

Implementation of Artificial Intelligence and Automation in Slovak Local Governments

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Abstract

The article analyzes the current state of implementation of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, automation and robotization in the environment of Slovak cities and municipalities. It is based on the results of an extensive questionnaire survey conducted between April and May 2025, in which 535 local governments from all over Slovakia participated, as well as on qualitative knowledge collected through informal interviews with representatives of cities and municipalities. The article identifies areas in which AI finds practical application - from administrative processes to communication with citizens to public infrastructure management and environmental monitoring. Special attention is paid to the analysis of local governments' attitudes towards new technologies, including the identification of barriers that slow down their wider implementation. Based on the data obtained and identified patterns, specific political and institutional recommendations are formulated aimed at a systematic, responsible and inclusive digital transformation of local government in Slovakia.

Keywords: *artificial intelligence, automation and robotisation, local government, digital transformation, public administration.*

Introduction

The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI), automation and robotisation technologies has significantly affected the functioning of the private sector in recent years, while it is increasingly visible in the sphere of public administration. In the context of the European digital transformation agenda, defined, among others, by the EU Digital Compass for 2030 and the EU eGovernment Action Plan, local and regional governments are expected to actively participate in the modernisation of public services and administrative processes (European Commission, 2021). In Slovakia, the debate on the digitalization of public administration has long focused on the central and regional levels, while the potential of local governments remains largely unused and unexplored. At the same time, municipalities and cities are the level of administration that citizens encounter most often and where the efficiency, speed and quality of service provision directly affect the everyday quality of life (Klimovský, 2019). The introduction of smart technologies into municipal practice is therefore not only a question of administrative modernization, but also a key prerequisite for building citizens' trust in public institutions (Douša, 2026).

The aim of this article is to provide a systematic overview of the current state of introduction of AI, automation and robotization in Slovak municipalities based on empirical data obtained from a questionnaire survey and additional qualitative findings. The article identifies areas of practical application of these technologies, analyzes attitudes and barriers on the part of local governments and formulates specific recommendations for policy making and institutional support for this transformation.

1 Literature review

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies into public administration is a subject of growing academic interest, with researchers approaching the issue from multiple perspectives – technological, organizational, legal and ethical. Sun and Medaglia (2019) identify key dimensions of AI implementation in the public sector: process efficiency, decision-making quality, transparency and accountability of algorithms. They emphasize that technological adoption in the public sector is conditioned by the institutional context, organizational capacities and stakeholder trust. In the environment of public institutions, artificial intelligence has established itself as a strategic factor of transformation, modernization and rationalization, which directly responds to the increasing pressure for performance and transparency. This technological shift allows employees to be relieved of routine, time-consuming administrative activities, thereby creating space for solving more complex and creative tasks. (Čepelová, Chmelařová, 2024)

In the European context, the debate on AI in public administration is developing intensively following the adoption of the EU Regulation on Artificial Intelligence (AI Act, 2024), which introduces a classification of AI systems according to the level of risk and sets obligations for their operators, including in the public sector (Doshi-Velez et al., 2017). This regulatory framework has a direct impact on the possibilities and conditions for deploying AI in local governments, as many applications in the field of monitoring public order or assessing the eligibility of applications could be classified as high-risk systems. In this context, the European Commission (2019) defined basic ethical guidelines, according to which trustworthy artificial intelligence must be legal, ethical, and technically and socially resilient. Priority requirements include preserving human oversight, protecting user privacy, and ensuring environmental and social sustainability so that the technologies serve future generations. Koreňová (2026) adds that although the European legal framework (AIA) unifies the rules, success in national conditions depends on the legislative implementation of specific laws, such as the proposed regulations on the organization of state administration in the field of AI or on the management of selected categories of public sector data.

Regarding local government specifically, research from countries with a higher level of digital maturity – such as the Scandinavian countries, Estonia or the Netherlands – suggests that successful digital transformation at the municipal level depends on the interplay of several factors: the availability of financing, digital competences of employees, political support from the local

government leadership and the ability to involve citizens themselves in the process (Wirtz et al., 2019; Janssen et al., 2020). According to international studies (Misch et al., 2025), the macroeconomic benefits of AI in European regions are conditioned by the institutional quality and readiness of the workforce. The lack of these capacities raises the risk of deepening regional disparities between the so-called “technological leaders” and “digital laggards”.

