

# Governance and Administrative Reform in Algeria (2019–2026)

## *An Evaluative Approach in Light of International Indicators and Institutional Transformations*

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### **Abstract**

This study evaluates the trajectory of governance and administrative reform in Algeria between 2019 and 2026, a period marked by constitutional change, public-sector regularization, accelerated digitalization, and territorial reorganization. A descriptive-analytical design was applied to a documentary dataset comprising the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI), statistics and administrative reports attributed to Algerian public institutions, constitutional and legal texts, and selected scholarly literature. The supplied WGI series indicates modest improvement between 2019 and 2024 in political stability and absence of violence (from  $-1.02$  to  $-0.78$ ), voice and accountability (from  $-0.95$  to  $-0.72$ ), government effectiveness (from  $-0.52$  to  $-0.39$ ), and rule of law (from  $-0.72$  to  $-0.61$ ). Regulatory quality remained nearly unchanged at a weak level ( $-0.89$  to  $-0.88$ ), while control of corruption improved only marginally ( $-0.61$  to  $-0.55$ ). Administrative measures included the reported integration of more than 500,000 beneficiaries of employment-assistance schemes, an exceptional promotion operation affecting 15,872 employees, the expansion of digital public services, and the planned transition from 58 to 69 wilayas. The findings suggest that Algeria's reform pattern has strengthened administrative capacity more rapidly than regulatory predictability, accountability, and local fiscal autonomy. However, WGI scores are perception-based estimates and the documentary design cannot establish causality. The article concludes that territorial expansion can improve access and create regional growth poles only if it is paired with fiscal decentralization, interoperable digital systems, transparent performance measurement, and stronger citizen oversight.

**Keywords:** governance, administrative reform, Algeria, Worldwide Governance Indicators, digitalization, decentralization

### **Introduction**

Governance and administrative reform are mutually reinforcing dimensions of contemporary development. Governance concerns the traditions and institutions through which authority is exercised, while administrative reform concerns purposeful changes to structures, procedures, and public-sector behavior intended to improve state performance (Caiden, 1991; Kaufmann et al., 2010). In practice, citizens experience governance through administrative encounters: the predictability of rules, the

accessibility of services, the integrity of officials, and the ability to obtain information or challenge decisions. For this reason, reform cannot be assessed only by the number of laws enacted or digital portals launched; it must also be evaluated through institutional outcomes.

Algeria entered a new reform cycle after the 2019 popular movement. The 2020 constitutional revision framed transparency, access to information, civil-society participation, and anti-corruption safeguards as central public values (People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, 2020). At the same time, the state pursued administrative stabilization, employment regularization, digital services, investment reforms, and changes to territorial organization. The supplied materials describe a sequence from 48 to 58 wilayas in 2019 and a further planned expansion to 69 wilayas under Law No. 26-06 of April 5, 2026. This period therefore provides a useful setting for examining whether formal and operational reforms correspond with movement in internationally comparable governance indicators.

### **Problem Statement and Research Questions**

The central question is: To what extent did administrative reforms adopted in Algeria during 2019–2026 correspond with improvement in governance indicators? Three subsidiary questions guide the analysis: (a) How did Algeria's six WGI dimensions evolve between 2019 and 2024? (b) Which quantitative and qualitative administrative reforms were most salient? and (c) Through what mechanisms might digitalization and territorial restructuring affect government effectiveness and accountability?

### **Introduction: Conceptual and Empirical Background**

#### **Governance as a Multidimensional Construct**

The WGI framework organizes governance into six dimensions: voice and accountability; political stability and absence of violence; government effectiveness; regulatory quality; rule of law; and control of corruption. Estimates conventionally range from approximately  $-2.5$  to  $+2.5$ , with higher values indicating stronger assessed performance (World Bank, 2024). These dimensions are related but not interchangeable. Government effectiveness emphasizes public-service quality, policy implementation, and administrative credibility. Regulatory quality concerns the state's ability to formulate and implement policies conducive to private-sector development. Voice and accountability addresses participation, expression, and government selection, while rule of law and control of corruption focus on institutional constraints and integrity.

WGI measures are valuable for trend and comparative analysis, yet they aggregate perceptions from multiple underlying sources. Small year-to-year movements should therefore be interpreted cautiously, particularly where confidence intervals overlap. In this study, the indicators are treated as diagnostic signals rather than direct proof that a particular reform caused a particular score. This distinction is especially important because reforms may have delayed effects, and external political or economic conditions can influence perceptions independently of administrative performance.

