware of what their predecessors raised in the previous term. Similarly, if one key senate staffer who liaised with regions leaves then the informal knowledge may leave with them.

Interestingly, younger or more tech savvy interviewees were most passionate about this theme. They recommended specifics: a web portal or module as part of the existing government e-document system, which would flag all inquiries from maslikhats and indicate the stage of their processing, as well as store outcomes. "Even the public could see that, say, the Akmola Maslikhat proposed X, and the Senate committee responded Y," one emphasized emphasizing the benefits of transparency. According to them, digital infrastructure would not just help improve efficiency, but also the trust as there would be less of a perception that documents vanish into a black hole. One senator conceded this point, saying that from the senate's side as well, communication is far from perfect: "We sometimes don't know about a problem in an area until it's a crisis." If there was a shared system where maslikhats are logging issues, then we could be more proactive."

4.2.3. Capacity and Analytics

Interview data point to a regular lack of in-house analytical ability among maslikhat deputies, representing an organizational barrier to effective interaction. In contrast to the functioning of national legislators, maslikhat deputies often have no personal staff and support for their research, and the secretariats are more engaged in administrative functions than policy analysis. One of the deputies commented that there is often no dedicated staff member for a deputy, that some have a student intern

or a helper who has to pay out of pocket, while another was more brutal in stating that Google is their assistant when writing proposals or reading laws. This analytical deficit means that maslikhat evidence based inputs will be limited and that the senate will not be dealt with on substantively equivalent terms.

Policy quality implications and proposals: it is a fact that the lack of analytical and legal skills directly affects the quality of communication with the senate. According to the senators, regional submissions are often not justified in a formal and legal way: get a directive with the suggestion of increased funding in a particular area with no references or legal notions. Interviewees therefore advocated the establishment of inspectorate analytical units in maslikhats or at least at the regional level, which would be able to assess the regional impact of draft legislation and monitor implementation. As one committee chair opined, "We could have better accountability of akimats and give the senate more substantive inputs if we had an analytical department."

4.2.4. Interaction Routines

Interaction routines are episodic and person of individuals. Relationship with the Senate has been defined as one which was sporadic, informal and subject to much personal initiative rather than set practices. Interviewees identified a lack of coordinating mechanisms (regular consultations or working groups), resulting in a push - pull engagement based on elections or high-profile events. One deputy called it: "Either we are visiting the Senate for one half of the week and hear nothing worth hearing for six months. Although informal channels can solve acute problems in a timely manner, they cannot be documented and hinder institutional learning or continuity. Formal meetings result in protocols and joint statements, but respondents doubt their effectiveness. A member of the maslikhat group commented that the absence of deadlines, responsible persons and enforcement mechanisms slows down the progress. The high rate of personnel turnover also works against continuity, and issues are rarely passed across convocations in a systematic manner. When a former deputy was asked how this happened, she responded that when leadership in the Senate changed, we had to begin afresh.

4.2.5. Reform Proposals

Even though there were various issues, which were brought by interviewees, due to several concerns, there was no dominantly negative evaluation, and several reform-based proposals were suggested to enhance the interaction of the Senate and maslikhats. Here, the most stated proposals are summarized, which is a reflection of an evolving agreement as to the areas of institutional priority focusing on change.

In general, the qualitative results are generally representative of the way in which Senate-Maslikhat interaction works in reality. Although a formally established framework exists, its functioning continues to be poor, which is majorly caused by restricted mandates, incomplete communication as well as insufficient organizational support. Notably, the flaws registered in Akmola region essentially do not differ with the ones registered in Astana-based interactions. Nevertheless, the respondents in Astana defined these problems more clearly and suggested more realistic ways of reform.

The most likely reason is that being based in Astana, deputies have better human capital and are more in touch with the main legislative and administrative procedures. At that moment, interviewees jointly generated an internally created map of potential improvement directions. These results are done in reference to the theoretical frameworks and literature reviewed above and discussed in the following section.

5. Discussion

The analysis of the data from both the quantitative survey and the qualitative interviews combined help to explain how Senate-Maslikhat interaction functions in practice and why the outcomes have been so uneven. The findings suggest a recurring pattern, formal channels are present and periodically activated, but do not consistently produce routinized coordination, traceable outputs, or enforceable follow-up. The central empirical insight is thus not the lack of "mechanisms", but a recurring discrepancy between formal availability and practical usability which affects the outcome of interactions across regions and policy domains.

5.1. Formal arrangements and their practical limits

Kazakhstan has the components of vertical linkage: elected maslikhats, representation of regions in the Senate, and an institutionalized council that is supposed to link the representative bodies at the regional and national levels. The findings are consistent with the argument that formal channels have become more numerous in recent years, including changes related to the 2022 constitutional reforms. Yet the functionality of these channels is limited by on-the-ground factors that repeatedly emerged across the data set: limited analytical capacity, unclear feedback pathways and reliance on personal initiative.

