COMPARATIVE STUDY ON SERVICE DELIVERY

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[1] *This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Advisory Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

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The Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) is an inter-governmental organisation supporting regional cooperation of public administrations in the Western Balkans. Its activities are supported by the European Commission (EC) and co-funded through annual contributions of the ReSPA Members. ReSPA Members are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, while public servants from Kosovo* participate in ReSPA activities funded by the European Commission. The purpose of ReSPA is to support governments in the Western Balkan region in developing better public administration, public services and overall governance systems for their citizens and businesses, and prepare them for membership in the European Union.

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CHAPTER I: Foreword

By Ms Ratka SEKULOVIĆ
ReSPA Director

The present Study on Service Delivery in the Western Balkans demonstrates the dedication of ReSPA Members and Kosovo* to the Berlin Process and their common European perspective. It also reflects the strategic vision set out in the Communication "A credible enlargement perspective for an enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans"[3] and the Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans[4] as one of the six EU flagships for the Western Balkans. Moreover, the Study itself establishes and demonstrates an excellent example of energetic cooperation within and across public administrations in support of the fundamental reform process – reform of the public administration.

It offers a unique cross-disciplinary and cross-sectorial overview of the state-of-play at the national and sub-national levels. On the one hand, it reveals potential weaknesses, while, on the other, it identifies possible transferrable answers and the existing best practices and solutions by and for different levels of public administration. This identification and presentation of regional challenges and opportunities underpin the even stronger importance of future cross-border public services, their interoperability and reuse of common building blocks. The richness of excellence presented in the selected case studies from the Western Balkans can serve as a basis for further benchmarking and benchlearning among different levels and sectors within the national public administrations, among ReSPA members and more broadly – with EU and global public administrations and stakeholders.

Closer and better inclusion of stakeholders creates the basis for truly integrated service delivery. A more inclusive and integrated approach is crucial for making the reform of the public administration a success. This Study has tried to address this by overbridging the traditional policy silos approach within and beyond public administration. Service delivery is for the first time in the region assessed by civil society organisations, businesses, donors and the public administrations themselves. This unique "self-assessment" by the public administration complements the Study's multi-disciplinary perspective and its fully integrated approach. Improving the quality of public services delivered is the joint responsibility and a continuous endeavour of all stakeholders. Therefore, a more systemic and regular monitoring mechanism for reviewing the quality of service delivery in the Western Balkans is needed.

I am convinced that the methodology and tools developed and tested within this Study form a sound basis for the creation of such a system. This monitoring system would complement monitoring and research by other regional actors such as SIGMA, OPSI OECD[5], RCC and others. It would lastly contribute to better understanding and more strategic and integrated design of national and regional policy measures.

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[3] COM (2018) 65 final - Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans.

[4] SWD (2018) 360 final.

[5] OECD Observatory of Public Sector Innovation

By Ms Barbara BANKI
Head of Unit Thematic Support, Economic Governance & IFIs, Public Administration Reform, European Commission, DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations

Good quality public services are critical to the lives of citizens, and ensuring their provision is an essential function of the government. Public administration reforms have the potential to improve existing services and unlock the ideas, knowledge and capacity for new solutions to societal challenges.

On 6 February 2018, the Commission presented the Western Balkans Strategy in the Communication "A credible enlargement perspective for an enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans."

The Communication of 6 February 20181, announced that "together with the partners in the Western Balkans, the Commission will launch a Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans." The Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans should be one of the six flagship initiatives of the Western Balkans Strategy.

The Communication sets out five main areas to be covered by the Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans, being one of them related to the development of e-Government, eProcurement, & digital skills. e-Government can help meet the challenge of developing a public administration, which provides public services for citizens and seamless cross-border public services for businesses. The digital transformation can increase the accessibility, transparency, responsiveness, reliability, and integrity of public governance.

DG NEAR has continuously been increasing its support to the Western Balkan Countries in the implementation of their Public Administration Reforms. Service delivery represents one of the core areas of public administration reform as defined in the 2014-2015 Enlargement Strategy; as such, this area has been supported through the OECD/SIGMA programme and also through budget support on Public Administration Reform.

In light of the all the above-mentioned, DG NEAR has welcomed the decision of ReSPA Members and Kosovo* to conduct a Regional Study on Service Delivery. We believe that the study will bring important operational insights on the state-of-play in the thematic areas of General Administrative Procedures Act (GAPA), e-Government and Quality Management. We are also looking forward to better understand, through the results of the study, trends, obstacles, challenges and successes in the service delivery area in the Western Balkans.

We hope that the recommendations of the study will assist Public Administrations from the Western Balkans to better shape their joint and country-specific actions for the support of Public Administration Reform. Last, but not least, we would like to invite ReSPA Members and Kosovo* to think of establishing a more permanent monitoring mechanism for the measurement of quality of Public Service Delivery in the Western Balkans. It would represent a sustainable measure supporting Public Administrations in the region in their path of modernization and alignment with the EU acquis."

By Mr Edwin LAU
Head of the Reform of the Public Sector Division in the OECD

Deepening understanding of the public administration reform processes in the Western Balkans

Technology is disrupting the status quo and creating a future of unknowns. Globalisation and globalism have accelerated and a backlash has formed as a result of growing economic inequalities. Gender equality remains an uphill battle, conflict is forcing record numbers from their homes, trust in government is near record lows, and climate change and job automation crises are fast approaching. With greater interconnectedness and citizens expecting, and wanting, a greater say in their public services the innovation impetus is strong. Today's complex social, political and economic challenges can seem insurmountable, but their significance is mirrored by the potential for governments to take action with new approaches to build new realities and better futures. In a time of increasing complexity, rapidly changing demands and considerable fiscal pressures, governments need to understand, test and embed new ways of doing things not just to keep pace with change but to direct it. Only through innovation, can governments deliver better policy, build constructive partnerships and drive better outcomes for the people they serve.

The Observatory for Public Sector Innovation (OPSI) is a global forum for public sector innovation within the OECD. OPSI works with governments to understand and encourage new approaches to address society's complex problems. It empowers public servants with new insights, knowledge, tools and connections to help them explore new possibilities. It connects and convenes innovators worldwide and directly advises leaders of public sector innovation in OECD member countries and beyond.

Its prime activities include pioneering research in systems approaches to public sector innovation, development of a new theory and model for public sector innovation, international innovation trend-spotting and evaluation, the creation of frameworks for innovation skills and methods diffusion (including the creation and management of an online navigator of tools and resources for public servants) conference and community convening (both on and offline) and providing trusted advice and custom transformation strategies to countries.

Historically, the public sector has based itself on, developed and rewarded subject matter experts. Today, public servants cannot address complex problems with subject matter expertise alone. They must also be equipped with innovation skills, problem solving methods, processes, and techniques. By focusing on the relationship between individual innovation capability and organisational capacity when undergoing public sector reform, governments can work toward creating a system where all public servants, regardless of their job or situation, are equipped and supported to innovate.

OPSI welcomes this comparative study on public service delivery which will, no doubt, deepen our understanding of crucial public sector reform efforts in the Western Balkan region. OPSI looks forward to continuing to learn from ReSPA about the experiences of its member countries and, in turn, to share lessons from the OECD members. Innovation is something that every country is undertaking, and so is something where every country has something to learn. Collaboration and information sharing between international forums are vital to ensuring that the difficult task of public sector reform and innovation has the best chances of success.

CHAPTER II - Introduction Into Comparative Study on Service Delivery

PART 1:   Importance of Service Delivery and Purpose of the Study, Analytical Framework and Research Methods

2.1.1. Importance of Service Delivery

Citizens and businesses view the public sector as a service provider, which they pay through their taxes, and they want to see the delivery of improved services. Growing user expectations and changing demographics, often in parallel with budgetary constraints, mean that effective and efficient public administration reforms, with strengthened customer focus, are increasingly essential in most countries

The service delivery and citizen-centred approach became quite pivotal over the past decades. Within the context of "Europe 2020", the actions are guided by the following vision: "*By 2020, public administrations and public institutions in the European Union should be open, efficient and inclusive, providing borderless, personalised, user-friendly, end-to-end digital public services to all citizens and businesses in the EU. Innovative approaches are used to design and deliver better services in line with the needs and demands of citizens and businesses. Public administrations use the opportunities offered by the new digital environment to facilitate their interactions with stakeholders and with each other.*" This vision for the EU consequently also reflected on the enlargement policy, with a clear focus on e-Government as one of the six flagship initiatives of the 2017 Western Balkan Strategy. Citizen-centric service delivery became a pivotal element and (one of) the main objectives. As clearly reflected in the statements, all countries have awarded this topic a prominent role and place in their public administration reform (PAR) strategies.

Service delivery has been broadly defined as "all contacts with the public administration during which customers, i.e., citizens, residents and enterprises (hereafter referred to collectively as citizens) seek data, handle their affairs or pay taxes. In this context, orientation towards citizens needs to be understood as encompassing all contacts and all tasks performed by the public administration that affect citizens. This broad definition encompasses not only contacts between the public administration and customers, but also the rules regulating those contacts (i.e. the administrative procedures)".[6]

Over time, a wide consensus on the key components of good governance has emerged among EU member countries with different political systems and legal traditions. The concept of good administration has been progressively defined accordingly and included in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.[7]

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[6] SIGMA (2017), The Principles of Public Administration – 2017 edition, pp. 62-63

[7] Article 41, Right to good administration: 1) Every person has the right to have his or her affairs handled impartially, fairly and within a reasonable time by the institutions and bodies of the Union. 2) This right includes: the right of every person to be heard, before any individual measure which would affect him or her adversely is taken; the right of every person to have access to his or her file, while respecting the legitimate interests of confidentiality and of professional and business secrecy; the obligation of the administration to give reasons for its decisions. 3) Every person has the right to have the Community make good any damage caused by its institutions or by its servants in the performance of their duties, in accordance with the general principles common to the laws of the Member States. 4) Every person may write to the institutions of the Union in one of the languages of the Treaties and must have an answer in the same language.

The administrative law principles common to all EU countries, setting the standards and inspiring the behaviour of public servants, should be embedded in institutions and administrative procedures at all levels of the administration. The following principles can be distinguished:

> - reliability and predictability (legal certainty)
> - openness and transparency
> - accountability
> - efficiency and effectiveness

Developing good administration requires political commitment, vision, strategy, defining of priorities and the right sequencing of actions. It needs to be translated into practice, with public services designed, delivered and constantly reviewed based on the needs of the user, rather than for the convenience of the administration. Proper policy development and monitoring mechanisms should be in place for this purpose. It is also essential for the public administration's approach towards service delivery to be coherent, effective and efficient, as well as ensuring equal treatment.

Strategic policy documents and action plans are not the goal in themselves, but rather prerequisites for providing citizens with high-quality, easily accessible services. Sound administrative procedures that are applied in practice are another essential element, but they must be accompanied by continuously improved quality of services and equal access to them.

This mix of macro level elements and operational translation has resulted in SIGMA's definition of the following four principles of public administration:[8]

1. Citizen oriented service delivery policy
2. Fairness and efficiency of administrative procedures
3. Existence of enablers for public service delivery
4. Access to public services

2.1.2. Purpose of the Regional Study on Service Delivery

ReSPA members and Kosovo*[9] are facing significant novelties, demands and expectations in the area of service delivery. These developments have significant impact on organisational structures, dynamics, importance and work of the public administration on the whole. In order to holistically assess the situation, gain a deeper understanding of the operational level and to support its beneficiaries in defining joint (as well as individual) future strategic actions, ReSPA has commissioned and supported the development and publication of this Study on Service Delivery.

The prime objective on the "macro" (country) level of the Study on Service Delivery is to provide an operational overview of and practitioners' insights on public service delivery in the Western Balkan region. But it also aims to go further and formulate both strategic and operational short-, mid- and long-term recommendations and a joint integrated vision of public administration development on the macro level. The additional value added of such a macro level analysis and

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[8] SIGMA (2017), The Principles of Public Administration – 2017 edition, pp. 62-63

[9] This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and ICJ Advisory Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of independence.

vision is that it is not only inter-sectorial, but also supra-sectorial as it is co-assessed, co-formulated and co-shared by broad societal dialogue. The same methodology and structure will be used to describe each of the countries in the Western Balkan region (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro and Serbia). In this way, all countries will receive equal attention and the strengths of each will be put into the spotlight.

Secondly, the Study on Service Delivery attempts to provide in-depth understanding of the operational level of service delivery (actual implementation of developed services) on the organisational or "micro" level. It attempts to understand the Western Balkan countries' practices in service design and change procedures, measurement of user satisfaction and citizens/user oriented approaches, quality measurement procedures, digital enablers' management, accessibility and other operationally interesting topics.

The third (and last) objective of the Regional Study on Service Delivery is to provide a regional comparative overview and conclusions, strategic orientation and possible future vision(s) in service delivery and perhaps even in the public administration reform area in the Western Balkan region. The last part of the Regional Study provides conclusions based on all analytical and researched material and data providing a condensed view on approaching service delivery reforms. It builds on the past, present and future lessons learned from the country case studies, online questionnaire data, and domestic and international best practices (see below).

Conclusions and recommendations have been drawn for all the countries – per thematic area and in the short-, mid- and long-term perspectives. ReSPA, its members and Study end users are thus also provided with a set of success and failure factors to take into consideration during service delivery reforms. Challenges, such as budgeting and HR development, have also been raised. The authors of the Regional Study on Service Delivery hope to spark discussions on what might be the next steps in terms of improving service delivery models with a view to moving forward (at the country and regional levels).

The Regional Study on Service Delivery therefore attempts to, inter alia, answer the following guiding questions:

a. How is the policy framework (in key thematic areas) implemented in day-to-day practice (looking beyond the legal and regulatory requirements)? What works in practice (and what does not), what are the lessons learned and the hidden successes in the implementation to be highlighted? Are there regional conclusions and recommendations to be drawn?
b. How is user satisfaction with public administration service delivery measured in the Western Balkans? What is the correlation with the service redesign process?
c. What are the trends in service delivery and user-focus approach in service delivery and are there any good examples warranting further exploration and what are they?

2.1.3. Analytical Framework of the Regional Study on Service Delivery

In terms of the above-mentioned Sigma Principles ((1) Citizen oriented service delivery policy, (2) Fairness and efficiency of administrative procedures, (3) Existence of enablers for public service delivery, (4) Access to public services), this Regional Study on Service Delivery intends to focus to an extent on the macro level, by analysing the existing policy framework(s), studying strategic options taken in the service delivery models (e.g. "electronic/mobile" and online-only strategies, multiple service delivery models, etc.) and exploring the citizen/user satisfaction measurement approaches used and/or promoted at the general country level (link with Principle 1).

Principle 2 is crucial for defining the key principles (such as legality, equity, equal treatment, proportionality, lawful exercise of discretion, openness and transparency, impartiality, objectivity and due diligence) warranting particular attention and it will be explicitly dealt with in this Study by focusing on GAPA implementation in the different countries. Given that ReSPA recently produced a full comparative study on the issue a full comparative content comparison of the Acts is not envisaged here.[10]

An important part of the Study, however, is dedicated to Principles 3 and 4. Whereas under Principle 1, the focus is on overall policy related to the service delivery model, the part devoted to Principles 3 and 4 focuses, notably, on the micro (organisational) level. The proposed methodology follows an "integrated service delivery cycle" or the switch from satisfaction measurement to satisfaction management. For that purpose a separate chapter on tools, instruments and practical ways of doing this has been included as part 2 of this Study.

This Regional Study on Service Delivery focuses on the following three key thematic areas of service delivery:

2.1.3.1.   General Administrative Procedure Act (GAPA) Implementation

The debate on GAPA implementation aimed to achieve the following objectives:

➢ Obtain a realistic overview of the practical implementation of GAPA at the national and, possibly, sub-national levels. Define the strong points, as well as deficiencies.
➢ Obtain a realistic assessment of consultation and revision processes involving GAPA policy makers and their implementation at the national, and, possibly, sub-national, levels (GAPA legal framework conception and its implementation).
➢ Obtain an overview of the existence, awareness and implementation of the principles of good administrative behaviour in practice. Different Focus Group participants were expected to provide complementary and horizontal constructive information.
➢ Obtain a realistic assessment of the state-of-play, challenges and successes in addressing the needs of vulnerable groups of public service users, including women, when implementing GAPA. Formulate proposals for the further development of accessibility for all. Stress on accessibility as two-sided responsibility (avoidance of one-way/ single public sector criticism).
➢ Obtain an assessment, in consultations with CSOs and the general public, of the state-of-play, challenges and successes in implementation, review and further improvement of GAPA implementation. Formulate proposals for the further development of the

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[10] Koprić and Kovač (2016), Comparative Study .Legal Remedies in Administrative Procedures in Western Balkans.

consultation process. Ensure consultations are a two-way communication process (avoid single/bottom-up assessments).

2.1.3.2. Digitalisation and e-Government

The digitalisation and e-Government implementation debate aimed to achieve the following objectives:

➢ Obtain a realistic picture of the state of affairs of the policies, standards and legal framework(s) for digital government projects and electronic service delivery. Do they exist, how are they implemented, communicated, supported and monitored?
➢ Assess facilitation between central and decentralised/sub-national government levels in the field of digital government projects and electronic service delivery.
➢ Assess the availability and uptake of the centrally developed and managed digital enablers at the central/sub-national/local levels.
➢ Obtain a realistic overview of the availability and interoperability of basic registers.
➢ Obtain an overview of ways of redesigning digital services

2.1.3.3. Quality Management and Service Delivery Management and Policy

The debate on "Service Delivery Management and Policy" aimed at obtaining a realistic view of the state of affairs in the area of service delivery strategies and policies. Do they exist, but, more importantly, how are they implemented, communicated, supported and monitored? The following elements were considered:

➢ Preparation of the policy/strategy. Who took the lead, who coordinated?
➢ Implementation
➢ Support (how are public sector organisations supported: tools, guidelines)
➢ Follow-up and monitoring (how do we know the policy/strategy is successful)

These debates provided valuable insight both in the positive developments and the encountered difficulties, and recommendations for the future.

This Study attempts to identify existing service delivery enablers in the above mentioned three key thematic areas and, as a practice/implementation focused study, attempts to produce an analysis and assessment of their usage in service delivery for citizens and businesses by service providers at central, decentralised/sub-national and local levels and the ways they contribute to service delivery improvements. Similarly, the Study also attempts to identify major obstacles impeding service delivery improvement at all levels. This distinctive and unique insight is complemented by a comparative overview of practices developed and implemented exclusively at the sub-national or local levels. Balkan Barometer Survey (end user/citizens satisfaction survey) results served as a secondary data source for obtaining feedback from citizens and businesses, since the authors of the Study lacked the manpower to conduct a client satisfaction survey by themselves.

The Study is not limited to any particular services or policy sectors, or to delivery channels used, but its authors have nevertheless tried to identify the best practices and regional priorities with strong focus on digital service delivery uptake.

2.1.4. Research Methods

Data and necessary information needed for the fulfilment of the above objectives were collected in the manner and order explained in detail below. It is important to clarify that country specific data and information were collected directly from the public administration representatives of respective ReSPA Members and Kosovo*. ReSPA National Coordinators facilitated the contacts. The research team performed the first round of data and information analysis and verification during the Focus Group meetings. In some cases, secondary data validation with the relevant and responsible civil servants. ReSPA and experts team are aware that in some cases the obtained information or opinions may be biased and do not necessarily represent the official position of the institution concerned, nor of a ReSPA member or Kosovo*. Data and information presented in this Study were submitted for additional verification during the completion stage of the study. Nevertheless neither ReSPA nor experts assume full responsibility for the correctness and objectivity of the information and data obtained from ReSPA members and Kosovo*.

2.1.4.1. Document Analysis

During the first stage, the team of regional experts and key experts collected and analysed various documents, starting with legal texts, policy and strategic plans, implementation and evaluation reports for each country separately and the entire region. The Regional Study on Service Delivery also builds on OECD/SIGMA reports[11] and takes into account the results of regional end user satisfaction surveys performed in the Western Balkans – namely the results of the 2017 and 2018 Balkan Barometer[12] and the WeBER-project.[13]

2.1.4.2. Focus Groups

As elaborated above, the Regional Study on Service Delivery focuses to an extent on the macro level analysis. This was mainly achieved through structured meetings of Focus Groups – one such group and meeting were organised in each ReSPA participating country.[14]

The objectives of each Focus Group were:

➢ to analyse the existing policy framework(s);
➢ to re-think strategic options taken in the service delivery models (e.g. "electronic/mobile" and online-only strategies, multiple service delivery models, etc.); and,
➢ to explore the user satisfaction measurement approaches applied and/or promoted (link with Principle 1 under SIGMA "Service Delivery Component", which focuses on citizen oriented policy development and implementation).

These issues were examined at the general country level. However, the composition of the Focus Groups was broad in order to obtain a horizontal and complementary overview. Sub-national level representatives were therefore of vital importance for conducting the overall analysis (and

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[11] http://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/monitoring-reports.htm

[12] https://www.rcc.int/seeds/results/2/balkan-public-barometer

[13] http://cep.org.rs/en/partnerships/weber-platform/

[14] With the exception of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where, due to the large number of institutions and constitutional complexity, two interconnected meetings had to be organised.

providing potentially interesting complementary examples at the sub-national level); however, the assessment presented in the text of the present Study is limited to the general country level. Possible key guiding questions (see Annex 1) have also been prepared by all the Regional Experts to support the debate.

The "State of Affairs" preparatory document (referring also to the SIGMA baseline reports) was prepared by the Regional Experts (with the support of the Key Experts and ReSPA National Coordinators) for all topics of discussion.

The participants in the Focus Groups (one in each ReSPA participating country) were identified and proposed by Regional Experts and in coordination with ReSPA National Coordinators. They included individuals at managerial/coordination/decision making levels of PAR. It is equally important that the Focus Group members have been directly involved in the implementation of PAR in the three core topics defined above, rather than (exclusively) in policy making. Focus Group members were practitioners rather than politicians.

Each Focus Group included participants selected to represent the following areas/jurisdictions of implementation: GAPA coordination (preparation and implementation); e-Government project/initiative/strategy coordination; GAPA implementers – at the central and local levels;, CSOs/NGOs focusing on accessibility and equality; academia – only if directly included in the implementation of one or more key thematic areas; relevant international organisations; and, the business sector. An overview of the composition of the Focus Groups in each country is provided in Annex 2.

For the purpose of facilitating discussion, the key topics were sent to the invited members of the Focus Groups in advance. Key data and figures on GAPA implementation, digitalisation and quality management, introduction to selected case study samples, key services, successes (regional/national knowledge) additionally supported the development of Focus Group debates and dynamics. The preparatory documents included a substantial literature review, review of the legal and policy/strategic framework(s), as well as a review of the results of OECD/SIGMA, Balkan Barometer and WeBER research, which were performed by the Regional Experts.

All the gathered and analysed information was brought together with the semi-structured interviews with some key stakeholders in each country in the Country Profiles (see Chapter 3 of this Study).

2.1.4.3.   Semi-Structured Interviews

Where needed, Focus Groups were complemented by semi-structured interviews conducted to collect and/or verify any missing data. A full overview of the interviews held in each country is available in Annex 3.

2.1.4.4. Institutional In-Depth Assessment Obtained via the Online Questionnaire

In order to collect in-depth views at the operational level, an online Questionnaire was developed and circulated to the central, sub-central and local levels of the public administrations in the different countries. The results of the online Questionnaire were used to underpin the statements and recommendations made by the Focus Groups and prepare the regional comparative overview at the operational level (see Chapter 4 of the Study).

The Questionnaire, distributed with the assistance of the ReSPA National Coordinators, to respondents at the institutional level, included focused questions on service delivery reform addressed to service providers at either the central government level or the sub-national or local level (this essentially means that one Questionnaire with general and specific questions for each group of respondents was disseminated).

The Questionnaire comprises four blocks: (A) Background Information, (B) General Information on Service Delivery, (C) User Orientation Status and Maturity, and (D) Service Delivery and User Orientation Actions. The Questionnaire was available (via Survey Monkey) in the local languages of the region and English between 2 April and 10 May 2018.

Respondents at the level of public institutions providing services were identified and notified by the Regional Experts and ReSPA National Coordinators. An introduction letter was sent to all the identified respondents. Ideally, persons in the institution/entity with good knowledge of different service delivery aspects (e.g. measuring user satisfaction, digital standards, online service delivery aspects, et al) were identified as the most suitable respondents to fill the Questionnaire. Additionally, the respondents were asked to share the link and related information with any of their colleagues who, in their estimation, could also fill the Questionnaire. A total of 1,099 responses at the level of institutions/entities in the Western Balkans were collected. The Questionnaire is available in English in Annex 4.

2.1.4.5. Case Studies

An important aspect of analysing service delivery in the Western Balkans at the organisational/institutional level involved identifying/describing/analysing state-of-the-art cases from the countries in the region. The selected case studies demonstrate how a modern public administration interacts with service users.

At least five in-depth inspiring practices in each ReSPA member state and Kosovo* provide complementary information on the state-of-play of the implementation of services in the three key thematic areas at the micro level. The cases were selected by the Regional Experts, based on their in-depth knowledge of the country specifics, who applied the following common selection criteria for the region: five cases of successful service delivery reform, including a service delivered to vulnerable groups (accessibility), a service provided at the local level (with possible/potential uptake at the national level) and a service covering digital service delivery. The selection of cases was verified by the respective Focus Groups and in coordination with ReSPA National Coordinators. The cases examine facilitation of enablers and solutions between national and sub-national levels of government and, equally interesting, present solutions on the services developed and delivered exclusively at the sub-national/local level. Overall, the presented cases also allow a good comparative overview of the state-of-play of service delivery in ReSPA members and Kosovo* and provide possible models for the further development of services, regional cooperation and further in-depth analysis focussing exclusively on specific services delivered at the local level. The template used by all Regional Experts during the preparation/description of each case study is available in Annex 5.

The cases are integrated in and briefly referred to throughout the Study. Because of the value-added for other public organisations in the region, a separate publication (as Annex 7 to this Study) has been produced.[15] The full overview of case studies by country is available in Annex 6.

2.1.5. Formulation of Findings and Recommendations

Country specific findings and recommendations at the macro level were initially formulated by the Focus Groups and can be found in Chapter 3 of the Study. These recommendations represent integrated country assessments of the current state of implementation, the operational challenges and opportunities in service delivery in the three key thematic areas and a joint vision of future developments in the area of service delivery.

However valuable, these conclusions do not fully address the third objective of the Regional Study on Service Delivery. Regional findings, recommendations and perspectives re service delivery in the Western Balkans are elaborated in Chapter 5. A multi-perspective and multi-source integrated approach was applied in their formulation.

Although valuable, the country profiles, online Questionnaire data, selected case studies and previous research and analytical work present partial and limited operational aspects of service delivery in the Western Balkans. Therefore, this Study combines and compares all the available sources and data in the formulation of conclusions, recommendations and perspectives at the regional level. All data obtained within the framework of this Study took into account and were compared with data and conclusions by OECD/SIGMA, as well as the data and recommendations formulated after the analysis of service delivery by the end users (Balkan Barometer, WeBER, and Transparency International). The authors of the Study believe that this multi-faceted and multi-source approach enables the readers of this document to obtain a relatively accurate picture of the operational state-of-play and regional comparative overview in the field of service delivery in the Western Balkans, as well as of the realistic and operational prospects for the further development of service delivery and the related public administration reforms.

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[15] Regional Study on Service Delivery (2018), "Inspiring Public Service Delivery Practices in the Western Balkans" part, ReSPA, p. 156.

2.1.6. Structure of the Study

Figure 1: Structure of the Study

1. GAPA
2. Digitalisation and e-Government
3. Quality Management and Service Delivery Management

Macro (country) level

Micro (institutional) level
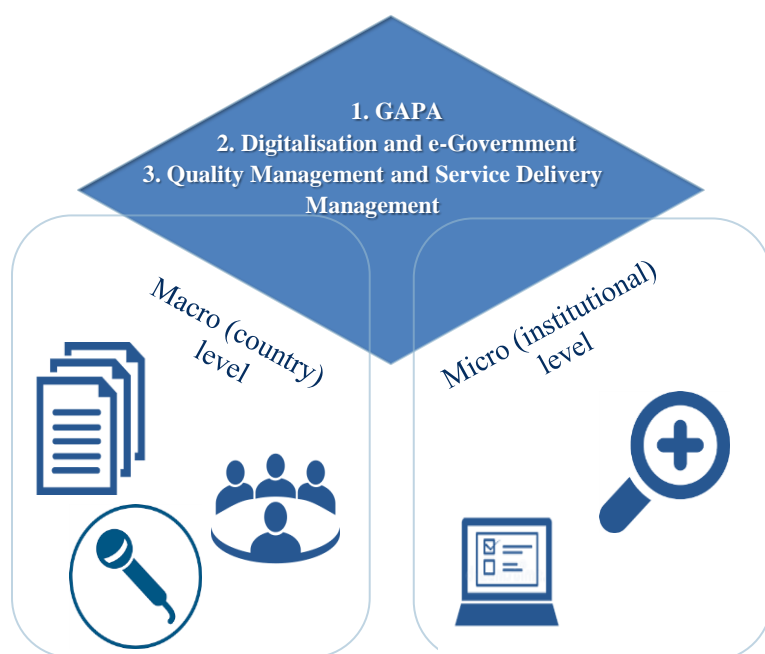
Chapter 1: High-level statements on service delivery

Chapter 2: Service Delivery: Concepts, Techniques, Tools and Approaches

Chapter 3: Country Profiles

Chapter 4: Service Delivery in the Western Balkan Region

Chapter 5: Comparative Conclusions and Recommendations on Public Service Delivery in the Western Balkans (Present & Future)

Annex Report: Inspiring Public Service Delivery Practices in the Western Balkans

Chapter 1 captures the statements of ReSPA's Director, the European Commission and OECD on the importance of service delivery for their respective countries, their future plans and policies.

Chapter 2 highlights the importance of service delivery and purpose of the Study, provides insights into the analytical framework and research methods (in Part 1), explains the major concepts in the service delivery debate and provides insights in (strategic and operational) approaches in this field of work. In addition to a brief description of the approaches/techniques, concrete (case) examples are highlighted and referenced (in Part 2).

Chapter 3 is the pièce de résistance of this Study. It is composed of the six respective country profiles, describing and analysing, in a structured fashion, the three main components of this Study at the macro level.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the status of service delivery in the Western Balkan countries at the institutional (micro) level by presenting the conclusions from the online Questionnaire.

Chapter 5 integrates all of the above by drawing some overall conclusions/recommendations on the status of service delivery at the regional level for the past, the present and the future.

Besides the detailed annexes related to specific parts, the inspiring cases are integrated in a separate publication (as annex 7 to this Study) and thus complete this Study.

PART 2: Service Delivery: Concepts, Approaches, Tools and Techniques[16]

Introduction

Figure 2: Categories of participation

Categories of participation[17]
Citizen control
Delegated power
Partnership
Consultation
Informing

Service delivery and the citizen-centric approach became quite pivotal within the context of "Europe 2020". This vision for the EU consequently also reflected on the enlargement policy. With a clear focus on e-Government as one of the six flagship initiatives of the 2017 Western Balkan Strategy, citizen-centric service delivery became a pivotal element and (one of) the main objectives. As clearly reflected in the statements in Part 1 of this Study, all countries have awarded this topic a prominent role and place in their PAR strategies. This part aims to set out the key principles and practical ways and tools in the area of service delivery. In this way it might serve as practical guidelines for public sector organisations and a framework within which the practices in the Western Balkan region as described and analysed in the following chapters can be put.

Governments have to be more responsive to society's needs and demands. Public sector organisations are being reformed in order to provide better, faster and more services. However, high quality and speed are not the only new features that society requires from its government. Since the pace of societal change is accelerating, governments should equally be able to respond to changing demands by offering new solutions. Secondly, governments reform with the purpose of re-establishing trust in government. Governments need to provide more choice, voice and transparency by interacting with citizens/customers at all stages of the policy and service delivery process.