#### **Administrative Reform in the Algerian Context**

Algerian administrative reform can be understood in three broad phases: post-independence state building, adaptation to a more market-oriented economy from the 1990s, and the post-2019 period centered on governance, digitalization, and proximity administration. Recent scholarship has emphasized persistent weaknesses in regulatory quality and anti-corruption performance. Kalakhi and Naziha (2023), examining Algeria's governance indicators through 2020, reported that legislative quality and political stability were among the most problematic dimensions. A 2024 study of local governance similarly linked territorial reorganization to the correction of regional imbalances and the transformation of delegated wilayas into full administrative units ("Local Governance in Algeria," 2024).

A further concern is the capacity of the national statistical system. Doghmani (2025) noted that the legal basis for official statistics remained Legislative Decree No. 94-01 of 1994 and was under review in response to digital transformation and big-data requirements. The research gap addressed here is the limited integration of these strands: WGI movement, workforce measures, digitalization, statistical capacity, and the 2026 territorial reform.

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

The study used a descriptive–analytical documentary design. It did not collect interviews, surveys, or individual-level data. Instead, it synthesized indicators, official administrative claims, legal texts, and published research to evaluate the direction, coherence, and plausible governance implications of reform. The unit of analysis was Algeria at the national level for 2019–2026; the principal quantitative observation window was 2019–2024 because the supplied WGI series ended in 2024.

### **Data Sources and Variables**

The quantitative core consisted of six WGI estimates for 2019, 2020, 2022, and 2024. Supplementary data included reported totals for employment integration, exceptional promotion, digital service expansion, commercial-register digitalization, start-up accreditation, territorial units, and parliamentary representation. Documentary sources included the 2020 Constitution, Law No. 19-12 on territorial organization, Law No. 26-06 as cited in the supplied Official Journal material, releases attributed to the ministries responsible for interior administration and employment, National Office of Statistics demographic information, and the literature listed in the references.

### **Analytical Procedure**

For each WGI dimension, absolute change was calculated as the 2024 estimate minus the 2019 estimate. Trends were compared descriptively across dimensions. Administrative reforms were then coded into four mechanism categories: institutional safeguards, human-resource capacity, digital process redesign, and territorial decentralization. The discussion used process reasoning to assess whether each mechanism could plausibly influence a WGI dimension. No statistical causal model was estimated, because four time points are insufficient and the reforms overlap with broader political and economic developments.

### **Validity, Ethics, and Limitations**

Triangulation across indicator, legal, institutional, and scholarly sources improved interpretive validity. Nevertheless, several limitations remain. First, the WGI is perception based. Second, some 2025–2026 figures in the supplied dataset may be provisional and require verification against final publications. Third, national averages may conceal large differences among wilayas. Fourth, administrative outputs—such as the number of digitized records—do not automatically demonstrate service quality, inclusion, or reduced corruption. The study used public, aggregate information and involved no human participants or personally identifiable data.

## **Results**

### **Institutional and Territorial Reform Trajectory**

The documentary evidence indicates that the post-2019 reform cycle combined constitutional redesign with operational measures. The 2020 Constitution strengthened the formal status of transparency, anti-corruption prevention, access to information, and civil-society participation. Institutionally, these provisions signaled a shift from a narrowly procedural administration toward a governance-oriented model in which public action is expected to be transparent, reviewable, and responsive. The distance between formal commitment and implementation, however, remains a central evaluative issue.

Territorial organization was a second major axis. Law No. 19-12 of December 11, 2019 increased the number of wilayas from 48 to 58 by creating 10 southern wilayas (People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, 2019). According to the supplied 2026 legal data, Law No. 26-06 added 11 wilayas—Aflou, Barika, Bir El Ater, Ksar Chellala, Aïn Oussera, Messaad, Ksar El Boukhari, Bou Saâda, El Abiodh Sidi Cheikh, El Kantara, and El Aricha—bringing the proposed total to 69 wilayas, 591 daïras, and 1,541 communes (People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, 2026). Full operationalization was expected in 2027.

The reform's stated logic extends beyond administrative proximity. Smaller jurisdictional distances can reduce travel costs, improve access to civil documentation and public services, and facilitate closer monitoring of local needs. New wilayas may also serve as regional growth poles in the High Plateaus and the South. The supplied materials link the new territorial map to representation changes based on preliminary 2022 demographic statistics: an increase in the National People's Assembly from 407 to 422 deputies and in the Council of the Nation from 174 to 207 members. These changes may broaden territorial representation, although additional seats do not by themselves guarantee participatory or accountable governance.