From an institutional theory perspective, this situation can be understood as a gap between the formal normative rules and the actual practices of their implementation. Formal oversight powers and

consultative mechanisms may coexist with informal norms and incentive systems that constrain the ability to challenge executive decisions and that prevent a clear division of responsibility while reducing consultation to a procedural element rather than a mechanism of accountability. The qualitative evidence captures this tension directly: participants describe meetings, visits, and official correspondence, but also describe cautious framing of problems, uncertainty about what happens after an issue is raised, and reliance on individuals to keep matters moving. Under such circumstances, formal expansion does not necessarily mean consistent institutional leverage. Instead, the system generates episodic responsiveness with potential for unevenness across territories and weakness across personnel change.

5.2. Communication versus coordination

A second implication is the difference between information exchange and concerted action. Survey results show moderately positive views of communication reliability and mutual understanding, and comparatively weaker views of clear procedures for joint decision-making. Qualitative accounts for this divergence: Interaction is often felt as information transfer (letters, visits, informal calls, periodic meetings) whereas coordination calls for a sort of pipeline, which transforms information into aligned action. In reality, respondents report numerous examples of contact, but fewer of instances where contact yields predictable results, in terms of decisions assigned, tasks assigned, and follow-up monitoring. This distinction is important because communication alone does not solve the problem of misalignment of implementation. Without coordination routines issues may be raised over and over again with no clear closure, leaving outcomes in the air and providing little incentive for sustained engagement.

The institutional design of the main consultative format endorses this tendency. The Council is advisory and does not in itself produce binding decisions. IGR theory would not conceptually address advisory arenas as if they were irrelevant: they can stabilize the agenda setting process and offer a repeatable venue for negotiation. However, the IGR scholarship also suggests that venue existence is not enough, in cases where outputs are weakly associated with implementation responsibility, where membership and agenda control is predominantly at the national level, or where there are no monitoring mechanisms. Evidence referred to in the findings is consistent with these constraints: issues may be discussed without consistent assignment of responsibility, and follow-up appears difficult to verify, implying that the Council functions not as an operational coordination, but more as an informational format. As a result, vertical interaction tends to be consultative with limited ability to discipline implementation.

5.3.Capacity constraints as a limiting factor

Across methods, capacity appears to be the most consistent limitation to mechanism performance. Quantitative patterns include the respondents in better resourced environments report themselves as having higher contact frequency and higher satisfaction. Interviews offer the mechanism logic for this association: limited staffing, thin secretariat functions, and scant analytical support make it challenging for maslikhats to translate local problems into actionable proposals, to consider policy and budget implications, and/or to systematically monitor executive programs. Where analytical capacity is weak, inputs are likely to be general, which limits their traction in national level processes that run through draft texts, quantified impacts and committee processes. Capacity therefore influences not only the quantity of interaction, but the quality and "actionability" of interaction.

Deputies that are part-timers and lack professional support have high transaction costs in sustained scrutiny and follow-up, particularly in the case of politically sensitive oversight. Capacity deficits therefore consolidate an equilibrium with stability and where oversight and vertical linkage are formally confirmed but selectively applied. In such conditions even well-designed mechanisms perform underachieve since one side of the relation cannot consistently provide evidence based proposals or maintain monitoring. The findings thus determine a practical pathway through which decentralization reforms can be more formal in nature: representation and consultation expand, but the institutional capability to make those channels consequential is uneven.

5.4.The missing digital backbone

A mechanism level deficit that came through strongly in the qualitative evidence was lack of shared information infrastructure. Interviewees reported a lack of a cohesive system that would track proposals and inquiries, processing stages, and response and results. The practical consequences were evident throughout the dataset: lack of transparency for deputies and citizens, low institutional memory in the event of personnel turnover and using personal correspondence as the default working process. In environments such as these, follow-up is more difficult to maintain because there is no definitive record of what was discussed, to where it was forwarded, what response was made, and whether action was taken.

This digital gap is salient analytically because it defines one concrete part of the "missing feedback loop". Even where formal meetings take place, an interaction mechanism still lacks higher functionality if it cannot reliably retain and display basic information: what was brought up, by whom, when, where it was routed, what the response was, whether there was any remedial action. Without this infrastructure, follow-up becomes a discretionary and challenging task to audit, which in turn does

reduce incentives for actors to invest efforts into systematic engagement. The end result is an interaction pattern that is legible to insiders by means of their personal networks but institutionally opaque, limiting both accountability and learning over time.

5.5.Astana as an illustrative case

We initially expected Astana to have better-working interaction mechanisms because of lower transaction costs and proximity to national institutions. In practice, we did not see fundamentally different mechanisms, but we did see a higher capacity, and clearer understanding of what the improvements are needed. This suggests that Astana is likely to act as a testing ground for practices that gave better thought and which regions may subsequently adopt.

