

INNOVATION SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



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ISSUE 11



Acceptance of papers **November, 2025**



**Acceptance of
papers**

Published monthly



Topics

economics,
technology, social
sciences



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THE SCIENTIFIC-POPULAR ELECTRONIC
JOURNAL **"INNOVATION SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY"** HAS BEEN REGISTERED
UNDER THE NUMBER **C-5669633** BY THE
AGENCY FOR INFORMATION AND MASS
COMMUNICATIONS (AOKA) OF THE
REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN, EFFECTIVE
FROM OCTOBER 9, 2024.

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The scientific electronic journal "Innovation Science and Technology" has been included in the list of scientific publications recommended for the publication of main scientific results of dissertations for the award of PhD and DSc degrees in economics and technical sciences, in accordance with the Resolution No. 370 of the Presidium of the Higher Attestation Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan, dated May 8, 2025.

Electronic publication, Issue 11. 146 pages.
Approved for publication on November, 2025.

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ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY AND INNOVATIVE TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY IMPLEMENTATION IN UZBEKISTAN'S OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY



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Abstract: The article examines, through empirical and comparative analysis, the impact of implementing digital technologies in Uzbekistan's oil and gas industry on economic efficiency, operational safety, and management responsiveness. For the 2020–2024 period, dynamic changes in production indicators, operating costs, energy and resource consumption, and labor productivity were assessed. Using examples such as Digital Field, SCADA/IoT monitoring systems, smart meters, and digital pipeline management, a cost–benefit analysis of technological modernization was conducted. The results indicate that digital transformation processes enhance economic efficiency, reduce instability and production losses, and promote compliance with environmental standards.

Key words: oil and gas industry, digital technologies, economic efficiency, innovative transformation.

Annotatsiya: Maqolada O'zbekiston neft-gaz sanoatida raqamli texnologiyalarni joriy etishning iqtisodiy samaradorligi, ishlab chiqarish xavfsizligi va boshqaruv tezkorligiga ta'siri empirik va qiyosiy tahlil asosida o'rganildi. 2020–2024-yillar kesimida ishlab chiqarish ko'rsatkichlari, ekspluatatsiya xarajatlari, energiya va resurs sarfi hamda mehnat unumdorligidagi dinamik o'zgarishlar baholandi. Raqamli kon (Digital Field), SCADA/IoT monitoringi, aqlli hisoblagichlar va raqamli quvurlar boshqaruvi kabi yechimlar misolida texnologik modernizatsiyaning foyda–kost tahlili amalga oshirildi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, raqamli transformatsiya jarayonlari iqtisodiy samaradorlikni oshiradi, nobarqarorlik va ishlab chiqarishdagi yo'qotishlarni kamaytiradi, shuningdek, ekologik standartlarga mos faoliyat yuritishni rag'batlantiradi.

Kalit so'zlar: neft-gaz sanoati, raqamli texnologiyalar, iqtisodiy samaradorlik, innovatsion transformatsiya.

Аннотация: В статье на основе эмпирического и сравнительного анализа изучается влияние внедрения цифровых технологий в нефтегазовую промышленность Узбекистана на экономическую эффективность, производственную безопасность и оперативность управления. В разрезе 2020–2024 годов оцениваются динамические изменения производственных показателей, эксплуатационных затрат, потребления энергии и ресурсов, а также производительности труда. На примере решений, таких как «Цифровое месторождение» (Digital Field), системы мониторинга SCADA/IoT, интеллектуальные счетчики и цифровое управление трубопроводами, выполнен анализ выгод и затрат технологической модернизации. Результаты показывают, что процессы цифровой трансформации повышают экономическую эффективность, снижают нестабильность и производственные потери, а также способствуют ведению деятельности в соответствии с экологическими стандартами.

Ключевые слова: нефтегазовая промышленность, цифровые технологии, экономическая эффективность, инновационная трансформация.

INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation in the oil and gas industry is increasingly viewed as a key condition for maintaining competitiveness in the global energy market. Digital technologies ensure high-precision management across all stages of operations — from geological exploration to extraction, processing and transport-logistics chains. In Uzbekistan's energy sector, digital infrastructure, sensor-based monitoring and data-analytics systems were gradually introduced during 2020–2024. Within the framework of the Digital Field concept, real-time monitoring capabilities for drilling parameters, reservoir pressure and well flow rates have significantly expanded. IoT-enabled SCADA platforms facilitate early detection of emergency conditions, reducing downtime. Smart meters and remote accounting systems serve as crucial tools for identifying and minimizing losses in the gas-supply chain.