Current research in the field of regional economics confirms that technological innovations alone cannot operate in isolation. Budová et al. (2026) demonstrated, using a panel model with fixed effects, a statistically significant and positive relationship between the rate of use of AI in enterprises, the level of intellectual capital and the economic performance of regions (measured through GDP per capita). Intellectual capital – including human skills, organizational structure and relational networks – forms the absorption base without which AI technologies cannot be effectively implemented. This insight is of fundamental importance for the strategic management of public administration: if local governments do not have qualified human potential, the return on public investments in digitalization drops sharply. As van Noordt and Tangi (2023) state, the key barrier to deploying AI in the public sector is not primarily a lack of finance, but the absence of organizational “AI capability” (a combination of technical, managerial and ethical skills of employees).

A significant trend at the municipal level is the use of AI to strengthen civic participation and the development of so-called citizen science. Štuller (2026) emphasizes that the combination of public involvement and artificial intelligence algorithms is causing a revolution in data collection and validation, especially in environmental policies. Modern applications (e.g. CrowdWater, Naturkalender, spotFIRE or iNaturalist) allow citizens to monitor hydrological conditions, phenological changes or the occurrence of protected species, while integrated AI models filter, validate and clean up this unstructured data. The resulting predictive models subsequently provide municipalities with exact data-based decision-making (evidence-based policy). This approach increases the legitimacy of decisions taken and deepens citizens' trust in public institutions, although researchers warn of the persistent digital divide and inequalities in digital literacy between different social groups. (Asimakopoulos, 2025)

From the perspective of practical city and municipal management (Smart City concept), artificial intelligence offers a wide range of tools divided according to technological complexity. Douša (2026) classifies these systems into categories such as generative AI (creation of official documents, summarization of minutes), natural language processing (conversational chatbots for local tax and fee management), geospatial AI (territorial planning and environmental monitoring), and custom machine learning models (Custom ML) that manage smart city infrastructure, such as transportation or waste management. Multi-criteria assessments (MCA) show that prioritizing more affordable tools, such as conversational NLP chatbots, can immediately relieve the burden on local government contact centers, while implementing complex ML systems requires high personnel and technical capacities, which smaller municipalities often lack. Research from the practice of European cities

confirms that conceptual digitalization and the deployment of AI can bring operating cost savings to local governments of up to 25%.

In the Slovak academic discourse, the topic of AI in local government has been relatively new and marginalized so far. Existing works have mainly focused on issues of eGovernment and electronic public administration at the central level (Mináč, 2021), while systematic research on the implementation of AI at the level of municipalities and cities has been absent. However, the latest domestic studies from 2026 point to ongoing conceptual progress. The central coordinator of digitalization in the Slovak Republic has become the Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic (MIRRI SR), while the institutional umbrella of the issue has been strengthened by the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Artificial Intelligence. The approved National Concept for the Informatization of Public Administration (with an implementation horizon of 2026–2030) already explicitly envisages the building of national data registers and the deployment of AI assistants to address specific life situations of citizens. Despite this strategic progress, the Slovak environment encounters specific systemic barriers. As Koreňová (2026) states, the implementation process is hampered by deep-rooted sectoralism and rigid bureaucracy. Slovak public administration and local governments have long faced an acute lack of capital investment, limited personnel capacities, and fragmentation of data registers. Researchers (Hickok, 2022, Šimko and Mesarčík, 2024) also point to critical risks in the area of cybersecurity and the vulnerability of data systems, which are becoming the main source of uncertainty for managers in the public sector. Another risk is the phenomenon of automating human biases – if machine learning models are trained on historically biased data, there is a risk of deepening discrimination in decision-making (Kankanhalli et al., 2019), which requires strict application of the principle of algorithmic transparency.

Summarizing the knowledge gained to date, it can be stated that the successful integration of artificial intelligence into the structures of local government is not just a question of purchasing software licenses, but represents a complex socio-technical process. It requires a cyclical connection of legislative anchoring, permanent education of employees, elimination of bureaucratic processes and development of digital literacy of the inhabitants themselves. It is precisely the deficit of comprehensive research that would reflect these interconnected factors in the specific conditions of Slovak cities and municipalities that defines the research gap to which this article responds.

2 Research methodology and data

The empirical basis of this article is based on two complementary data sources, which corresponds to a mixed research strategy (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018), combining quantitative and qualitative approaches.