Figure 3: Policy/ Public Service Design
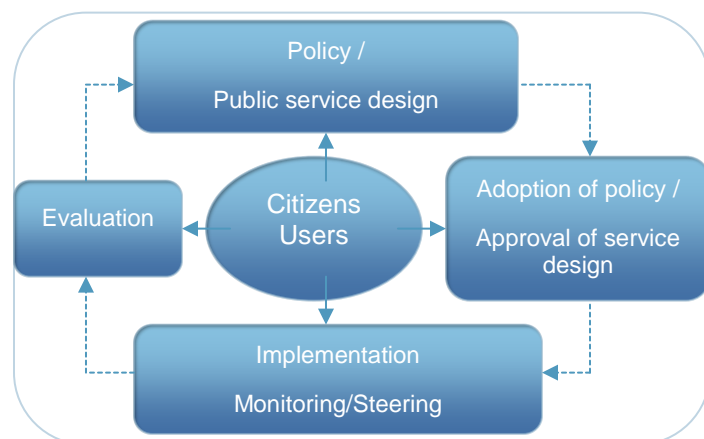
Traditionally, the political leaders determine what services are to be provided, on what terms and to whom; and bureaucrats and professionals subsequently organise and deliver the services. The role of the citizens is largely passive. In the new setting, however, the range of actors involved – institutionally or on an *ad hoc* basis – in the production, delivery and evaluation of public services has grown and the citizens

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[16] This part is largely based on: Thijs N. (2011), Measure to improve. Using citizen/users information to improve the performance of public sector organisations, EUPAN, p. 101; Staes P. & N. Thijs (2008), European Primer on Customer Satisfaction Management, EUPAN, p. 98 ; Thijs N. & I. Mackie (2017) , Quality of Public Administration Toolbox, Chapter 5: Service Delivery and Digitisation, European Commission, Brussels, p. 117

[17] R. Arstein (1969), A Ladder of Citizen Participation, Journal of the American Planning Association, 35: 4, pp. 216 — 224. Note that Arnstein also mentions in his categorisation the positions of "manipulation" and "therapy" as two positions of "non-participation"

have assumed an increasingly active role. This changing role of citizen/customers of public services has an impact on the policy and management cycle as a whole.

The consultation of citizens/users provides crucial input throughout the policy and management cycle. Consultation can be defined as a two-way relationship, where government talks to citizens/customers and citizens/customers provide feedback to government. It is based on the government's prior definition of the issue on which the citizens'/customers' views are being sought and requires the provision of information. The citizen/customer no longer comes into the picture only at the end, but at all stages and steps of the policy and service delivery.

Strategies of participation and knowledge on needs and performance are essential. This implies that public agencies evolve from a closed, self-centred service provider to an open networking organisation which the public can trust. This occurs through transparent processes and accountability; through democratic dialogue from an internal (resources and activities) focus to an external (output and outcome) focus; and from a classical design-decision-production-evaluation cycle to an involvement of stakeholders in general, and citizens (as customers) in particular at each and every stage of this cycle. Citizens/customers become co-designers, co-deciders, co-producers and co-evaluators.

Putting citizens at the heart of public institutions provides a twofold benefit: it makes public administrations more responsive and increases citizens' satisfaction and trust in government. Citizen-centric service delivery implies that policy makers better understand the needs of and key drivers of satisfaction for citizens, and that they are in a position to "identify sub-groups of users and needs or gaps in accessibility" (OECD 2013). This, in turn, can enable public sector entities to adopt better policies and to provide more responsive services based on citizens' perspectives and empirical evidence. Measuring citizen satisfaction and preferences on a regular basis can help public managers monitor public sector performance over time, continuously improve service delivery, and measure the impact of reforms and service-improvement activities on end users, ultimately resulting in a higher likelihood of citizens being satisfied with policy outcomes. Emerging literature suggests that working toward a more citizen-centric system allows public administrations to increase their efficiency, thanks notably to early or immediate feedback mechanisms for taxpayer-funded services (World Bank 2015), and "flatter, agile, streamlined and tech-enabled" practices (World Economic Forum 2012). In the reverse case, governments run the risk of seeing resources being diverted or misallocated, thereby diminishing the quality of public service delivery and undermining trust in public institutions.

Figure 4: Mapping the Pivotal Role of Public Sector Service Delivery
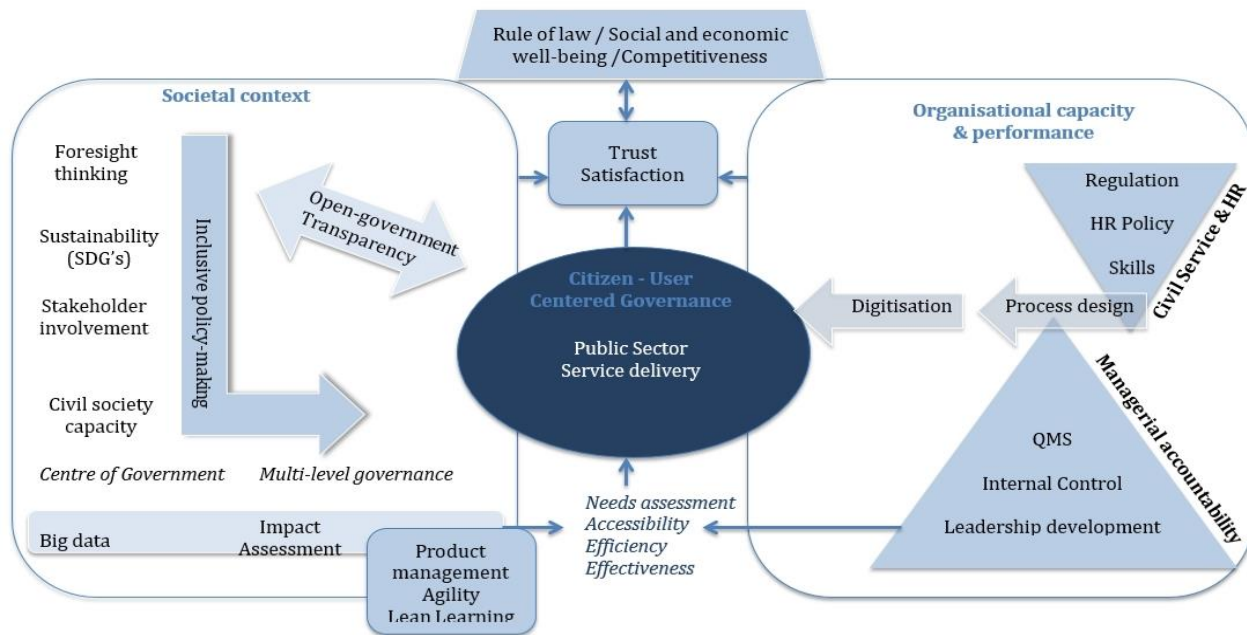
The SIGMA Principles of Public Administration include four principles of service delivery.[18] Developing good administration requires political commitment, vision, strategy, definition of priorities and the right sequencing of actions. This needs to be translated into practice, with public services designed, delivered and constantly reviewed based on the needs of the user, rather than for the convenience of the administration. Proper policy development and monitoring mechanisms should be in place for this purpose. It is also essential for the public administration's approach towards service delivery to be coherent, effective and efficient, as well as ensuring equal treatment. Strategic policy documents and action plans are not the goal in themselves, but rather prerequisites for providing citizens with high-quality, easily accessible services. Sound administrative procedures that are applied in practice are another essential element, but they must be accompanied by continuously improved quality of services and access to them.

Figure 5: Service Delivery Principles
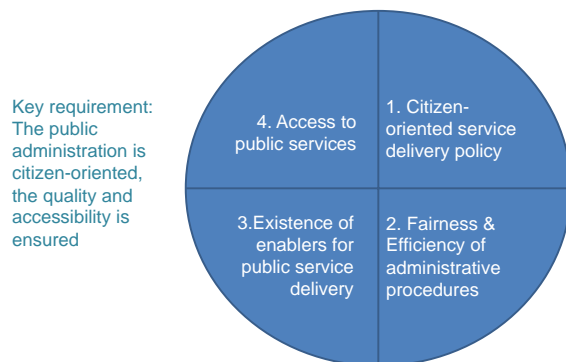
Key requirement: The public administration is citizen-oriented, the quality and accessibility is ensured

4. Access to public services
1. Citizen-oriented service delivery policy
3. Existence of enablers for public service delivery
2. Fairness & Efficiency of administrative procedures

Public services can be understood as all interactions between government and citizens, businesses and other service users,[19] whether directly or by proxy through an intermediary. In other words, they encompass not just the well-recognised services provided by the state, such as health, education, police, fire service, welfare,

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[18] SIGMA (2017), The Principles of Public Administration – 2017 edition, pp. 62-63

[19] Throughout this Chapter, we use the term 'citizen-user', to bring together the broader concept of a 'citizen' (who has the rights and duties of a member of society) with the narrower notion of a 'user' (who has the rights and expectations of a customer or consumer of a service). Similarly, this Chapter also refers to business-user, as the other main beneficiary of public services. Public and non-profit bodies are also service users and covered by 'others'.

social services, etc. They also include every instance in which citizens, businesses and others come into contact with the administration and some form of exchange of information or finance takes place: registering, licensing, applying, paying, borrowing, making an enquiry, etc. Public 'services' are mostly intangible, but they can also involve construction works, or the supply of equipment or items.

The motivation for improving service delivery can arise from demands by citizens and businesses for higher quality or greater accessibility, or an internal search for more cost-effective ways of working and better organisation in trying to 'do better with less' in the current financial climate. Globalisation, the digital society, 24/7 media and social networks have opened the eyes of citizens and businesses to what is possible. Learning from their experiences with the commercial sector, they want public services that are better, faster, cheaper, and in many cases, they want more from their public administrations. ICT has now assumed a transformative role in public service design and delivery. The rise of the 'digital society' has heightened expectations from e-service delivery among citizens and businesses. Meeting these expectations calls for addressing a number of questions. We will tackle these questions in the ensuing sections by presenting different approaches and tools providing answers to them.

Key questions	Approaches and tools
1. Do we know what citizens / users expect from our organisation in terms of services and their delivery? What can be improved?	✓ Direct contact (surveys, panels, and focus groups) ✓ Indirect feedback and representation ✓ 'Life events' analysis and customer journey mapping
2. How do we improve our systems and processes, to optimise service delivery?	✓ Process re-engineering ✓ Organisational interoperability ✓ Administrative simplification
3. Are user demands best met through the 'front office' interface with the administration? Which (other) service delivery channels should be used and prioritised?	✓ One stop shops ✓ End-to-end service delivery ✓ Multi-channel service delivery
4. Given all of the above, do we make best use of e-Government in delivering these services through online channels?	✓ Interoperability ✓ Online 'life events' for citizens and businesses ✓ Key enablers (eID, single sign-on, etc.) ✓ 'Once only' registration ✓ 'Digital by default' ✓ 'Open by default', Government as a Platform (GaaP)
5. Do we know how satisfied users are with our services and how we deliver them?	✓ Users' service charters ✓ Mystery shopping ✓ Satisfaction measurement and management ✓ User experience testing
6 How can administration better manage their whole service portfolio?	✓ Public service portfolio management

2.2.1. Understanding Users' Needs and Expectations

In designing and delivering services, public administrations should rely not only on their own expertise and insights. Public service users should be involved in expressing their needs and expectations. Various ways and means can be used to capture them - the choice depends on the situation faced by the service provider. The following options are complementary, not mutually exclusive, each providing its own insights into customer wants, behaviours and motivation. Consultation should be viewed as a continuum that starts with identifying initial needs and expectations, and later monitors and evaluates satisfaction that these preferences are being met during delivery or have evolved.

The administration ….	Potential tools ….
… Has the time and resources to initiate original customer research, and hence make direct contact with actual and potential service users.	✓ Performing **user surveys** to ask citizens and businesses directly about their preferences and experience ✓ Setting up **focus groups** for more qualitative research ✓ Creating **citizen/user panels** for qualitative dialogue and continuity
…. Makes the most of more readily available sources of information, to get indirect feedback from existing service users and their representatives	✓ Seeking insights from **front-line staff** (their observations about user experience and feedback they receive from users indicating needs) ✓ Performing analysis of **comments and complaints** made by existing service users ✓ Making formal and informal contact with **representative bodies**
… Invests in objective testing of the suitability and strength of service delivery, simultaneously taking the users' point of view.	✓ Using **'mystery shoppers'** to independently evaluate the service experience ✓ Performing **'customer journey mapping'**, usually based on **'life events'**, to walk the path that users have to follow to receive the service ✓ Testing user experience by putting them through an actual (digital) service delivery process and recording their actions or inaction (e.g. giving up) and feedback.

2.2.1.1. Indirect Feedback

Trust in public services starts with openness, which means willingness to accept feedback even when it is critical, and to learn from it. **Comments, suggestions and complaints schemes** are valuable sources of information for public administrations on service relevance and quality. Such schemes often tend to record formal complaints in which the service user is seeking explicit redress. It is vital to regularly monitor and act expediently on such concerns, using various channels (contact centre, website, post and fax) as appropriate, to respond quickly to concerns about service quality. Qualitative ways of obtaining insight can be very powerful. In this regard, the views, perceptions and observations of frontline staff should be regarded as very useful and often underused by public sector organisations.

Inspiring example: Complaint Front Office for service quality (Italy)

The 'Complaint Front Office' aims to bring the public administration and the citizens closer together. The administration's contact points are the website, the contact centre and the multi-functional front office. The website offers online services and exhaustive information about the sectors in which the body operates. The contact centre and the front office are the two indirect ways of communicating, thanks to an operator and/or facilitator.

The Complaint Front Office records and manages the dissatisfaction with the public services provided to Milan's two million inhabitants. Before the creation of this service, there was no front office able to record and manage all incoming complaints. The complaint management procedure is an integral part of the Quality Management System implemented by the City of Milan according to the UNI EN ISO 9001:2000. This certificate guarantees the quality of the administration's services and allows the users access in many different ways.

In April 2015, the City Council of Milan launched a new "Complaint Front Office for Service Quality" using a customer relationship management (CRM) system integrated with the other channels, such as the channel used to ask for information. The project has involved a major reorganisation in the back offices and a rationalisation of the number of civil servants engaged in the service.

From 21 April 2015 until August 2016, the citizens submitted: 33,000 information requests; 7,500 warnings; 6,200 complaints and 610 suggestions. All of them were reviewed, while the answers to 1,306 of them were being prepared.

The access network has been reconsidered as previously the interaction was not registered and individual paper-based complaints could be lost. Besides, registration of any document presented to any public office is mandatory according to the Italian law. This is also why it has been decided to collect the complaints through the institutional website and at the 10 records offices spread around the city. The persons in charge of the records offices must collect the complaints and enter the data regarding the complaints directly into the CRM. In this way, the operators in the back office receive the complaints and answer the citizen by e-mail or post as indicated by the latter.

An integrated CRM will enable citizens to send their requests to the Planning and Control Department. In this way, it will be possible to analyse and categorise the requests with the aim of asking the departments receiving the complaints to consider improving the services they manage. The Communication Department, the CEO office, the IT Department and the Planning and Control Department have contributed to defining the specific framework for lodging the claim.

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Furthermore, public administrations can introduce government-wide complaint review and conflict resolution policies. This approach starts by recognising that the process (including any appeals) carries high costs for both the administration and the citizen/business, wherefore the best way to raise satisfaction levels is for the officials to take the initiative and make quick and direct contact with the complainant. Many informal suggestions may go unrecorded in comments and complaints schemes, but can provide valuable insights into the service users' views.

In some cases, administrations may wish to focus their research on specific target groups that face a higher risk of being excluded from accessing public services, if their specific circumstances are not taken into account sufficiently. The case of people with disabilities using Lodz-Baluty tax office services demonstrates the merit of reaching out to **representative bodies** in identifying improvements in both communication and physical access.

Inspiring example: Improving access to the Lodz-Baluty tax office (Poland)

Since 2006, the Polish Tax Office Łódź–Bałuty (Drugi Urząd Skarbowy Łódź–Bałuty) has made special efforts to improve their service to citizens with disabilities. By establishing cooperation with organisations representing and associating with disabled persons, the Head of the Office hoped to obtain valuable insight into their needs, to enhance their social functions, and particularly to facilitate the process of fulfilling their fiscal duties. The Head of the Office organised a number of meetings with representatives of the aforementioned organisations, and consulted with them directly about the accommodation in the office, with the aim of improving the conditions in which disabled people are served. He also asked for their opinions on manuals in which guidelines were set out for providing services to the disabled.

During the meetings, emphasis was placed on modern, safe and costless way of contacting the tax office electronically. The participants were informed about entitlement to personal income tax deductions, particularly relief rehabilitation. Organisations of persons with disabilities are informed regularly (every quarter) in electronic form of the planned training courses organised at the headquarters of the local office, including their scope and, among other things, changes in tax law. This resulted in a number of effective actions: an instruction manual and training in sign language and communicating with the blind for the employees, and architectural improvements (admission rooms for people with disabilities, an access ramp for wheelchairs, bright colours and contrast in materials displayed in wall-mounted display cases, etc.). The headquarters office is in contact with the local tax office to provide access to the services of an interpreter of sign language into Polish and from Polish into sign language, using wideotłumacza. The film promoting the above method of communication can be found at http://youtu.be/RLuK_xrEgV4. In addition, the office has implemented a system that allows the transfer of information to and communication with customers via SMS/e-mail related to the fulfilment of tax obligations. For example, customers with disabilities are sent information about relief rehabilitation.

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2.2.1.2. Direct Contact with Citizens and Businesses

Current and potential users can be approached directly for their views and insights. The main strength of **user surveys** is that they allow mass collection of information, wherefore they are especially useful in obtaining a comprehensive picture using quantitative data. If done correctly, this information should be representative of the whole population, whether citizen-users or business-users. Four types of user surveys are possible. Their respective advantages and disadvantages are set out below.[20] The choice of survey format should be tailored to the purpose and the audience, by analysing the total population of users in advance.

Survey type	Pros and cons
Face-to-face	☑ Surveys conducted face-to-face are able to collect fuller, more complex data.
	☑ The use of an interviewer gives more control over who is approached and therefore who actually answers the questions. This is important with strict statistically representative sampling designs.
	☑ Designed with care and administered well, they will generally have better response rates than other types of survey.
	☒ Face-to-face interviews are labour and time intensive, and are likely to be more expensive than other options.
Telephone	☑ This format can be very cost-effective, if the survey is relatively short and straightforward.
	☑ Appropriate for service-specific surveys where there is a contact number for each person from which to draw a sample (a pre-condition).
	☒ Some categories of people will be systematically under-represented, especially those who are hard-to-reach.
Postal	☑ Like telephone interviews, these need to be shorter than face-to-face surveys and use mainly simple, 'tick box' types of questions to achieve a reasonable response rate.
	☑ They can be very cost effective (cheap to set up) and provide anonymity which may prompt a better response rate for more sensitive topics.
	☒ They offer very limited scope to ask qualitative questions, even less than telephone surveys.
	☒ Response rates tend to be low, for example only 10-20% of questionnaire being returned. This has to be planned into the survey design.
	☒ There is a high risk that some citizen groups will be over or under-represented, such as those with language, literacy difficulties or with support needs.
Internet	☑ Electronic surveys can be very cost-effective with a high response rate for users which are easy to target through the Internet, for example, professionals, public bodies, even businesses.
	☒ At present, web-based or e-mail surveys are of limited value in customer research in public service contexts, because the distribution of access to the web is not evenly spread across all sections of the population.

The main drawback of surveys in general is that there are limitations on getting qualitative impressions from users, even in face-to-face interviews. This technique can capture new insights through several rounds and layers of questions, but at the cost of fewer topics and a smaller sample group than quantitative surveys would allow. A more appropriate device for in-depth qualitative research is either:

➢ **Focus Groups** - bringing together a small but diverse group of actual or potential users for a one-off discussion; or
➢ **User Panels** - a group of service users, who are broadly representative of the whole population and who have consented to be part of a pool of people that will be used to take part in periodic research and consultation exercises.

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[20] Communities Scotland (2006), "How to gather views on service quality", Scottish Executive, p. 72.

2.2.1.3. Mystery Shopping

Sometimes, the best way to understand service delivery from the user's perspective and to spot opportunities for improvement is to send representatives out into the field to see for themselves. 'Mystery shopping' is a well-established private sector technique that has been transferred to public services: the use of individuals trained to observe, experience and measure any customer service process, by acting as customers and reporting back on their findings in a detailed and objective way. This procedure can be used over the telephone, in face-to-face situations, or by e-mail. The exercise involves deciding on suitable scenarios - typical situations or issues that service users may present, rather like 'frequently asked questions'.

> **Inspiring example: Mystery shopping to strengthen standards and performance (Malta)**
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> In 2016, the People and Standards Division embarked on a thorough and detailed exercise collecting standards of procedures (SoPs) for all services offered by over 130 Government departments which deal with the public directly (whether face-to-face, by e-mail or on the phone). Information sessions were provided to Directors and/or Directors General to guide them in the completion of this exercise. These SOPs focus specifically on client-oriented services, rather than the internal workings of the departments. In addition, the departments were asked to indicate the timeframes for every service offered and to provide reasonable justifications for services which take a considerable amount of time to be completed. The collated SOPs will be utilised to help the mystery shoppers to assess and determine the way to continuously improve these services. They will also be required to provide recommendations for the simplification of services that take exceptionally long to be finalised.
>
> In addition to SOPs, all Government departments dealing with citizens directly were asked to complete a general self-assessment based on the following 10 determinants of service excellence: access, communication, empathy, competence, courtesy, credibility, reliability, responsiveness, security, and tangibles. The objective of this exercise was to give the departments a general guideline of the aspects of the services they offer that will be audited by the Quality Audit Officers in 2017, with the aim of improving the service offered to their customers. These audits will be used to give departmental ratings of 1 to 5 stars, which will be published on every department's individual webpage.
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2.2.1.4. Life Events and Customer Journey Mapping

While individual services can be assessed at specific points in their life cycle, a more dynamic analytical approach is to evaluate the users' experiences of '**life events**' – common, crucial moments or stages in the lives of citizens or the lifespan of a business. For the user, accessing the service that they are entitled or obliged to receive typically involves multiple contacts with more than one administrative authority. Often, individual elements of the 'life event' service are fragmented across units within one organisation or across several different institutions, according to the competences assigned by the executive. The 'life event' approach is both a tool of analysis, and the basis for organising public services, especially online by exploiting the processing and networking power of ICT. There is no universally agreed definition or directory of 'life events', but the following table shows typical **examples**.

This leads to the concept of **end-to-end service delivery**, whereby a request for service delivery with the administration is opened, processed and delivered at the same point of entry for the user, irrespective of how many individual public institutions are involved or how many back-office transactions take place to satisfy the request. To design a service that is truly fit-for-purpose, this means also conducting an **in-depth investigation of process steps**, as well as data used in the interactions with end-users, and how they can be managed to create the optimal path and most satisfying experience for the user.

Citizen-users	Business-users
- **Having a baby** - **Admission to hospital** - **Studying** - **Looking for a job** - **Paying income taxes and social contributions** - **Marrying / changing marital status** - **Buying, building, renting or renovating a property** - **Travelling to another country** - **Moving** - **Applying for a driver's licence** - **Selling and buying a car** - **Reporting a crime** - **Retiring** - **Dealing with the death of a close relative**	- Starting and registering a business - Applying for licences and permits - Building, buying, renting or renovating a property - Hiring an employee - Running a business - Paying tax and social security contributions - Trading across borders - Closing a business

This is where additional methodologies come in, like **customer journey mapping**, which traces users' steps during their interaction (documents to be provided, case files to be opened, timings to meet, deadlines to be complied with, etc.) and the emotional responses these provoke (*when do users feel dissatisfied and why?*). The main 'hot spots' can be identified by putting mapping and comments together (e.g. poor quality reception at entry, lack of information about required documents, procedures too complex to complete, inconsistency, etc.).

Inspiring example: From measuring complexity with life events to mapping the journey with businesses (France)

The Modernisation State Department in France (Secrétariat général pour la modernisation de l'action publique) carries out a large-scale survey amongst user groups (individuals, businesses, local authorities and associations) in its **bi-annual complexity barometer**. The initial survey in 2008 was based on 6,000 telephone interviews split between 3,015 individuals, 1,029 businesses, 804 local authorities and 805 associations. A quota sampling method was used to ensure that each sample was representative. The study was organised around life events for citizen-users (buying a house, getting children, etc.) and business-users (recruiting staff, paying taxes, etc.). The perceived complexity is measured for all these events, as illustrated in the following graph for businesses.

One of the events perceived as the most complex and frequent was the "creation of an enterprise". Over 300,000 businesses are set up every year, an administrative procedure characterised from the outset by its length. To analyse in detail the exact sources of dissatisfaction with concrete moments of interaction with the public administration, and to identify opportunities for improvement, **customer journey mapping** is used as a qualitative technique.

Of all the administrative procedures studied, **setting up a business** is one of the longest and most complex in terms of the number of steps

Priority preoccupations for the enterprises

and the number of documents to be submitted. Customer journey mapping, or recording the event from the user's
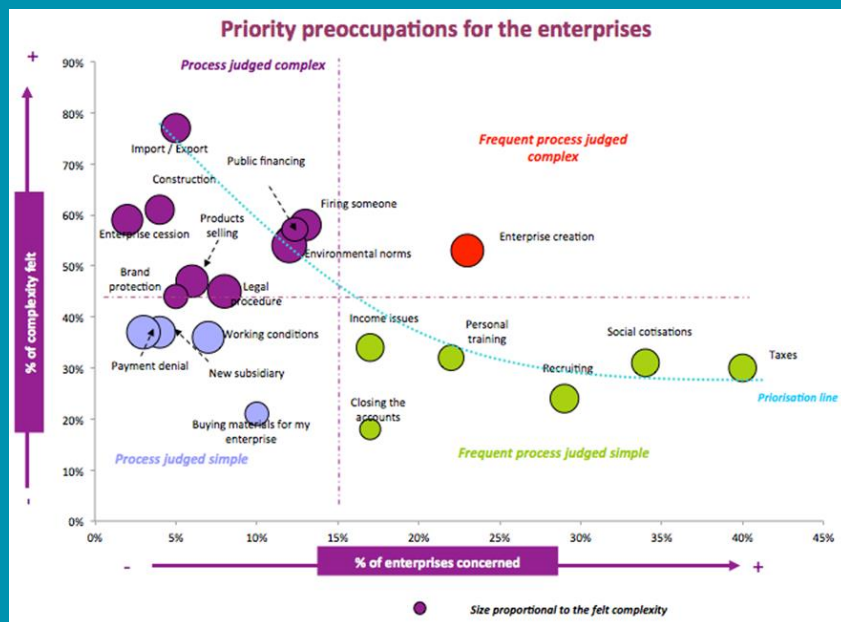
point of view, allowed seeing these two realities in a new light, revealing, for example, that administrative pressure grew, reaching its peak during the first few months the business is operating, just when the entrepreneur needs to devote all his or her energy to helping it grow. It also, of course, identified a number of administrative inconsistencies. A business that has been formed in legal terms still must obtain an operating licence (covering equipment, receiving the public, etc.) to start up its activity (this is true of at least a hundred types of activity). In concrete terms, this sometimes means waiting several months before actually being able to launch operations. This finding is very important in focusing improvement efforts since the users' progress clearly shows that, even though some problems remain, the effort made to improve the "legal" company formation phase has improved the situation, by setting up one-stop shops in the Business Registration Centres (CFE). By contrast, issuing operating licences has not so far been covered by the streamlining initiatives, especially the paperless process.

This second phase in setting up a business, **from legal establishment to operational activity**, is a difficult and, by its nature, very dissatisfying period for entrepreneurs, who thought or hoped they would be able to launch their activity but find themselves confronted with new government agencies, new contacts, etc. This is the second major lesson from the study. While entrepreneurs feel that they have plenty of support upstream, where it is simply a question of developing their project, as soon as the company has been formed in legal terms, they are subject to multiple obligations, repeated declarations and all sorts of red tape. Faced with these difficulties, they find that the government, as a partner, also becomes the source of all the irritation. Having to comply for the first time with requirements they had not known existed, entrepreneurs find themselves drawn away from the heart of their activity and, either alone or with their accountant, must rapidly take on this new management role. It is therefore necessary to allow the start of commercial activity more quickly and, as far as possible, to give the project founder the means to respond to government requirements, which must be clarified and rationalised. Some very tangible improvements have been realised:

2.2.2.   Improving Processes to Benefit Public Service Users

Administrative burdens are the costs to businesses and citizens of complying with the information obligations that arise from laws and regulations. In delivering public services that meet user expectations, one of the main policy drivers has been the desire to achieve **administrative burden reduction (ABR)**, usually known as 'cutting red tape'. It is about getting rid of unnecessary steps and processes that bring no apparent public value. Regulatory reform has a direct impact on service delivery, as it affects both *what* institutions do and *how* they do it (including when, where and in some cases, how much they charge). It generates some administrative simplification of itself and creates the right climate for more.

Inspiring example: Reduction of administrative burdens for citizens (Austria)

In April 2009, the Council of Ministers decided on a comprehensive programme to reduce administrative burdens for citizens and improve the quality of governmental services. The aims were twofold:

- ➢ Cutting time and costs spent on **information obligations** - reducing official channels by fostering the use of e-Government solutions, enhancing intra-governmental cooperation, providing one-stop-shop solutions; and
- ➢ Improving **service quality** - making questionnaires and forms more comprehensible and easier to access, providing information in a barrier-free way at a single point of access, and developing interactive procedures.

After the first quantitative and qualitative research, the 100 most burdensome activities were identified and workshops were organised to discuss potential mitigating solutions. Participants of the workshops comprised legal experts from the ministries; civil servants from enforcement agencies; and stakeholders. Around 4,000 interviews were conducted by opinion-pollsters to estimate the burden and to identify starting points for reforms. It was calculated that these most burdensome information obligations for citizens had led to 22 million requests, solicitations, petitions and declarations per year. This equals 32.3 million hours total burden for all Austrian citizens, consisting of: 4 million hours for obtaining information, 18.8 million hours for processing, 9.5 million hours for arriving at the local authority, and €113 million out-of-pocket expenses (copies, fare, etc.).

About 140 measures have been planned and partly implemented by line ministries. Simplification measures already implemented have led to a time reduction of 12.7 million hours for citizens. Key measures are setting up an electronic register for the civil status of citizens, the simplification of free public transport for pupils and trainees and the introduction of the Mobile Phone Signature ("mobile citizen card") in administrative procedures. During a major tax reform in 2015/2016, the preconditions for the so-called automatic tax declaration were created. It will serve as a no-stop solution for citizens with a reduction potential of 3.1 million hours in the medium term.

The latest report on the measures can be found in an annex to the budget:

https://service.bmf.gv.at/BUDGET/Budgets/2016/beilagen/Better_Regulation_2016.pdf

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Even without regulatory change, public administrations can **streamline and simplify processes** to reduce the burden on citizens and businesses, as well as free up resources and realise savings. To balance necessary bureaucracy compliance costs down, administrations need to understand, manage and improve their internal working processes (back office) and their interface with the users (front office).

2.2.2.1. Process Re-engineering

Processes are what make institutions function. They are the set of activities that turn inputs into outputs, with the aim of meeting policy and operational objectives. While users have a high-level objective (e.g. 'get a job'), they have to achieve a series of intermediate goals first. Each 'life event' (e.g. finding a job) is a **composite** of *individual public services* (e.g. help with searching for job vacancies), each of which is usually made up of several *processes* (e.g. registering interest with employment services), and each process in turn comprises a number of *operations* (e.g. finding the local employment office, meeting an adviser, completing a form with personal details and aspirations, etc.).

Inspiring example: Using co-creation to develop user-friendly digital services (Denmark)

The Danish Business Authority (DBA) works actively to ensure that companies experience their interaction with public authorities as being easy and efficient. When businesses save time and costs on public reporting and registrations, they can instead spend their time creating growth within their business and in society. Efficient public services also mean that the public authorities use far fewer resources on enquiries and correcting errors. The DBA has used co-creation as a way of developing new solutions that can achieve this goal. Co-creation happens when public authorities involve the end-users in developing new or better solutions to the challenges businesses face in relation to public administration. The end-users can be both the companies themselves and the case workers in the public administration. Co-creation does not mean that the power to make decisions about the initiatives to be implemented is delegated to the users, rather that they take part in cooperation with a cross-disciplinary team representing resources from different disciplines, such as service designers, business process re-engineers, legal specialists, etc.