5.6.From formal channels to consequential mechanisms

Taken together, the evidence points to a shift away from symbolic consultation to more consequential vertical coordination. Reforms that were put in place in the early 2020s have helped to broaden channels of representation and increase institutional visibility at the regional level, with participants in this study generally expressing support for increased regional participation. However, the empirical data obtained suggests that meaningful engagement is still dependent on the quality of institutional engagement mechanisms: their ability to ensure that procedural predictability is followed by mechanisms to ensure that consultation outcomes are integrated in decision-making processes, and promote accountability both through follow-up and monitoring mechanisms rather than through appeals to the good will of participants.

Overall, the core challenge is not the absence of channels, but the lack of mechanism attributes that render channels consequential. Across the evidence a thin set of attributes set symbolic consultation apart from operational coordination; predictable interaction routines, clear responsibility assignment, traceable outputs, and credible follow-up. Where these attributes are absent, formal channels are still provided for, but underused and vertical interaction is episodic and person dependent. This discussion thus refines broad claims about centralization and capacity constraint by noting specific points of mechanism through which interaction loses policy traction: thin local analytical support, advisory venues weakly coupled to binding processes, and missing documentation and tracking infrastructure that prevents sustained accountability.

6. Conclusion

This paper examined the mechanisms of interaction between the Akmola Region Maslikhat and the Senate of Kazakhstan and identified the set of challenges limiting this relationship,

The results show that, even though the formal mechanisms for interaction between the Senate and the maslikhats, including mechanisms for regional representation in the Senate and advisory bodies for the purpose of facilitating communication between the national and the regional levels, were established, these institutions now exist in a half-functional state. Intergovernmental communication does exist; but it is irregular, unsystematic, and its effectiveness is mostly a matter of individual initiative rather than of sustainable, institutionalized, and documented procedures. Although the maslikhats are granted a certain level of formal powers (namely, the approval of local budgets, the exercise of oversight functions, the initiation of votes of no confidence against akims), in general their role in executive decision-making opportunities is limited. The discrepancy between their legally determined powers and their actual influence increases the possibility that the needs of local communities will not be fully considered on the national level and the maslikhats will become mainly approving rather than representative institutions.

Based on interviews and the results of the surveys, four key institutional limitations were identified. First, systemic communication gaps remain, which are manifested in the lack of a common platform and predictable procedures for submitting, following, and providing feedback on initiatives; as a result, proposals end up lost and subsequent actions are fragmented. Second, the weak institutional capacity of maslikhats, especially the lack of qualified personnel and analytical support, hampers the capacity of maslikhats to prepare well-grounded proposals and engage in thorough analysis of policy and budget decisions. Third, the institutional cultural characteristics, such as a hierarchical nature and a preoccupation with risk aversion, undermine incentives for critical oversight of the executive branch, while the Senate does not necessarily value regional feedback, at least where the feedback is not clearly politically significant. Fourth, interactions are very much personalized: when mechanisms work well, they usually are based on informal networks and personal contact rather than on the formalization of institutional prescriptions.

6.1. Recommendations

Building on the findings and reflecting ideas voiced by participants, we propose six mutually reinforcing steps to strengthen Senate-Maslikhat interaction.

1. Institutionalize regular consultations by creating predictable routines: an annual forum between the leadership of the Senate and the chairs of the maslikhat to discuss cooperative

mechanisms and outline regional priorities, along with quarterly region-level meetings in which senators meet with the corresponding maslikhat.

2. Create a unified electronic platform (proposed as "InterGov Connect") by developing a unified portal that allows maslikhats, Senate committees, and relevant ministries to submit, route, and track issues and provide clear status updates and enforce a required feedback loop. The platform should also be an archive of previous cases and best practice.

3. Strengthen institutional interaction by increasing the membership of the Senate's Council, to include current maslikhat deputies in addition to Senate representatives; at the same time, prescribe clear functions for this body, including making regular (e.g., quarterly) analyses of initiatives submitted by maslikhat and making systematic reports on their consideration and implementation.

4. It is recommended to provide specialized funding to establish small analytical units or to engage specialized consultants at regional level; even small expansion of analytical unit by two or three specialists can be very effective to substantially improve the quality of formulated initiatives and effectiveness of subsequent monitoring of their implementation. These should be accompanied by regular professional development programs on legislative technique, budget analysis and inter-level communication.

5. Institutionalization of mechanisms for the accountability of senators to the regions, and thus reinforcing the feedback loop between the national and regional levels of representation, increasing the responsibility for taking the regional interests into account in the legislative activity.