1. Quantitative component (questionnaire survey), where the main source of data was an online questionnaire survey entitled "Usage of artificial intelligence, automation and robotization in

local government", which took place from April 22 to May 14, 2025. The survey was addressed to all member cities and municipalities of the Association of Cities and Municipalities of Slovakia (ZMOS). In total, the questionnaire was completed and sent by 535 local governments from all over Slovakia, which represents a representative sample of Slovak municipalities with different population sizes, geographical locations and administrative capacity. The questionnaire contained 21 questions focused on specific AI, automation and robotization tools and technologies, with respondents having the opportunity to indicate which of the listed tools they actively use in their local government. In addition to closed questions with the option of choice, the questionnaire was supplemented with space for free comments and statements. The data were processed using descriptive statistical methods. The data was supplemented and combined with the results of the project VVGS 2024-3421 Modernization and Rationalization of the Local Governments through AI, focusing on the city of Žilina.

2. The quantitative findings were complemented by qualitative insights from a series of informal interviews with city and municipality representatives conducted as part of the Investing in Sustainable and Vibrant Regions project. These interviews provided a better understanding of the attitudes, motivations, concerns and specific experiences of local government staff with new technologies. The insights gained were used primarily to interpret and contextualize the quantitative data, as well as to formulate recommendations.

3 Experience of local governments with artificial intelligence

The survey results clearly show that the introduction of AI in Slovak local governments is still in its early stages, with relatively simple and accessible applications prevailing. The most widely used tools are common information search and conversational AI tools, such as ChatGPT, which is used by 333 (62.2%) of the 535 local governments surveyed. This is followed by translation tools with 238 users (44.5%), tools for text recognition from scanned documents using OCR and AI analysis (93 local governments, 17.4%), and office suite tools such as Microsoft Copilot (90 local governments, 16.8%). (ZMOS, 2025)

The introduction of AI in the local government environment is most often associated with the effort to speed up and streamline administrative activities. Municipalities have started to use AI tools in the creation of documents, especially when writing emails, designing questionnaires or compiling public announcements. The use of these tools allows local governments to process a higher volume of outputs with a smaller number of employees, while at the same time increasing the linguistic and stylistic quality of documents. In the area of municipal web presentation, artificial intelligence is applied in the generation of texts and structuring of content, which allows even less technically proficient employees to edit municipal websites in a simplified way. This increases the timeliness of published information and the accessibility of data for citizens. The application of AI in the processing of voice messages for municipal radio is also noteworthy - automatic speech synthesis allows for the

generation of announcements from pre-prepared text, which are subsequently played at scheduled intervals.

The use of AI has proven particularly effective in the preparation phase of project proposals and applications for non-repayable financial contributions. Some municipalities use tools that can read the call for proposals and then recommend the structure of the application, create draft texts and identify key terms that increase the likelihood of success. Local governments also appreciate the ability of AI to summarize extensive documents, such as methodological guidelines, thereby saving valuable time for project staff and increasing the overall success rate of applications.

The use of AI in the field of monitoring changes in the territory brings remarkable results. Through camera systems or drone footage, algorithms can detect new potholes, illegal dumps, wear and tear on furniture, or unauthorized interventions in public green spaces. Automatic detection of anomalies in the image allows technical services to react before the condition of public space deteriorates. This capability is combined with geographic information systems (GIS) in some municipalities, which increases the efficiency of public infrastructure maintenance. AI tools for automatic transcription of spoken word are increasingly being used in connection with municipal council meetings. The systems can convert audio recordings into text in real time and then create stylistically edited minutes. This relieves the secretariat's agenda and improves public control over decision-making processes. Automated minutes of meetings also increase transparency and accessibility of information for citizens, which is one of the key principles of modern public administration.