The principal implementation risk is fiscal. New administrative units require buildings, personnel, information systems, transport, and recurrent budgets. Where communes depend heavily on central transfers, territorial expansion may reproduce dependency rather than deepen decentralization. The reform's governance effect will therefore depend less on the map itself than on the transfer of functions, predictable finance, local revenue authority, and transparent performance standards.

### **Results: Administrative Capacity and Digitalization**

#### **Human-Resource Measures**

The supplied administrative data characterize workforce regularization as one of the largest public-sector integration operations in Algeria. By 2024, more than 500,000 beneficiaries of the Professional Integration Assistance Scheme and the Social Integration Scheme were reportedly moved into permanent or stable positions (Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, 2024). In addition, an exceptional promotion operation reportedly covered 15,872 employees who had met eligibility requirements by December 31, 2023. A partial movement of walis and delegated walis across 10 wilayas in 2024 was presented as an effort to renew leadership and evaluate local performance (Ministry of Interior, 2024).

These measures can strengthen government effectiveness by reducing employment insecurity, preserving institutional knowledge, and improving motivation. Their effect is not automatic, however. A larger or more stable workforce improves services only when job profiles match organizational needs, training is continuous, workloads are monitored, and promotion reflects competence as well as seniority. Workforce expansion without process redesign may increase recurrent expenditure while leaving citizen-facing bottlenecks intact.

#### **Digital Government**

Digitalization emerged as the operational center of reform between 2020 and 2026. The supplied dataset reports more than 2 million commercial registrations digitized, a unified public-services portal offering more than 300 administrative services, and growth in accredited start-ups from fewer than 1,000 in 2020 to approximately 8,000 in 2024–2025. Digital workflows can shorten processing times, standardize requirements, improve traceability, and reduce opportunities for discretionary face-to-face transactions. These mechanisms are consistent with an improvement in service effectiveness and, potentially, corruption control.

The governance value of digitalization depends on design quality. A portal that merely reproduces paper procedures online may shift rather than remove bureaucracy. Interoperability, secure digital identity, data-quality rules, user support, accessibility, and grievance mechanisms are necessary for end-to-end transformation. Uneven internet infrastructure in newer or remote wilayas may also create a digital divide. The planned modernization of the legal framework for official statistics is therefore consequential: reliable administrative data are required to evaluate service times, geographic equity, budget execution, and actual uptake (Doghmani, 2025).

Taken together, the human-resource and digital measures suggest a state-capacity strategy: stabilize personnel, simplify transactions, and create traceable systems. The next section assesses whether the governance indicators display a parallel directional change.