6. Joint formats of pilots and encourage a culture of interaction. Initiate pilot joint working groups on specific areas of public policy with senators, maslikhat deputies and representatives of relevant central/executive bodies. Implementation of such pilot projects in the Akmola region can be a demonstrative case of the possibility of joint policymaking and inter-level coordination. At the same time, senior political and administrative leadership should give the consistent signal that interaction with maslikhats is an organic and necessary component of the decision-making process. Accordingly, institutionalize the practice of including structured meetings with the maslikhat deputies in the program of regional visits by representatives of the central government.

6.2. Limitations of the Study

The study's quantitative sample was limited, especially when it comes to Senate representation, meaning both limiting the ability to statistically generalize the results obtained, as well as enabling a more in-depth quantitative analysis to be conducted. Accordingly, the survey results should be regarded as indicative and analytically informative but not as definite and exhaustive empirical

conclusions. Response bias is possible, as the participants may be more systematically invested in (or critical of) intergovernmental interaction than are the non-participants. The analytical focus of the study was mostly the Akmola region (with limited comparison to the city of Astana), which may not have reflected fully the interregional differences and variation in institutional practices.

Moreover, the study also is located within a specific institutional moment. Kazakhstan is publicly debating further parliament redesign, including possible unicameralization of the Parliament (a referendum is tentatively discussed for 2027). Such a shift could modify or supplant the Senate's role as a "chamber of regions" and, consequently, the formal and informal avenues by which maslikhats seek national-level traction. Therefore, several recommendations should be read not only as Senate specific fixes, but as transferable design principles (routinised interaction, traceability, and capacity) applicable to any future regional-representation mechanism.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that the mechanisms ensuring communication between regional maslikhats and the Senate are an important component of Kazakhstan's institutional attempts to build a more adaptive and accountable public administration system. Consistent strengthening of this vertical line of interaction can contribute to a more accurate consideration of the local socioeconomic realities in national policy; as well as to the expansion of the real influence of their respective representative bodies on the decision-making affecting the interests of their territorial communities.

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Appendix 1

Section 1: Respondent Profile (Demographics)

Please select or fill in the appropriate response.

1. Your current role:
 - ☐ Maslikhat Deputy
 - ☐ Senate Member
 - ☐ Administrative/Support Staff
 - ☐ Other (please specify): _____
2. Length of tenure in current position: _____ years
3. Have you previously worked in both bodies (Senate and Maslikhat)?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
4. Region represented: _____

Section 2: Likert-Scale Questions (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree)

2.1 Effectiveness of Interaction

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

- a. Interaction between the Senate and Maslikhats is systematic and well-structured.
- b. Communication channels between the two bodies are reliable and timely.
- c. The current interaction mechanisms promote mutual understanding.
- d. There are clear procedures for joint decision-making.
- e. Conflict resolution mechanisms between the Senate and Maslikhats are effective.
- f. Regional issues are adequately reflected in national legislative outcomes.
- g. My body (Senate or Maslikhat) is actively engaged in inter-institutional dialogue.
- h. I am personally satisfied with the current state of cooperation between the Senate and Maslikhats.

2.2 Importance of Various Improvement Measures

Please rate the importance of the following actions for improving cooperation:

- a. Increasing frequency of joint sessions and consultations
- b. Creating dedicated liaison officers or units
- c. Establishing formal feedback mechanisms on legislation
- d. Enhancing digital communication tools
- e. Conducting joint policy planning or strategy development
- f. Organizing regular intergovernmental workshops and capacity-building sessions
- g. Reforming legal frameworks to clarify roles and responsibilities
- h. Ensuring transparency and public reporting of intergovernmental coordination

Section 3: Frequency of Interaction

How often do you engage in direct interaction (formal or informal) with representatives of the other institution?

- Weekly
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Annually
- Rarely or never

Section 4: Open-Ended Questions

Please provide your responses in short paragraphs or bullet points.

1. In your experience, what examples of effective cooperation between the Senate and Maslikhats stand out?
2. What are the main difficulties you face when coordinating actions across these two levels?
3. What structural or procedural improvements do you think would most enhance collaboration?
4. What tools or formats (e.g., working groups, forums) would improve communication and decision-making?
5. In your view, how can regional needs be more effectively reflected in national legislation?

Section 5: Educational Background and Capacity Building

5.1 Highest Level of Education Completed:

- Secondary Education
- Vocational/Technical Education
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- PhD or equivalent
- Other (please specify): _____

5.2 Field of Specialization (for highest degree): (Open-ended)

5.3 Have you completed any advanced training or professional development programs related to public administration, legislation, or intergovernmental relations in the past 5 years?