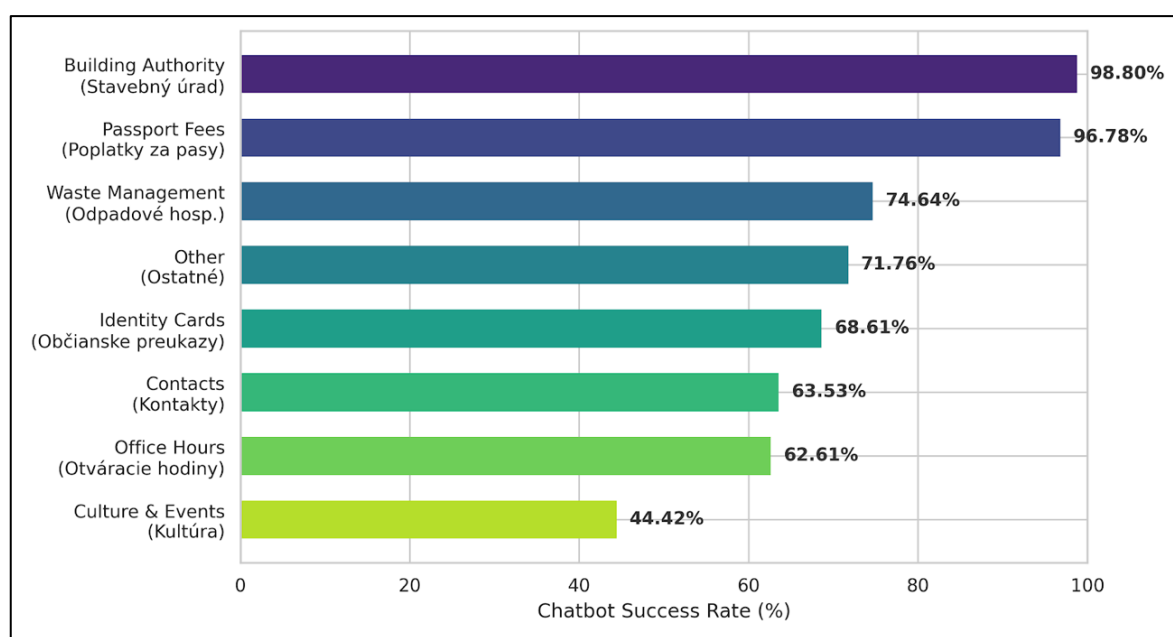
The use of AI in big data analysis in the energy sector is of growing importance. Local governments analyze historical data on energy consumption, compare suppliers' price offers, and model price development scenarios, which directly feeds into public procurement processes. In the legal field, some local governments are experimenting with legal chatbots that can interpret the provisions of relevant legislation - from the Municipal Organization Act to the Construction Act. These tools are mainly used by smaller municipalities without their own legal advisors. In the field of foreign relations, AI supports the translation of documents and the drafting of formal responses in foreign languages, thereby increasing the quality of international cooperation.

4 Experience of local governments with automation and robotisation

Automation and robotization are complementary tools to artificial intelligence, which allow ensuring the efficiency of processes without the need for constant human intervention. The results of the survey show that their deployment in Slovak local governments is still scattered and focused on specific, limited areas.

One of the most common examples of automation is the use of chatbots on municipal websites (16 municipalities, 3.0%). These tools allow citizens to ask common questions about office hours, tax obligations or cultural events, with answers generated automatically. The introduction of

chatbots significantly relieves office employees of routine interactions, especially during exposed periods such as tax season or election preparations. Automatic notifications via SMS or email messages inform about service outages, cultural events or changes in the organization of waste collection. This approach is also confirmed by the results of research conducted by the Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, Faculty of Public Administration, in the period from July 1, 2025 to January 1, 2026. Over six months, citizens asked a total of 8,603 questions via the AI chatbot on the websites of the city of Žilina. The estimated number of users served was approximately 1,850 citizens. The calculation was based on the assumption of an average of two conversations per citizen per month. Up to 47.3% of all conversations took place outside standard working hours, i.e. from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. and during weekends. This figure clearly indicates the high added value of digital tools at a time when human operators are not available. Of the total number of relevant queries, 28% (2,363 questions) were directed to a human operator. These were mainly cases where the chatbot did not find an answer in the available content of the city's websites. Only 3.1% of queries (261 questions) remained unanswered, which indicates a high level of functionality and relevance of the implemented solution. The average number of conversations per day reached 48.