Public services in many EU Member States are undergoing profound changes these years, increasingly transformed into self-service digital solutions. This also counts in regulating businesses. However, new problems can arise as the digitisation process progresses. Both time and wage costs can be saved by digitising reports and registrations, but when the helpful contact person disappears, companies also lose the opportunity for specific and personal assistance. This is costly for both companies and public authorities, as many self-service solutions today do not invite companies to serve themselves. Ultimately, this can cause a range of problems: companies must use multiple channels simultaneously to solve their problem, they make errors, or they are simply unable to comply with regulation even if they want to. An end-user perspective is therefore necessary to create a self-service solution that can efficiently replace the competent voice on the phone.

In 2011, the Danish Business Authority conducted a project designed to explore and create a more efficient and user-friendly digital service. One of the concepts developed in the project was a digital solution for companies to select an industry code (also known as a NACE code) when registering their business online during start up. NACE is the acronym used to designate the various statistical classifications of economic activities developed since 1970 in the European Union. NACE provides the framework for collecting and presenting a large range of statistical data according to economic activity in the fields of economic statistics (e.g. production, employment, national accounts, in other statistical domains). Statistics produced on the basis of NACE are comparable at European and, in general, at world level. The use of NACE is mandatory within the European statistical system. It is thus obligatory to select a NACE or industry code when starting up business in Denmark.

Another digital service which involved end users and co-creation methods, was the development of a digital service called the 'spray journal', which is a mandatory digital tool for reporting farmers' use of pesticides on their fields to the Danish AgriFish Agency. The project involved end users in developing a digital service which was easy and user-friendly, and causing as few administrative burdens as possible. The project made use of methods such as ethnographic interviews with farmers, agricultural consultants mapping their needs and challenges with using the spray journal and testing an early prototype. The results were used to improve the final construction of the digital service, the "spray journal", and to improve the administration connected with it.

The lessons from these two projects showed that good digital service often means that public authorities need to cooperate across silos, to provide digital solutions that are efficient for companies and public authorities alike. Through co-creation, we realised that businesses and citizens do not distinguish between the various bodies when contacting the public authorities. They often expect that the authorities cooperate on the digital self-service solutions and that they only have to send information to a single recipient. Designing a user-friendly self-service solution therefore requires extensive cooperation between the various public authorities. The cooperation should be based on businesses' actual experiences and processes. Insight into businesses' actual problems with public regulation makes it clear to authorities why cooperation is necessary when designing self-service solutions in the most efficient way for all parties. An organisation can benefit from basing its development project on co-creation if the organisation is about to implement a previously-decided initiative to reduce bureaucracy. Here, user-centric innovation and co-creation can contribute to making better informed decisions about the many detailed questions concerning the practical design, work processes, required guidelines and desires connected with the initiative.

Due to the project, the Danish Business Authority has co-created a new digital platform between businesses and public authorities to support registration of industry codes. The project has provided us with thorough insights into users' challenges and has made clear how public authorities can work together to provide effective solutions that are efficient for companies and public authorities alike. A business case was developed, showing that a new self-service site for industry codes will save companies time equivalent to DKK 25 million over a four-year period (equivalent to almost €3.4 million). At the same time, the solution will also reduce the expenses of the Danish Commerce and Companies Agency and Statistics Denmark by DKK 930,000 (equivalent to around €125,000).

For the spray journal, the involvement of farmers and agricultural consultants made it possible for the Danish Agrifish Authority to aim at reducing administrative burdens followed by the mandatory digital reporting of pesticides and developing a digital service fitting reality and the needs of end users.

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From the administration's perspective, the **challenge** is: how to bring all these operations together into a process that is easy for the user to access as a service, within the whole life event. This involves both back office and front office considerations, in which ICT and interoperability now play vital roles.

Process re-engineering also entails looking at how interface with the administration is experienced from the end user's perspective and tailoring the 'back office' processes to make service delivery as user-friendly as possible, which can be achieved through '**co-creation**': working with end users to develop new or better solutions and cooperating across administrations.

2.2.2.2.   Administrative Simplification

Administrative simplification is designed to reduce regulatory complexity and uncertainty, and reduce unnecessary burdens created by bureaucracy and paperwork. As an example in overcoming obstacles, the Netherlands took a decision at the top of Government and found the delivery of social assistance to be the greatest administrative burden on citizens. A particularly interesting dimension of the Dutch programme was the 'seduce and support' approach, whereby municipalities were pushed on by each other's successes ('seduce'), while in parallel, regional advisers on cutting red tape were at hand to provide practical assistance ('support').

Inspiring example: Bureaucratic simplification of social assistance (The Netherlands)

In 2007, the 4th Cabinet under Prime Minister Balkenende committed itself to a real, noticeable reduction of administrative burden to citizens by resolving the 10 major bottlenecks experienced by citizens in their contacts with the government, one of the most prominent being the process of applying and accounting for social assistance benefits. At the municipal level, this process accounted for roughly 40% of the total administrative burden placed on citizens. Four themes were identified as crucial in improving the social assistance delivery:

- ➢ Less burden of proof of eligibility;
- ➢ Speeding up procedures;
- ➢ Legality;
- ➢ Control and accountability.

Emphasis was placed on the 'noticeability' of improvements: not only would a reduction of total minutes spent by the public be judged a success, but a marked change in the experience of the individual claimant would also have to be realised. A project to bring about these changes was launched by the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, in cooperation with a large number of municipalities, which have responsibility for social assistance, all over the Netherlands. The objectives of the project were manifold: noticeably improving the quality of social assistance services by municipalities, reducing administrative burden for citizens applying for and receiving social assistance benefits, but also bringing about a change in the culture in which social assistance applications were assessed. This involved moving from a system of suspicion and control, in which every claimant was viewed as potentially fraudulent, to a system of so-called 'high trust', were applications are viewed as principally legitimate. One notable specific objective was the abolishment of the monthly entitlement form.

The ministry adopted a 'seduce and support' approach, whereby municipalities were persuaded to implement improvements by showing them the advantages and the progress made in other municipalities. This was done at a number of workshops and conferences, and through widely disseminated brochures detailing best practices throughout the country. Regional Red Tape Ambassadors were deployed to assist municipalities in the implementation.

All the while, the project was part of a much wider effort to reduce the administrative burden on citizens, professionals and administrations. In terms of measuring results, the main quantitative indicator used was the Standard Cost Model for citizens – a tool which enables the quantification of administrative burden on citizens in both time and monetary costs. Results of the project were substantial on individual, local and national (aggregate) levels. For individual social assistance claimants, the administrative burden was reduced by as much as 40% in time and 20% in out-of-pocket expenses. For the total administrative burden placed on citizens in the Netherlands, this translated to a reduction of about 3,500,000 hours. At the municipal level, yearly savings of between €100,000 and €1,000,000 could or had been realised, depending on the size of the municipality and the degree of implementation. More than 60% of municipalities no longer require the monthly entitlement form. The ministry continued to monitor the administrative burden placed on citizens by municipalities, and many municipalities conducted follow-up projects to the ones described here.

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ABR can be organised at **any territorial level** of public administration and in any field. Portugal's Simplis programme of administrative simplification, which was organised at the national level under the responsibility of the Minister of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers from 2006 to

2009, was extended to municipalities as a partnership with central government in 2008. In an example from Italy, registration and housing of immigrants was the focus of administrative simplification in Milan. The solutions were found in a blend of organisational reforms, within and beyond the municipality, and simplifying information requirements.

Inspiring example: 'Simplis', the Lisbon simplification programme (Portugal)

Back in July 2008, the Lisbon Municipality launched its simplification programme 'Simplis', a new impulse for the city, and with that, a new age of delivering efficient services to the citizens began. This was a yearly programme, built with the participation of several levels of the organisation, from the elected to road menders, and all levels of civil society, from structural organisations to individual citizens.

More than 100 measures and actions were taken, spanning many branches, such as service delivery, internal improvement and citizens' engagement. A couple of them clearly stand out from the others in terms of the level of improvement in the way services are delivered and recognition of it by the citizens, as well as knowing that this was achieved with a low (or no) budget. Within this simplification programme, with a strong link between services, the municipality managed to increase citizen satisfaction levels. Citizens stated that measures allowing access to services via the web, creating multiple points of entrance, or decreasing the number of days between instruction and decision, have simplified their lives, thus providing them with faster services, more information and lower costs. To respond to this call, the approach focused on the following measures:

> ➢ Na Minha Rua (Fix My Street);
> ➢ Plantas de Localização (Location Plans);
> ➢ Horários de Funcionamento (Business Schedule Map);
> ➢ Atendimento Personalizado Online (Personalised Chat);
> ➢ Licenciamento Aberto (Open Licensing);
> ➢ Balcão Único e Descentralização do Balcão Único (One-Stop Shop Start and Grow);
> ➢ Serviços na Hora – Certidão/Reprodução (Just in Time Services – Certified Copies and Plans);
> ➢ Gestor do Munícipe (Citizen Manager); and
> ➢ Filmar Lisboa (Filming in Lisbon).

The choice of these measures was not random. They were the result of a survey taken at the beginning of 2013 among Lisbon's citizens, and were the measures quoted by citizens and those which they use the most. They represented 70% of the overall measures.

The Municipality of Lisbon prepared the sixth edition of the programme, in which the main focus was to be a macro programme of the virtualisation and the dematerialisation of information and requests, aiming to achieve even higher satisfaction levels of citizens, as well as internally gaining data storage space, and promoting electronic data interchange (EDI) within similar organisations, so as to store documentation as metadata.

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2.2.3. Meeting User Expectations of Easy Access to Services

Accessibility is a crucial aspect of service delivery and can be both physical and virtual. Again, the underlying principle here is aligning with the users' expectations, even if this means an adjustment in the administration's approach, subject to affordability and available resources.

2.2.3.1.   One Stop Shop (OSS)

A one stop shop (OSS) is essentially a single window (office or webpage) where multiple services are offered and hence the customers can find the information they need and typically conduct

transactions in one place, either physical or 'virtual'.[21] The OSS is usually described as bringing many services 'under one roof'. This scenario is popular among municipalities in many countries, for example, for representing a range of functions or departments in one location, as an alternative to the town hall. OSSs are sometimes created with the aim of serving users in remote (as well as urban) locations, who might otherwise be excluded, including the establishment of mobile OSSs. OSSs can also deliver cross-border services in rural border regions.

Inspiring example: One Stop Shops at the service of citizens (Cyprus)

The need for more efficient, effective and qualitative provision of services to citizens is nowadays of utmost importance in all modern States. The inability of the traditional, bureaucratic public administration to effectively meet citizens` needs, has led to the necessity to search for new methods with regards to the structure and operation of the public sector.

In view of this, Citizen Service Centres (CSCs) have been established all over Cyprus, based on a strategy plan, with the aim of providing multiple services at one point of contact/location, thereby offering citizens the convenience of having all their requirements met in one stop. The ultimate goal is to have a citizen-centric public administration, which does not engage its citizens in long-winded, time-consuming and frustrating procedures, but is in a position to effectively meet the citizens` needs in a timely manner. Acting as an alternative channel for dealing with public agencies/organisations, CSCs offer more than 90 different services of a number of governmental organisations, such as issuing of birth certificates, identity cards, driving licences, road tax licences, social insurance contributions records, etc. In addition, CSCs receive applications for the issuing of passports and refugee identity cards, for registration in the electoral register, for grants, allowances, benefits and pensions. The on-the-spot provision of services and information to citizens at a single point of contact is rendered possible, by fully utilising modern Information and Communications Technology. The network currently comprises seven CSCs in total (five operating in urban areas and two in rural areas).

The competent authority for the CSC, the Public Administration and Personnel Department (PAPD) of the Ministry of Finance, manages the project relating to the establishment of CSCs and the organisation, staffing, supervision and coordination of their operation, with a view to ensuring their efficiency and effectiveness. An important stakeholder in the whole project is the Department of Information Technology Services, which is in charge of the installation and support of the IT systems/equipment.

Despite the small geographic distribution of the island, the impact on citizens has been remarkable. It is noteworthy, that, over an 11-year period from the establishment of the first CSC, the seven CSCs have provided a total of 6.6 million services to citizens who have visited them (3,000 services per day on average), while 2.3 million citizens received information over the phone (data as of end of May 2016).

At present, the seven CSCs operating on the island act as an alternative channel for citizens to deal with the public administration. The PAPD is committed to continuing the improvement of the relationship between public administration and citizens, by establishing new CSCs and by constantly upgrading and improving the effectiveness of the already established CSCs. To this end, the PAPD has established a quality management system based on ISO 9001 and all the Citizen Service Centres have been certified according to this standard.

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[21] Please note that 'one stop' is not the same as 'once only'. The OSS is a mechanism to access multiple services, but does not necessarily mean that user information will be shared across administrative units and never again requested. While some OSS do also offer 'once only' data registration, this is not a definitive characteristic of an OSS.

OSSs can also be created for **specific services** relating to life events, such as tax administration, or buying and selling property.

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Inspiring example: All in one – Bürgerbüro in the Tyrolean district of Reutte (Austria)

The district of Reutte covers an area of 1,250 km² with only a small number of inhabitants (about 32,000) in the north-west of the Tyrol and can only be reached by car or by train (2.5 hours' travel) from the capital Innsbruck. The distances to the district capital of Reutte are long, some of the 37 municipalities are more than 60 kilometres away from the local administration. The Bezirkshauptmannschaft Reutte is the office of the local administration and security board. Until 2007, there were separate offices for passport issues, vehicle licensing and for driving licences and these offices were spread over three floors. So, for example, if you needed a driving licence, you had to go to the licence office on the second floor, where you received an invoice. You then had to go to the first floor to pay the taxes and then go back up again to the licence office on the second floor to file the application. After that, you had to wait for one or two days before receiving the licence. The building was not easily accessible for people with disabilities and there were no lifts. Since the administration was going to move into a new building, there was also an opportunity to tackle changes in the administrative organisation.

The 'Bürgerbüro' opened in 2007 in the new Bezirkshauptmannschaft Reutte, with brightly lit and transparent rooms, quite near the main office entrance. Three offices had to be closed and 20 employees had a new type of work to deal with. The team in the 'Bürgerbüro' works open hours and does a lot of job-sharing. Everyone in the team is able to carry out all duties; they organise their own holiday replacement, they make a weekly plan of which hours everybody will work and they share a collective guidance in their group. The new office is now open for the citizens from 07:30 until 16:00 with no break at midday. The 'Bürgerbüro' now also collects the taxes, so that everyone really gets what he or she needs all in one place ("one-stop shopping"). The new 'Bürgerbüro' has already appeared several times in the newspapers, on radio and local television.

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There is no template for designing an OSS: its form generally follows its function. Broadly speaking, OSSs fall into three categories, although individual OSSs can mix elements from each one in practice

- ➢ **'Reception':** A signposting role, providing information and pointing the users towards the individual agencies and services they require. This runs the risk of being just '*one more stop'*.
- ➢ **'Surgery':** The OSS is like a general practitioner, able to provide a diagnosis, feedback and to deal with common conditions, but referring to specialists to treat more complex cases.
- ➢ **'Multi-clinic':** This model is full service, able to manage the case end-to-end, from initial consultation to completion, with all specialist inputs provided along the way.

Most OSSs can be categorised as falling under the surgery or multi-clinic models, or a combination of the two in specific fields. Where an OSS deals in only one policy area, such as tax administration or housing in the previous examples, it is more likely to fulfil the 'full service' role. OSSs that cater for all citizen and/or business services tend towards the more generalist 'surgery' model.

Three elements are particularly important in the early stages of the development of the one stop shop: (1) planning and managing OSS projects; (2) linking the OSS to administrative simplification and process mapping, and (3) ensuring the Government has a strategy in terms of promoting different channels, most notably digital vs. physical. When contemplating an OSS project or

implementing an existing one, whether physical or virtual, here are some **questions to consider**:

Question	Considerations
Are there any legal barriers to establishing the OSS?	Legislation that assigns responsibilities to specific levels of government or territories (e.g. regions, provinces) can limit the development of OSSs as a national network whereby citizens can access services anywhere in the country. In planning the OSS, time should be allowed to develop and adopt solutions in the legislative programme of the government.
Is the OSS just a 'window' into the administration or does it involve a more substantial relocation or reorganisation of resources?	In the case of a physical OSS, the office will need to be staffed. If the 'receptionist' model is foreseen, then staffing levels may be minimal, if the surgery or multi-clinic model is planned, the OSS will require a management and staff structure which mirrors the organisation(s) it represents. The more staff that are transferred to the OSS, the more important it will be that they play a full role in its development and buy-in to the concept.
Does the OSS have the authority to make decisions?	If the intention is to follow the 'receptionist' model, then no decision-making powers are necessary, but, if the OSS is to move beyond diagnosis and referral, it must have delegated authority from the parent organisation(s) to decide on individual cases. This means appointing or assigning staff with enough seniority and experience, in the case of a physical OSS.
Is the OSS in effect a new and additional agency?	There are arguments for creating physical OSS as separate legal entities within or outside the administration, but risks too. The parent or partner organisations may be reluctant to make qualified staff available (their 'best people'), and/or resent the transfer of powers and resources to the new body. Some OSSs have failed in the past because of 'turf wars', which makes the initial planning and internal negotiations over the OSS especially critical to its success.
If the OSS is a physical location, is it accessible and visible?	To be effective, the OSS must have 'presence'. In other words, it must be actively promoted to its target group, and easy and low cost to access if a physical OSS, including by public transport if aimed at citizens.
Are staff competent to handle the OSS role?	This is not just a matter of technical knowledge and experience, but also inter-personal and analytical skills for customer service. These should be assessed before appointment/assignment to the OSS, and coached if there are gaps.
Has the OSS been properly costed and its benefits evaluated, to justify the spending and upheaval, and is it sustainable?	In principle, single portals represent a step up in access to public services for the citizen or business. But like any organisational change, an OSS requires upfront investment, including staff movement and training, and running costs. Many of the financial benefits will accrue to the user, rather than the administration.
Has the OSS been accompanied by administrative simplification?	If the OSS is essentially a professional interface with the citizen or business, then it is simply acting as a guide to navigate the service through the labyrinth of the administration's bureaucracy. This is a vital role in itself, but the real benefits (and economies) come from marrying the single portal to the seamless process, which is essential in the case of the virtual OSS online.

2.2.3.2. Multi-Channel Service Delivery

Nowadays, users want their interactions to be convenient, and they prefer to be online, rather than in line. To meet this expectation, administrations need to deploy a variety of channels that allow users to consume their services anytime, anywhere and anyhow. Services should be tailored to the needs of individual users, as much as possible; user segmentation is a step in that direction. Scenarios range from traditional channels, such as the counter and telephone, to electronic channels, such as the Internet, e-mail, SMS-messaging, interactive voice response systems and digital television. A multi-channel strategy can address two objectives faced by today's public bodies: improving the services provided to the user community and/or reducing the

costs of providing its services. Each administration should find out the preferences of their user segments in relation to the services and the types of transactions required. Preferences vary considerably depending on:

> **Demographic and socio-economic factors**: These might include gender, location (urban or rural based, dispersion of population across the country or regions) and health.

> **Delivery phase:** For example, whether orientation, information, consultation or transaction.

> **Complexity:** Research has shown that the channel via which users seek information is often also the channel they prefer in the following service steps, but users prefer direct channels (especially by phone) for complicated interactions.

> **Personal or impersonal:** Users who prefer personal contact when seeking general information are not usually inclined to use the phone or Internet in the following process steps. But users who use the phone are more inclined to switch to the Internet.

> **Type of service:** For example, research shows women in the EU use the Internet generally less than men, but are more likely to use it to search for health-related information.

A public administration's user population is not homogeneous; nor should it be treated as such. To be able to deliver quality services, services should be tailored to the needs of individual users, as far as this is possible. Although fully-customised service provision may be a thing of the future, user segmentation is a valuable step in the right direction. Segmentation means that the user population, ideally per service or group of related services, is subdivided into subsets of users who share an interest in the service(s), based on one or more characteristics. The segments are then 'targeted' in the most suitable way over the most appropriate channels, based on their needs. Generally, users want services to be flexible, accessible, complete, easy and secure. A user's channel preferences are influenced by circumstances such as the nature of the service required or his/her need for direct, person-to-person interaction. New developments in ICT allow the public sector to meet these preferences by adapting their front and back offices: allowing new ways of interaction through a variety of channels, restructured services that accommodate their users' needs, and re-organised business processes within and between separate administrative bodies. This is often a challenge for public sector services, which are typically built as 'silos'. Scenarios range from traditional channels, such as the counter and telephone, to e-channels such as the internet, e-mail, SMS-messaging, interactive voice response (IVR) systems and digital television.[22]

Overview of channels with potential advantages and disadvantages	
Call centre	☑ Can handle voice contacts (e.g. telephone), Internet contacts (e.g., chat, e-mail), written contacts (e.g. faxes, regular mail) ☑ Can deliver services ranging from simple general information requests (e.g. self-service through IVR systems) to complex transaction services (e.g. in direct contact with a human agent) ☑ The use of computer telephony integration (CTI) enables it to be a one stop shop ☑ Cheaper to operate than traditional channels ☑ Can be used as an add-on channel for other channels
Counter	☑ Provides direct and personal contact ☑ Suitable for complex services that cannot be provided over self-service channels expensive to operate ☒ Physical distance and limited opening hours may be a barrier

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[22] Based on: European Commission, DG Enterprise, Interchange of Data between Administrations Programme (2004), Multi-channel delivery of e-Government services, p. 77

E-mail	☑	If organised around automated response: suitable for simple services that don't require personal contact, and available on a 24/7 basis
	☑	If organised around manual response: suitable for complex information and communication services that require personal contact
	☑	Less formal than regular mail
	☒	Expensive to operate
Instant messaging	☑	Suitable for asking brief questions and for obtaining a prompt answer
	☑	Faster than e-mail
	☒	Danger of misunderstanding due to brevity of messages
Interactive Voice Response (IVR) systems	☑	Accessed over a phone line
	☑	Suitable for simple services
	☑	Available 24/7
	☒	Seen by many as user-unfriendly (phones with visual readouts may remedy this)
Mobile devices	☑	Enable users to access services irrespective of location
	☑	Offer functions such as SMS, e-mail, access to the Internet (depending on the model), in addition to telephony
	☑	Raise inclusion in areas with poorly established fixed telephone line system by offering telephone, SMS and Internet (m-services)
	☒	Size of screen is a limiting factor to providing services
	☒	Functionality of different devices is converging (e.g. PDAs and mobile phones)
Personal computers	☑	Widely used device to access the Internet (home, work, school, public access points)
	☒	Internet connection needed: modem over standard telephone line, ISDN line or ADSL connection
Public Internet Access Points (PIAP)	☑	Intended for users who have no access to the Internet
	☑	Usually located in public places with dedicated staff available to assist users
	☒	Physical distance may be a barrier
SMS	☑	Offered by the GSM network
	☑	Send short (max. 160 characters) messages to and from mobile phones
	☑	Suitable for notification services
	☑	Can be combined with other channels (websites, e-mail boxes)
	☑	Technology becoming available that allows messages to be sent via the fixed line telephone system
Telephone	☑	Very high penetration rate
	☑	Type of services, "opening hours" and costs dependent on the receiving end of the line (an administration's employee, a call centre agent, an IVR system or an answering machine)
	☑	Preferred by many users (instead of e-channels)
	☑	Speech/auditory impaired may be helped by text phones and communication assistants
	☑	May be used to access websites
Websites	☑	Can contain very large volumes of information
	☑	Suitable for services that are not too complex
	☑	Available 24/7
	☑	Parallel or add-on channels such as a call centre can make websites appear more direct: a call centre agent guides the user through his web session
	☒	Devices are needed to access websites (overall Internet penetration rate in EU was growing to an average level of 85% in 2017. Note needs to be taken of the differences between countries and the known digital gap.
	☒	The nature of the accessing device (PC, mobile phone) determines viewing and thus services (e-services vs m-services)

An administration's first step in defining a multi-channel strategy consists of determining its objectives: why does it want to offer a variety of channels? Only if it has a clear vision can it make properly motivated choices, in terms of which channels it should implement and how it can redesign its services to reap the optimal benefit. A multi-channel strategy can address two objectives faced by today's public bodies: improving the services provided to the user community and/or reducing the costs of providing its services. Because success in service delivery depends on a vast range of parameters, there is no single formula or solution that fits all situations. Instead, each administration wishing to implement a multi-channel strategy must make its own

investigations and choices. This is exemplified by the case of customer service reforms in the City of Linz in Austria, which has put in place a multi-channel offer of personal, telephone-based and online citizen services, including the OSS approach.

Inspiring example: Three channels in the City of Linz (Austria)

In the administrations of municipalities (communities), which are the smallest units in the structure of the federal state, the administration and the citizens interact on a virtually equal footing. Due to this close and direct contact, the municipalities are compelled to constantly scrutinise and improve the way in which they deal with their citizens. In 2001, the municipal authorities of Linz launched a service offensive with the aim of giving their citizens much better access to the individual services. Based on their customers' need for information, communication and interaction, which had undergone some changes, new forms of organisation were created for the three most important access routes:

➢ **Personal**: Services for which there is a great demand, which can be dealt with quickly and do not require any special knowledge (which can therefore be standardised) were bundled together. These so-called quick services were offered at 'single points of contact' which were easy for the customers to get to (Citizens' Service Centres, decentralised libraries). In addition, services that were in great demand but for which special knowledge was required were spatially and organisationally brought together in so-called specialised centres (e.g. Construction Service Centre, Fee Service). Since 2008, services for special target groups have been offered within the framework of the 'mobile citizens' services' at locations, which can be flexibly arranged and are convenient for the customers (e.g. at the start of the semester, students can register places of residence and get active passes at the University of Linz; before the travelling season, travel documents can be obtained in larger firms in Linz).
➢ **Internet**: The platform 'service A-Z' under www.linz.at offers citizens access to comprehensive information and many online services. There is also a special portal for entrepreneurs (www.linz.at/wirtschaft) to ensure the best possible service to this target group around the clock.
➢ **Telephone:** With the establishment of the Teleservice Centre (TSC) in 2006 and the continuous expansion of the services it offers in recent years, it has been possible to optimise the means of access to the municipal administration that is most frequently utilised by citizens. The TSC thereby completes the comprehensive service concept from which both the citizens of Linz and the municipal administration benefit: the citizens enjoy an improved quality of services and the administration can deploy its resources more efficiently. The value of this approach has been confirmed by the excellent results obtained in the surveys of customers and the 'mystery actions', both of which are carried out at regular intervals, as well as by contacts with customers (both direct and by phone).

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2.2.3.3.   Product Management

A complementary and completely innovative approach in managing users' expectations and ensuring easy access to public services has been developed by California Health and Human Service Agency, Office of Innovation, United States of America.

The California Health and Human Services Agency (CHHS) oversees departments and offices that provide a wide range of services in the areas of health care, mental health, public health, alcohol and drug treatment, income assistance, social services and assistance to people with disabilities. Its main work across disciplines, sectors and services is focused on establishing an environment that supports innovation that helps design services with a clear user focus. With dedication to innovation, the CHHS Innovation Office aims to improve programme outcomes and better meet client needs.

With its focus on product management (public service as product), a complementary methodology for improving the quality of public services has been successfully developed. This complementary method encompasses all stages of the product lifecycle - planning, forecasting, production and marketing of a product or products.

It would be interesting to gain further insights into CHHS' practice and to explore possibilities for cooperation in the area of public service delivery, including process and product optimisation, as well as innovation in public services in the Western Balkans. Different capacity building activities could be facilitated to Western Balkan countries across the digital service skill set in order to develop functionally "T" shaped skill sets (design, software development and product management).

2.2.4. Using e-Government to Access Faster, Cheaper, Better Services

Digitalisation of public administration is not an end, but a means to improve efficiency, to reduce bureaucracy, to increase user-friendliness and accessibility, and to promote ethical practices and reduce opportunities for fraud and corruption. This transformation builds on openness - sharing information and data between administrative bodies, and opening up to stakeholders. Another core element is interoperability: the ability of institutions to work together, and systems to 'talk' to each other. Many countries are moving towards 'once only'[23] registration of personal data by citizens and businesses, where desired and permitted by law, and towards online channels being the default option for accessing public services ('digital by default'). In this light, it is important that no citizens are left behind by technological change, where for services should also be inclusive and accessible. The *EU's e-Government Action Plan 2016-2020* recognises these as the underlying principles when creating new public services. The e-Government Action Plan aims to remove barriers to the completion of the Digital Single Market[24] through 25 actions.[25]

2.2.4.1. From Information to Pro-Active Service Provision

Public administrations are increasingly using the Internet to bring services to citizens and businesses. This evolved quickly from the passive (one-way access to basic public information) to the interactive (two-way engagement, allowing sophisticated transactions to take place). The five stages of e-Government development in public service delivery could be described as:

1. The most basic level of e-Government is the provision of useful information to citizens and business users on public services online, which can also help to promote transparency and accountability.
2. This evolved into more sophisticated communication, whereby the administration moves beyond setting out basic information (such as opening hours of public facilities, citizens' rights and entitlements to services, etc.), and opens a dialogue with service users, allowing information sources to be interrogated (such as on real-time availability of public transport), ask questions, make comments and complaints etc.
3. Opening communication channels leads logically to transactions: enabling citizens, businesses and public authorities to access and use public services online, for example in submitting applications, registering births or business start-ups, making payments or purchasing certificates.
4. Dealing with individual administrations on individual steps in the transaction process is hugely inefficient, especially for the citizen or business. The big leap forward in the productivity and quality of the user's experience comes from integration: the bundling of

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[23] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Once-only_principle

[24] See also http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-4919_en.htm

[25] The actions are explained in greater detail and their progress can be followed on the Actions Dashboard.

services across several administrations, so that the interface between them is seamless and the connections between the various 'back offices' becomes effectively invisible to the consumer. This puts the onus on the administration to deliver the right package of information and accessibility, rather than on the user to find it.

5. This leads logically to full interaction with the user, whereby the citizen or business can engage directly - and if desired, exclusively - with the administration online, providing data and managing its updating and usage. The citizen or business can monitor in real time what is happening with their services and their personal data, in the same way they can track delivery of a parcel on a private sector website. The power of the Internet permits a whole new paradigm in service delivery and democratic governance.

6. Citizen desire for public services or need for interaction with administration is proactively expected and the service 'comes to the user' either for confirmation (e.g. for confirming the willingness to accept child allowance after its birth) or on its own (see the discussion on 'no stop shop' below).

With Governments looking to further increase the availability of online services, the question for public administrations is: how best to generate demand among businesses and citizens by ensuring the highest quality user experience, both nationally and across borders? The answer brings us back to citizen and business 'life events'. The challenge is for the IT systems of the participating agencies to cooperate (or 'interoperate') for the seamless delivery of the e-Service. At present, *life event journeys are rarely completed end-to-end without interruptions*. Interrupted journeys imply incomplete availability of online services.

Level	Issue	Solutions
Technical	Covering the applications and infrastructures linking systems and services	Interface specifications, interconnection services, data integration services, data presentation and exchange, secure communication protocols, etc.
Semantic	Ensuring that the precise format and meaning of exchanged data and information is preserved and understood throughout exchanges between parties	Reference taxonomies, vocabularies, code lists, data dictionaries, sector-based libraries, etc.
Legal	Ensuring that organisations that operate under different legal frameworks, policies and strategies can work together	Enact legislation, including transposing European directives into national legislation, adopting bilateral and multilateral agreements, interoperability and digital checks of proposed legislations, compliance with data protection requirements, coherence with relevant legislation
Organisational	Ensuring services are available, easily identifiable, accessible and user-focused by documenting and integrating or aligning businesses processes, and formalising the organisational relationship for establishing and operating public services	Memorandums of understanding (MoUs) or service-level agreements (SLAs) that specify obligations of participants in processes and define expected levels of service, support/escalation procedures, contact details, etc.