- Yes
- No

If Yes:

5.4 Please specify the type(s) of training received:

- Public policy and governance
- Legislative drafting or analysis
- Intergovernmental coordination
- Strategic planning or leadership

- Communication or negotiation skills
- Other (please specify): _____

5.5 Organizers of training (select all that apply):

- Civil Service Training Institute
- National Parliament or Senate programs
- International organizations (e.g., UNDP, OECD)
- Universities or research centers
- NGOs or think tanks
- Other: _____

5.6 In your opinion, how relevant was the training to your current role?

(1 = Not Relevant, 5 = Highly Relevant)

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

5.7 Do you think further training is needed to improve the effectiveness of interaction between the Senate and Maslikhats?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

5.8 If yes, which areas should be prioritized for future training? (Open-ended or multiple choice)

- Legal frameworks and legislative process
- Digital tools for communication and coordination
- Strategic planning and joint policymaking
- Participatory governance and stakeholder engagement
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Conflict resolution and negotiation

Other: _____

Appendix 2

Analysis of survey findings

Figure 1. Distribution of respondents by position

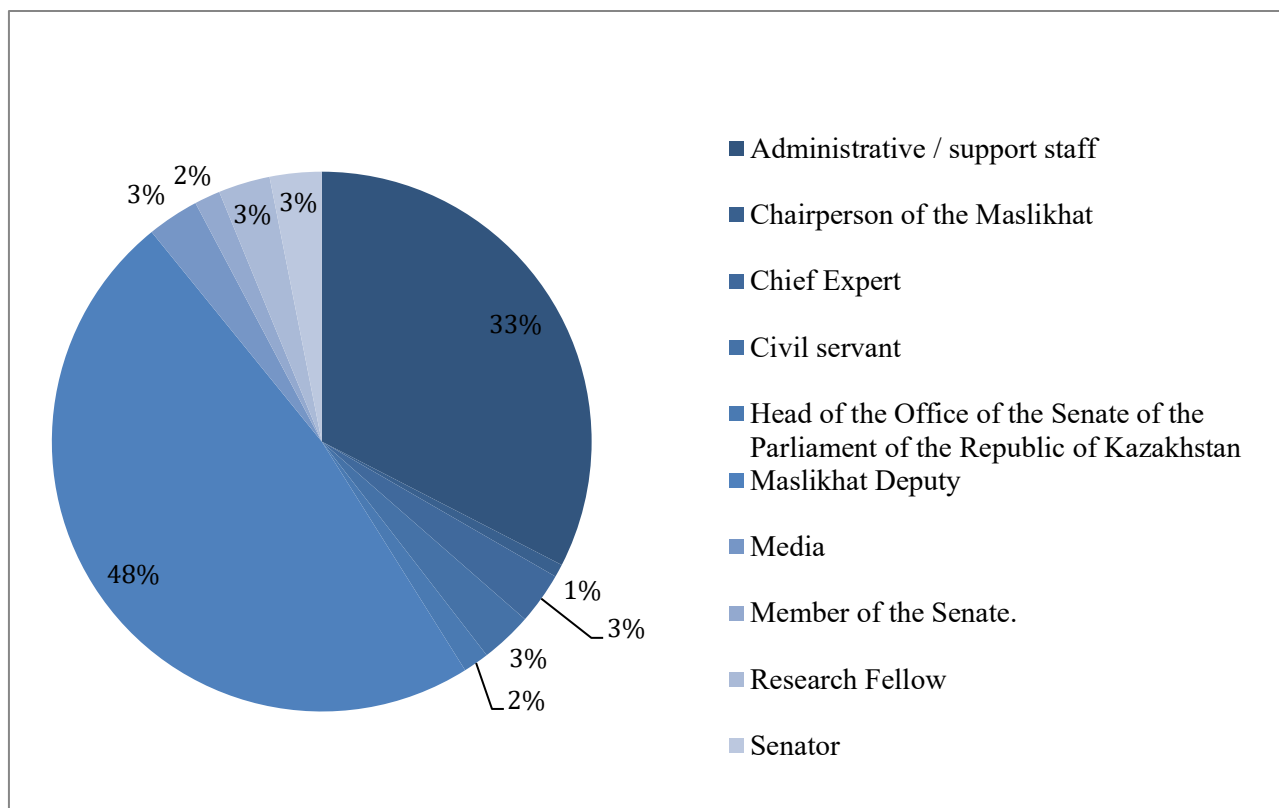


Figure 2. Education and Professional Development

Master's degree	39
Master of Public Policy	23
Pedagogical	2
Management	2
Political Science	2
Psychology and Management	2
Agronomy	2
Medicine	1
Mechanical Engineer	3
Mining Engineer (Mechanical), Lawyer	2
Bachelor's degree	24
Economics	8
Finance	4
Lawyer	2
Journalism and Political Science	2
Political Science	2

Public Administration and Management	2
Teacher / Education	2
Engineer	2
Doctorate / PhD	3
Agronomy	1
Lecturer-Researcher	1
Candidate of Philological Sciences	1
Secondary specialized education	2
Lawyer	2
Secondary education	2
Management	2
Grand Total	70