### Results: Worldwide Governance Indicators

**Table 1**

*Algeria's Governance Indicator Estimates, 2019-2024*

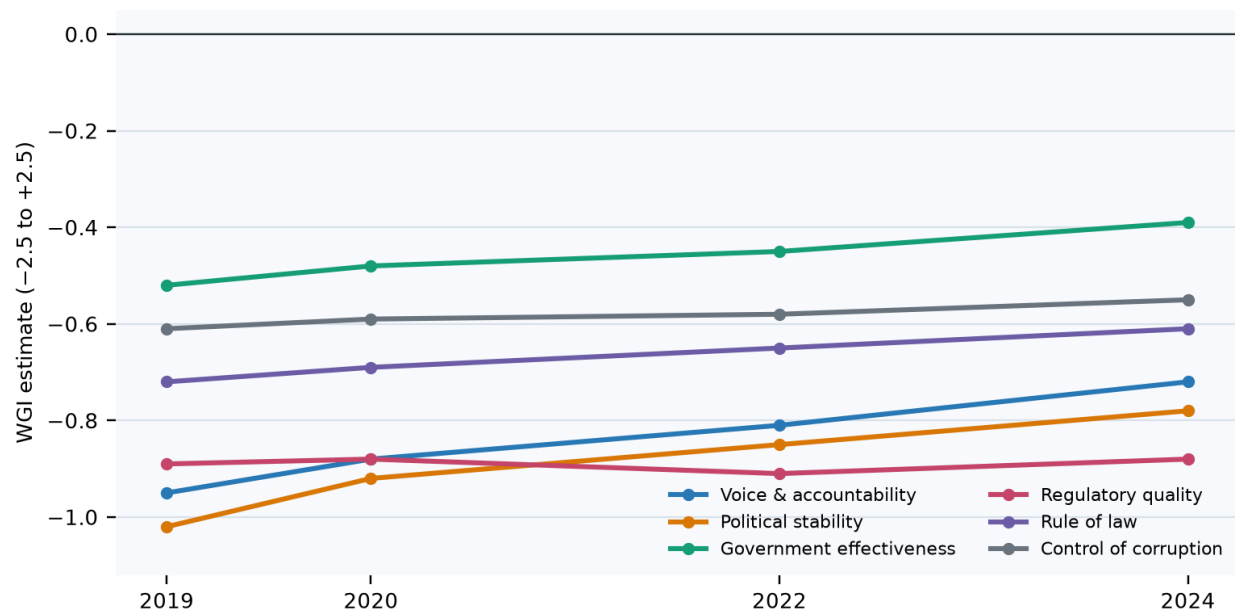
| Indicator                         | 2019  | 2020  | 2022  | 2024  | $\Delta$ 2019-24 |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------------------|
| Voice and accountability          | -0.95 | -0.88 | -0.81 | -0.72 | +0.23            |
| Political stability / no violence | -1.02 | -0.92 | -0.85 | -0.78 | +0.24            |
| Government effectiveness          | -0.52 | -0.48 | -0.45 | -0.39 | +0.13            |
| Regulatory quality                | -0.89 | -0.88 | -0.91 | -0.88 | +0.01            |
| Rule of law                       | -0.72 | -0.69 | -0.65 | -0.61 | +0.11            |
| Control of corruption             | -0.61 | -0.59 | -0.58 | -0.55 | +0.06            |

Note. Values reproduce the supplied WGI dataset; positive change denotes improvement. WGI estimates generally range from approximately  $-2.5$  to  $+2.5$ . Source: World Bank (2024).

All six estimates remained below zero in 2024. Political stability recorded the largest change (+0.24), followed closely by voice and accountability (+0.23). Government effectiveness improved by +0.13 and rule of law by +0.11. Control of corruption moved by only +0.06. Regulatory quality was effectively flat (+0.01) and deteriorated temporarily in 2022. The pattern is therefore one of gradual, uneven improvement rather than structural convergence with high-performing systems.

**Figure 1**

*Trajectory of Algeria's Six WGI Dimensions, 2019-2024*



### Results: Interpretation and Regional Benchmark Differentiated Movement Across Governance Dimensions

The strongest movement occurred in dimensions related to political stabilization and public-sector functioning. The post-2019 normalization of national institutions and the sequence of presidential, legislative, and local elections may have influenced perceived political stability. In administration, workforce regularization and digital process expansion plausibly contributed to service continuity. Yet the documentary evidence cannot isolate these effects from macroeconomic conditions, security trends, or changes in the WGI's underlying sources.

Regulatory quality remained the weakest and most stagnant dimension at  $-0.88$  in 2024. The supplied materials associate this result with delays in implementing regulations, complex tax and customs procedures, and limited regulator independence. This diagnosis is consistent with earlier research that identified legislative and regulatory quality as a persistent constraint (Kalakhi & Naziha, 2023). Control of corruption also improved slowly despite new constitutional and institutional safeguards. The result suggests that creating institutions is necessary but insufficient without investigative capacity, transparent procurement, protection for reporting wrongdoing, and publication of enforcement outcomes.

### Regional Comparison

**Table 2**

*Selected Governance Estimates in the Maghreb, 2024*

| Country | Government effectiveness | Control of corruption | Regulatory quality |
|---------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Algeria | -0.39                    | -0.55                 | -0.88              |
| Morocco | -0.12                    | -0.35                 | -0.15              |
| Tunisia | -0.25                    | -0.42                 | -0.28              |

Note. Comparative values reproduce the supplied dataset and should be checked against the downloadable WGI series before publication. Source: World Bank (2024).

On the supplied estimates, Algeria trails Morocco and Tunisia in all three selected dimensions, with the widest gap in regulatory quality. The comparison does not establish why the gap exists, but it reinforces the importance of implementation clarity, predictable rules, and a simpler business interface. Because WGI country estimates include uncertainty, the benchmark should be interpreted as directional rather than as an exact league table.