2.2.4.2. Interoperability and 'Once Only'

The changing relationship between administration and service user through e-Government can only happen with a parallel revolution in the way that administrations operate. While the first wave of digitalisation involved individual institutions putting their individual services on the Internet, the real benefits started to materialise when institutions began to link these islands to meet the user's needs. This can only

occur if institutions are willing and able to work together – within countries, but also across borders. This is all about interoperability at different levels: technical, semantic, legal and organisational.[26]

What it is	What it does
Electronic identification (eID)	Issued by the Government, eID verifies that the user is who he or she claims to be. This protects the citizen or business from the misuse of personal or corporate information and the effects of identity theft, and builds trust in the user through the reassurance of secure log-ins. It also covers a range of electronic trust services (e-TS) namely e-Signatures, electronic seals, time stamp, electronic delivery service and website authentication.
Single Sign-On (SSO)	SSO is a functionality that allows users to get access to multiple websites without the need to log in multiple times.
Electronic documents (e-Documents)	These are authenticated documents, recognised by the public administration, which allows users to send and receive 'paperwork' online.
Authentic sources	**Base registries** used by governments to automatically validate or fetch data relating to citizens or businesses, allowing online forms to be pre-filled, so that they are received by the user either partly or fully completed for checking, amending if necessary, and adding information as required.
Electronic safe (e-Safe)	The e-Safe is a virtual and secure repository for storing, administering and sharing personal electronic data and documents.

As well as facilitating interoperability, Governments are also taking action to put in place the **key enablers**, prioritised in the e-Government Action Plan,[27] that enable public administrations to offer secure and seamless electronic services to citizens and businesses.[28]

The most mature enablers are eID, SSO and e-Documents, which are used in just over 60% of studied life event services on average.[29] Countries are increasingly developing national solutions, so that citizens and businesses do not have to keep track of multiple requirements for electronic authentication. DigiD in the Netherlands is a good example of a solution growing into widespread usage through its open availability, practical simplicity, and the momentum that is generated by mass take-up.

Base registries in digital format, exhaustive (i.e. containing information on all the subjects) and otherwise of high technical quality, combined with interoperability, allow network benefits to be unleashed, including implementing the **'once only' registration principle**, which aims to ease the administrative burden on businesses and citizens, and is increasingly being applied across the EU. 'Once only' is rarely a standalone initiative, but instead typically fits within a wider e-Government agenda. Given the scale of its impact and the timescales of its implementation and requires a long-term policy framework and resourcing.

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[26] European Interoperability Framework (https://ec.europa.eu/isa2/sites/isa/files/eif_brochure_final.pdf).

[27] EU e-Government Action Plan 2016-2020 Accelerating the digital transformation of government, COM/2016/0179 final

[28] EU, e-Government Benchmark Report 2017

[29] EU, e-Government Benchmark Report 2016

DigiD is the Dutch government's authentication system for citizens. Although not obligatory by law, DigiD has become the standard. More than 600 government organisations or private organisations performing public tasks are connected to the DigiD service, which is managed by Logius. When someone logs on to a government website using his DigiD, DigiD will feed the Citizens Service Number (unique identifying number) back to the respective organisation. Using this number, the organisation can find out from its own administration or personal records base register whom it is dealing with and which information is already available. DigiD is available at two different levels: basic (user name and password: DigiD) and middle (DigiD + SMS-authentication) representing STORK QAA level 2/31.

DigiD was developed by large executive agencies as a common solution, facilitating broad usage among citizens – and among others, by obligatory use for digital tax filing - and then made available to other government organisations. The solution is easy to acquire, free of charge to citizens, and students need it, get used to it, and keep it. More than 117 million DigiD transactions were conducted in 2013. For the 11 million citizens who have activated their accounts, DigiD is the key to a wide range of public e-Services, such as:

> - The pre-filled income tax form offered by the Tax Agency, which citizens only need to check, accept or modify;
> - The e-Services of the Employee Insurance Agency, which unemployed people need to use when they register as job seekers or apply for unemployment benefits; or
> - The digital certificate request or notification of change of address at the municipality.
> - DigiD is a push factor for new digital services, both for smaller organisations and more work processes.

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While 'once only' registration is easy to conceive in principle, it is, however, harder to realise in practice. The public administration faces legal, institutional and technological obstacles, and important considerations of data protection and privacy. The European experience of benefits and barriers has been explored through research commissioned by DG CNECT.[30]

In some countries, 'once only' has transcended the status of *opportunity* for citizens, and become established as a *right*, enshrined in law and hence an obligation for the administration. In these cases, governments have a choice to:

> Put the infrastructure in place first, before converting 'once only' into an entitlement, on the assumption that the created system is robust enough to handle an upsurge in demand; or
> Make the policy decision to lead with 'once only' registration as a right, and thereby create the pressure on the administration to respond.

Several administrations have followed this second route, including Estonia and Spain, and have succeeded in generating the impetus to find organisational and technical solutions. The X-Road data exchange layer in Estonia is a prime example of a solution borne out of necessity, and which has become the backbone of public service delivery to citizens and businesses, because of its openness, simplicity, flexibility, scalability and security. It requires minimal investment by service providers (X-Road gives the provider of data services a universal tool for organising secure data exchange equally with many parties), and allows citizens and businesses to control the quality of their data and access by officials.

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[30] EY & DTI (2014), Study on e-Government and the Reduction of Administrative Burden, Final Report: A study prepared for the European Commission, Directorate-General of Communications Networks, Content & Technology

Inspiring example: The X-Road (Estonia)

Running a modern State is a data-centred endeavour. Ensuring the functioning of the state requires administering very large quantities of data. In Estonia, where there is no centralised or 'master' database, data are stored where they are created and each agency administers its own data separately. But the state authorities and agencies need data outside their purviews to function. For example, the police constantly require information from the Population Register. Likewise, the Unemployment Insurance Fund depends on information from the Health Information System.

The genesis of the X-Road goes back to the late 1990s, when Estonia had many separate information systems and a lot of projects to connect them. The reality then was very little paperwork in the back office, but plenty demanded of citizens and businesses, shifting the burden from the administration to the service user. Instead of trying to create a centralised database or channel all information through a central server, which would have created a single point of failure (SPOF), the Estonian administration built "the X-Road" as its interoperability solution: **a secure, Internet-based, platform-independent data exchange layer**. The X-road infrastructure consists of software, hardware, and organisational methods for standardised usage of national databases.

Launched in 2000 and available since 17.12.2001, the X-Road is a technical and organisational environment that provides the interface between portals (for citizens, businesses and administrators), base registries (population, health insurance, social insurance, vehicle, tax and customs databases etc.) and the state's information systems, enabling 'once only' data registration and a comprehensive and flexible package of online services to be made available. Originally, X-Road was a system for making queries to the different databases. Now in its 5th version (soon to be 6th), it has developed into a powerful ecosystem that enables searches to be performed across several databases, transmitting large data sets, and writing to multiple databases. The private sector also participates, with banks, law firms, energy and telecommunications companies now connected to X-Road, extending the benefits to citizens and businesses still further. X-Road is particularly suitable for queries involving **multiple agencies and information sources**, and hence for processing 'life events'.

The major strengths of the X-Road platform are its **openness and simplicity.** X-Road is developed from freeware components, uses XML, and exchanges data through the public Internet, encrypted through SSL (no virtual private network is required). Each IS remains under the control of the responsible institution. It uses a common protocol, so that information systems based on different platforms can interface with the X-Road's secure servers and successfully communicate with each other simultaneously, unhindered by their individual characteristics - they do not have to change their FURPS setting levels . The X-Road allows public authorities to focus on designing and implementing new services, adding them incrementally when they are ready, knowing they can rely on the existing infrastructure.

X-Road is also **scalable**, as additional systems can be added at low cost. It is easy to install, as it requires just a standardised secure server (with software that includes a local monitoring system, downloadable for free from the State Information Agency) and a software adapter server on any development platform. The prospective service provider then creates services in their adapter server that can then be offered to others over X-Road via the secure server. The service user can connect the service provider's open web services to their own information system. The Mini Information System Portal (MISP) software can also be adopted for using the service, as a simple user interface that has mechanisms for user authentication and authorisation.

X-Road is the solution that ensures the state does not ask twice for basic data. The **'once only'** principle has been a citizen's right and the administration's mandate since 1997, well before X-Road was conceived, and was a major push factor in its development. The X-Road also enables the public to have oversight and control over their personal information as people own their data under the law. People are seen as the 'donors' of their data to the administration, and can decide, for example, whether a new doctor sees their e-Health record or not.

The **security** of X-Road is paramount and is guaranteed by its architecture, together with regulatory, organisational and technical measures. All exchange of data with and between governmental agencies must satisfy three requirements to be secure:

> ➢ First, the data must be easily accessible by the authorities that are authorised to use it.
> ➢ Second, the integrity of the data must be maintained; no third party should be able to make any changes to the data while it is in transit.
> ➢ Third, the data must remain confidential during its journey; it must be protected from the eyes of unauthorised parties

As a data exchange platform, the **X-Road fulfils all three conditions.** To access online services, citizens must first authenticate themselves with an ID card or via an Internet bank, while entrepreneurs are authenticated on the basis of data from the Commercial Register. X-Road uses a versatile security that employs multi-level authorisation, a high-level log processing system, and encrypted and time-stamped data traffic. In the X-Road environment, encrypted data are directly transferred through secure servers from one information system to another. Data do not pass through the X-Road centre and cannot be viewed there; the centre only has statistical information about data transfer. The X-Road central server issues certificates to secure servers and provides a list of trusted certificates to systems connected to the X-Road. Additionally, the central server accepts log hashes from secure servers so that a chain of service usage can be constructed later if necessary.

X-Road enables a wide range of otherwise complex services to be offered **quickly, conveniently and safely**. Administration system for the state information system (RIHA) serves as a catalogue for the state's information system and as the procedural and administrative environment for connection with and administration of the X-Road.

Officials can use the services intended for them (for instance, the document exchange centre) in the information systems of their own institutions. This avoids the labour-consuming processing of paper documents, large-scale data entry and data verification. Communication with other officials, entrepreneurs and citizens is faster and more accurate.

The **meta-architecture** of the relationship between user (citizen, business or public official) and the government agency, has a series of layers. e-Government services require a way to relate citizens to their portfolio of rights and obligations via their electronic identity, and a distinct set of solutions providing electronic access to the information systems of the agencies through delivery channels. The integration layer joins the information systems of different agencies allowing for sharing of data and functionality through X-Road, while all the software described in previous layers needs servers and network infrastructure:

➢ The **electronic identity** (eID) is organised by the State using a PKI-based smart-card, which is compulsory for all citizens, alongside an optional SIM card as a secondary token, which can be used for eID through mobile phones. Each card is tied to the unique ID code of each person, with little other information – just the code, and the authentication and sign certificates which enable the ID to be authorised. This digital signature is then legally equivalent to the physical one. To give an idea of the scale of usage for interactions and transactions with the public services, each person performs on average 2-3 digital signatures per month.

➢ The web is the main **service delivery channel** for the most widely-used services; mobile phone access is also developing. Since 2016, for example, citizens can now submit their tax declarations by using their mobile phones. For more complex or tailored services, citizens and businesses still use branches of the public administration for physical access. Over 120+ different contact points exist - centralisation is low, although a central service portal for citizens does exist.

➢ The **infrastructure** remains mainly dispersed. Although most government networks have now been consolidated, there is still a large number of tiny hosting facilities with varying levels of quality. However, there is a readiness and a plan to move towards a central platform offering a state 'cloud'.

The X-Road has enabled a steady evolution in the **quality of service delivery** to citizens and enterprises, progressively reducing the time and cost of interacting with the public administration, and increasing the convenience. The example below shows how X-Road has helped to evolve public services, especially for key 'life events' such as driving a car.

Example: Applying for or Renewing a Driver's Licence

What it is	What it does
2010	To get a driver's licence (or ID card), the citizen had to take four separate printed photographs made by a professional photographer, which were then scanned and printed onto the licence/ card
2012	Photo-boxes were available in Citizenship Offices
2013	A photo on the last valid document was available over X-Road and could be accessed by police traffic control (an additional level of authorisation)
2014	A photo on the last valid document in the citizenship system was available for renewing the driver's licence (by the Road Administration Service) over X-Road, so there was no need to have an additional photo taken.

To carry the driving example forward:

> ➢ You no longer need to carry automobile documents with you while driving. The police traffic control can perform a history check of the vehicle and validate its status (not stolen, up-to-date insurance, passed technical inspection, etc.).
> ➢ You also do not need to carry your driving licence with you. The traffic control police can authenticate you and your right to drive (including any previous penalties) based on your ID card, using X-Road.
> ➢ In fact, you do not even need to carry your ID card with you. The police can authenticate you and your rights based on your ID code, your photo and a few additional background questions.

Checking a vehicle's data, for example, has become quicker for the Police and Border Guard Board. Before X-Road, it took three police officers and 20 minutes to conduct one background check on a car; now it takes one police officer just two seconds – by him/herself in the police vehicle or with a handheld device on the street.

Another example of change to benefit the public: in the past, citizens had to pay a fee for public services (such as document issuing) BEFORE they received them. The plan now is to allow them to pay the fees AFTERWARDS, as they will have been authenticated and hence there is proof of receipt and they cannot avoid payment.

Exchanging data via the X-Road saves the citizens' time. For example, when a child is born, information about the birth is sent directly from the hospital to the Population Register via the X-Road and the child's unique ID code is generated. From there, it is sent automatically to the Health Insurance Fund, so that the child will have health insurance and a family physician. This prevents the creation of excessive paperwork and saves time. The state functions in the background.

The X-Road helps authorities make work processes more convenient. Many activities can be automated, which frees employees to deal with matters that require human involvement. Authorities also do not have to worry about the authenticity of data; they can be confident that data received from the Tax Board definitely originated from the actual Tax Board. Additionally, the X-Road can be used regardless of what technology an authority uses.

In 2016, 96% of working-age people filed their 2015 tax returns electronically; the process typically takes less than 5 minutes, as the forms are already pre-filled with data from various systems and just need to be reviewed.

As per the public administration, the X-Road notably allows the authorities to efficiently exchange data among themselves. Sensitive information moves securely, and the system itself is so resilient that it cannot be easily brought down by those with malicious intentions. The system has operated continuously without interruption since X-Road's launch in 2001. The X-Road helps the state see the big picture of how different authorities are connected to one another. In addition, the X-Road makes it possible to exchange data not only within the country, but also across national borders.

Over 250 information systems are now accessible over the X-Road in Estonia, providing access to over 1,600 services. Over 1,000 organisations and enterprises use the X-Road daily in Estonia, and over 2.6 billion transactions have been made through the system so far. The **rapid growth in service requests** through X-Road in the last 10+ years is testament of its success.

Today, X-Road is also implemented in Finland, Azerbaijan, Namibia and Faroe Islands. X-Road is also the first data exchange platform in the world that allows data to be automatically exchanged between countries. Automatic data exchange capability was established between Estonia and Finland in June 2017.

The biggest beneficiaries of the X-Road are, of course, the citizens. They enjoy the benefits of a better functioning state and save all the time they would otherwise spend submitting papers and forms. How much time? You can track it live on this site here!

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Material on X-Road has been compiled with help from "Raising Public Awareness about the Information Society", supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

On its own, 'once only' can involve a net increase in public spending, as the benefits largely accrue to businesses and citizens, while the upfront costs are borne by the administration. That is why it is typically part of a much broader e-Government programme, especially when it is a stepping stone to 'digital by default', where the net savings from ABR are enjoyed by all parties. The latest generation of service delivery is taking advantage of interoperability to introduce the concept of '**no-stop shops**', whereby citizens and businesses receive the services they need *automatically* without demanding them. This extends the once-only principle[31] creatively to another level, by using the established data exchange among back offices of the public administration, which is integral to making 'once-only' work, to trigger the transaction (e.g. welfare payment or tax rebate) to those members of the community who are entitled to it. One of the early examples is the project 'ALF' in Austria, whereby citizens no longer need to fill in forms and make requests to receive their child benefit entitlements after birth.

Inspiring example: Child benefits without application (Austria)

Following a decision of the Austrian Federal Government, the project Antragslose Familienbeihilfe (ALF) – in English, 'Child Benefit without Application' - started in December 2014. ALF is a cooperative project between the Federal Ministry of Finance and Federal Ministry of Families and Youth, with the intention of reducing the administrative burden on citizens and administrative staff and saving costs. ALF eliminates the need to apply for child benefits after childbirth - in other words, the implementation of a 'no-stop shop' solution.

➤ Before ALF, the citizen had to make an individual application for child benefits, either personally at the fiscal authority (41 offices in 80 locations), by post, or online (20% used the IT application 'Finance Online for Citizens'). The case officer would then need to collect the relevant data manually and assess the application on the same basis.

➤ With ALF, the data collection, the application review and the scoring of the application are all automated. The process is triggered by an electronic transfer of personal data in case of a live birth without the need for an application. Potential entitlement to child benefits is system-generated from the issue of a birth certificate in the central register of births, marriages and deaths, which sends the information to the master data administration of the Finance Ministry (BMF). These data are matched with those from other external databases, for example, income/salary information and National Insurance data. By applying a set of business rules, the system checks the benefit entitlement and determines who is the claimant (mother, father, family solicitor, etc.). If banking information (IBAN, BIC) is available, the person eligible for child benefits will start to receive regular payments quickly and without complication. If additional data are necessary, they will be gathered by mail through an automatically created information letter.

ALF depends on the integration and interoperability of systems from different government ministries. It is an example of a new ICT application, within an appropriately robust ICT environment, acting as a facilitator for process change, capable of managing automatic data exchange and rules-based calculations without human intervention. In this case, they are also underpinned by an appropriate legal basis for data transfers. The project was implemented within seven months using agile software, validating the prototype with users at a time when changes could still be incorporated, and with skills transfer to the public sector of the project through close cooperation between ICT staff from the Federal Computing Centre and the external experts developing the software, which underpinned the project's sustainability. Results from live running from June 2015 to early September 2015 showed just a 2% error rate and average time of application processing of two days, with automatic payment in more than 60% of cases and in 45% of remaining cases requiring no more than bank account details.

ALF is the first step of the programme FABIAN, which is defined to improve the whole service delivery process for family allowances. There are approximately 80,000 births per year and an annual budget for child tax allowances and child benefits of €4.2 billion, covering 1.15 million entitled citizens and 1.7 million children. The time citizens save has been estimated conservatively at 39,000 hours per year (around 30 minutes per person). The project also promotes social inclusion, since automatic generation of entitlement reduces the risk of exclusion as a result of intellectual or linguistic capability.

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[31] Citizens and enterprises need to provide basic information to any public authority only once; it will not be requested again.

By reducing staff time needed to process applications, it enables them to be redeployed to perform other tasks, such as entitlement control functions and other functions within the tax administration. The estimated savings for the ALF project are 15 full-time equivalent staff, but the intention is not that the saving in staff time will lead to redundancies. Thus, it has not in itself to date generated significant concerns for labour unions. The concept can be used in other environments, irrespective of language or culture, for universal benefits (e.g. not subject to income declaration criteria) and uniformly paid (i.e. where recipients are not able to choose how they receive services or benefits). This could be applied elsewhere at national level, or, via a shared service platform, for a universal benefit paid by all sub-national entities within a territory. The project has high-level political support from the Finance Minister and the Family and Youth Minister.

ALF was a nominee for the 2015 European Public Sector Awards (EPSA), as one of the three finalists in the 'European, national and regional' category.

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Developments, such as Austria's ALF initiative, suggest that the public administrations have reached a stage of service delivery evolution where almost anything seems possible. And yet public bodies remain largely rules-based organisations, and this often leaves them constrained by 'paper trail' thinking, rather than a 'solution-orientation'. In other words, many administrations are:

- ☒ **Fixated on documents** - how to ensure we have papers from citizens and businesses which have been verified by signatures and, in some cases, counter-signed by notaries; … Instead of …
- ☑ **Focused on data** - what information do we need, what sources can readily provide it, and can we find an easy and efficient way to ensure it is valid.

Many public administrations, affected by the inertia of traditional practices, require citizens and businesses to provide paper-based documentary evidence to access public services. The rationale is that this proof is required by law, but this is increasingly outdated in a digital society and being rapidly overtaken by eID. As well as being costly and time-consuming, it also conveys an absence of trust in the service user, which is then reciprocated in a lack of trust in the public administration.

Public administrations can make leaps forward by **thinking data not paper**: in other words, asking the question 'how can the necessary information be found most easily', and considering the sources of data as the starting point - flexible and open to re-use in potentially many alternative situations. This is where the longer-term benefits of open data become apparent: datasets opened up to the public attract users to create new services on their own, sharing them with the public and thus creating new public value. Finally, the more artificial intelligence develops, the more different datasets can be combined and used in entirely new ways to derive insights and intelligence.

2.2.4.3.   Moving towards Digital by Default

'Digital by default' means that public administrations should deliver services (including machine-readable information) digitally as the preferred option (while keeping other channels - face-to-face, telephone, postal - open for those who are disconnected by choice or necessity). In other words, at least one digital channel should be available for accessing and using a given public service. In addition, public services should be delivered through a single contact point or a one stop shop and via different channels. As well as benefits to users, 'digital by default' typically presents cost savings to the administration, in comparison with other service delivery channels.

What requires close attention is **not digitalising the bureaucracy**. Digitalising public services and providing them 'digitally by default' requires changes in organisation, culture of creating delivering and using services, and finally standards-based data management in the back office of the administration.

Most countries take a phased approach, starting with the most advanced e-services where online take-up is already high, or business-related services or the services with the greatest number of users. Strategies for rapid roll-out are likely to have the greatest impact, as 'digital by default' creates its own inevitability. Experience suggests that **success factors** include: build the business case around costs and benefits; invest into robust e-ID and interoperability infrastructure; get a political mandate; align (with) the law; invest in forward planning with a realistic timetable; involve all affected entities from very early in the process; ensure

Barrier	Key question
Accessibility	Do citizens and businesses have Internet access (PC, smart phone, public Internet access point), and if not, how can coverage be ensured?
Awareness	Are businesses and (especially) citizens sufficiently aware of online channels as an option for accessing the administration?
Ability	Are there any physical obstacles to using online services, such as sight or other physical or mental disabilities, and if so, how can prospective users be helped with access?
Aptitude	Do potential users have the comprehension and competences to interact with online channels, and if not, how can these be best provided or circumvented?
Attitude	Are users resistant to using online services, and if so, what are the reasons? Do they trust government in general?

effective coordination; and especially take the users with you, consulting with citizens and businesses from the outset, and communicating intentions and expected timetables. The public must be partners in change.

The success of 'digital by default' relies on both the **willingness and ability to access online services**. What influences the users' behaviour? What are the obstacles preventing or dissuading them from using e-Government portals? Assuming public services are online and hence available, public administrations face five main potential barriers as the basis for designing policy solutions:

Potential measures for governments to improve take-up
• Increase generally the transparency of the public administration;
• Ensure superb user experience by prototyping and testing the service prior to its full-scale launch with actual users;
• Provide the required level of data security (e-ID with secure authentication) and consider trustworthiness when introducing new services, as all initiatives should go beyond mere compliance with the legal framework on personal data protection, privacy and IT security to build trust and take-up;
• Recognise the diversity of customer segments among citizens (by age, employment, education, ability) and businesses (by age/phase, size, sector), and customise both promotional messages and actual services accordingly;
• Make service reliability a prime concern;
• Provide supportive customer services to assist the user in navigating problems when they arise, such as helplines, discussion forums and live chat (as well as more conventional contact details and FAQs), and take on board user feedback.

Attitudes can be the most rigid barrier, either because citizens prefer personal contact, expect other channels to be easier or quicker, believe personal visits or paper submission will be required anyway or do not trust the service, because of concerns about protection and security of personal data. Also, senior civil servants/public managers may resist change because they feel that by opening up and sharing data they lose some of their power, or they just do not feel comfortable with digital tools and developments in this area.

Some administrations are taking steps to actively reassure citizens and businesses of the security of their data, and to provide connectivity to high speed broadband, backed up with education,

training and user-friendly applications. In the short-medium term at least, there will be a sizeable proportion of the population that is not able or willing to take up online services. To **avoid digital exclusion**, this percentage should be protected and arrangements made to ensure alternative channels or 'hand-holding' assistance is available (e.g. telephone helpline services, or 'drop-in' centres). This places the onus on public administrations to ensure that service design reflects user expectations.

Inspiring example: Privacy & data protection to orient public administration to citizens (Italy)

Public administration offices must ensure that EU directives are implemented, in addition to those concerning privacy, access, transparency and personal data protection. This is particularly true in the case of healthcare public administration. Nowadays, technology offers a wide range of tools allowing sensitive data to be handled automatically. In addition, it is important to connect healthcare databases to ensure effectively the best healthcare assistance.

To achieve this objective, the administration, already committed to digitising its activity to comply with the EU e-Government Action Plan for 2011-2015 (which carries the slogan 'use information and communication technology to promote a sustainable, intelligent and innovative administration'), must review its internal procedures, which are often disinclined to offer citizens digital services. The health agency solved this problem by implementing a novel system that ensures that sensitive data is handled, while guaranteeing the privacy of the citizens. A new model has been developed and a privacy policy has been drafted. A 'privacy office' has been instituted, with a risk management system for dealing with critical issues regarding processing personal data. This model allows the following:

➢ The privacy in the company's quality system to be equipped with a management incentive system linked to internal quality control, giving annual targets to ensure privacy;
➢ A network of employees to be created, ensuring that privacy procedures are respected in every section of the organisation, in conjunction with the Central Privacy Office, by reviewing internal data management processes;
➢ Increased knowledge among operators, improving their skills and attitudes towards customer care and protection;
➢ An innovative communication campaign to be launched requiring customer participation, thus ensuring maximum results from the measures already adopted, increasing the empowerment and the relationship between citizens and administration, involving the citizens to give suggestions on how to improve the services on offer;
➢ Managing every new data processing project through a preliminary privacy assessment impact, together with doctors and computer technicians, to ensure the utmost respect of citizens' data;
➢ A custom-made front desk to be created, both online and on-site, to offer citizens a quick and dedicated communication channel and solutions to their problems; and
➢ Measuring periodically the stakeholders' satisfaction.

The improvement plan involves the entire company and its corporate management executives and operators, and has clear potential to be used in other complex administrations. Therefore, it shows that, with an integrated and systemic approach to a complex discipline, it is possible to achieve improvement in the following matters: quality performance, participation and acknowledge of operators, fulfilment of customers' requests and needs; and good relations and cooperation between public administration and customers.

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The example of Viladecans in Spain is a municipal initiative under the title "W!Ladecans. Digital City Viladecans. Smart City", designed to tackle multiple barriers to digitisation at the same time. Not only is the town targeting 100% connectivity to high speed broadband by 2020; it is also backing up accessibility with education, training and applications, ensuring that citizens and business have a reason to be online.

Viladecans is a town of around 68,000 people in Catalonia. Under the auspices of the project "W!Ladecans. Viladecans Smart City", the administration began a scanning process that took in all aspects: territory, citizenship, services and applications, and are now pursuing their goals in three complementary areas:

> ➢ **Infrastructure:** with the name of W!FI, W!CABLE, W!HOME and W!ESCOLA, the administration started several projects in the short or medium term to provide ICT infrastructures in Viladecans that allow meeting the connectivity demands of enterprises, households and schools. W!-FI is a project that provides free wireless connectivity for all citizens of Viladecans in public facilities, parks, beach and green areas of the city. 'W!CABLE' is a public wholesale network open to all telecommunication operators to send Internet to the households. In the first stage, completed in February 2011, it provided fibre connections to about 2,500 homes, offering services around symmetrical 100 Mbps. Nowadays, it reaches about 10,500 homes and five operators are currently providing services up to 1Gbps on it. W!ESCOLA is another network project aiming at providing fibre to all schools with the goal to start innovative educational projects. By 2020, all houses in the city will be connected by a FTTH network; the wireless public space access will be mainly dedicated to the provision of public services, typical of a smart city (Internet of Things, machine-to-machine (M2M); and free access to all citizens in public facilities.

> ➢ **Training and education**: XPLAI, which means 'network of public Internet access', is the entity entrusted with training and awareness-raising of Internet use. It is specially aimed at those who have more difficulty accessing the Internet and that are subject to an increased risk of digital divide, either due to social, economic or generational reasons. Viladecans has launched e-Government projects with the implementation of the public folder administrative formalities online. The municipality has started work on e-Education (W!ESCOLA) with the digitisation of all schools in the city (incorporating digital whiteboards, computers and WI-FI connectivity), developing collaborative applications to support teaching. The XPLAI network has started new lines of work according to the new tendencies of digital production and following MAKER's philosophy, using 3D printers, scanners. There is also another line of work in the schools that is focused on encouraging and introducing programming and robotics in classrooms. This work is being done through training plans to teachers and directly to the students. Finally, it is envisaged to start projects in the line of the Internet of Things.

> ➢ **Applications and services:** An e-Health project is being promoted from the Viladecans' Hospital and the CAP (Primary Care Centres) and the City Council is streamlining the institutional structure of the city by setting up social networks for collaborative work of all entities. Beyond the goal of 'Smart City' (it is important to note here that Viladecans is now working on the new Smart City Master Plan), Viladecans wants to become a 'Living Lab' in which the municipality is a test where products and services can be developed based on a new telecom infrastructure. Viladecans has all the elements to develop innovation and development projects using the methodology 'Living Lab': it hosts a Campus of the Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPC); it has research centres in the country (Agropolis, I2Cat), a very active business community with two local business organisations (Viladecans Business Association, Viladecans Entrepreneurs Club).

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Interoperability and increasing connectivity also pave the way for realising the potential of '**open by default**'[32] to increase transparency and accountability, and to generate opportunities for creating new businesses. Government-collected data are *presumed* to be available to all - in free, accessible and machine-readable formats - unless there is a compelling reason to keep them confidential.

By providing building blocks of online information, public administrations can open the space for third parties (other administrations, enterprises and individuals) to engineer their own solutions - **Government as a Platform (GaaP)**. This would enable them to combine modular services into new, personalised, user-friendly and innovative e-services, characterised by an EU-funded study as the 'cloud of public services'. This could ultimately achieve the aspiration of citizens and

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[32] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_by_default

businesses enabling them to assemble their own, fully customised, service solutions to meet their individual 'life event' needs at a time and location of their choice, by using an online application offered by the public administration or a third party. The GaaP building blocks include:

- **Open data portals**, web-based gateways used by public administrations to publish large volumes and variety of data, without the burden of having to respond to individual requests. These make it easier to find re-usable datasets with the help of search functions. The portals can also offer Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) that enable direct access to data for software applications.
- **Catalogues of standards**, such as the EU Catalogue of ICT standards and technical specifications, which is being assembled by the European Commission as an EU-wide resource for public procurers preparing calls for tenders.
- **Catalogues of services**, such as the EU Catalogue of Public Services, a Commission initiative to identify common service attributes or descriptors that can enable users to find similar web-based public services in other Member States.

GaaP enables administrations to create an open environment in which the creativity of citizens and businesses can flourish, as they are encouraged to use public information (open data and other content) and instruments (applications, catalogued standards and services, etc.) to generate new social value, which can also directly benefit the actors themselves.

The combination of these various tools and techniques opens the possibility for a **comprehensive package** of organisational, governance, regulatory, infrastructure and simplification measures acting in concert to improve efficiency and user-centricity.

Inspiring example: Administrative simplification & e-Government in CORA (Spain)

The CORA reforms in Spain are a comprehensive approach to creating a transparent, agile (active & sharp) administration with a focus on efficient services to citizens and businesses. To achieve these objectives, a large part of the 222 CORA measures are based on cooperation between administrations, the use of technology and the promotion of e-Government. The use of electronic channels and more efficiency through common or shared services aims to ensure and enhance the quality of public services.

Digitalising administrative procedures was not just one more option to be considered, but rather one of the most important **strategic measures for continuous improvement of the public administration**. It has enabled Spain to maintain - and even improve in some cases - the quality of public services within the context of austerity, major budget cuts and a very limited intake to fill public sector vacancies. These shared services and systems not only allow Spain's administrations to do more with less, but also to make a clear contribution to simplifying procedures and reducing administrative burdens (70% of savings from lightening burdens are achieved by facilitating online interaction), removing the need to submit documentation already held by another part of the public administration, and developing more personalised services.

No less important is its contribution to projecting an image of a **single administration** to citizens and businesses (the concept of government as whole and indivisible). By developing interoperable systems, actions and services can be coordinated between different administrations, particularly in the fields of education, justice, employment and healthcare. Significant cases include the Employment Portal, and interoperability projects in the healthcare field (e-prescriptions, health insurance cards and medical histories that can be shared by all Autonomous Communities). In a country that is as decentralised as Spain, it is crucial that the different authorities work together (as developed extensively by CORA) in planning the strategy and implementation of interoperable solutions, so that comprehensive services can be provided with citizens' and businesses' needs in mind, and not restricted by jurisdictional boundaries.