Figure 3. Effectiveness of Interaction

	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	f.	g.	h.
Mean	3,54	3,71	3,78	3,23	3,67	3,68	3,65	3,87
Median	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	4
Std Dev	1,22	1,13	1,27	1,05	1,11	1,12	1,21	1,30
Pearson's coefficient of skewness	1,33	-0,77	-0,51	0,66	-0,88	-0,85	-0,86	-0,30

- a. Interaction between the Senate and Maslikhats is systematic and well-structured.
- b. Communication channels between the two institutions are reliable and timely.
- c. Existing interaction mechanisms facilitate mutual understanding.
- d. Clear procedures for joint decision-making exist.
- e. Conflict-resolution mechanisms between the Senate and Maslikhats are effective.
- f. Regional issues are adequately reflected in national legislation.
- g. My institution actively participates in inter-institutional dialogue.
- h. I am personally satisfied with the current state of interaction between the Senate and Maslikhats.

Figure 4. Communication channels: reliability and timeliness

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
The communication channels between the two bodies are reliable and timely.	2.8%	11.1%	36.1%	19.4%	30,6%
Number of respondents	2	8	25	14	22

Figure 5. Assessment of joint-decision making procedures

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
There are clear procedures for joint decision-making.	11.4%	8.6%	42.9%	28.6%	8.6%
Number of respondents	8	6	30	20	6

Figure 6. Importance of increasing frequency of joint sessions and consultations

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Increasing the frequency of joint meetings and consultations	2.8%	2.8%	52.8%	13.9%	27.8%
Number of respondents	2	2	37	10	19

Figure 7. Frequency of interactions

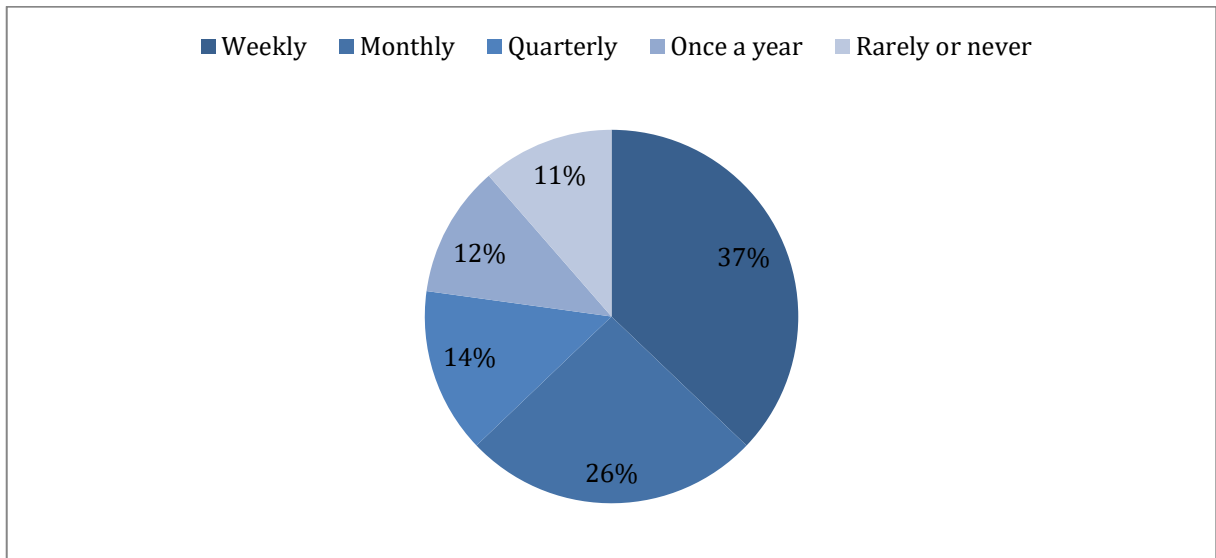


Figure 8. What tools or formats (e.g., working groups, forums) would improve communication and decision-making?