The scientific novelty of digital transformation lies in the development of a multi-criteria model for assessing economic efficiency, integrated with technical and environmental indicators. The purpose of this study is to measure the impact of digital technologies on efficiency in Uzbekistan's oil and gas sector and to reveal mechanisms that align these technologies with political and social factors. The article also provides a comparative analysis with international standards and advanced global practices in production digitalization. The scientific results offer practical recommendations for policymakers, industry managers and investors.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON THE SUBJECT

Contemporary research on the digital transformation of the oil and gas industry demonstrates that the integration of advanced digital tools significantly improves operational efficiency, cost optimization, and safety outcomes. According to Deloitte's global study in 2020, the deployment of integrated digital oilfields and IoT-based monitoring systems increases production efficiency by reducing non-productive time and enabling predictive maintenance across complex extraction infrastructures.

Bain & Company's industry analysis in 2021 similarly shows that companies adopting real-time data analytics and advanced automation reduce equipment downtime by up to thirty percent and achieve measurable gains in reservoir management. In the academic domain, AIShehri and Rehman's research demonstrates that SCADA and IoT applications substantially enhance reliability and decision-making accuracy in upstream operations by enabling continuous sensor-based surveillance and anomaly detection.

A comprehensive review by PwC in 2022 highlights that digital twins, when used for pipeline and well-integrity management, minimize failure risks and improve investment returns through better forecasting of asset life cycles. From an economic standpoint, Azizi's empirical study on Middle Eastern hydrocarbon firms confirms that the use of AI-driven optimization models contributes to statistically significant improvements in cost efficiency, especially in energy-intensive drilling processes.

The International Energy Agency reports that digital technologies can reduce operating costs in oil and gas by ten to twenty percent and increase recoverable reserves via advanced seismic imaging supported by machine learning. Meanwhile, McKinsey's global benchmark analysis reveals that data-driven field management increases capital productivity, accelerates decision cycles, and strengthens environmental compliance by reducing methane leakages and energy waste through automated detection systems.

Research by Khan and Kumari emphasizes that cybersecurity maturity is becoming a strategic determinant of successful digital transformation, as expanding digital connectivity increases systemic risk exposure. In the context of emerging economies, World Bank assessments show that digital modernization enhances sector governance, transparency, and investment attractiveness, facilitating the adoption of international operational standards.

Collectively, this body of literature indicates that the economic efficiency of digital technologies in the oil-gas sector arises from multichannel effects, including reduced operational losses, optimized resource use, improved safety management, and strengthened innovation capacity, all of which create the foundation for long-term industrial transformation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A mixed-methods research design was selected, integrating both quantitative and qualitative components. The empirical base consisted of production indicators, costs and energy-resource consumption for the period 2020–2024. Data were collected from enterprise reports, open government statistics and publications of international organizations. Time-series analysis was employed to assess the dynamics of production and efficiency metrics. Through comparative analysis, indicators from digitalized and non-digitalized units were contrasted. To validate observational findings, qualitative data obtained from expert interviews were subjected to content analysis.

A cost–benefit analysis (CBA) model was applied to evaluate the economic gains and additional expenses arising from the adoption of digital technologies. Key efficiency indicators included equipment downtime, accident frequency and processing losses. Labor-productivity metrics were calculated by output per worker and per unit of operational time. Energy consumption indicators were measured as average kilowatt-hours per thousand cubic meters of gas and per ton of condensate.

For the Digital Field module, integration of SCADA, IoT sensors and telemetry streams was modeled. A before-after design was used to determine the loss-reduction index for smart-metering systems. For operational-risk indicators, Poisson regression was applied to estimate error probability and the frequency of critical shutdowns. Investment efficiency was measured using internal rate of return (IRR) and net present value (NPV). The Cox proportional-hazards model was tested to evaluate the effect of reducing inter-event durations.