The starting point for the CORA reforms regarding e-Services was Law 11/2007 on Electronic Access to Public Services, which placed a duty on public administrations throughout Spain at all levels to make their transactional

services (records, payments, certificates, notifications, and others) available through the Internet. The Law gave citizens a fundamental right to relate to public administration by electronic means, namely:

- To choose the channel to interact;
- To submit forms and documents;
- To make claims;
- To make payments and transactions;
- To get electronic copies of documents;
- To not provide data and documents already in the possession of the public administration;
- To choose the applications to communicate with public administration.

In effect, the 2007 Law embodied both the 'once-only' registration principle and 'digital by default'. Such an obligation created momentum, but took time to operationalise. By 2011, 95% of procedures and 99% of overall administrative transactions in central administration had been adapted as e-Services. However, digital by default also needs high Internet penetration and digital skills for its benefits to be fully felt. Law 11/2007 fixed a deadline for the central administration, while for the regional and local administrations, there was a precondition: budget availability. The fact that the law had to be implemented in times of crisis, with huge reduction in budgets, was an important barrier for territorial public administrations.

CORA's new efforts fostering administrative simplifications and e-Government have been focused on four lines of action:

1.Organisational structure & governance

A new structure and governance model has been created in the central administration that would support the implementation of the measures and to make the management of ICT more efficient. Major organisational decisions have been taken, such as:

- Creation of the Chief Information Officer (CIO) with horizontal and executive competences throughout the central administration (which, until then, could only coordinate) in policy, budgets and personnel, with some exceptions;
- Creation of the General Secretariat for Digital Administration, which leads on the strategy and development of common infrastructures;
- Definition and implementation of the digital transformation strategy; and
- Implementation of a framework of shared services in the central administration.

2. Regulatory framework

A new framework has been defined with the publication of Law 39/2015 on the Common Administrative Procedure of Public Administrations and Law 40/2015 on the Legal Regime of Public Administrations. These laws were complemented by the reinforcement of national interoperability schemes.

- Law 39/2015 provides that electronic processing must be the ordinary activity of public authorities, to better serve the principles of efficiency, efficiency, cost savings and transparency. It incorporates a complete and systematic regulation of external relationships with citizens and businesses regarding administrative procedures. Furthermore, it instituted full and mandatory electronic relations between business and all public administrations.
- Law 40/2015 consolidates a scenario in which the use of electronic media is to be the general rule and not the exception. It regulates public administrations in relation to their internal organisation and the relations between them.

For the public administration, the goal should be, on the one hand, to encourage citizens and businesses to make intensive use of electronic services, and, on the other, to implement paperless internal processing, which leads to real improvements in efficiency and effectiveness (lower costs, better services with fewer staff, shorter processing times, a more personalised service of higher quality, more transparency and accountability, etc.). Laws 39/2015 and 40/2015 reinforce the obligation of the electronic relationship, including the submission, notification and compulsory exchange of information in electronic format among all administrations. Published in October 2015, their obligations will come into force gradually over three years, so the effort to remove paper-based processes is going to be very intense. They also reinforce the role of collaboration, cooperation and coordination between administrations, since the objective is to optimise the whole administrative network and not just isolated organisations. Laws 39/2015 and

40/2015 consider digital administration as a national policy - a factor of transformation of Spanish society and economy, and an element of efficiency in the management of public resources.

3.Common technical infrastructures for all public administrations

Common infrastructures for the implementation of Law 11/2007 (the building blocks) have been strengthened, and new infrastructures have been created in CORA. These include:

➢ A common network of inter-administrative communications;
➢ A common system of identification and electronic signature that includes advanced and simplified systems (Spain has been the first EU country to implement an e-IDAS node);
➢ A data intercommunication platform;
➢ A procurement platform;
➢ Electronic invoice platforms;
➢ Payment gateways; and
➢ Common electronic notification systems, etc.

Each is included in a catalogue of common services (more than 30) available to all public administrations and in the Technology Transfer Centre, where a community of experts from all administrations share knowledge and applications to foster the implementation of common solutions. All of them can also be found in the portal: www.administracion.gob.es. Simplification of electronic identity and digital signature systems (CL@VE) has become a driver to increase the use of all electronic services. Advanced electronic signatures are currently a barrier for some citizens and many public services do not represent a major risk that requires a maximum level of access security. Provisions to allow legal representatives to make electronic presentation on behalf of third parties have also been strengthened.

4.Administrative simplification

Development of concrete simplification measures has been mostly part-driven by ICT and e-Government. When CORA was launched in October 2012, two of its four sub-committees had a remit of particular relevance to e-Government, namely administrative simplification and management of common services & resources, respectively. More than 100 relevant proposals in CORA's 2013 report covered inter alia:

➢ e-Procurement and e-Invoicing platforms to increase budgetary control and transparency, and reduce late payments;
➢ Creating a centralised public information agency;
➢ Establishing a General Access Point as a gateway to government administrations;
➢ Simplification and reducing administrative burdens;
➢ Creation of the National Health System (SNS) healthcare card database;
➢ Creation of unique, comprehensive databases of all public administration grants and collaboration agreements (to the transparency website);
➢ Introducing interoperable computerised health care records and interoperable electronic prescription;
➢ Establishing a virtual one-stop shop for foreign trade;
➢ Enhancing the data intermediation platform as a means of implementing the citizen's right not to submit documents already held by the administration;
➢ Establishing automated administrative actions in some public services, with no need for civil servant actions to increase productivity and reduce time of processing;
➢ Extending the mandatory electronic filing of tax returns and other documents;
➢ Using e-Tendering, extending e-Notifications, and promoting electronic auctions;
➢ Introducing a new electronic case file system in courts;
➢ Joint technology planning for the Justice System (decentralised in Spain)
➢ Electronic processing by health centres of births and deaths;
➢ On-line processing of motor vehicle certifications;
➢ General Deposit Bank´s Virtual Office;
➢ Digital Office of Information and assistance for victims of terrorism;
➢ Centralisation of ICT purchases;
➢ Providing electronic certificates to non-residents;
➢ Creation of a MOOC platform; and
➢ The Technology Transfer Centre.

Evidence of the continual progress being made in the digitalisation of Spanish society can be found in how the State Tax Administration Agency (AEAT) ran the **Personal Income Tax (PIT) campaign**, which reflects the spirit of the CORA reforms. The PIT return is possibly the administrative procedure that affects the largest number of citizens in Spain, including the population segment that has most difficulty in using the Internet. The 2015 campaign saw the greatest increase in returns filed online over the previous 10 years, which was made possible by a number of factors resulting from different reform measures, including: simplifying the authentication process; replacing paper correspondence with electronic communication; automating administrative processes; reducing the average wait for a tax refund for returns processed online; and making it possible for third parties to represent a taxpayer in the filing of his or her PIT return.

Independent reviews by the OECD

On ICT and e-Government, the OECD's 2014 Public Governance Review noted that "the CORA reform agenda recognises the importance of reaping the untapped potential of government data and information to improve performance, increase trust and foster cultural change in the administration; the need to focus on achievements made as a result of investments made in e-services; and the priority need to enable the new Chief Information Officer (CIO) and governance structure to be operational as soon as possible to also allow stronger co-ordination."

The **OECD's 2016 Progress Report** recommended inter alia that further reforms include:

➢ Linking the transparency and open data agendas more closely, to boost the proactive disclosure of data and information, and would help move from a legal compliance approach to a real collective commitment across the administration. As a side effect, this could ease up the change of culture within the administration and create more opportunities for public engagement, thus creating higher value;
➢ Reinforcing the integration of data and information across the administration, both as an overarching strategy to improve internal efficiencies and service delivery as well as part of broader efforts to develop a "data-driven public sector";
➢ Using data analysis more actively to spur the public sector and maintaining efforts to build a culture of information sharing and public data release across the Spanish administration, especially for economic data and particularly in real time. Raising awareness and increasing the capacities of civil servants can provide an important incentive to further contribute substantively to the portal; and
➢ Considering the expansion of use of the Transparency Portal as a platform to engage citizens in policy drafts. This is a common practice linked to the implementation of the transparency policy in countries such as Mexico and Portugal, which has created important externalities in terms of public engagement in policy making and regulatory reform.

Following the OECD recommendations, the transparency website and the open data website have been strengthened and all statistics on the use of electronic services have been published. Datos.gob.es, the Spanish open data website, is one of the most advanced in Europe according to EU's maturity of open data websites report. The Office for the Execution of the Reform of the Administration (OPERA) has led the development and implementation of the transparency website and the relations with Open Government Partnership (OGP) organisation. The election of a new national government in 2016 has led to the role of OPERA being taken over and taken forward by a new General Directorate of Public Governance.

Lessons learned

The success of the reform process has been underpinned by the comprehensive development of e-Government solutions, as outlined in the four action lines above, covering structures, governance arrangements, accountability, legislation, common infrastructures, simplification of access, and concrete measures. A critical factor is the reinforcement of organisational collaboration between public administrations.

The reform has given impulse to the use of electronic channels with citizens and businesses, by setting 'electronic relationship' goals for each organisation (which is imperative) and measuring the use of the electronic channel in each specific voluntary public service. However, it also important to be careful to avoid some segments of users falling into the 'digital divide', by enhancing assistance services in the first steps of an electronic obligation and offering an easy-to-use appointment system when a face-to-face relationship is needed.

Continuous monitoring of public administrations' compliance with the new legal obligations (set out above) has been made possible by defining a performance scorecard. In conclusion, with fewer resources it has been possible to

2.2.5. Committing to Service Standards and Measuring Satisfaction

Ultimately, the test of good service delivery is whether it has lived up to the needs and expectations of the customer. This brings us full circle back to the first step, understanding what users want. Administrations have two potential instruments to define and check performance: codifying user expectations in the form of service charters; and measuring customer satisfaction to ensure performance levels are being reached, and ideally exceeded. In both cases, these tools can be a catalyst for action and further innovation.

2.2.5.1.   Service Charters

A citizen or user charter is a unilateral declaration by a public service provider of standards for its services, within the framework of its mandate and tasks stipulated by legislation. The essence can be summed up by 3Cs: **C**lient-oriented standards; **C**ommunication; and **C**ommitment. The radical idea is to give rights to the clients of public services that are not statutory, but the 'pressure' of the promise is such that the organisation will do a great deal to fulfil the commitments it has made.

The charter can comprise a 'soft' standard (e.g. "*we will treat you with friendliness and respect"*), but the most important are concrete and measurable (e.g. "*you will be helped within 15 minutes"* and not "*ready while you wait"*). The standard should also be formulated from the **individual client's perspective** (e.g. "*you can expect to receive an answer from us within two weeks",* rather than "*95 percent of the letters are processed within two weeks"*). They should also concern the entire spectrum of service, which can bring user charters closer to the 'life event' and 'customer journey' approaches. The user charter is suitable for all organisational elements with client contacts, but also engages the employees of the front office, as well as management.

Inspiring example: User charters in health care (The Netherlands and the United Kingdom)

The concept of the service charter was originally developed in commercial organisations and was then adopted by public services and healthcare. In the **United Kingdom,** the concept has been used in all National Health Service hospitals since 1991 in the form of the Patient's Charter. Healthcare organizations in Italy, the USA and the Netherlands have also adopted the concept. In several Dutch healthcare services, the multi-attribute specific service charter is used. This consists of a number of promises covering the patient's journey from general practitioner referral through to discharge from the hospital and follow-up arrangements. The specific goals in implementing service charters are:

➢ Increasing the responsiveness of healthcare services to the needs of patients;
➢ Making healthcare service providers more accountable;
➢ Ensuring patients know what to expect so that they can become more equal partners in the healthcare process;
➢ Being used as a listening mechanism;
➢ Increasing feedback from patients; and
➢ Improving patient satisfaction.

In the **Netherlands**, an integrated regional stroke service involving five organisations has developed and implemented a single service charter. Based on the concept of integrated care, regional stroke services have been established in the Netherlands. Integrated care is an organisational coordination process that seeks to achieve

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seamless and continuous care that is tailored to the patient's needs and based on a holistic view of the patient. Three phases of the integrated stroke service can be distinguished: acute care involving the emergency department and stroke unit of the regional hospital, rehabilitation involving rehabilitation centres, specialised nursing homes and home care and, finally, long-term support. Delivering optimal care with this range of providers requires a complex mix of collaboration on operational and individual levels involving streamlining information flows and the transfer of acute patients. On a tactical level, this can involve performance indicators on the care-chain level and, on the strategic level, financial and logistical agreements. These interventions aim to improve patient care and medical outcomes, objectives that fit into the general goals of care integration: enhancing patient satisfaction and quality of life, efficiency and outcomes.

Based on: Thomassen, Ahaus and Van de Walle (2014), "Developing and implementing a service charter for an integrated regional stroke service: an exploratory case study" in BMC Health Services Research 2014, 14:141

The charter commits the organisation to realising the standards and clearly indicates the consequences if the service falls short of the published standards. As well as internal solutions, options include letters of apology and small compensations, which acts to hold the administration to account, and could be said to set a benchmark for assessing performance.

2.2.5.2. Measuring and Managing Satisfaction

In terms of service transformation, measuring and managing satisfaction is a key strategic tool. It can give organisations an understanding of the 'drivers' that they can actually shape (as compared to issues around perception and the media, over which they have little control), and allows them to monitor performance and service evolution over time. Users' experiences of services can be explored in various ways:

- **Qualitative** research techniques can be used to better understand a service through the customers' eyes, and to explore in depth their experiences and expectations.
- **Quantitative** research can provide numerical measures of customer satisfaction and statistically representative findings to assess the performance of a service and provide information to drive improved service quality.

Thinking well in advance about what the organisation wants to achieve with satisfaction measurement is important in deciding which measurement tools and techniques to apply to which user groups:

Administrations can use multiple methods, such as face-to-face and telephone surveys, and 'mystery shopping' to feed into refining or re-designing services, in line with citizen-user responses. This can include the 'Net Promoter Score', which reveals the difference between those citizens and businesses that rate the public service highly ('promoters'), and those that give it a score below acceptable levels ('detractors').

Important questions in setting up satisfaction measurement
☑ **What do you want to know?**
☑ **Why do you want to know this?**
☑ **Should the customers be segmented (e.g. by sector, location, regularity of contact) and different measures or techniques applied to different groups?**
☑ **Are there baselines for comparing performance and progress over time?**
☑ **Are there benchmarks which the measures should be aiming to achieve (e.g. service charters)?**
☑ **What is the motivation for measuring satisfaction (reporting, reforming) and how does this affect how you collect and capture information?**
☑ **Will the measurement itself and the choice of tools) act to strengthen relations with your users?**

Dissatisfied with using mean average scores to track satisfaction with public services over time, the Dutch Government has turned to private sector practice, and is now using the 'Net Promoter Score' to reveal the difference between those citizens and businesses that rate the public service highly ('promoters'), and those that give it a score below acceptable levels ('detractors').

In the business community, the traditional measurements of client satisfaction were found to be poor predictors of profitable growth. An excessive averaging effect between dissatisfied and satisfied clients often generated scores of between seven and eight. Many large companies nowadays use NPS as a customer feedback tool. A pilot study in the Netherlands by N3Wstrategy found that - with some modifications - the NPS method could be made suitable for use in the public sector. NPS in the public sector means:

- Better insight into customer needs through a mainly qualitative approach
- Less administrative pressure on members of the public (filling in forms)
- Greater staff involvement
- Greater focus on specific measures

The NPS distinguishes three categories of individuals - Promoters, Detractors and Passives - and reports the difference between the percentages of Promoters and Detractors.

- Promoters = respondents awarding a score of 9 or 10;
- Passives = respondents awarding a score of 7 or 8;
- Detractors = respondents awarding a score of 0 to 6.

An absolute score is not particularly meaningful. More useful information is gathered when tracking the evolution of the NPS over time. The most important aspect of the NPS is the generation of qualitative information about the needs of customers and about opportunities to improve public services (especially their operational processes). This information is easy to understand for all employees and provides the input that managers can use to direct the organisation. In addition to a wealth of improvement points, direct contact with clients can generate a great deal of energy, when compliments are given.

For further information: Kenniscentrum Dienstverlening, Quality Institute of Dutch Municipalities, dienstverlening@kinggemeenten.nl

Customer-focused organisations view satisfaction measurement as a means rather than an end, as part of a cycle of continuous improvement in service delivery, and as part of a wider toolkit of customer insight techniques, to focus its time and resources more effectively.

2.2.6. Conclusions, Key Messages and Inspiration for Future Action

The main messages can be formulated as follows:

- Gather information on needs and expectations, in order to fine-tune services and the channels that deliver them, through surveys, panels, comments, complaints, mystery shoppers and representative bodies;
- Interpret 'customer intelligence' in the context of life events and journey maps, based on the steps that citizens and businesses *actually* take, not what the administration thinks

they do (including complementary contacts with non-public services), and identify bottlenecks, dead-ends, detours, repeat requests for information, and missing links along the way;

➢ Acknowledge the users' growing preference to be online not in line, and to minimise their contacts with administrations (ideally one portal for all needs), but also their diverse circumstances and the varying complexity of their interactions, so that 'once only' and digital can be the default scenarios, but personal contact and hand-holding assistance should remain on offer;

➢ Ensure a complete, comprehensive and interoperable digital service offer, so that each citizen and business can assemble the fully customised and cloud-based package that fits their individual situations, backed up by support services as needed;

➢ Enable this radical transformation in the relations between public authorities and service users to happen by re-engineering back office and front office functions, ensuring interoperability between systems, and achieving a seamless user interface, by engaging in systems thinking;

➢ Commit to service standards - including the accessibility of public services with special attention to the vulnerable groups - that correspond to the customer's reasonable expectations, according to user feedback; and

➢ Consider the whole service portfolio, whether systems remain relevant or could be updated and upgraded, in dialogue with enterprises, citizens and civil society representatives.

This ambitious agenda represents a daunting challenge, to stay in step and up to speed with the expectations of citizens and businesses in the digital age, but the experience of EU Member States shows that public administrations are increasingly rising to it. Results from public opinion measurements (mainly Balkan Barometer and WeBER) demonstrate increasing expectations of citizens and businesses from public administrations and services delivered also in the Western Balkans. This makes the above outlined challenging agenda also fully applicable in the Western Balkans region,

CHAPTER 3: Country Reports

3. 1. Service Delivery Country Report for ALBANIA

"The public services reform is one of the key priorities of the Government of Albania 2017-2021 Programme. It constitutes a strong commitment towards our citizens, the business community, as well as our international partners, to whom we are grateful for their support with this reform.

Through this path breaking reform, we are making progress to combat corruption, foster a customer/citizen care culture, enhance public access, and increase effectiveness in the Albanian public administration.

We are fundamentally remodelling the ways public services are delivered in Albania through integration and digitalization of services. ADISA now offers more than 535 integrated, standardised and high-quality services to more than 800 000 citizens and is soon expanding throughout the country. The e-Albania portal offers 551 electronic services and 774 informative services, with e-permits, e-business and e-health being the most frequently used services. What is more, this reform is also transforming the work culture in the public administration and the ways in which traditionally citizens and businesses approached the 'state'.

In this first phase, what we have done is a paradigm shift that put customer or citizen care at the forefront of public services, closed loopholes for corruption and reduced inefficiencies through the so-called deregulation process, i.e. simplification of bureaucratic and administrative burden. In the second phase, these changes to systems, processes and workflows, as well as quality standards and monitoring will be consolidated and rolled out to all services provided by central and local government institutions".

Ms Senida Mesi, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania

3.1.1. Acronyms

ADISA	Agency for the Delivery of Integrated Services
AKCESK	National Authority for Electronic Certification and Cyber Security
AQTN	Central Technical Archive of Construction
ASPA	Albanian School of Public Administration
AZHT	Territorial Development Agency
BO	Back Office
BPR	Business Process Reengineering
CAP	Code of Administrative Procedures
CCPARS	Crosscutting Public Administration Reform Strategy
CFM	Citizen Feedback Mechanism
DAA	Digital Agenda of Albania
DPD	General Maritime Directorate
DPGJC	General Directorate of Civil Status
DPSHTRR	General Directorate of Road Transport Service
DPT	General Directorate of Taxation
EU	European Union
FO	Front Office
FSDKSH	Mandatory Health Insurance Fund
GoA	Government of Albania
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ISC	Integrated Service Centre
ISSH	Social Insurance Institute
LTPD	Long Term Policy Document on the Provision of Citizen-Centric Administrative Services by Central Institutions
MASR	Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
NAIS	National Agency for Information Society
NSDI II	2015-2020 National Strategy for Development and Integration
OSS	One Stop Shop
PAR	Public Administration Reform
PSDR	Public Services Delivery Reform
QKB	National Business Centre
QSUT	University Hospital Centre "Nene Tereza"
SHKP	National Employment Service
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNPAN	UN Public Administration Network
WeBER	Western Balkans Enabling Project for Civil Society Monitoring of PAR
ZRPP	Immovable Property Registration Office

3.1.2. Executive Summary

The Government of Albania in 2014 launched an overall programme to improve public services, as one of its six priorities.[33] The fast-paced reform included important milestones, such as: completion of the first inventory of central government administrative services and their classification and codification according to best EU practices; the establishment of the Agency for the Delivery of Integrated Services (ADISA) as a dedicated Agency to guarantee customer care standards in service delivery to citizens and businesses; the setup of a Citizen Feedback Mechanism; the revamping of the e-Albania portal; the initiation of a standardisation and simplification process in service delivery and piloting of Front Office (FO) and Back Office (BO) separation and FO management by ADISA; the opening of a nationwide Call Centre at 118-00 for information on services.

This reform is comprehensive and includes several inter-related interventions at legal, institutional and operational levels. It includes almost all line ministries and has recently been extended to the realm of local government. While overshadowed by some other reform initiatives (such as the judicial reform) in terms of public visibility and discussion, the public service delivery reform has every potential to be the one with the most tangible results for citizens of Albania.

The Law on Delivery of Public Services at Front Office Level in the Republic of Albania[34] is the main legal instrument that defines the rules on public service provision by removing administrative barriers and offering fast, efficient, transparent and higher quality service in Albania.

The Long-Term Policy Document on the Provision of Citizen-Centric Administrative Services by Central Institutions (LTPD)[35] constitutes the strategic framework for the delivery of public services in line with the 2015-2020 National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI II),[36] the 2015 – 2020 Crosscutting Public Administration Reform Strategy (CCPARS)[37] and the 2015-2020 Digital Agenda of Albania (DAA).[38]

The institutional set-up for public sector service delivery coordination is in place. The Albanian administration has made progress towards establishing the technical and administrative capacities, as well as the human resource base requisite for the effective and efficient management of services delivered to citizens.[39] At the operational level, the key stakeholders involved in the implementation of the citizen-centric services reform include the Agency for the Delivery of Integrated Services (ADISA), the National Agency for Information Society (NAIS) and the institutional public service providers.

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[33] The Albanian Government's priorities included: 1) Land and Territorial Reform; 2) Improvement of the Energy Sector; 3) Water Resources and Infrastructure Management; 4) Foreign Direct Investments; 5) Structural Reforms for the Modernisation and Consolidation of Public Institutions; 6) Innovative Governance.

[34] Law No. 13 /2016 on Delivery of Public Services at the Front Office Level in the Republic of Albania

[35] Government of Albania - Council of Ministers, Decision No. 384, of 25 May 2016 "Long-Term Policy Document) – on the Provision of Citizen-Centric Administrative Services by Central Institutions" (LTPD).

[36] Government of Albania-Council of Ministers, 2015-2020 National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI II), , Decision No. 348, of 11 May 2016.

[37] Government of Albania-Council of Ministers, 2015-2020 Crosscutting Public Administration Reform Strategy, Decision No. 319, of 15 April 2015, http://dap.gov.al/images/DokumentaStrategjik/PAR_Strategy_2015-2020_English.pdf

[38] Government of Albania-Council of Ministers, 2015-2020 Cross Cutting Digital Agenda of Albania, Decision No. 284 of 1 April 2015, http://akshi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Digital_Agenda_Strategy_2015_-_2020.pdf

[39] OECD/SIGMA "Principles of Public Administration Monitoring Report – Albania", 2017.

The Government of Albania has been focusing on and investing in the government-wide digitisation program which includes the digitisation of most important government records. The first examples of full-service digitalisation accompanied by the elimination of paper documents included the health card, tax declarations, applying for construction permits and applying for university. The unique e-Albania.al multifunctional governmental portal serves as a centralised gateway whereby all citizens can avail themselves of electronic services provided by the Albanian public institutions via the Internet. The 535 e-services offered on the portal aim to serve the needs of a wide range of users: from unemployed citizens, drivers, property owners, pupils, the elderly, to Albanians living abroad, businesses, public servants, etc.

The Albanian Government's ambition is to further increase the number of electronic services offered on the portal, the number of e-services offered only online via the portal, as well to connect more systems to the Government Interoperability Platform.

3.1.3. Service Delivery Framework

a) Policy and Strategic Framework

The modernisation of public services is one of the main priorities of the Government 2017-2021 Programme.[40] Its main objective is the elimination of physical service windows and simplification and facilitation of the whole process by use of digital infrastructure. This is also set out in the 2015–2020 National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI II)[41] and is embodied in the 2015–2020 Cross-Cutting Public Administration Reform Strategy (CCPARS)[42], which constitutes the overall framework for the modernisation and transformation of institutions and practices of the public administration in the country, with the vision of providing "*high quality services to citizens and businesses in a transparent, effective, and efficient manner through the use of modern technologies and innovative services and in compliance with EU accession requirements through impartial, professional and accountable civil servants, part of efficient setups*".

The 2015-2020 Cross-Cutting Public Administration Reform Strategy is in line with the obligations derived from the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) to substantially improve the quality of public services and to ensure more rapid approximation with EU standards and requirements. It envisages four main priorities, namely:

1. Policymaking and the quality of legislation;
2. Organisation and functioning of PA;
3. Civil Service: Human Resource Management; and,
4. Administrative procedures and oversight

CCPARS focuses on improving overall administrative capacity, including of the management of civil service and capacity building in public administration. CCPARS objectives are being implemented through the Action Plans of the Crosscutting PAR Strategy and the national

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[40] The 2017-2021 Programme of the Albanian Government, https://www.kryeministria.al/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/PROGRAMI.pdf

[41] Government of Albania-Council of Ministers, 2015-2020 National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI II), Decision No. 348/2016.

[42] Government of Albania-Council of Ministers, 2015 – 2020 Crosscutting Public Administration Reform Strategy, Decision No. 319/2015.

Public Financial Management Strategy,[43] as well as through the Action Plan for the Implementation of the 2015-2020 crosscutting Digital Agenda of Albania.[44]

The 2015-2020 DAA foresees the establishment of a citizen-centric services model through the creation of a unique public services window, as well as the improvement of access to services for the citizens and increase in transparency of the services of each public institution, mainly through the utilisation of information and communication technology. The interconnection of information technology systems will be enhanced, as will the exchange of real-time data between them through the Government Interoperability Platform, prerequisite for simplifying services and reducing the number of documents citizens or businesses are required to produce at service windows. At the same time, concrete steps are to be taken to reduce the number of licences, permits and authorisations needed to carry out activities in the country, as well as to reduce the maximum deadlines for implementation.

In May 2016, the Council of Ministers approved the Long-Term Policy Document on the Provision of Citizen-Centric Administrative Services by Central Institutions (LTPD).[45] The LTPD constitutes the instrument necessary for defining the strategic vision, objectives and principles of the entire public service delivery reform process and helping the GoA and other partners in this reform to align efforts, elaborate intentions and synergise on common objectives and expected results, taking also into account the economic rationale. LTPD is the key document that establishes a common reference for engagement and allows harmonised activities spanning a relatively long time frame, such as transformative undertakings entailing also cultural changes. The policy document is important for the process – assessment of the service delivery situation, review of potentials for change, consultations with various service providers and end-users/beneficiaries, adoption of international standards and principles on service delivery within the context – as well as for its end result. The policy objectives guiding the citizen-centric service delivery approach essentially include five key goals:

1. Reduced time and administrative burden for citizens and businesses;
2. Improved service access and delivery quality;
3. Increased number of satisfied citizens using government services;
4. Reduced corruption, and
5. Increased efficiency, transparency and accountability in service delivery.

b) Legal Framework

The legal grounds for the reform of public service delivery were created in a unique way in Albania, without following a set model. On 18 February 2016, the Parliament of the Republic of Albania adopted Law No. 13 on Public Service Delivery at the Front Office Level in the Republic of Albania.[46] The Law defines the rules for the provision of public services by removing administrative burdens and ensuring fast, efficient, transparent and higher quality services. It identifies and defines the role of ADISA; the principles and channels (ways) of public service delivery; the rules for developing public service models; the rules on cooperation among different institutions, including local governments; and the rules on the organisation of service windows and ADISA's operations.

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[43] Government of Albania, Council of Ministers, 2014 – 2020 Albania Public Finance Management Strategy, Decision No. 908. http://www.financa.gov.al/files/userfiles/Raportimet/Albanian_PFM_strategy_2014-2020.pdf

[44] Government of Albania, Action Plan for the Implementation of the 2015-2020 Digital Agenda http://akshi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/PLANI_I_VEPRIMIT-final_dt_18_3_2015.pdf

[45] Government of Albania-Council of Ministers, Decision No. 384/16, "Long-Term Policy Document on the Provision of Citizen-Centric Administrative Services by Central Institutions" (LTPD).

[46] Law No. 13/2016 on Public Service Delivery at the Front Office Level in the Republic of Albania

The authorities proceeded to enact a number of by-laws governing i) the establishment of ADISA Integrated Service Centres (ISCs) constituting single points of contact for citizens in need of public services and ensuring equal access to the latter and ii) the appointment of ADISA as the national authority responsible for drafting models and setting standards of service delivery, as well as iii) providing for transfer of the FOs to ADISA. [47]

The most important law governing administrative decision-making is the Code of Administrative Procedures. Law No. 44/2015 on the Code of Administrative Procedures (CAP) in the Republic of Albania was adopted on 30 April 2015, with the objective of ensuring effective implementation of public functions for citizens and the protection of their legal rights. The CAP entered into force a year after its publication i.e. on 28 May 2016 and repealed the 1999 Code of Administrative Procedures, the first to codify administrative legal matter in Albania.

Currently, there is a rich legal framework that directly and indirectly regulates ICT and information society in Albania. It includes the National Interoperability Framework and legal acts such as Council of Ministers Decision No. 495/2017 on the Adoption of Rules to Benefit from Electronic Public Services, Law No. 9918/2008 on Electronic Communications in the Republic of Albania, Council of Ministers Decision No. 357/2013 on Management of Electronic Documents in the Republic of Albania, Law No. 273/2010 on Electronic Documents, Law No. 325/2010 on State Databases, etc. Law No. 9880/2008 on Electronic Signatures[48] is in compliance with Directive 1999/93 /EC. Part of the matter governed by the 2014 EU Electronic Identification and Trust Services Regulation (eIDAS) has also been regulated by the 2008 Law on Electronic Signatures, amended in 2009. The rest of the regulations were aligned by Law No. 107/2015 on Electronic Identification and Trusted Services[49] just for the part that affects Albania, which has the status of candidate country and is not yet an EU member state. So both of the above mentioned laws align Albanian legislation with the eIDAS Regulation commensurate to the country's engagement as a candidate country in a complementary way. Therefore, there is no need for further alignment until Albania becomes a Member State.

c) Institutional Framework and Set-Up

The institutional set-up for public sector service delivery coordination is in place. The Albanian administration has made progress towards establishing the technical and administrative capacities, as well as the human resource base necessary for the effective and efficient management of services delivered to citizens.[50] The legal basis and institutions for an effective service delivery system are in place, although some challenges have been identified.

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[47] The Council of Ministers passed Decisions No. 384/2016, 693/2014, 343/2016, 584/2016, 654/2016, 522/2016 and 306/2017 regulating the following issues of relevance to ADISA's operations:
- The determination of the authority responsible for developing service delivery models;
- The organisation of the integrated public services agency (ADISA);
- The strategic objectives and approach to be followed in the operation of ISCs, Front Offices and other service channels;
- The establishment of the state database and the management system of information cards;
- The standardisation, classification and codification of public services, as well as creation of the application forms for services; and
- The transfer of the administration of the FOs of a number of public institutions to ADISA.