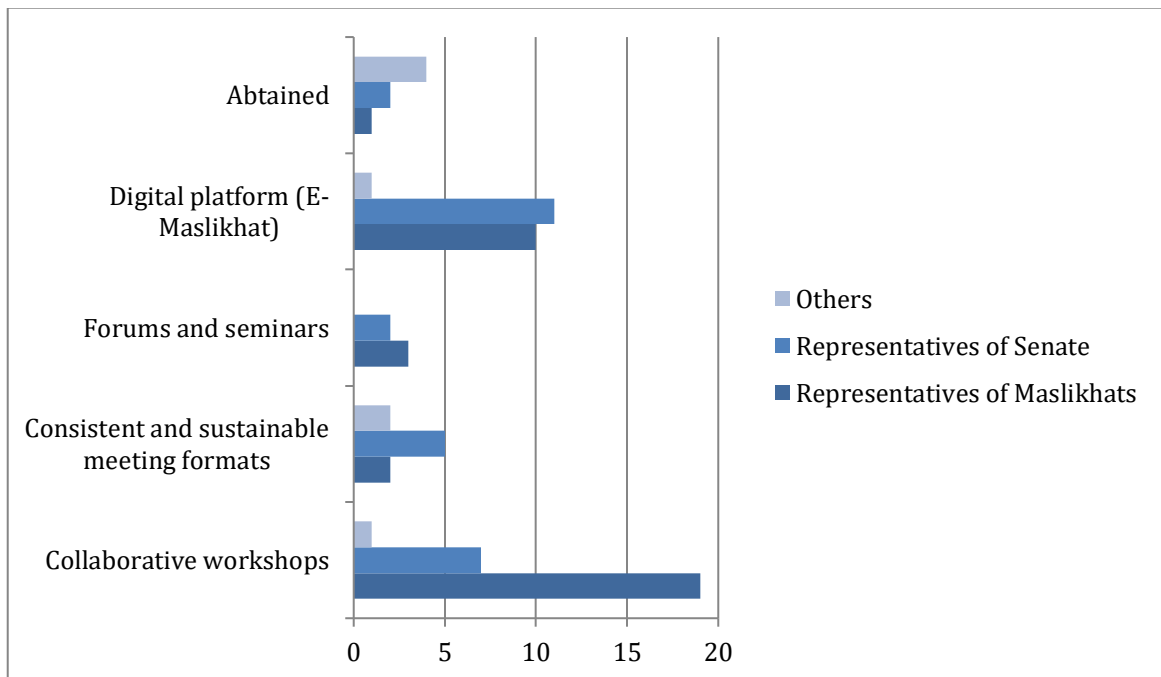


Figure 9. How can regional needs be more effectively reflected in national legislation?

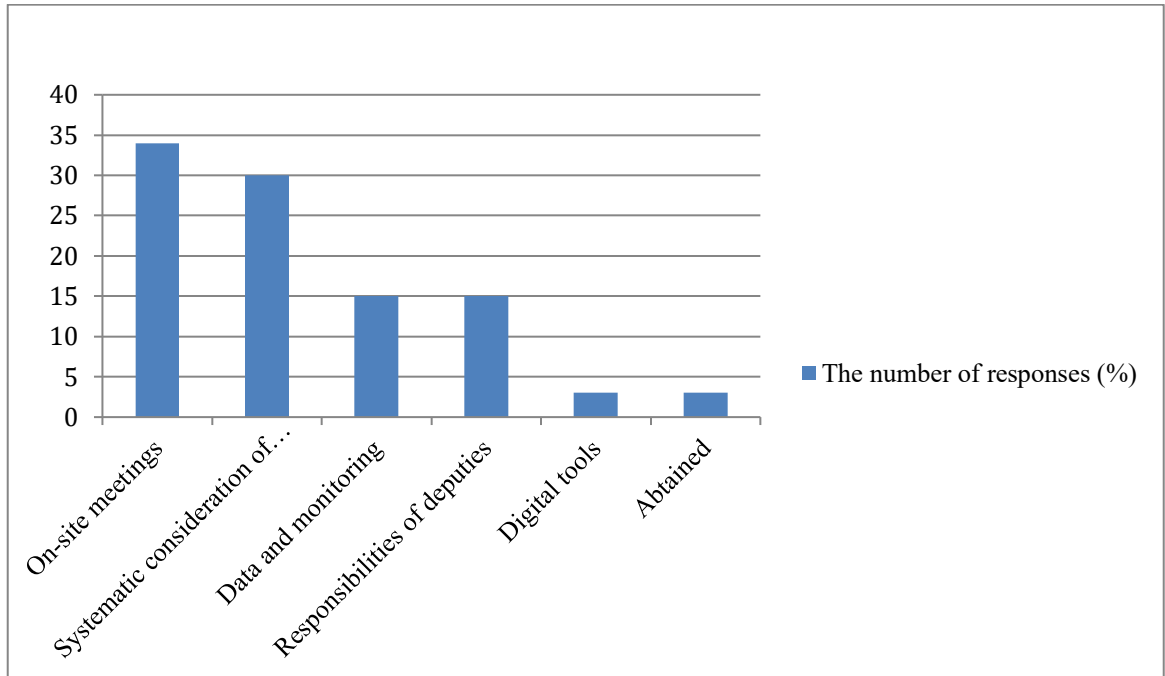


Figure 10. What structural or procedural changes, in your opinion, could improve the interaction?