Graph 1: AI Chatbot Success Rate Across Different Municipal Agendas

Source: Own, 2026

Analysis of the thematic focus of queries showed that citizens were most interested in the issue of collection, loading and removal of solid municipal waste and small construction waste. The city registered 1,577 queries in this area. The chatbot successfully resolved 74.64% of them and redirected 24.35% to a human operator. Other significant areas included the agenda of identity cards (issuance and loss). Here, the chatbot resolved 68.61% of queries. For questions about passport

fees (current rates, payment methods, taxes), it achieved a success rate of up to 96.78%. The building authority agenda, which includes building permits, zoning, and building approvals, recorded an exceptionally high success rate. The chatbot successfully answered 98.8% of queries here. In the area of providing contacts (telephone numbers and e-mail addresses), the chatbot solved 63.53% of questions directly and redirected 29.75% to a human. Topics classified as “other” achieved a success rate of 71.76%, with 24.81% of queries requiring operator intervention. The chatbot successfully answered the opening hours of the office and individual departments in 62.61% of cases. The greatest room for improvement was shown in the area of culture, i.e. with questions about cultural events, theaters, cinemas, museums and galleries. Here, the chatbot solved 44.42% of queries, while 53.05% of queries were directed to a human operator. The main reason was the absence or insufficient up-to-dateness of information on the city's official website.

In the field of waste management, the use of sensors in containers that monitor their fullness is developing (20 municipalities, 3.7%). Data from the sensors is transmitted to the dispatching office, which uses them to plan the routes of collection vehicles. This optimizes fuel consumption, reduces road congestion and prevents containers from being overfilled. Some municipalities use RFID technology to record individual dumps, which increases transparency and fairness in waste fees. Municipalities are implementing sensors to measure air quality, which continuously monitor concentrations of particulate matter, nitrogen oxides or ozone. The data is processed in real time and published via web interfaces or mobile applications, thereby strengthening environmental transparency and citizen control.

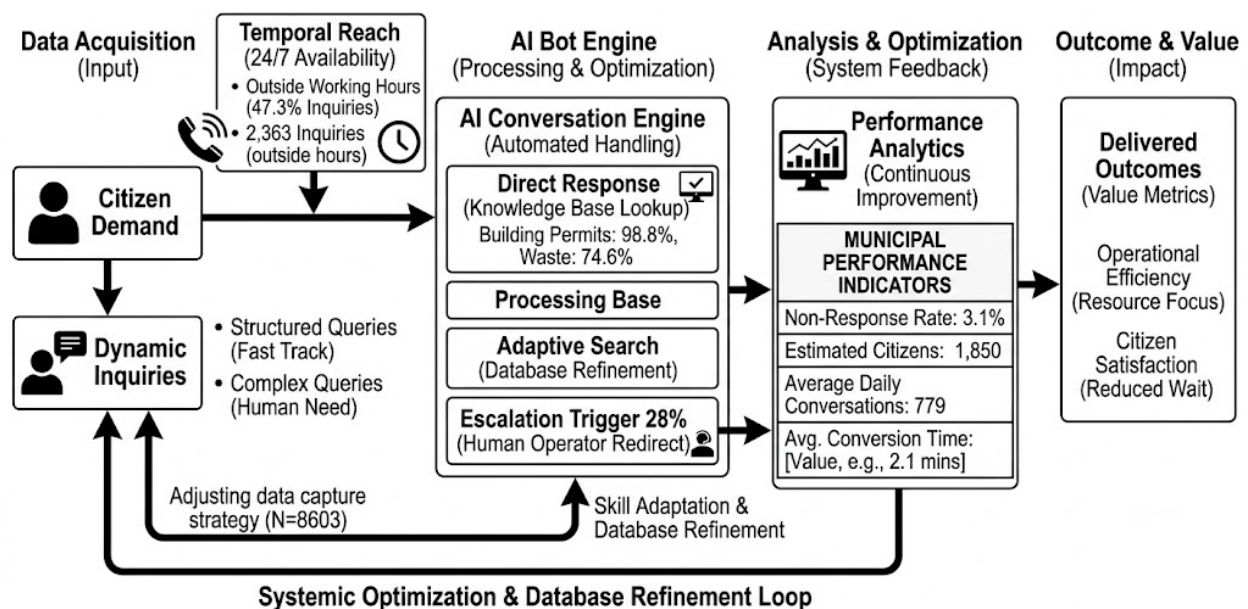


Figure 1: Integrated municipal conversation and performance optimization model
Source: Own, 2026