[48] The consolidated Law No. 9880/2008 on Electronic Signatures is available at the website of the National Authority for Electronic Certification and Cyber Security (AKCESK). http://cesk.gov.al/legjislacioni/index.html

[49] Law No 107/2015 on Electronic Identification and Trusted Services is available at the AKCESK website: http://cesk.gov.al/legjislacioni/index.html

[50] OECD/SIGMA "Principles of Public Administration Monitoring Report – Albania, 2017"

The Inter-Ministerial Committee on Service Delivery and e-Governance was established pursuant to Order No. 15 of the Prime Minister of 18 January 2018. The Committee aims to facilitate the implementation of the reform of public services and electronic governance, through policy making and harmonisation of the approaches to implementation in defined areas. The Committee is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and charged with:

1. Drafting policies and submitting them to the Council of Ministers for approval;
2. Approving action plans and the institutions responsible for the submission of relevant proposals and fulfilment of their remit;
3. Analysing and selecting best practices and models, which will be recommended for implementation;
4. Overseeing the implementation of reform in public services and e-governance;
5. Reviewing the activities of institutions and working groups participating and involved in the respective reforms; and,
6. Analysing and offering solutions to the problems encountered during the reform.

Central coordination of service delivery is conducted by two different organisations: ADISA and NAIS with the support of the relevant ministries and the municipalities.

The Agency for the Delivery of Integrated Services in Albania (ADISA)

ADISA is the designated institution responsible for citizen-centric public service delivery models and standards established under Council of Ministers Decision of 22 October 2014. Its remit was expanded under Law No. 13/2016 on Public Service Delivery at the Front Office Level in the Republic of Albania. It is a public legal entity organised in the form of a self-sustained agency. ADISA is the institution behind the FO-BO separation. It serves both as the "brain" behind the citizen-centric services and the "face" of those services. It is the brain, which sets the standard design and monitoring of the services across all relevant government offices. It is also the public face of the services, which means that ADISA establishes and manages customer care service windows in the ADISA Centres.

The law specifies ADISA's scope of work: delivering public services; preparing models of service delivery and procedures for FOs and Integrated Service Centres, and establishing and managing them; proposing and participating in business process reengineering of public institutions; collecting information on services provided by public institutions and informing the public about them; monitoring service delivery performance and gathering citizen feedback.

ADISA performs this role based on the applicable legislation and inter-institutional agreements regulating the following issues of relevance to ADISA's functioning:

1. The strategic objectives and approach to be followed in the operation of ISCs, Front Offices and other service channels;
2. The determination of the responsible authority for drafting the models of service delivery;
3. The organisation of the Integrated Public Services Agency (ADISA);
4. The establishment of the State Database and the Management System of Information Cards;
5. The standardisation, classification and codification of public services, as well as the creation of the application forms for services;
6. The transfer of the FOs of a number of public institutions to the administration of ADISA.

National Agency for Information Society (NAIS)

The National Agency for Information Society is the core institution in Albania in terms of ICT, digitalisation of government and public services serving citizens, businesses and public administration employees. Based on years-long experience in the public ICT infrastructure, NAIS' responsibilities were expanded in 2017 and now include:

1. Implementation of a centralised infrastructure in order to create capabilities to host and provide centralised services;
2. Provision of centralised services to citizens, businesses and the public administration, in accordance with its legal framework;
3. Design, implementation and monitoring of ICT central government projects;
4. Audit of state databases and ICT systems; and,
5. Development of information society strategies and policies.

Prime Minister's Order No. 673/2017 on the Reorganisation of the National Agency for Information Society recognises the role of NAIS as a public central institution, reporting to the Prime Minister. NAIS owns and administers all system and hardware infrastructure and software in the field of ICT for the institutions and bodies administering the budget under the Council of Ministers. NAIS develops policies, strategies and regulates the ICT sector, with the exception of electronic communications. NAIS is a provider of ICT services and electronic services to citizens, businesses and the public administration. The new Order upgrades the functions and key competences exercised by NAIS in e-Government and the provision of e-services, standards and systems. It is now charged with:

1. Promoting new technologies, designing strategies and policies in the field of information technology and e-Government electronic communication;
2. Providing focused services ICT for electronic governance, public administration, citizens, businesses;
3. Establishing and providing electronic services for the physical counters of institutions and bodies of the public administration under the responsibility of the Council of Ministers, which provide public services;
4. Providing IT systems, hardware infrastructure and ICT for ADISA, within the scope of public services it delivers at physical windows;
5. Undertaking, at its own initiative or pursuant to the requirements of public administration institutions, initiatives for the electronic reengineering of services through the Government Interoperability Platform, depending on the need for improving procedures, reorganisation of work processes, with a view to simplifying, increasing efficiency and efficiency of public administration, as well as developing technology;
6. Defining the Albanian standards of electronic public services (e-services), in accordance with valid international and European standards, to be followed by the public administration and private entities;
7. Providing authentication services, electronic signature and digital seal services to authorities and public administration institutions and private entities; and,
8. Developing, managing and maintaining hardware infrastructure and software services for electronic governance, comprising:
    - the unique governmental portal e-Albania, the governmental interaction platform for service delivery:
    - electronic governance, by typology: government - government; government - citizen; government – business.

Line ministries and subordinated agencies - all the ministries, with jurisdiction over departments or Agencies providing public services to citizens, are relevant stakeholders.

Ministerial Working Groups are established and serve as the mechanisms to review and approve new rules and draft legislative amendments in the area of public service delivery. These groups are in charge of deregulation and reengineering the business processes, by assessing them and subsequently proposing and approving the necessary changes; they are also tasked with proposing possibilities for using ICT solutions in public service delivery.

Municipalities – provision of services to citizens through one stop shop centres to be established in all the municipalities to provide services to the citizens, based on ADISA-developed service standards. ADISA is co-locating municipality service windows within its ISCs and is expected to have its central government service windows at the municipal one stop shops. Piloting of the latter is under way.

1.1.4. Analysis of Service Delivery of Key Thematic Fields

a) GAPA Implementation

The adoption of Law No. 13/2016 on Public Service Delivery at the Front Office Level in the Republic of Albania marks the beginning of a new era in the delivery of public services aiming to increase the efficiency, transparency and quality of services delivered by the public administration. In addition to service delivery principles and the procedures for the establishment of new services and reorganisation of the existing services, this Law also provided for the establishment of ADISA, the agency extending integrated public services.

According to the relevant legislation in force, public services are provided by ADISA, institutions of public administration, local government units and independent institutions. Each of these institutions acts in line with the general legal administrative terms, rules and procedures and specific normative regulations.

The implementation of the Law has shown that some aspects need to be improved to better meet the objectives of the law seeking to build even closer links between the State and the people towards social and economic progress. **The revision of the Law should also ensure better harmonisation both with the Code of Administrative Procedures and the EU Directive on Services in the Internal Market.**

The review of the Law should take stock of the experience in its enforcement to date and should take into account and clearly state the prevalence of the Code of Administrative Procedures vis-à-vis the procedure and manner of service delivery at the central and local levels. **During the revision process, particular attention should be paid to aspects related to the rights to information and personal data protection. The Law should provide for clear procedures for reviewing administrative complaints about received services and institutions delivering the services.[51] It also needs to specify ADISA's remit and the principles of standardising service delivery, notably how service delivery counters are established and operate, and the procedure for interaction between service delivery and service recipients. The current law also lacks provisions governing service fees.**

The CAP is based on the principles of legality, due process and proportionality. It governs individual administrative enactments, administrative contracts and other administrative actions, in order to enhance the overall systematic approach, broaden judicial control of the public administration and ensure efficient procedures.

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[51] See the report on proposed amendments to Law No. 13/2016, prepared by Support to Improve Citizen-Centric Public Service to Albania, EU Technical Assistance Project

The CAP recognises the key principles of good administrative procedures, whilst devoting special attention to enhancing the system and regulation of administrative dispute proceedings. The functioning of administrative courts and regulation of administrative reviews, as well as protection through administrative silence, provide guarantees of enhanced exercise of administrative rights. Also, a special "complaint" remedy has been introduced (Articles 142-144) enabling the lodging of administrative complaints against other administrative actions – not against individual administrative enactments, but regarding the indirect performance of public services.

The change in the system has been huge – at the beginning, Albania switched from sector specific administrative laws to one overarching "umbrella" law, which was reviewed to reflect all the best international practices and lessons learned during the implementation of the first CAP. This is a major change for PA and for the services it provides. Articles 74 -76 deal with the concepts and principles of one stop shops; the citizens' right to seek the necessary information on services; the citizens' right to address directly the BOs and seek delivery of services from them; the right of BO institutions to exercise their competences without interference.

Art. 97(1) regulates silent consent: "1. If a party has requested the issuance of a written administrative act in an administrative procedure and the public administrative authority has not notified it of its decision by the initial deadline or by the extended deadline, or rendered a decision by the extended deadline, the request shall be deemed approved, and the requested written administrative enactment as issued in silence (hereinafter referred to as "the act in silence"), in cases provided for by separate laws." The silent consent rule in Art. 97(1) of the 2015 CAP requires that each case be regulated by a separate law. The CAP can be applied only if there is explicit authorisation in a separate law.

OECD/ SIGMA Monitoring Report for Albania 2017 states that since the "...introduction of the CAP, there has been a clear move to set standards for citizens' rights to good governance..."[52]

The new CAP devotes particular attention to enhancing the system and regulation of administrative dispute proceedings and the administrative judiciary, and protection against administrative silence. Also, a special "complaint" remedy has been introduced (Articles 142-144) enabling the lodging of administrative complaints against other administrative actions – not against individual administrative enactments, but regarding the indirect performance of public services. Implementation of the reform is ongoing, so it is too early to assess its impact.

Other legislation is harmonised with the CAP is being done on an as-needed basis rather than systemically. The SIGMA recommendation has been implemented, except for the coordination part that is still pending and hindering the full implementation of the law.

The MoJ has developed a commentary on CAP implementation and initial trainings for civil servants are under way to support the CAP implementation process. The Albanian School of Public Administration (ASPA) has provided initial training to more than 500 civil servants through an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) programme. The principles of the new CAP are also included in the training programme for new public servants delivered by ASPA.

However, there is still a need to conduct extensive training on the new CAP for civil servants (at the central and local levels) responsible for drafting related regulations and for public officials providing public services, as well as the need to **raise the awareness**

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[52] See OECD/SIGMA "The Principles of Public Administration – Albania Report 2017", pp. 113-114.

of the general population, ensuring that citizens and businesses understand their rights regarding administrative procedures.

According to the 2018 Balkan Barometer survey,[53] more and more citizens believe that administrative procedures in public institutions are efficient: 57% of the Albanian public perceives the administrative procedures as efficient, compared with 42% in 2017.[54] In 2018, 31% of Albanian citizens held the view that the law was applied and enforced effectively, compared with 22% in 2017, and 18% of Albanians thought that the law was applied to everyone equally, compared with 16% subscribing to this opinion in 2017. Despite these positive trends in both of the analysed areas, the number of citizens who assessed them negatively remained high, 68% and 82% respectively. Positive trends in public opinion (end users' opinion) indicate that there are improvements in the quality of public service delivery, but that additional efforts need to be invested.

Based on the results of WeBER, 50.4% of Albanian citizens agree that the government has invested efforts and launched initiatives to simplify administrative procedures for citizens and businesses. As many as 88.7% of those aware of such initiatives confirm that administrative simplification initiatives have improved service delivery.

Albania Inspiring Practice No 2: ADISA Lab Bringing Innovative Solutions for Public Services

ADISALab - is a group of ADISA employees committed to innovation, inspired by people and excited by creativity. ADISA Lab tackles problems from the outside in, building useable solutions, focusing on user-centred design and facilitating a collaborative approach to the work of the public administration. ADISALab members come from different units and directorates within ADISA. Besides their everyday tasks, they work as ADISALab on innovative projects aiming to improve public services delivery in Albania.

The ADISALab focuses on four priority areas:

1. Reducing costs for ADISA and the public;
2. Contributing to ADISA's goals to public benefit;
3. Improving Albania's standing with the international community;
4. Helping the government fulfil t its mandate.

Users are being included at different stages of the project, including interviews with the target group (30 persons), and a presentation to and evaluation of prototypes and identified solutions by the target group and an NGO working in the field. Setting up an innovation lab in public service delivery enabled ADISA to take an innovative approach by using a user-centred design. As the solution is not resource demanding, it is an ideal approach for other projects to follow.

A total of 44.5% of Albanians agree that dealing with the administration has become easier in the past two years, which is close to 45.4% of the respondents who say they now need less time to avail themselves of administrative services and that aspects of services have improved.

Only 43.2% of the pollees said they believed the administration was seeking feedback from the citizens on how it could improve administrative services. Of them, 84.8% confirmed that the administration has used their feedback to improve service delivery.

There is a need to conduct training for civil servants (at the central and local levels) responsible for drafting the relevant regulations and for public officials extending public services. There is also a need to raise the awareness of the general population, ensuring that citizens and businesses understand their rights regarding administrative procedures. ASPA should intensify training activities on the relevant law to ensure their proper implementation.

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[53] RCC (2018) "Public Opinion Survey – Balkan Barometer", p. 115

[54] RCC (2017) "Public Opinion Survey – Balkan Barometer", pp. 122-124

The Albanian administration should continue enforcing the Law on Public Service Delivery at the Front Office Level and the Code of Administrative Procedures, and develop a plan for aligning the other laws and regulations with the Code.

Figure 6: Knowledge of Service Delivery Institutional Framework
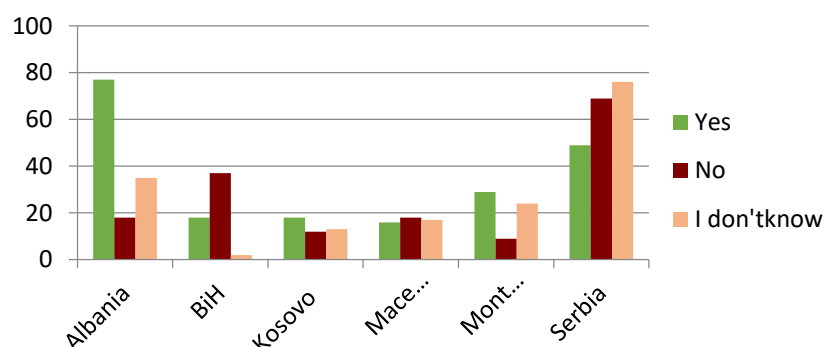
Several issues need to be highlighted with respect service delivery redesign processes in Albania. On the one hand, knowledge of the institutional set up for assessing and managing the service delivery processes among staff (e.g. internal follow-up/assessment structure and processes in place) in Albania (only 28.5% of respondents) is below the Western Balkan average.

On the other hand, knowledge of the organisations' policies and procedures to initiate and implement service (re)design is the highest in Albania.

Figure 7: Involvement of Staff in Organisational Policies and Process for Service Re-design
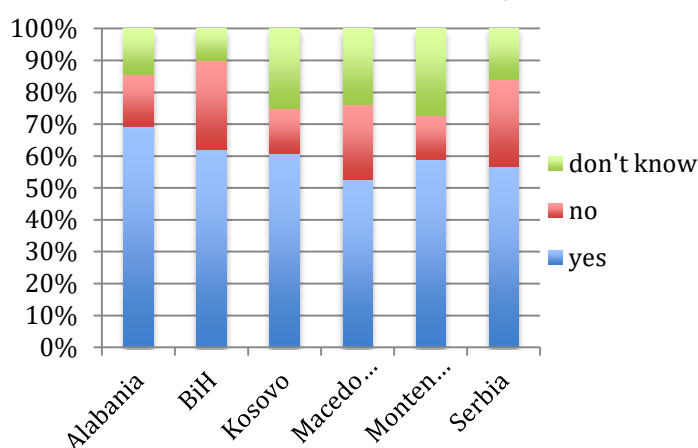
Albania is also the leader in the Western Balkan Region with respect to the level of involvement of staff in organisational policies and processes for initiating and implementing service redesign initiatives. The level of staff involvement at the sub-national level is somewhat lower than at the national level, but still high compared with the regional level.

Albania's performance is comparatively average in terms of systematic service delivery cost assessment and calculation of the financial impact of service redesign; however, there is clearly room for improvement given the overall regional low proportion of systematic cost assessment and assessment of the financial impact of service redesign (especially for end users).

The results of the Online Questionnaire indicate that Albania is the regional leader in ensuring systematic training needs assessments for the front desks and a systematic approach ensuring the front desks are systematically trained in extending redesigned services.

Detecting training needs

Figure 8: Detecting Training Needs
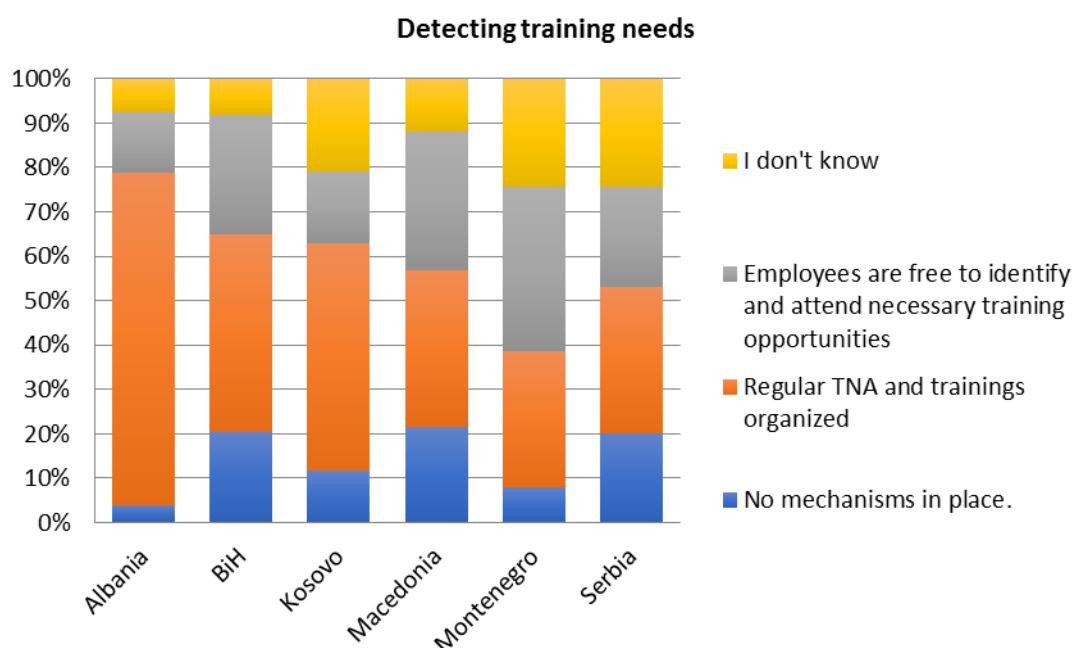
b) Digitalisation and e-Government

The GoA has been focusing on and investing in the government-wide digitalisation programme, which will include the digitisation of the most important government records. A key aspect of government IT systems entails improving their ability to communicate, exchange information and make use of the existing information. The overview of the digitisation process

Figure 9: Is Your Organisation In Charge of Maintaining any Register?
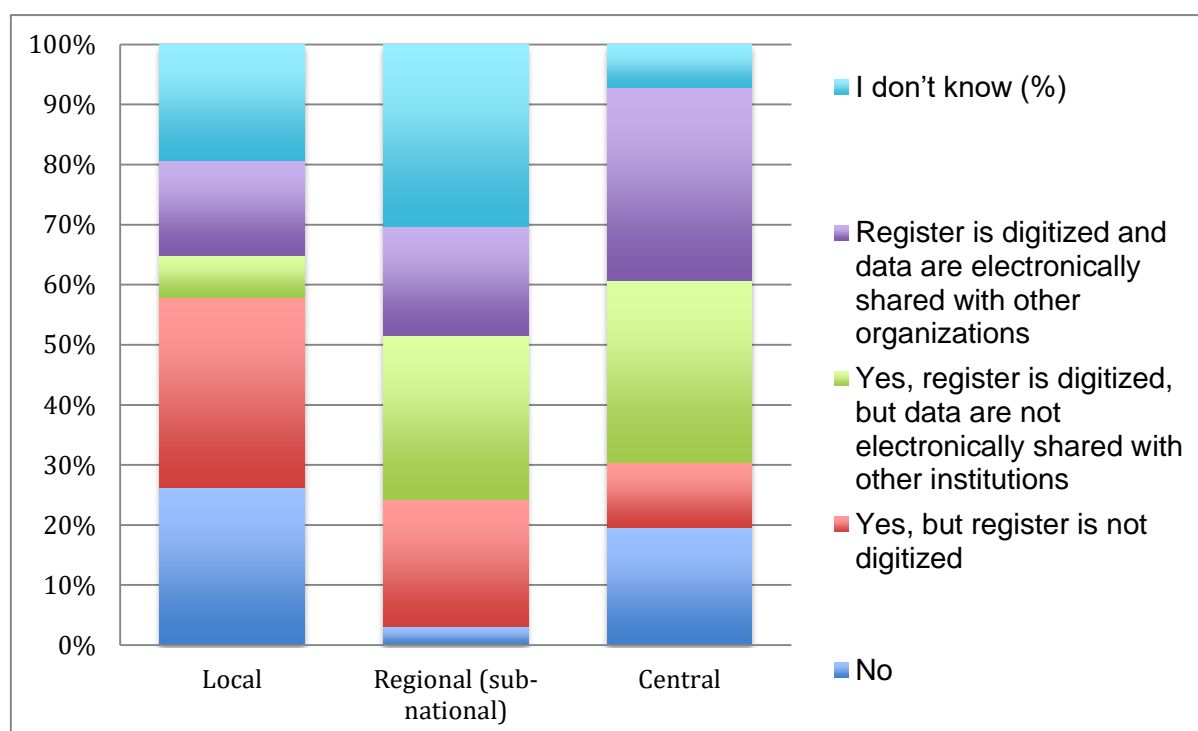
and data exchange is depicted in the chart below.
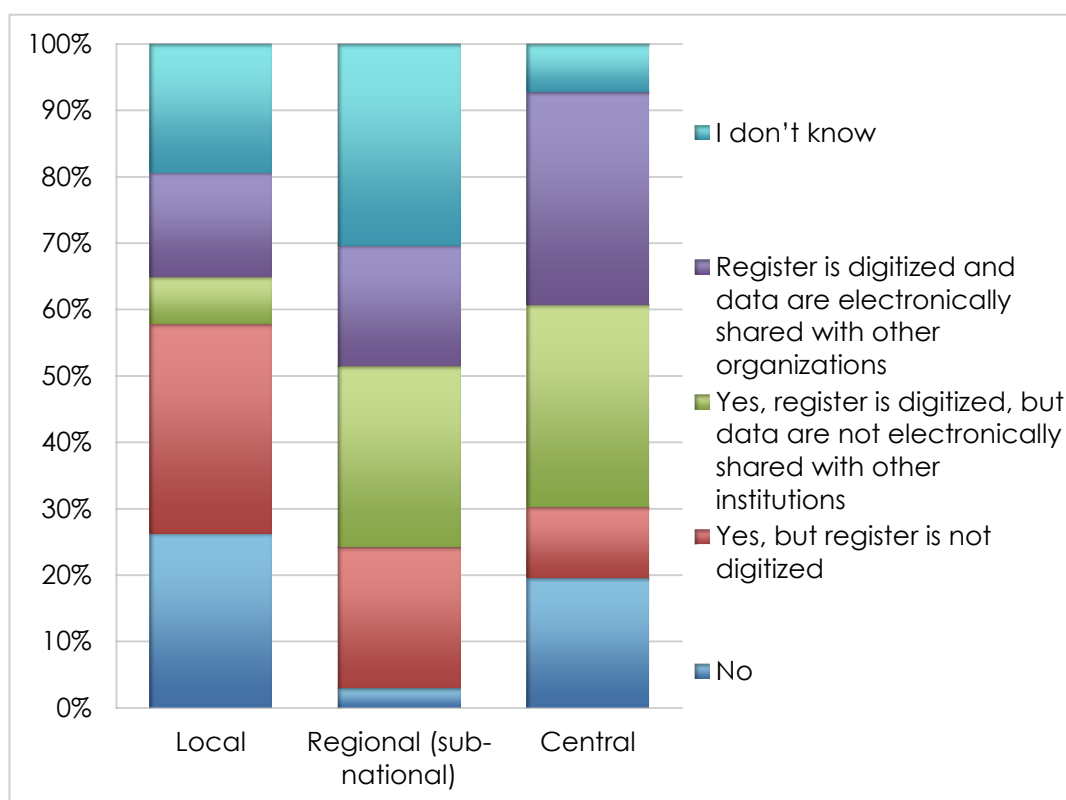
The legal framework for ensuring interoperability is in place, and NAIS has implemented the interoperability platform for integrating government IT systems to enable the reuse of data. At the operational level, NAIS is responsible for reviewing and approving all new government IT systems, and ensuring that principles related to service delivery (such as reuse of already existing data and the so-called "only once" principle) are implemented. NAIS also coordinates integration with the interoperability technical solution to enable data exchange among registers.

Albania Inspiring Practice No 5: Creation of the Civil Status Register as the Backbone of Service Delivery

The Civil Status Registers is one of the largest providers of administrative services. It issues birth, marriage and death certificates, and can also register marriages (four million transactions a year in all). The Civil Status Register has 350 regular offices and 37 archive offices, and the emphasis is still strongly on physical service delivery. A central database containing the civil status data of all Albanian citizens was recently introduced. The information is stored in a safe place. All the acts (birth, marriage and death) are registered electronically. Each citizen has a unique ID number in the database. The citizens are issued ID cards and passports upon online consultation of the main central database (National Civil Status Register - NCSR). The election rolls are generated by retrieving the data online from the central database, filtering the citizens by age and other criteria according the law.

Currently, 48 information systems, including all basic registers, are interconnected via the Interoperability Platform. More fundamentally, interoperability allows automatic data exchanges and boosts processing times, efficiency, and accuracy. **Endeavours should now focus more on reuse of all the relevant data available within the public administration.**

Thanks to the legal framework that obligates all authorities to seek NAIS' approval for introducing new IT systems, NAIS has strong leverage to push the authorities to integrate their new systems with the common interoperability solution. The centrally coordinated interoperability technical solution is the only legal way to exchange electronic data between governmental IT systems. In its Operational

Conclusions, the 7th EU-Albania Public Administration Reform Special Group, which met in Tirana in September 2017, stated that NAIS **should keep increasing the number of systems connected to the unique government interoperability platform**.

A single ICT system for integrated service delivery is being designed to enable ADISA to deliver services on behalf of government agencies in a homogenous fashion through the FO function. ADISA presently has access to IT systems of BO institutions. Based on inter-institutional agreements, the latter provide limited but sufficient access to ADISA's service windows, where citizens/entities can submit their applications and collect outputs/responses. **Separate services still do not communicate with each other and the next step should be to connect them in order to create aggregated services.** The platform will take into account the current IT solutions of the institutions. It will allow proper integration of central government institutions and ADISA through the necessary "interfaces", aiming at improving public service delivery quality and efficiency, while **ensuring compliance with security standards**.

The unique e-albania.al multifunctional governmental portal serves as a centralised gateway enabling all citizens' access to electronic services provided by the Albanian public institutions via the Internet. The portal is connected to the Government Interoperability Platform, which allows interaction among 48 electronic systems of public institutions. There are currently over 535 e-services available to citizens and businesses on the portal, with 56% of e-services application forms already pre-filled. **In order to achieve the objectives set out in the DAA and the Government priorities, NAIS should continue to increase the number of electronic services offered on the portal, especially the number of e-services offered only online via the e-Albania portal.**

A lot of these e-services are 100% reengineered, hence offering a completely paperless service. By offering more than 1,400 electronic and informative services (automation levels 1 – 4 according to UNPAN 2014), the portal has improved the accessibility of information about public services, the level of public awareness about the public service delivery procedures, and has, most importantly, acted as a robust catalyst in decreasing queues in front of public agency counters receptions, reducing corruption and bureaucracy, providing citizen equality, decreasing service delivery time and promoting government transparency.

An e-Albania Kiosk is installed in each ADISA Integrated Service Centre (ISC). The Kiosk provides the citizens with the opportunity to access the multifunctional

Figure 11: Online Services Sophistication

Government portal in each ISC, with or without the assistance of Info Point operators as the case might be.
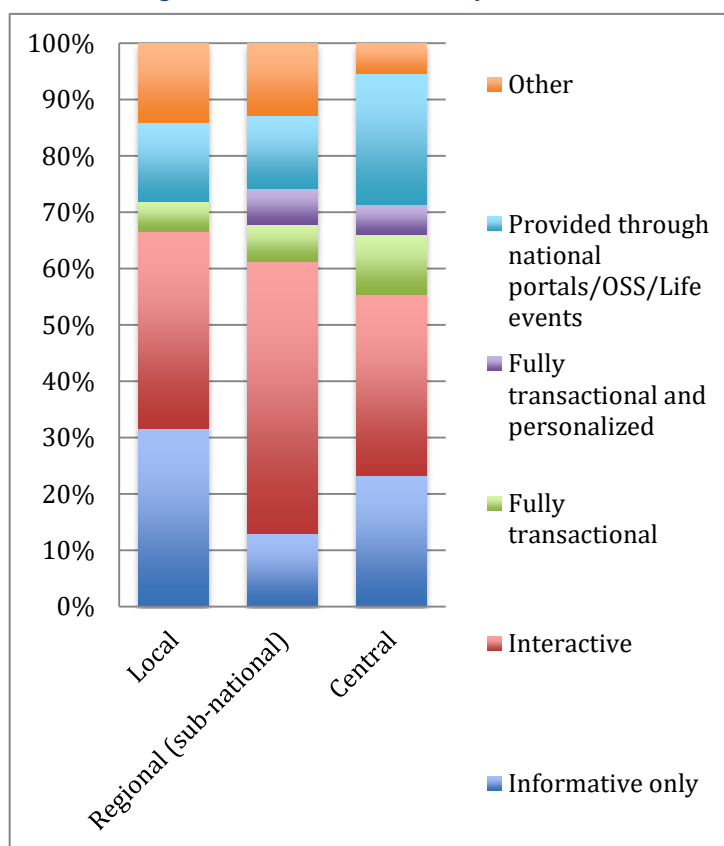
Services are redesigned in response to changes in service procedures (such as accompanying documents, workflow etc.) or user feedback and suggestions. In the first case, NAIS receives accurate information from institutions providing the particular service and then applies the requisite technical changes. In the second case, the e-Albania Citizen Helpdesk Sector reports any difficulties users face or recommendations they leave. An analysis is then conducted to determine whether any changes should be technically applied to the e-service itself.

All 535 e-services offered on the portal are dedicated to a wide range of users, from unemployed citizens, drivers, property owners, pupils, the elderly, Albanians living abroad, businesses, civil servants, etc. These services are also classified in categories (health, economy, education, etc.) and are searchable through the search bar. There are three types of users on the portal: citizens, businesses and civil servants. Citizens are able to access e-services dedicated to citizens, businesses the e-services dedicated to businesses and civil servants those dedicated to civil servants. E-Albania is available on desktop, mobile web, as well as a native app for iOS and Android. The majority of e-services, as well as all the informative services, are available on the mobile app. This includes e-services dedicated to students, too.

There are two electronic signatures service providers on the market, but there are no low-cost or free-of-charge and convenient digital signature services available to citizens, making it difficult to achieve traction on the market. NAIS is one of the official providers of the e-signature. The e-signature via a USB-token is used by physicians, businesses, architects, engineers, civil servants, etc. The legal framework for electronic signatures is in place, and electronic signatures are recognised as equal to handwritten signatures on the same grounds as in the EU eIDAS regulation. The e-signature is used for e-services on the e-Albania portal, document exchange between public institutions, etc. E-signatures are free of charge for civil servants and offered at an affordable rate to businesses. Citizens can use their e-signatures on their ID cards via a card reader to access some e-services provided online. However, without the widely used high-security e-ID and e-signature infrastructure, it is difficult to introduce new e-services that require higher security levels in authentication and take legally binding actions by signing documents online.[55]

The relevant laws and by-laws adopted pursuant to Council of Ministers Decision No. 495/2017 on the Adoption of Rules to Benefit from Electronic Public Services cleared the way for the digital seal legitimation, giving legal validity to the administrative documents generated through the e-Albania portal.