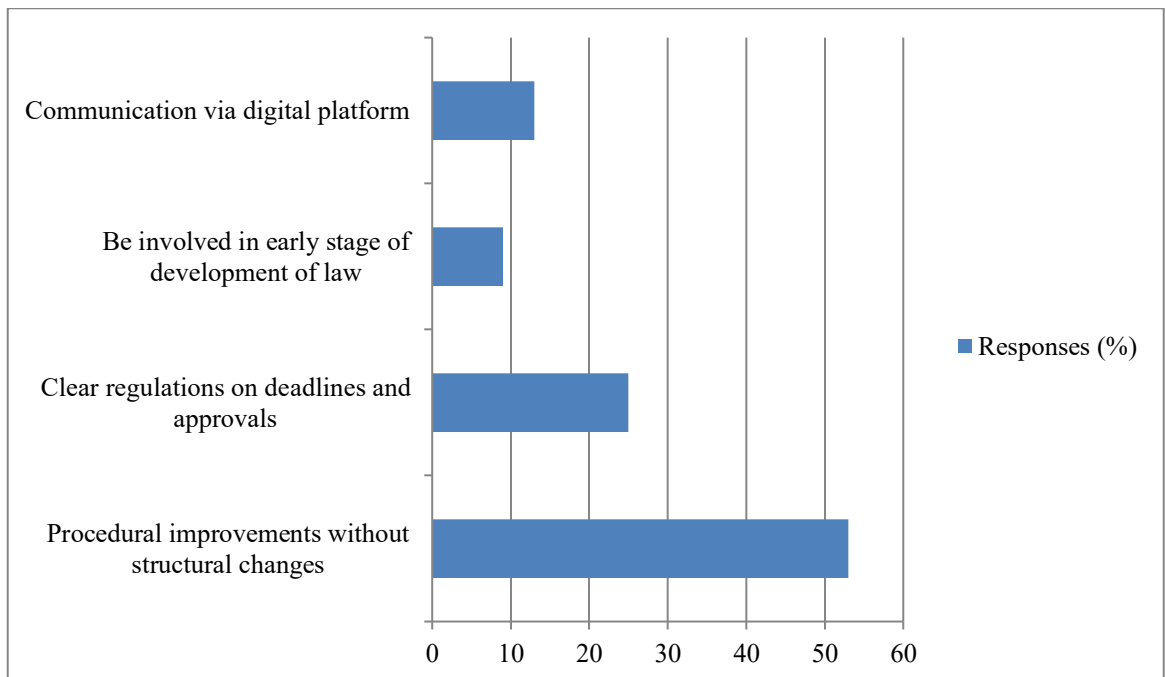


Figure 11. Do you think further training is needed to improve the effectiveness of interaction between the Senate and Maslikhats?

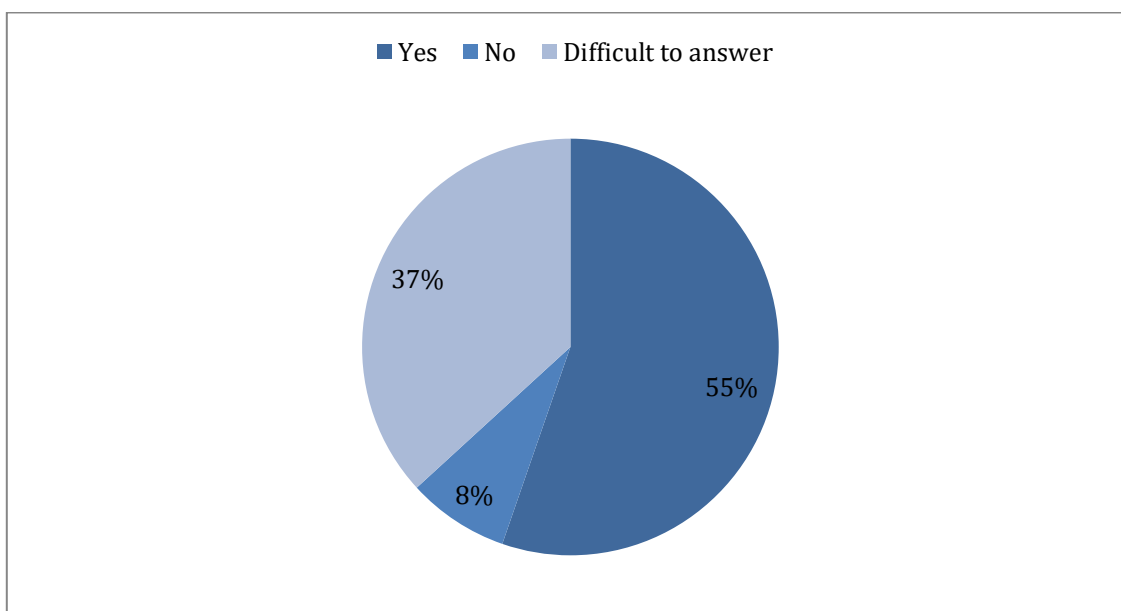


Figure 12. Which areas should be prioritized for future training?