## **Discussion**

### **Capacity Gains Without Full Institutional Consolidation**

The results support a mixed assessment. Algeria's reform cycle appears to have generated tangible capacity-oriented changes: a more stable public workforce, wider digital service delivery, stronger formal commitments to transparency, and a territorial design intended to bring administration closer to citizens. These developments coincide with improvement in government effectiveness and political stability. The pattern is consistent with the proposition that purposeful administrative change can improve governance even from a low baseline (Caiden, 1991; Kaufmann et al., 2010).

At the same time, regulatory quality, corruption control, and accountability improved less decisively. This divergence matters. A state may process documents more quickly while still confronting unpredictable regulation, weak consultation, limited disclosure, or insufficient enforcement. Administrative modernization should therefore be distinguished from governance consolidation. The former improves organizational machinery; the latter embeds contestability, legal predictability, integrity, and answerability into the exercise of authority.

### **Digitalization as an Institutional Reform**

Digitalization offers the clearest bridge between these agendas, but only when it is treated as institutional redesign rather than computerization. End-to-end digital services can create audit trails, publish service standards, reduce informal discretion, and generate disaggregated performance data. Open dashboards can allow citizens and elected assemblies to compare processing times, budget execution, complaint resolution, and service access across all wilayas. Conversely, fragmented platforms, weak cybersecurity, and exclusion of citizens with limited connectivity can reduce trust.

### **From Territorial Division to Economic Decentralization**

The transition to 69 wilayas may improve physical proximity and visibility of local administration. Its developmental promise, however, rests on economic decentralization. Experiences elsewhere in the Maghreb indicate that new territorial units need adequate own-source revenue, equalization mechanisms, professional administrations, and clear assignment of functions. Without these elements, decentralization can become deconcentration: responsibilities move geographically, but authority and resources remain centralized. For Algeria, the decisive tests will be whether the new wilayas receive predictable finance, publish results, coordinate with communes, and attract investment without multiplying procedural layers.

### **Implications for Governance Measurement**

Future evaluation should complement WGI estimates with administrative indicators that are frequent, auditable, and geographically disaggregated. Examples include median service completion time, share of transactions completed fully online, procurement competition, local revenue ratios, budget execution, complaint closure, and citizen satisfaction. Linking these measures to reform milestones would permit stronger inference than national perception scores alone.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **Conclusion**

Between 2019 and 2026, Algeria pursued a broad reform agenda that combined constitutional principles, workforce measures, digital government, and territorial restructuring. The supplied WGI

series shows improvement in all six dimensions between 2019 and 2024, but the magnitude varied substantially. Political stability, voice and accountability, government effectiveness, and rule of law improved more than regulatory quality and control of corruption. Because all 2024 estimates remained negative, the trajectory should be described as gradual progress from a weak baseline rather than completed transformation.

The transition from 58 to 69 wilayas could be a significant institutional opportunity. It can reduce distance to public services and support growth poles in underserved areas. Yet boundaries alone cannot produce good governance. The reform requires fiscal capacity, clarified competences, professional staffing, interoperable data, and public accountability. Similarly, integrating employees and digitizing services can strengthen the state only when accompanied by performance management, process simplification, inclusion, and evidence-based evaluation.

### **Priority Recommendations**

- Modernize the statistical framework. Complete the revision of Legislative Decree No. 94-01, establish data-quality and interoperability standards, and publish metadata for administrative datasets.
- Secure local fiscal autonomy. Adopt a coherent local-finance framework for the new wilayas and communes, combining own-source revenue, transparent transfers, equalization, and public reporting.
- Institutionalize performance management. Define a compact set of outcome-based key performance indicators for walis, daïra heads, and service agencies; link advancement to verified performance and professional development.
- Design digital services end to end. Remove unnecessary procedural steps before digitization, provide assisted-access channels, and measure completion rates, processing time, user satisfaction, and geographic equity.
- Strengthen regulatory quality. Publish implementation calendars, conduct proportionate impact assessments, consolidate tax and customs guidance, and track delays in issuing implementing decrees.
- Deepen participation and accountability. Publish citizen-friendly program budgets, open local consultations before major decisions, disclose procurement outcomes, and establish accessible complaint and feedback mechanisms.
- Create a national observatory for local governance. Benchmark all 69 wilayas through a transparent scorecard while avoiding simplistic rankings and accounting for differences in population, geography, and fiscal capacity.

### **Future Research**

Future studies should validate the 2025–2026 administrative figures, incorporate WGI confidence intervals and underlying sources, and construct a wilaya-level panel of service, fiscal, integrity, and participation indicators. Interviews with officials, civil-society organizations, businesses, and service users would clarify how reforms are experienced and why implementation varies across territory.

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