Albania Inspiring Practice No 3: Implementation of the Digital SEAL

The National Agency for Information Society has implemented the digital seal on the e-Albania unique governmental portal. As of January 2018, 29 documents bearing the digital seal are available to citizens and businesses. They include civil status certificates, pension certificates, business certificates and extracts, health cards, property titles, et al. Circa 300,000 digitally signed documents were generated in less than four months, reducing drastically the queues at the institutions' counters, saving citizens thousands of hours, as well as money, since some of them are offered free of charge via the portal. On the other hand, the Albanian government has thoroughly facilitated the lives of citizens and businesses by placing the burden of securing the digitally sealed documents on the Albanian public administration. So, when a citizen goes to a state counter or a notary, the latter are responsible for providing the required digitally sealed documents through e-Albania. Meanwhile, citizens and businesses that need to deliver these documents to private institutions can download them directly from the portal, and they come equipped with a digital seal and full legal validity.

To provide users with a viable option of receiving answers on their applications, as well as electronically signed documents from public institutions, the "My Documents" section is

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[55] *Ibid.*

accessible through the "My Space" menu. The portal also offers the messaging feature, where users can see messages that are sent to them. Through e-services, citizens or businesses can see or check their personal/business data stored on various state databases.

The number of transactions via the Government Interoperability Platform has exceeded 25 million each year, for the past two years. Meanwhile, the number of times e-services have been used has more than doubled in the first months of 2018 compared with 2017, exceeding 300,000 a month.

Herewith a list of some fully transactional electronic services available online on the portal:

1. Application for Construction Permit, a complex process that has been implemented entirely online for almost a year and a half;
2. The Electronic Consulate Service (SHKO) answers questions of millions of Albanians abroad seeking an Albanian public service around the world. Over 45,000 new applications were filed through the portal in less than one year;
3. Business is one of the priorities among the services provided on the e-Albania portal, starting with the registration of the new entity;
4. The State Matura Electronic Service. Preliminary registration of graduates who will take part in Matura Exams is 100% online through the portal;
5. The portal provides essential solutions to a large part of public services related to vehicles, ownership and obligations of their holders.

The e-Albania portal receives user feedback data on a regular basis. Such channels include e-service ratings of available e-services on the portal, comments left on social media profiles or on the e-Albania forum, e-mails sent to the official helpdesk e-mail. In practical terms, the procedures are simpler and the transactions are performed online through a computer, tablet or smartphone, always through the e-Albania government portal, allowing real-time downloading of the legal documents and their printing on a common printer.

The following Table and Chart present an overview of available enablers, e-services building blocks and their usage:

Portal	Enablers	Building blocks	Registers
Single sign-on available: Yes	eID available and used: Yes	Number of information systems interconnected to the Government Interoperability Platform: 47	All basic registers digitised and shared
Service catalogue available: Yes	e-Documents circulating: Yes	e-Forms available: Yes	
No of transactional e-services available: 535	Mobile authentication available: No	e-Payment available: Yes	
No of registered users: 500,000	e-Signature available and used: used by businesses mainly	e-Invoicing available: N/A	
No of transactions/services rendered per year: 3,600,000	No of registered e-Signature providers: 2 1-NAIS (National Agency for information Society) 2-ALEAT shpk	e-Delivery available:	
Personalised My Portal with my data and my e-Documents available: Yes	No of eSignatures issued to: Citizens: 713,700 Public administration, private sector, e-Health: 8,848		
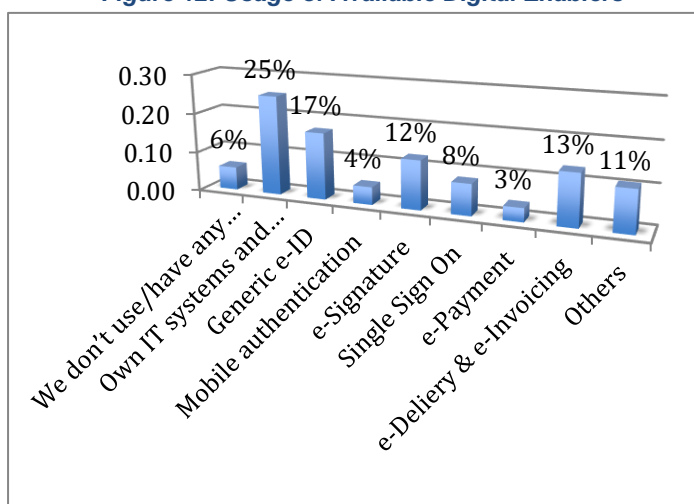
Huge progress has been made in the establishment and deployment of critical tools that enable better electronic service delivery, such as generic electronic identifications, qualified electronic signatures and other trust services and reusable technical building blocks (portal, single sign-on, payment gateways). However, a substantial share of electronic service silos supporting usage of digital tools developed only for those particular services (25%) is still dominant. Several IT systems enabling service delivery were created over the past years mostly tailored to the institutions. The Government has been working on integrating these systems into its Interoperability Platform and Government Data Centre.

Albania Inspiring Practice No 4: Use of Electronic Certificates to Declare Imports and Exports in a Single Administrative Document

The Albanian Customs Administration has been focusing its efforts on the implementation of the provisions of the new Customs Code providing transition to paperless customs and enabling the submission of customs declarations only in electronic form.

The project therefore aims at simplifying and reducing procedures for entrepreneurs and citizens, with a view to creating paperless customs.

It has simplified declaration, reduced time for following up declarations, as well as costs of purchasing customs declarations, photocopying documents attached to all copies of the declarations and their printing.

On the other hand, the project allowed the Albanian authorities to assess the fulfilment of conditions regarding interoperability and interconnectivity with the EU IT systems.

In general, business users have widely adopted the use of some central digital enablers to access administrative services; however, personal use is still marginal, due to high cost and low convenience. Therefore, **use of a central mobile phone authenticating/signature building block is highly recommended as it facilitates use of electronic signatures via a mobile phone and, as opposed to the card-based citizen card, installing software and additional hardware (card reader) will no longer be necessary.** This would make services more accessible to all. A similar functionality is widely used in EU countries. It was developed with the support of the EU Commission within a large EU pilot project on interoperability of electronic identities called 'STORK' and is available for reuse.

c) Quality Management in Service Delivery

The consequent policy in the area of user orientation and citizen-centric service delivery over the past years and the relevant investments have apparently yielded some tangible results inside the public sector institutions (the service providers). In the online survey, carried out between March and May 2018 in the context of this Study, Albanian public sector institutions rated the importance of user orientation for their institutions as "highly valuable" and even as "an indispensable part" for most of them.

This general perception of the institutions is underpinned by the concrete use of instruments and tools in the area of user orientation and citizen-centric service delivery. "Non-use" is, however, still considerable and efforts should be invested in stimulating the desired outcomes in practice, notably in raising awareness, training and practical support in directly linking them with managerial accountability and responsibility of the public sector leasers/managers to

Figure 13: Use of Tools and Instruments
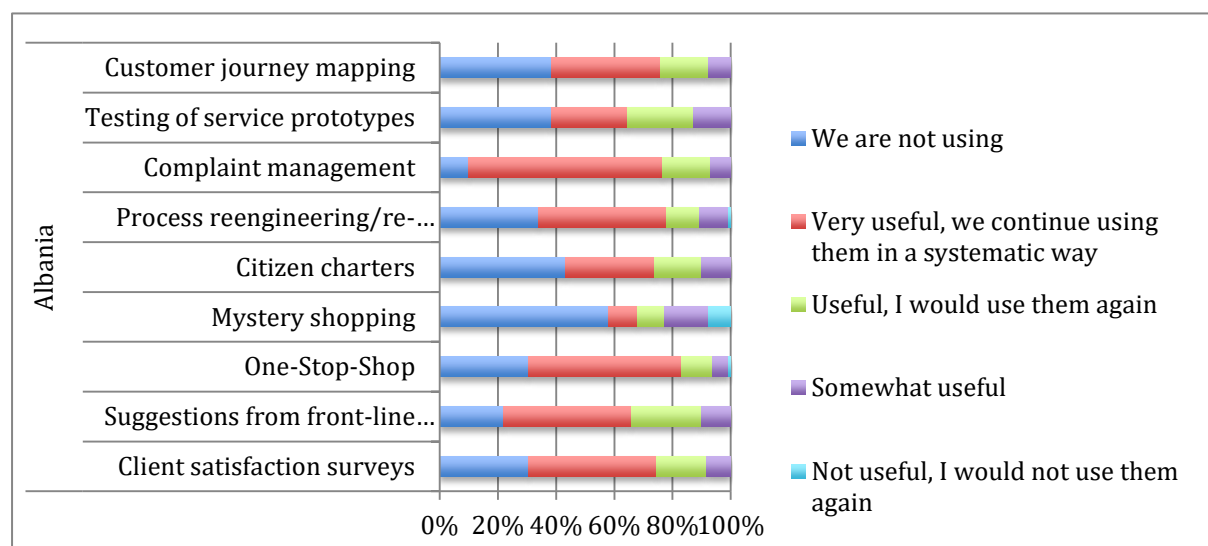
include citizen-centric service delivery as an indispensable part of managing their organisation.

Albania's results are quite good compared with other countries in the region. Those institutions that do make use of tools and instruments are apparently satisfied and find them (extremely) useful.

Figure 14: Satisfaction Measurement
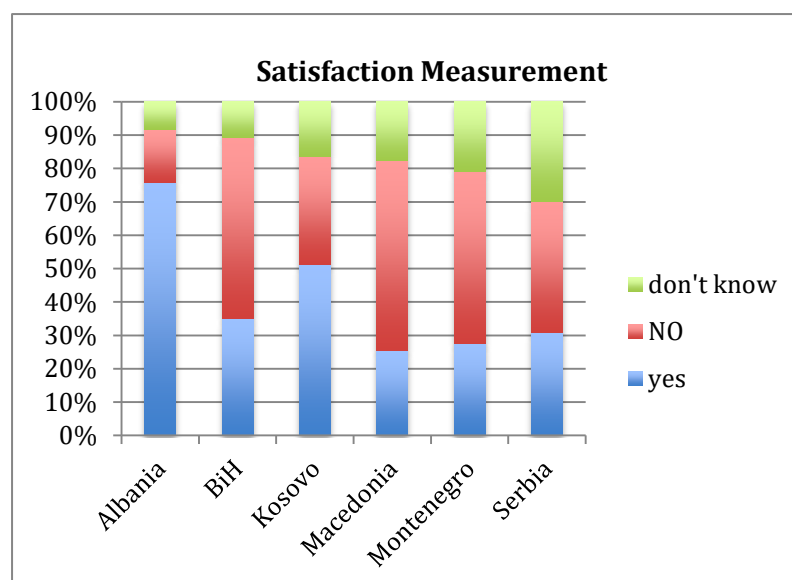
Albania definitely seems to score much better than the other countries in the region in the area of structured user satisfaction measurement, with 75% of its institutions having a regular practice in this regard.

Improving accessibility to administrative services is a clear policy objective for the Albanian Government. ADISA's Integrated Service Centres (ISCs) consolidate front-end service provision to offer easier access, higher transparency and efficiency of service delivery.

An ADISA-managed service window incubator project was launched in October 2015 with the Tirana Immovable Property Registration Office (ZRPP). In November 2016, the first Integrated Service Centre (ISC) was opened in the Kavaja district offering circa 233 services rendered by six institutions. By 2017, four such centres were opened (in Kavaja, Kruja, Fieri and

Gjirokastra), hosting around 370 services provided by nine central and local institutions and pursuant to Council of Ministers Decisions transferring the administration of the FOs from the institutions to ADISA, as well as agreements signed between parties on operational collaboration, IT, services flow, etc. At present, the following nine public institutions are hosted by the four ISCs: 1) Immovable Property Registration Office (ZRPP), 2) Mandatory Health Insurance Fund (FSDKSH), 3) Social Insurance Institute (ISSH), 4) General Directorate of Civil Status (DPGJC), 5) National Business Centre (QKB), 6) National Employment Service (SHPK), 7) General Directorate of Taxation (DPT), 8) Directorate for Agricultural Land Registration (DRTB), and 9) General Directorate of Road Transport Services.

In performing their services, ISCs cooperate with the BOs of public institutions based on prior agreements; therefore, their operational staff is currently a mix of ADISA and BOs service operators. In order to improve public access to services provided by an increasing number of public institutions, ADISA's strategy is to steadily increase the number of its territorial branches and have four regional ISCs and 11 local ISCs (set up in municipalities) up and running in short-to-medium term.

Under Law No. 13/2016 on Public Service Delivery at the Front Office Level in the Republic of Albania, the FO and BO institutions have separate yet complementary roles: ISCs are responsible for the following services: provision of information to

> **Albania Inspiring Practice No 1: Integrated Service Centres (ISCs) managed by ADISA**
>
> The Integrated Service Centre (ISCs) managed by ADISA are the Centres in which ADISA provides Front Office services for a number of central government institutions, thus providing citizens and businesses with fast, easy and transparent access to public services. Setting up ISCs through ADISA in Albania, thus separating FO and BO and putting citizens at the centre through adoption of innovative solutions in service delivery in Albania has entailed a fundamental change in how the state institutions interact with citizens. Four regional Integrated Service Centres, at which ADISA provides front office services for a total of nine institutions, have been established to date. For these ISCs, ADISA has designed a new service delivery model, which is based on separated service windows, the integration of services and collocation, thus making life easier for the customer. Its main achievements include the development of new work organisation and service delivery standards, increased client satisfaction, shorter waiting and application processing times and enhanced transparency for the customers.

citizens/entities on available public services and status of submitted applications; preparation and submission of applications for outputs requested by citizens/entities; delivery to citizens/entities of outputs provided by back office institutions. BO institutions, on the other hand, are responsible for the preparation and provision of outputs requested by citizens/entities at ISCs' service windows. It is, therefore, clear that the respective roles of the FO and BO are complementary in a service chain focusing on the needs and requests of citizens, businesses and various other entities.

ISCs' work has been organised to ensure efficiency. The processes for providing the services to citizens and entities are divided into specialised roles/units thereby reducing overall service time at ISCs. This division of work consists of the following: queue management, information services, transactional services, complaints services, protocolling and supervision. In all its ISCs, ADISA has set improved service delivery standards based on customer care principles, ensuring equal access to public services to citizens/businesses and taking into account the needs of special groups, such as person(s) with disabilities, foreigners and senior citizens.

Overall, a noticeable improvement in the ADISA-provided FO services and in other service delivery areas have resulted in Albania registering one of the highest levels of satisfaction with administrative services in the Western Balkans, with 41% of citizens satisfied or extremely satisfied and an even higher percentage of businesses (46%) satisfied or extremely satisfied with them. [56]

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[56] OECD-SIGMA "Principles of Public Administration - Monitoring Report Albania 2017"

ADISA has made progress in developing new standards to improve service delivery. Based on the Council of Ministers Decision on the Creation of the State Databases, ADISA has organised the information related to the public services offered in the Republic of Albania by public institutions in a database. ADISA, as the responsible authority for designing models, has organised the information by using the passport of services model. The inventory of public services is in place and contains a high level of information: over 1,400 services of 134 government bodies have been classified and codified and the process is ongoing.

On the other hand, ADISA is currently using these data to provide information to the citizens - via its Call Centre, the e-Albania portal, and other channels - about the procedures, documents and other conditions they should fulfil for the institutions to provide them with the requested services.

Pursuant to Council of Ministers Decision No. 343 on the Responsible Authority for Designing Models of 4 May 2016, ADISA has prepared the unique model for service information passports. A service information passport is an instrument compiled by ADISA in cooperation with the respective institutions, which includes the most important information on a specific service (type of service, document required, application process, timing, fees, etc.) and is available on the e-Albania portal, ADISA's website and its Call Centre. ADISA has already prepared 560 such cards on services delivered by 20 central institutions/agencies.

Unified information on administrative public services is available via the e-Albania.al portal, providing the citizens with an overview of what they need to do to avail themselves of the service. Six authorities have adopted and apply in practice the standard service application template introduced in July 2016 to simplify the procedure; 128 standardised application forms have been introduced for 301 services of 17 institutions.

In October 2016, ADISA inaugurated the ADISA Call Centre which represents an additional channel of information on public services. It provides expedited, accurate information on 560 public services of twenty public institutions. This Centre is a very useful source of information that directly assists citizens by providing quick information to different categories of society, such as the rural population, elderly people, minorities, people with disabilities, etc. Citizens can call and seek information on necessary documents, fees, and deadlines related to the public services they need. The Call Centre (phone no. 118-00) operates as an information channel from 7 am to 9 pm on weekdays and from 7 am to 2 pm on Saturdays and Sundays, saving citizens looking for information about public services both time and money.

Costs related to delivering public services are not yet systematically monitored on a wide scale, but ADISA has taken steps to pilot cost measurements. Currently, cost per transaction is available for 13 service delivery institutions, but there is no monitoring of cost per transaction through different channels of service (digital versus physical channels), which could provide an additional incentive to prioritise digitalisation of services (when possible). SIGMA states in its 2017 Monitoring Report that "standardisation of service provision (unified application forms, service passports, complaints management) has made it easier to use administrative services, and improvements in gathering user feedback about service quality and satisfaction have also been made."[57] However, SIGMA's recommendation **to develop a methodology and gather information on the costs of all delivery channels at the individual service and agency level is yet to be fulfilled.**

In compliance with the requirements of the Code of Administrative Procedures and the Law on the Right to Information, ISCs have a separate service window to deal with the citizens/entities' complaints. This service is extremely important for the constant improvement of processes and services delivered to citizens. The service collects the complaints, forwards

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[57] OECD/SIGMA "The Principles of Public Administration – Albania Report 2017

them to the relevant institutions and communicates their output to the complainants (output denotes responses or measures addressing the complaints). ADISA also created a Guideline for managing complaints, which sets out a unified approach to the user complaint management process. This unified approach includes a standardised complaint form and a standardised process for handling complaints by the FOs and BOs, such as rules on how to respond to all complaints. All citizens should receive responses to complaints within ten workdays; the Guideline also covers the implementation of similar complaint management procedures for other service points that have not been consolidated into ISCs.

Business Process Reengineering (BPR) is one of the fundamental aspects of the Government's strategy for citizen-centric public services delivery. The reduction of the administrative burden for the Albanian citizens would not be possible without the elimination and/or simplification of a myriad of documents and procedures. Nine Ministerial Working Groups and twenty institutional technical groups have been set up to reengineer business processes, while a BPR process, launched in early 2016 with the World Bank's support, has been conducted in ten institutions providing public services at the central government level, namely: the Territorial Development Agency (AZHT), General Directorate of Road Transport Service (DPSHTRR), Mandatory Health Insurance Fund   (FSDKSH), the Social Insurance Institute (ISSH), Immovable Property Registration Office   (ZRPP), Central Technical Construction Archives (AQTN), General Maritime Directorate (DPD), General Directorate of Civil Status (DPGJC), Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth (MASR), and the National Business Centre (QKB). In result, circa 450 public services have undergone a major analysis (of the three main components: procedures, legal and IT) and a specifically tailored reengineering methodology was applied to: (i) simplify and standardise the internal working processes; (ii) lessen the administrative burden for the citizens (by reducing the number of documents required to access a service); and, (iii) sensitively reduce delivery time. In November 2016, the Inter-Ministerial Public Services Committee decided to approve the Methodology for Reengineering of Public Services -"AS IS" service maps, as well as "TO BE" maps, have been prepared.

A policy for administrative simplification has been developed and consistently implemented. The deregulation process has been going on since September 2017 and aims to facilitate procedures for obtaining public services, as well as to cut red tape and corruption. All public services are being reviewed in detail in order to reduce the number of accompanying documents citizens need to provide to obtain a public service, merge or reduce the number of public services, and digitalise services in order to diversify their providing channels, as well as facilitate their obtainment.

There are altogether over 1,400 services provided by the central government, with over 6,800 total documents required. There are around 301 licences and authorisations. (111 licences issued by the National Business Centre and 190 licences issued by the line ministries).

The goal is to maximally cut the financial costs and time citizens and businesses need to benefit from public services, reducing the number of documents, such as certificates, permits, licences, or authorisations that public institutions require in exchange for the services provided. At the same time, the intention is to encourage the use of online services and avoid long queues at the counters, eliminate corruption and make the public administration more responsive to the needs of citizens and businesses. The state-citizen and state-entrepreneurial relationships are being re-dimensioned: the state, on the one hand, has to meet the citizens' expectations of correct, standard, professional, timely, citizen-centred administrative services, while, on the other hand, citizens and entrepreneurs should be well informed of their rights in order to claim what they are lawfully entitled to.

The following general principles underpin the deregulation reform process:

1. Simplification and reduction of requests for permits, licences and authorisations, unless they are necessary to promote competition; protecting the health of consumers, individual and national security, public order, and the environment;
2. Transfer of the burden of obtaining a document issued by other public institutions from citizens to public institutions;
3. In cases where legislation provides sufficient protection, there should be no additional vocational training requirements;
4. Diplomas, qualifications and additional training are necessary only when they are directly related to the relevant activity; and,
5. Establishment of a single National Business Centre (QKB) authority that builds, ensures, controls and monitors compliance with standards, as well as of an inventory of all permits, licences and authorisations in the country.

The government **should continue with the implementation of the deregulation reform (reduction of the administrative burden for citizens) and the reengineering process by: a) approving the drafted laws; b) completing the institutional reform; and c) putting in place IT tools and instruments**. The first step of implementation has already been made and involves the reduction of documents required of the citizens, by both eliminating non value added documents and imposing on the public institutions the task of collecting a part of the document, on behalf of the citizen, by means of integrated IT platforms and the government gateway.

ADISA and NAIS should ensure that both physical and digital optimisation possibilities are considered during the reengineering and documents simplification processes of each service, in order to achieve optimal solutions for the Government, as well as for the citizens. The cost of all delivery channels – per transaction, per service, by individual agency – should be monitored separately, as this should act as an incentive for digitalisation.

In 2017, ADISA established an Innovation Lab – ADISALab. Innovation is the key pillar of public service transformation and the ADISALab will be a critical component to ADISA's success. ADISALaB aims to ensure capacity building and good practices to promote continuous improvement in service delivery, and sustain the necessary change in the institutional and management culture through set up assistance, training and mentoring to support its functioning. This output has direct bearing on enhancing the sustainability of the reform and ensuring its longevity. (See Annex7)

The functioning of ISCs and other service channels would not be complete without rigorous performance monitoring and assessment. Performance monitoring and assessment helps identify the steps and measures to constantly improve the activity of ISCs/service channels against objectives and targets. ADISA's performance assessment of service channels aims at improving public service delivery to citizens and increasing the overall satisfaction of service users. To this end, the present performance assessment system of ISCs and other ADISA service channels is structured along service delivery objectives, scope of application, determination of performance indicators, data collection methods and tools, and identification of the responsible authorities. The scope of the performance assessment includes all ADISA's ISCs and FOs, present and future, ADISA's Call Centre, and online channels of service delivery (ADISA mobile application, e-mail and website). As for the object of assessment, its scope extends to: service processes, service quality, citizen satisfaction and work ethics. ADISA has developed a set of indicators for each channel of service and the data are collected through a) system records (FO or BO ICT system, reports, various documents), and b) statistical surveys (Exit Surveys, Customer Satisfaction Survey, Mystery Shopping/Calling, phone and online surveys).

In 2017, the first nationwide mystery shopper assessment was conducted by a civil society organisation, resulting in awards for the best-performing regional office and institutions in general.

Periodic surveys have been conducted in institutions before ADISA started hosting their services and, subsequently, in ADISA FOs in order to measure the level of citizen satisfaction before and after they take over the administration of FOs of various public institutions, in order to identify strengths/weaknesses and to set further objectives for improving the quality of service delivery and to measure citizen satisfaction with info points, reception and accommodation, application process, BOs, as well as to obtain data on improvements achieved by ADISA in all ISCs. The survey's results show greater citizen satisfaction since ADISA took over the administration of the FOs.

Now that it has strengthened capacities and achieved tangible results, **ADISA needs to establish and implement a quality management framework in all the ISCs and invest efforts in ensuring that quality assurance tools are also introduced by other government bodies providing over-the-counter services.**

ADISA needs to be supported by the government in order to increase its oversight role to ensure that other government institutions comply with the public service quality requirements and standards.

ADISA and NAIS should pursue a Quality Management System policy by gradually aligning the ISCs' organisation, processes and documents with the principles and requirements of ISO 9001- 2015. ISO 9001[58] is a worldwide recognised system, which sets quality management standards to be implemented by service delivery organisations in order to acquire its label of excellence.

A Citizen Feedback Mechanism (CFM), subject to monitoring by the Delivery Unit at the Prime Minister's Office, has been established under World Bank's auspices to gather citizens' opinions on the quality of service delivery. By the end of 2017, the CFM collected citizens' views on the first four public central institutions (i.e. ZRPP, ISSH, SHKP and QSUT). Citizens, who had had direct contact with the aforementioned institutions, were asked to qualify their experiences in applying for their services. Text messages were sent to applicants (citizens) and their responses were then compiled in the respective reports and communicated to the relevant institutions rendering the services, to the cabinets of the relevant ministries and to ADISA.

A new CFM IT system, comprising a larger number of institutions directly offering public services to citizens was established at the end of 2017. The new CFM (Citizen's Feedback Monitoring) system offers tools to add, analyse, process, and convert the data into useful information, which is accessible both on the local intranet and the Internet. This web-based system serves not only for measuring the citizens' experience with the quality of service delivery, but also for underpinning informed decision-making. The CFM system is run and managed by the Albanian Prime Minister's Office. This system fulfils two main tasks: a) it offers tools to collect feedback, and b) it enables the interpretation and analysis of the feedback.

With the new CFM system, the citizens will be contacted via:

1. SMS;
2. E-mail;
3. Web; and,
4. Face to face survey.

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[58] Interview with Mrs. Anisa Gjika, former General Director of ADISA, 22 February 2018.

At least 561 surveys will be launched in 23 institutions a year. This means that two or three campaigns will on average be launched on a daily basis. The integration of 23 institutions in the monitoring framework will be gradual.

3.1.5. Accessibility and Service Delivery for Vulnerable Groups

In 2014, the Parliament approved Law No. 93 on Inclusion and Accessibility of Persons with Disabilities. The Law aims to guarantee the promotion and protection of the rights of people with disabilities to enable their full and effective participation in all walks of life, on equal terms with others, autonomy and independent living of all persons with disabilities, through the provision of assistance and support. The Law determines the responsibility of all structures, public and non-public, including state bodies, central and local, in the implementation of the principles of inclusion and accessibility to reduce and eliminate obstacles for persons with disabilities, in order to facilitate their equal participation in society.

Furthermore, the Council of Ministers in June 2016 adopted the 2016-2020 National Action Plan on Persons with Disabilities,[59] to address the issue of accessibility to public services by people with disabilities; thus, the policy framework is in place to ensure people with limited mobility access to public buildings.

ADISA has set improved standards of service delivery ensuring equal access to public services to persons with disabilities in all the ISCs. ADISA's service delivery standards include: i) necessary signalisation items and parking facilities, ii) a Queue Management System and waiting area(s); iii) dedicated staff to help at the info points; use of the e-Albania kiosks; iv) Complaint Management System (CMS); v) the infrastructure allowing access to persons with disabilities (e.g. ramps for wheel-chaired persons, dedicated restrooms, etc.).

Accessibility issues for people with disabilities remain unaddressed outside of the ADISA ISCs. The accessibility of public buildings remains generally low. In general, the needs of customers/ citizens with disabilities are inadequately addressed in practice, although it should be noted that the ADISA ISC model requires that all the Centres be wheelchair accessible.

ADISA is working towards providing public services without barriers. ADISALab has been organising various consultations and meetings with representatives of NGO and networks supporting persons with disabilities in order to ensure 'continuous improvement of services, systems, processes or products to maximise benefits for citizens with disabilities.

The newest ADISA Integrated Service Centre, to open in the Shkodra Region in 2018, will be the first ISC implementing the full range of standards of services for people with disabilities.

Web accessibility standards (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines [WCAG]) for public web pages and e-service channels have not been adopted. However, the adoption of web accessibility standards is a goal in the Digital Agenda Action Plan, as well as in the 2016-2020 National Action Plan on Persons with Disabilities.

Sign language is officially recognised[60] under Prime Minister's Decision on the Recognition of Sign Language in the Republic of Albania, but its use is not compulsory for government institutions.

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[59] 2016-2020 National Action Plan on Persons with Disabilities, approved by Council of Ministers Decision No. 483 on 29 June 2016

[60] Prime Minister's Decision No. 837 of 3 December 2014 on the Recognition of Sign Language in the Republic of Albania

WCAG and use of sign language indicate that some progress has been made in ensuring accessibility to all users of public services. However, equal access to public services should be ensured also to other vulnerable groups, such as representatives of the Roma community, minorities, etc.

Access remains a central element of the citizen-centric service delivery model. **Further efforts need to be invested in improving the accessibility of public services, e-services for special-needs users by preparing a roadmap for an improved feasible nationwide model,** with special consideration being given to the interconnection between the central and local governments to ensure reach, especially of the vulnerable groups, as well as support its implementation. This will also ensure the expansion of the application of customer care standards to both public administration performance and the beneficiaries' experiences with service delivery, notwithstanding the providing authority, either central or local.

3.1.6. Recommendations

Short-Term Recommendations

➢ GAPA1. The Albanian administration should continue implementing the Law on Public Service Delivery at the Front Office Level and the Code of Administrative Procedures and develop a systemic approach and action plan for aligning laws and regulations with the latter.

➢ GAPA2. ASPA should intensify training activities on the Law on Public Service Delivery at the Front Office Level and the Code of Administrative Procedures to ensure their proper enforcement. Awareness raising activities should be intensified and target both civil servants and the general population.

➢ eG1. NAIS should continue increasing the number of electronic services offered on the portal, especially the number of e-services offered only online via the e-Albania portal.

➢ eG2. The investments should now focus more on reuse of all the relevant data available within the public administration.

➢ eG3. With more and more registers and services going online, NAIS should continue ensuring compliance with the highest security standards in order to maintain the trust of citizens and businesses.

➢ eG4. The focus should be also on digital skills training and awareness raising among the general population.

➢ QM1. The application of user feedback tools should be expanded to cover all services, including e-services.

➢ QM2. ADISA needs to establish and implement a quality management framework in all Integrated Service Centres and endeavour to ensure that quality assurance tools are also introduced by other government bodies providing over-the-counter services.

➢ Accessibility1. Accessibility of public services and e-services to special-needs users should be improved by preparing a roadmap for an enhanced feasible nationwide model that works on the nationwide level, with special consideration being given to the interconnection between the central and local governments to ensure reach, especially of the vulnerable groups, as well as support its implementation.

➢ QM3. Participation of civil society and the academic network in improving public service delivery should not boil down only to monitoring. They should be encouraged to propose innovative ideas, actions and policies and launch effective innovation labs and other instruments.

Mid-Term Recommendations

➢ GPA1. The Law on Public Service Delivery at the Front Office Level should be revised with particular focus on the aspects related to the right to information and data protection. It should provide clear procedures on handling administrative complaints

about rendered services and institutions rendering them in order to ensure better harmonisation with the Code of Administrative Procedures, other relevant national law, as well as the EU Directive on Services in the Internal Market

- GAPA2. Ensure effective implementation of the Code of Administrative Procedures by completing and aligning the regulations with the Code. Efficient and effective coordination of these processes should be established
- GAPA3. ADISA should develop a methodology and gather information on the costs of all delivery channels at the individual service and agency levels.
- GAPA4 The revised Law on Public Service Delivery at the Front Office Level should define the right to information and data protection, as well as define procedures on handling administrative complaints about rendered services. The Law should also govern service fees more thoroughly.
- eG1. NAIS should keep increasing the number of systems to be connected to the unique Government Interoperability Platform.
- eG2. Separate services still do not communicate with each other and the next step should be to connect them in order to create aggregated services.
- QM1. ADISA and NAIS need to obtain ISO quality management accreditation to ensure their services consistently meet the customers'/citizens' requirements and that their quality is consistently improved.
- QM2. The application of user feedback tools, developed and piloted in some institutions, should be expanded to cover more services, including e-services.
- Accessibility1. NAIS should implement web accessibility standards for all government webpages and the e-Albania portal.