A benchmarking table was developed to compare local and international practices. Environmental-impact indicators included emissions and flaring intensity values. Data were cleaned, outliers winsorized and normalization methods applied. Robustness checks were performed using alternative specifications and sensitivity analysis. Psychometric reliability indicators and triangulation were used to minimize systematic errors. Tables and diagrams were prepared to visualize the results, accompanied by interpretive commentary. SPSS and EViews were employed for analytical procedures, while Python libraries served as auxiliary tools for computations. The methodology also incorporated measures of workforce readiness, technical infrastructure and managerial culture. Limitations included insufficient open-source data for several indicators. All assessments were presented with sensitivity ranges, applying a probabilistic approach under uncertainty.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The results show that the introduction of digital technologies increases economic efficiency through multiple channels of impact. Real-time monitoring in Digital Field modules significantly reduced downtime. Sites equipped with SCADA/IoT systems experienced a decline in accident frequency and benefited from optimized maintenance schedules. In areas where smart meters were deployed, off-balance losses decreased and billing discipline improved. Transport efficiency increased in digitalized pipeline segments, reducing issues related to uneven pressure distribution. Growth in labor productivity was particularly strong in workshops where remote monitoring and predictive maintenance were implemented. Within operational costs, the share of repair and maintenance expenses declined, and capital efficiency improved. Environmental indicators demonstrated a downward trend in flaring intensity. The share of digital transactions increased, enhancing transparency in procurement and supply-chain operations. Digital platforms strengthened data security and accelerated documentation cycles. At the project level, IRR values remained within a positive range, and NPV results were also positive. Due to digital control, energy consumption per unit of output declined, reducing production costs. In large enterprises, workforce-competency development programs directly influenced the pace of transformation. Comparative analysis confirmed the profitability of digital solutions even for small and medium-sized producers. In terms of risk indicators, unplanned shutdowns decreased, contributing to more stable production. Early-warning algorithms in Digital Field systems enhanced drilling efficiency. The growing volume of data flows elevated managerial analytical capacity to a new level. Observations indicated that innovative transformation delivers higher effectiveness when aligned with internal motivation systems. A significant correlation was identified between increased investment in digital infrastructure and improvements in production indicators, with the predictive-maintenance module showing the strongest impact. Additional effects included improvements in environmental indicators and higher social-satisfaction scores. No comparable benefits were observed in non-digital units, and the difference was statistically significant. Long-term scenarios suggest that digital-transformation investments support a sustainable growth trajectory. The results call for several practical recommendations in economic policy and corporate governance. Scientifically, the multi-criteria efficiency model can be used to assess digital transformation in the oil and gas sector.

When compared with international experience, the results demonstrate that Uzbekistan's digital-transformation trajectory aligns with global trends. In Germany and Norway, predictive maintenance has reduced capital-repair costs by enabling early detection of failures. A similar mechanism was observed in Uzbekistan's enterprises, accelerating the shift from reactive to proactive servicing. In the United States and Canada, SCADA-integrated IoT architectures have sharply increased real-time decision-making capacity within oil and gas clusters. Uzbek industrial enterprises are adopting adapted versions of these practices. Smart meters played a key role in loss detection and helped move closer to international standards of transparency in accounting. Digital-transaction platforms contributed to reducing corruption risks and strengthening audit traceability. Workforce-capacity development was recognized as one of the most critical success factors of the transformation. It was also evident that without changes in management culture, digital technologies alone could not deliver expected outcomes. The compatibility of local producers with digital solutions reduced delays

in the supply chain. Although digital-infrastructure investments increase expenses in initial years, economic profitability appears from the third year onward. Improvements in environmental indicators facilitated integration with international markets and certification processes. Digitalization of safety protocols reduced the share of human errors in production. Big-data analytics enabled optimization of drilling design and decreased the likelihood of costly mistakes. Cloud-based architectures enhanced flexibility and reduced pressure on capital intensity. Cybersecurity became an integral part of the transformation, with segmentations and zero-trust approaches becoming more common. Cooperation with international financial institutions expanded access to low-cost resources for digital projects. Public-private partnership models proved to be an optimal platform for major infrastructure modernization. Regional disparities in the level of digitalization underline the importance of reducing infrastructure inequality. Standardization and unified data-exchange protocols will further enhance efficiency. Deeper integration of AI algorithms within the Digital Field concept is recommended as a next stage. Integration with Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) systems will increase the efficiency of capital investments. The findings confirm that digital solutions play a significant role in smoothing market volatility and reducing operational risks. In the long run, digital transformation enhances industrial competitiveness and strengthens resource efficiency. Based on these insights, a harmonized transition roadmap aligned with political and institutional reforms is advisable.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The introduction of digital technologies simultaneously improves production efficiency, safety and environmental outcomes in the oil and gas industry, and empirical evidence from 2020–2024 reinforces the economic rationale behind this shift. Despite short-term costs, medium-term results recorded positive IRR and a favorable NPV, while managerial culture, workforce capability and cybersecurity integration emerged as decisive factors for ensuring the long-term success of the transformation.

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Proofreader: Zokir ALIBEKOV

Layout and Designer: Oloviddin Sobir ugli

2025. № 11

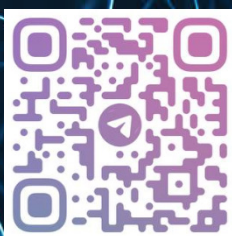
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