The most widespread group of barriers includes cultural and psychological concerns. Typical statements from local government representatives captured in interviews illustrate widespread attitudes that slow down the introduction of innovations into everyday practice. These concerns are rooted in a deeper distrust of technology, loss of control and automation of decision-making processes that have so far been exclusively the responsibility of people. Smaller municipalities face significant limitations in terms of human and financial resources. There is a lack of IT specialists, data analytics experts or project managers with digital transformation competencies. Funds for investments in new technologies are limited, while grants and calls specifically focused on AI and automation in local government are not sufficiently accessible and easily applicable for smaller municipalities. Local governments are aware of the existence of the regulatory framework – including the GDPR and the new EU AI Regulation – but its correct interpretation and application in the specific conditions of local government is not obvious to most of them (Európska komisia, 2019). Concerns about data breaches, unauthorized data processing, or lack of transparency in algorithms are leading many local governments to forgo potential benefits rather than risk legal consequences. Despite the prevailing skepticism, the survey also confirmed the existence of a group of more progressive local government representatives who are actively following this topic, testing new solutions, and are not afraid to experiment. Their experiences are proof that it is possible to consider the targeted and responsible integration of smart technologies even in local government settings. These technology enthusiasts also function as informal ambassadors for change, and their examples can inspire other local governments. (ZMOS, 2025)

5 Recommendations for systematic implementation of AI

Based on the analysis of empirical data and identified patterns, in this section we formulate concrete recommendations aimed at the systematic and responsible digital transformation of Slovak municipalities.

A key prerequisite for the successful implementation of AI is raising awareness about the possibilities of these technologies and their real benefits for local governments. It is not enough to present AI as an abstract technical concept – it is necessary to show specific applications that can simplify administration, improve communication with citizens and increase the transparency of decision-making processes. Systematic education of local government employees should take the form of practically oriented training courses, workshops and exchange of experiences between local governments. Educational programs should be differentiated according to the level of digital competencies and the specific needs of different categories of employees.

For smaller municipalities with limited capacities, it is essential to support the emergence of shared service centers that will allow them to access modern solutions without the need for high own financial or personnel capacities. These centers can ensure the development, operation and support of specific tools and applications, thereby achieving economies of scale and more equal access to

innovations across municipalities of different sizes. The shared service model is a proven tool in countries with advanced administration, and its adaptation to Slovak conditions represents a realistic and effective path.

The introduction of technologies should be based on clearly defined frameworks and regular audits that ensure compliance with public administration values, personal data protection and the principles of responsible governance. Transparency, clarity and controllability of systems must be an integral part of each phase of implementation. Special attention should be paid to systems with the potential to influence decisions that impact on the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. The successful development of AI in local governments requires coordinated systemic support from the state. It is necessary to create a coordination framework that would ensure methodological guidelines, support for standardization and sharing of proven solutions. Equally important is the regular announcement of financial calls aimed at supporting innovative projects and the digital transformation of local government, including opportunities to engage in international partnerships and research initiatives. Slovakia could draw inspiration from the Estonian model of digital public administration.

Conclusion

The introduction of artificial intelligence, automation and robotization in Slovak local governments is a real, but still nascent process. The results of a large-scale questionnaire survey involving 535 local governments across Slovakia, together with qualitative findings from a series of interviews, reveal a heterogeneous picture: on the one hand, a group of progressive local governments that are actively experimenting with new technologies and achieving tangible results, and on the other hand, a majority group for which new technologies are still a source of uncertainty, fear and mistrust. The most widespread are relatively accessible and easy-to-use tools – conversational AI, translation tools and OCR – while more sophisticated applications in the areas of traffic management, crime prediction or advanced document processing remain the exception. This picture corresponds to the general trend of digital adoption in the public sector, where technological development typically outpaces institutional and cultural readiness. Barriers to adoption are complex and interdependent: cultural and psychological concerns intertwine with capacity and financial inadequacies, regulatory uncertainty with a lack of specific methodological guidelines. Overcoming these barriers requires a systemic approach that includes education, institutional support, ethical oversight, and adequate funding. If Slovakia is to fully exploit the potential of artificial intelligence and automation in local government, it is not enough to wait for the technologies to take care of themselves. Conscious, strategic, and inclusive steps are needed that remove barriers, dispel fears, and create conditions for the safe, effective, and fair introduction of innovations into the public sector. The experience of existing pioneers can be a valuable inspiration, but the key goal remains to make the technical innovation a common and trusted part of the daily activities of local governments

throughout Slovakia. The article opens up space for further research, especially in the area of longitudinal monitoring of AI adoption in Slovak local governments, comparative studies with other V4 countries, and in-depth case studies of successful implementations.

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