Long-Term Recommendations

- GAPA1. The Albanian Government should continue implementing the reengineering process   (reducing the administrative burden for citizens) by approving the draft legal enactments; completing the institutional reform and putting in place IT tools and instruments
- eG1. Use of the central mobile phone authenticating/signature building block is highly recommended as it allows use of electronic signatures with a mobile phone and, as opposed to the card-based citizen card, installing software and additional hardware (card reader) will no longer be necessary.
- QM1. ADISA needs to increase its oversight role to ensure that the other government institutions comply with public service standards and quality requirements.
- QM2. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, as the Public Service Delivery Reform leader, should organise regular service delivery hackathons or similar events to review existing services and propose improvements or new services. Alternatively, all service delivery organisations should involve their users and wider community in reviewing and redesigning their services.

3.2. Service Delivery Country Report for BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

"Bosnia and Herzegovina's role of ReSPA chair in 2018 is both an honour and a responsibility. Together with the representatives of all administration levels actively contributing to ReSPA'a activities, we welcome the contents, goals, guidelines, and recommendations of this Study. Besides the evident fact that there is no alternative to regional cooperation, we strongly support ReSPA in continuing its activities, especially by developing comparative studies focusing on regional service delivery. The activities conducted to date have produced visible positive changes across the region. The good service delivery practices implemented by proactive and open public institutions can be replicated throughout our region, used for other studies, and reports evaluating the progress of BiH and other countries in the region.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is showing evidence of progress in several areas, but the long path of service optimisation still lies ahead. The journey of excellence in public administration can be supported in many proven ways, but choosing the best and the most efficient approach and model remains essential. This Study recognises the progress achieved in quality management at both the state and entity levels. State and entity level institutions can avail themselves of the services of the Public Administration Reform Coordinator`s Office, the BiH Institute for Standardisation and the BiH and entity Civil Service Agencies introducing, promoting and building capacity for implementing ISO 9001 or CAF quality management standards. The Study shows that institutions that follow the quality management approach frequently implement client satisfaction surveys, and as of recently, employee surveys, as well as redesign and optimise the public administration process. This proves the success of the Revised Action Plan 1. Similar activities will be envisaged in the action plans to be drafted after the adoption of the 2018-2022 Public Administration Reform Strategy.

A good example with visible results is the e-Procurement system provided by the BiH Public Procurement Agency. The presented mobile application is a huge step towards optimising public services and saving a lot more time, money, and human resources. It should be noted that the Public Procurement Agency fosters close and regular contact with its clients, that it receives direct feedback, and proactively acts to improve it services. Similarly, other public institutions presented in the Study are genuine vehicles of change and improvement in the performance of public institutions in BiH, as reflected in the various staff education programmes offering continuous courses tailored to meet the staff's needs and demands regarding the development of digital communication skills.

The BiH Council of Ministers will closely follow the recommendations set out in this Study, particularly regarding e-services and the interoperability framework, with a view to reducing administrative obstacles in the BiH public administration by using the already established structures and methodologies, and developing new ones for the areas identified in the Study."

Mr. Denis Zvizdić, Prime Minister, BiH Council of Ministers

"As the Study correctly states, our relevant institutions successfully established the one stop shop system for business registration, resulting in remarkable time and cost reductions for everyone interested in doing business in Republic of Srpska. In 2018, we`ve moved forward with our client-oriented policy and, in cooperation with the local authorities, established the construction permit one stop shop system, thus directly facilitating increased investments in Republic of Srpska. Accordingly, as the Study itself recognises, the Republic of Srpska institutions, such as our ministries, APIF or the Banja Luka local authorities, are proactively sharing all relevant information for the citizens and clients, both on their websites and by other means of communication.

Also, the Study provides a short overview of the efforts our institutions have invested in establishing the e-Government portal. The Republic of Srpska Government is strongly committed to fulfilling all the needs of our citizens and clients and we will continue investing in the improvement and accessibility of public services by eliminating administrative burdens. In order to achieve that, we are continuously improving our legal framework in line with EU and other relevant international standards, creating the necessary conditions for regular use of client oriented tools, such as e-signature or e-documents. It goes without saying that vulnerable groups of our society are not excluded from the Government`s efforts to pursue the necessary administrative reforms. As the Study shows, we are taking the necessary steps to actively incorporate the Braille alphabet in all administrative procedures.

The Republic of Srpska Government is strongly committed and dedicated to regional cooperation and we welcome ReSPA's initiative to develop and publish this Study, demonstrating not only the positive public administration practices in the region, but giving us concrete recommendations on how to improve the everyday lives of our citizens as well."

Ms Željka Cvijanović, Prime Minister of the Republic of Srpska

"The FBiH Government has put priority focus on projects aimed at intensifying economic development, strengthening FBiH's internal societal stability and consolidating the rule of law, with a view to putting in place a long-term sustainable and stable system that will boost the competitiveness of this BiH entity. We are aware that these processes rest on strengthening the quality of public services.

As the Study correctly notes, FBIH Government's efforts are aimed at advancing the process of optimisation for businesses and citizens, as evidenced, inter alia, by the drafting of amendments to the Law on the Registration of Businesses; the Company Law, the Law on Entrepreneurship and Related Activities and the preparation of the Law on Electronic Signatures, which will greatly simplify and speed up the business registration procedure. The ongoing activities of the inter-institutional working group tasked with establishing a one stop shop will soon result in the development and proposal of measures and activities aimed at establishing a one stop shop mechanism and the electronic registration of businesses.

We adopted the Decision on the Establishment of a Single "FBiH e-Government" Portal, prerequisite for implementing the regulatory guillotine strategy and improving the regulatory impact assessment procedure. We have built the human resource capacities in the institutions implementing the guillotine and performing regulatory impact assessments. We have put in place the IT infrastructure for enhancing and improving the quality of civil society participation in the regulatory process. The e-Consultations module will provide members of the public with notice of all public consultations and the possibility to directly engage in public consultations on public policies, laws and other draft regulations and share their comments and suggestions. The module will also allow the relevant authorities to publish their reports on the completed public consultations.

Our efforts are also directed at improving the organisational culture of our institutions, wherefore the FBiH Government fully supports the systemic introduction and promotion of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and building capacities for applying this quality management tool, which can be extended to include other institutions after its smooth implementation in the FBiH Civil Service Agency.

We are also committed to laying down the common foundations for and principles of the civil service system at all three administrative government levels in FBiH, the establishment of a single register of public servants, workforce planning and an internal labour market, establishment of merit-based recruitment and highly qualified and neutral verification of competences, as well as the establishment of a motivating career development system and wages for civil servants.

The FBiH Civil Status Register Law lays down the grounds for establishing and keeping the Central Civil Status Register of FBiH. The Register is a database comprising all FBIH vital records, notably, the birth, marriage and death registers and the register of nationals. This Register is essentially an electronic database comprising the personal data of all persons registered in the vital records kept in FBiH cities and municipalities. The Register is linked to the BiH Agency for Identification Documents and facilitates checks of data in response to individual applications for ID documents (passports and ID cards).

The establishment of the Interoperable Information System (IIS), the platform for all future exchanges of data among state institutions was one of the most important project activities within the Improving Investment Climate and Institutional Strengthening Project (ICIS) project. The implementation of this information system led to the establishment of the infrastructure facilitating the exchange and compilation of information from various sources (databases,

registers, records, et al), and thus increasing the usability of the existing systems and databases. At the moment, four institutions are sharing and exchanging data amongst themselves via the IIS and we hope that many others will soon join them.

Cooperation between the FBiH Agency for Quality and Accreditation in Healthcare and MyRight has resulted in the development of standards, round tables, public debates and a PR campaign for public health institutions on how to assist persons with disabilities.

We welcome ReSPA's initiative to develop and publish this Study, which does not only highlight the shiniest stars of public administration, but gives specific recommendations as well."

Mr Fadil Novalić, Prime Minister of the Federation of BiH

"BiH undoubtedly has a long way to go, especially when it comes to use of e-services, proactive information disclosure and full involvement of clients and citizens, including those with disabilities and vulnerable groups in public decision making, ensuring they have access to public buildings, information, etc.

We see some good practice examples at the state level, in particular the public consultations on draft regulations through the e-consultation web platform, as well as good practice examples at both the entity and local levels demonstrating a participatory approach to all involved stakeholders and proving that there is strong managerial accountability, accompanied by the openness and professionalism of the public servants. Much more, however, needs to be done to achieve visible improvement.

The Open Government Partnership initiative can have a brisk start once the action plan is adopted this autumn. On the other hand, we are seeing progress with the one stop shop approach to business registration and building permits in Republic of Srpska, and although still at an early stage, statistics are showing high numbers of clients served. The other levels should also open up to clients and citizens. The Federation of BiH amended the relevant laws this year to facilitate establishment of one stop shops. As for e-service delivery, the infrastructure and capacity development provided so far must be used to be benefit of all BiH clients and citizens.

The ReSPA, EC and other international stakeholders have significantly invested in improving service delivery in BiH and now it is time for BiH, entity, cantonal and local institutions to take action. The region should use this Study to replicate and share inspiring practices, such as e.g. Albania's e-services, wherever possible, and thus save resources and achieve concrete results faster. "

Mr Josip Grubeša, Minister of Justice of BiH

3.2.1. Acronyms

AIDRS	Republic of Srpska Agency for Information Society of Republic of Srpska
APIF	Agency for Intermediary, IT and Financial of Republic of Srpska Services of Republic of Srpska
BAS	BiH Institute for Standardisation
BD	Brčko District
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
CoM	BiH Council of Ministers
CSA	Civil Service Agency
DEU	Delegation of the European Union
EC	European Commission
EIPA	European Institute of Public Administration
FBiH	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
GAPA	General Administrative Procedures Act
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
IDDEEA	BiH Agency for Identification Documents, Registers and Data Exchange
ISO	International Organization for Standardisation
OGP	Open Government Partnership
PAR	Public Administration Reform
PARCO	Public Administration Reform Coordinator`s Office
PPA	BiH Public Procurement Agency
QM	Quality Management
RAP	Revised Action Plan
ReSPA	Regional School of Public Administration
RS	Republic of Srpska
SCM	Standard Cost Model
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TI	Transparency International
TQM	Total Quality Management

3.2.2. Executive Summary

Service delivery in Bosnia-Herzegovina is characterised by the lack of a strategic framework on public administration (Public Administration Reform Strategy - PARS) since the end of 2014. The 2018-2022 PARS was not yet officially adopted at the time this Study was finalised. The 2018 Balkan Barometer indicates that government performance was rated the lowest across all four areas in BiH compared with the other countries in the region (time required to get public information, treatment of citizens in public sector, time to obtain public services, price of public services).[61]

Broadly speaking, the legal framework sufficiently regulates quality service delivery, with particular exceptions at almost all levels indicating the strong need to harmonise the legal framework, especially in the area of digitalisation aiming to achieve faster and digital public services.

The present country report identifies changes at all levels of government and in all the relevant areas: the Office for Accreditation and Certification at the Ministry of Transport and Communication has been established; the BiH Council of Ministers adopted the Interoperability Framework; amendments to the General Administrative Procedures Act were adopted in the Republic of Srpska, and the Law on e-Signatures in the BiH Federation was pending adoption by the House of Peoples. On the operational level, the one stop approach in the Republic of Srpska resulted in improved client-orientation, redesign and optimisation of processes, public procurement has become fully operational in terms of online and mobile services and the quality management approach has established a sound basis for process- and client-oriented public administration.

It may be generally concluded is that most strategies and policies of service delivery are in place for sufficiently acting upon them that projects and initiatives on reducing administrative burdens and utilisation of digital/e-services have been extensively, but that implementation, coordination and standardisation have not been addressed properly. This implementation gap is visible throughout public service delivery in BiH.

Strengthening of the accountability of the public administration, ensuring proper and safe data exchange, compliance with good governance principles, digitalisation of services and public registers and standardisation of services using quality management tools, need to become the agenda priorities of all governmental levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

3.2.3. Service Delivery Framework

a) Policy and Strategic Framework

This specific situation of BiH, with fragmented results in overall service delivery, has led to relatively high public dissatisfaction with public services, as measured by the 2018 Balkan Barometer:[62]

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[61] https://www.rcc.int/seeds/files/RCC_BalkanBarometer_PublicOpinion_2018.pdf, p. 111.

[62] https://www.rcc.int/seeds/results/2/balkan-public-barometer,

How satisfied are you with Public services in general?

Economy	I'm completely dissatisfied	I'm mostly unsatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	I'm mostly satisfied	I'm completely satisfied	DK/refuse
Balkan Barometer 2018						
Bosnia and Herzegovina	23	21	31	21	3	0
Balkan Barometer 2017						
Bosnia and Herzegovina	17	22	32	23	4	0

Comparison of the 2017 and 2018 survey results shows an increase in the total number of dissatisfied and a decrease in the total number of satisfied respondents. Generation of a concise policy framework on service delivery would trigger public satisfaction, if conducted country-wide. Quite similar results were found in the 2018 WeBER PAR Study[63], service delivery part, where BiH scored only 1 of possible 5 points, and was the only country to score such a low result. **This indicates that it is high time for the BiH governments to start designing and delivering citizen and business oriented services, starting with the adoption of the envisioned strategy and respective action plans**.

Neither the Public Administration Reform Strategy (PARS)[64], nor, consequently, the 2006-2010 Action Plan[65] and the 2010-2014 Revised Action Plan 1 (RAP 1)[66] devoted a separate policy chapter to service delivery by Bosnia and Herzegovina`s public administration. Various aspects of service delivery were covered by objectives and activities of interconnected reform areas – mainly administrative procedures, human resource management, IT and e-Government and institutional communications. BiH has been struggling with the strategic framework on the public administration, the priority being the development of an agreement on the new strategy. The underpinning of the services and the proper framework for optimising service delivery has not been the strategic focus of the governments in BiH so far. In view of the complex administrative set-up and the overall long process of decision-making pertaining to country-wide strategies, the BiH Council of Ministers, FBiH Government, Republic of Srpska Government and Brčko District (BD) Government decided in 2015 to continue their efforts on initiated but, as yet, uncompleted activities/projects of the former PAR Strategy and RAP 1.[67]

As the RAP 1 expired and the complicated process of adopting a new PAR strategy became obvious, the British and German Governments, acting in a synergy and sending a strong message about the growing importance of the public administration reform to the governments for efficiently addressing the needs of citizens, businesses and the EU integration requirements, pushed for the adoption of the 2015-2018 Reform Agenda, which explicitly states: "*Public administration reform is one of the key priorities in ensuring fiscal sustainability and the quality of public service delivery to citizens.*"[68] In the absence of a PAR strategy, the adopted Reform Agenda has to an extent contributed to putting the focus on the socio-economic aspects and the quality of service provision in the public administration of BiH. Additionally, the cooperation of the German and British Governments and the respective projects have increased in the area of public administration reform in BiH.

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[63] https://weber-cep.s3.amazonaws.com/data/attachment_396/bih_5sd_p1_i1_summary.pdf

[64] http://parco.gov.ba//wp-content/uploads/2014/02/strategy-for-public-administration-reform.pdf

[65] http://parco.gov.ba//wp-content/uploads/2014/02/action-plan-for-par.pdf

[66] http://parco.gov.ba/en/dokumenti/rju-dokumenti/

[67] Reports on the fulfilment of RAP 1 objectives can be found on the PARCO website www.parco.gov.ba – the final one until June 2017.

[68] http://europa.ba/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Reform-Agenda-BiH.pdf, p. 6.

Six drafts of the new PAR strategy had been developed, but it was not before the end of March 2018 that the Joint Group for the Development of the PAR Strategy - appointed by the BiH Council of Ministers and the FBiH, RS and BD Governments in 2015 in order to define the PAR strategy for the state, entities and the Brčko District - agreed on the final version of the 2018 – 2022 Public Administration Reform Strategic Framework (PAR Strategy, hereinafter PARS)[69].

Under the PARS, public administration denotes administrative systems, which are defined as such in 2018 in BiH, FBiH, RS and BD regulations. It focuses on the following priority areas:

- ➢ Strengthening public administration capacity through the implementation of the European Administrative Space principles;
- ➢ Establishment of a customer-oriented and transparent public administration;
- ➢ Building of a professional and depoliticised merit-based civil service system; and,
- ➢ Establishment of a rational, coherent, efficient, effective and responsible organisational structure of public administration at all levels of government.

The new PARS was submitted for adoption to the BiH Council of Ministers, the FBiH, RS and BD Governments in the late spring of 2018.[70] By September 2018, the PARS was adopted by the FBiH and BD Governments and the BiH Council of Ministers adopted the strategy on 25 September 2018 with an amendment of the Ministry of Finance and Treasury to ensure more efficient use of budget funds;[71] the RS Government was expected to follow suit. Unlike the former strategy, the new one is aligned with the SIGMA/EU PAR principles[72] and envisages more efficient and effective monitoring and evaluation of the public administration and PAR.

The relevant action plan(s) for reform areas are to be developed within six months from the day of adoption of the PARS by the BiH, entity and BD Governments. Each administrative level is entitled to prepare individual action plan(s), the so-called sub-action plans, harmonised with the common Action Plan and indicators, based on their specific situation, needs and priorities. This is subject to ongoing agreements with the entity and BD PAR coordinators, coordinated by the Public Administration Coordinator`s Office (PARCO) and there is still no official information on how exactly the action plan(s) will be elaborated. One initial draft of the action plan (including also the area of service delivery) has been developed and used as the basis for evaluating the cost of the public administration reform – service delivery chapter. This action plan has not been treated as official, but it can be used as a strong basis for the sub-action plan(s) to be developed and agreed upon. As far as cantons are concerned, FBiH will most likely decide which activities need to be addressed by particular cantons.

Even though the highest interaction and widest scope of services delivered to citizens is provided at the local level, the difficulties of including the local level in the PARS are exacerbated by the context of administrative and constitutional restrictions. This approach will most likely be kept also in the new PARS.

In addition to the previous PARS, Action Plan, Revised Action Plan 1 and the Reform Agenda, there are a number of policies at state and entity levels that have impact on service delivery

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[69] The draft 2017-2020 PAR strategy can be found in BCS http://parco.gov.ba/2017/11/13/javne-konsultacije-o-nacrtu-strateskog-okvira-za-reformu-javne-uprave-za-period-2017-2020/. This is not the final draft, but the only one currently available online.

[70] Preparation of the strategy was supported by: GIZ through the Strengthening of Public Institutions Programme, Good Governance Fund, EC/DEU and SIGMA

[71] http://parco.gov.ba/hr/2018/09/25/usvojen-strateski-okvir-za-reformu-javne-uprave-do-2022/

[72] http://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Principles-Public-Administration-Overview-Serbian.pdf.

in BiH. One of them is the Republic of Srpska 2009-2012 e-Government Development Strategy.[73] Although it has formally expired, this strategic document still provides general guidance on the implementation of the e-governance approach to public service delivery, and on the introduction of information and communication technologies. The Republic of Srpska IT System Development Policy,[74] the E-Health Development Strategy[75] as well as the 2018-2022 Business Development Strategy are also of relevance in this entity.

In September 2016 the FBiH Government appointed "*the working group for the establishment of the one stop shop system for business e-registration,*"[76] supported by the World Bank. The working group's report was adopted in April 2018 and the legislation amended in order to meet the expectations (see the following section Legal Framework).

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) has a country-wide approach in terms of policy framework on public disclosure and standardisation of data. At the time this Study was prepared, all public officials and representatives of civil society had been appointed to the Advisory Council of the Open Government Partnership Initiative of BiH. On 10 October 2016, the BiH Council of Ministers adopted the Decision on the Establishment of the Advisory Council of Open Government Partnership Initiative (OGP Council) to play an advisory coordination role, with the aim of promoting transparency and openness of public administration bodies and involving citizens and civil society organisations in the formulation of public policies. After all the members representing state and entity levels and CSOs were appointed, the BiH OGP Council held its constituent session in late May 2018, followed by a workshop on the preparation of the OGP Action Plan,[77] which was due to be completed by October 2018.

Furthermore, *Proactive Transparency*[78] was initiated at the state level with PARCO and interested state institutions, which proactively participated in the development of the *Standards for Proactive Transparency.*[79] It is highly recommended to include the entity levels in this initiative.

In addition to proactive budget planning at the local level in both entities, the Budget for Citizens[80] is proactively shared by the PARCO, including an online survey, which was used to collect opinions on the needs of users, namely which information they expect to have access to.

b) Legal Framework

Service delivery is mostly affected by the General Administrative Procedures Act (GAPA), BiH Law on e-Signatures,[81], Law Amending the Law on ID Cards for BiH Citizens,[82] Decision on the Basic Use of e-Signature and Authentication,[83] Decision on e-Transactions and e-

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[73] https://www.aidrs.org/wp-content//files/Strategija_eVladaRS_2009_2012.pdf

[74] https://www.aidrs.org/sr/legislativa-i-standardizacija/strateski-dokumenti/

[75] *Ibid.*

[76] 140th and 141st sessions of the FBiH Government, www.fbih.gov.ba

[77] OGP initiative is supported by the GIZ Strengthening of Public Institutions Programme and ReSPA in its respective working group.

[78] http://parco.gov.ba/hr/transparentnost/proaktivna-transparentnost/

[79] http://parco.gov.ba//wp-content/uploads/2016/07/politika-proaktivne-transparentnosti-u-javnoj-upravi-u-bih-1.pdf

[80] www.parco.gov.ba

[81] Official Journal of BiH No. 91/06

[82] Official Journal of BiH No. 18/12

[83] Official Journal of BiH No. 21/09

Government of the BiH Council of Ministers,[84] Law on Electronic and Legal Transactions,[85] Law on e-Documents,[86], Law on Personal Data Protection[87], FBiH Law on e-Documents,[88] Republic of Srpska Law on e-Signatures,[89] Republic of Srpska Law on e-Transactions,[90] Republic of Srpska Law on e-Documents[91] and the Law on IT Security[92]. Additionally, the BiH Council of Ministers (CoM) adopted the BiH 2017-2021 IT Development Policy and several rulebooks needed for registers of authenticators, a rulebook on e-signature measures, procedures and protection, resources and certification system; furthermore, the IT security management policy in institutions of BiH has been adopted.[93]

A long list of policies, laws and decisions, with limited operational impact so far, has prolonged the *status quo* in Bosnia-Herzegovina. There is an implementation gap between setting legal preconditions and enforcing a coordinated approach in implementation. This fact was also confirmed by the results of the Online Questionnaire indicating that respondents perceive lack of adequate coordination as a major obstacle for user centric services, which should consequently derive from the legal framework (see Annex 3, Chapter 3). **Achievement of results requires governments to steer and coordinate implementation of an overall reform vision and prioritised objectives in the area of service delivery.**

A complete legal framework has been in place in Republic of Srpska since 2008, and it was updated in December 2015 in order to align it with the *acquis communautaire*. The RS Government has established two certification authorities with exclusive competence for RS: a) the Agency for Information Society of Republic of Srpska (AIDRS) provides qualified digital-signature certificates to the staff of administrative authorities in this entity (for internal administrative use only); b) the Tax Administration provides non-qualified digital-signature certificates to companies for use in online reporting of financial information.[94]

The biggest progress in GAPA implementation has been recorded in Republic of Srpska.[95] This entity has implemented the greatest number of RAP 1 objectives in the area of administrative procedures and, in-mid June 2018 adopted amendments to the GAPA, which now sufficiently address issues of e-services, processing e-filings, implementation of the Law on e-Documents; implementation could, however, be faster to provide even more visible and tangible country wide results. Facilitation of communication between institutions and customers is regulated as well, which is expected to lead to increased efficiency and transparency. In addition, the new amendments to the GAPA will enable Republic of Srpska to efficiently introduce one stop shops and the once-only approach. The amended law introduces novel provisions on the use of sign language and Braille. A unique administrative position is introduced for cases when the exercise of one or more rights requires procedures in one or more institutions. Furthermore, the law sufficiently elaborates the procedure regarding legal documents containing a formal irregularity or those that are incomprehensible

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[84] Official Journal of BiH No. 7/10

[85] Official Journal of BiH No. 88/07

[86] Official Journal of BiH No. 58/14

[87] Official Journal of BiH Nos. 49/06, 76/11 and 89/11

[88] Official Gazette of FBiH No. 15/13

[89] Official Gazette of BiH-RS No. 59/09, 33/16

[90] Official Gazette of BiH-RS No. 59/09

[91] Official Gazette of BiH-RS No. 106/15

[92] Official Gazette of BiH-RS No. 70/11

[93] RAP 1 January – June 2017 Progress Report, p. 12.

[94] http://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Monitoring-Report-2017-Bosnia-and-Herzegovina.pdf, p. 130.

[95] RAP 1 Semi-Annual Progress Report as of June 2017.

or incomplete, as well as electronic communication in administrative procedures, the procedures for inspecting files in electronic format and electronic delivery. In addition, it elaborates the issuance of decisions in electronic format and specifies the deadline.[96] As stated in the Explanatory Memorandum, the legislator took into account the SIGMA principles, particularly those on the service delivery area and improvement of service accessibility, as well as the European e-Government Action Plan 2016–2020 - Accelerating the digital transformation of government.

No evidence was found of amendments to the GAPA in FBiH or at the state level at the time this Study was prepared, although amendments, such as those adopted in Republic of Srpska, could result in stronger provisions on e-documents, e-signature, deadlines in the administrative procedures and silence of the administration and, hence, to a major reduction of administrative barriers.

These improvements of GAPA should continue across and at all levels of BiH in the spirit of genuine dialogue, coordination and replication of GAPA successes, regardless of the level that has achieved progress.

In FBiH, the Draft Law on e-Signatures[97] (October 2017) - which is pending adoption by the House of Peoples - regulates the right of natural and legal persons to use this type of signature in administrative, judicial and other proceedings, business and other operations. It also governs the rights, obligations and responsibilities of natural and legal persons providing the services of creation, verification or authentication of electronic signatures, time stamps and seals, electronic registered delivery, etc. In the Federation of BiH, some changes in the legislation are evident; they regard reducing the administrative burden on businesses (Draft Law Amending the Law on Companies, Draft Law on Entrepreneurial and Similar Activities in FBiH), as well as the appointment and work of an inter-disciplinary working group for the establishment of the one stop shop system for business e-registration.[98]

The Republic of Srpska Government has passed the Law on the Establishment of the National Centre for Digital Identity Management within the entity's IT Agency, putting in place the prerequisites for the issuance and usage of digital signatures to both legal and natural persons (smart cards, mobile applications).

Interoperability and recognition between all the accredited certifiers in the territory of BiH should be legally ensured and use of all accredited and qualified e-signatures for all services offered by the public administration in BiH should be enabled, given that this is currently not the case.[99]

c) Institutional Framework and Set-Up

The institutional set-up for service delivery takes into account the level of state and entity institutions, and, in case of FBiH, the cantonal level.

PARCO coordinates the overall PAR between different institutional veto-players and stakeholders, institutions tasked with different activities, in accordance with its mandate.[100]

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[96] Explanatory Memorandum to the Draft Law Amending the GAPA of Republic of Srpska.

[97] http://www.parlamentfbih.gov.ba/dom_naroda/v2/userfiles/file/Materijali%20u%20proceduri_2017/Nacrt%20zakona%20o%20elektronskom%20potpisu_bos.pdf

[98] 140th and 141st Sessions of the FBiH Government, www.fbih.gov.ba

[99] https://www.aidrs.org/legislativa-i-standardizacija/zakoni/zakon-o-elektronskom-potpisu-rs/

[100] https://parco.gov.ba/en/o-nama/mandat-ureda-koordinatora-za-reformu-javne-uprave/

The below Table provides an in exhaustive list of institutions that play a central role in service delivery:[101]

	State Level	FBiH	Republic of Srpska, BiH	Brčko District
Reform Coordinators	BiH Council of Ministers (CoM)	FBiH Government	Republic of Srpska Government	BD Government
Key stakeholders	BiH Ministry of Justice IDDEEA	FBiH Ministry of Justice	Ministry of Administration and Local Self-Governments	Administrative Inspectorate of the BD Government
Institutions tasked with different activities	Centre for e-Government of the CoM General Secretariat BiH Ministry of Transport and Communication Office for Certification and Authentication	FBiH Ministry of Transport and Communication Sector for IT at the FBiH Government General Secretariat	AIDRS Sector for IT at the General Secretariat of the Republic of Srpska Government	BD Sector for IT

With a view to facilitating the management and monitoring of the RAP 1 reform areas, Supervisory Teams were set up for all six (previous) reform areas: strategic planning, coordination and policy development, public finances, human resource management, administrative procedure, institutional communication and e-Government, coordinated by PARCO. Supervisory teams are composed of representatives of the relevant areas at the state and entity levels. The new PARS will incorporate the service delivery pillar, wherefore it is quite likely that a supervisory team for service delivery will be formed as well. The role of the teams is to act as a bridge between different governmental levels and the PARCO, and to share major findings and activities with other levels and all four reform coordinators[102], as well as to initiate further projects and monitor them.

The key institutions for service delivery, coordination and the implementation structure will be formally defined upon the adoption of the 2018-2022 PARS. Hence, it can be expected that BiH will have a better, clearer and comprehensive policy and accompanying institutional framework in times to come.

Given the ongoing reporting on/monitoring of the fulfilment of RAP 1[103], we have to underline that the RAP 1 reflects the coordination and implementation structure of the previous PARS, where central institutions with a formal mandate are mostly coming from the area of administrative procedures and administrative services, and the area of e-Government. Those institutions (in the Table above) will most probably be the key/central institutions for service delivery in the new PARS. PARCO will continue to work on its mandate and provide support in PAR coordination, implementation and fund management, pursuant to its role and mandate. Primarily, we adhere the political responsibility for the overall PAR and the area of service delivery, which is at the executive level: BiH Council of Ministers, FBiH Government, Republic of Srpska, BiH Government and BD Government, with their respective structures.

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[101] Based on the RAP 1 2017 Progress Report.

[102] There are four reform coordinators: for BiH, FBiH, RS and BD. They coordinate the work of relevant bodies and exchanges with supervisory teams and monitor the implementation of agreed actions and objectives. The reform coordinators closely cooperate with PARCO and send their reports to PARCO, which is then in charge of overall reporting for all levels of administration. The new Strategy will retain the four reform coordinator structure and most probably the existing one.

[103] Projects/activities under way, completed, partly completed, not initiated, displayed by a traffic-light system

Other institutions and stakeholders – all responsible ministries at state, entity and BD levels, agencies and other public bodies (e.g. Tax Administration) are tasked with certain activities and they are responsible for services in accordance with their mandate – but they do not represent central and coordinative institutions for the area of service delivery.

The listed institutions will most probably keep their central and coordinating role in the new PARS, which needs to be formally adopted (see the above sections on Policy and Strategic Framework). It cannot be speculated whether new agencies/institutions will be established or how far specific institutions can specialise in order to meet the expectations more efficiently and focus on the objectives of the new PARS.

As for the significant progress made in the institutional set-up, the Office for Certification and Authentication at the BiH Ministry of Transport and Communication was established in January 2018 after a 12-year standstill.[104] The Office for Supervision and Accreditation maintains the electronic register of verifiers headquartered in BiH, accredited verifiers and verifiers headquartered in third countries, the certificates of which are guaranteed by verifiers headquartered in BiH. The Office is also authorised to take any measure to ensure the fulfilment of the requirements under the Law on e-Signatures and related regulations, such as prohibition of use of inappropriate technical means and procedures, provision of all or individual services in connection with e-signatures and verification, revocation of verifiers' or signatories' certificates, ordering the revocation of certificates issued to verifiers, etc.[105]

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[104] http://www.mkt.gov.ba/sektori/ured_za_nadzor/default.aspx?id=6313&pageIndex=1&langTag=en-US

[105] Ibid.

3.2.4. Analysis of Service Delivery of Key Thematic Fields

a) GAPA Implementation

Four different versions of GAPA are applied in BiH at the moment. Mostly harmonised, they govern, among other things, electronic communication and customer orientation. On the other hand, the provisions pertaining to clear procedures regarding e-documents, e-signatures, deadlines and feedback to clients need to be elaborated more strongly and clearly, especially in case of FBiH, which has not amended its law since 1999. This calls for its **adoption of a set of laws regulating e-communication**, like RS has done (see above, the Legal Framework section).

Figure 15: Policy and Procedures in Place to Initiate and Implement Service (Re-) Design Request
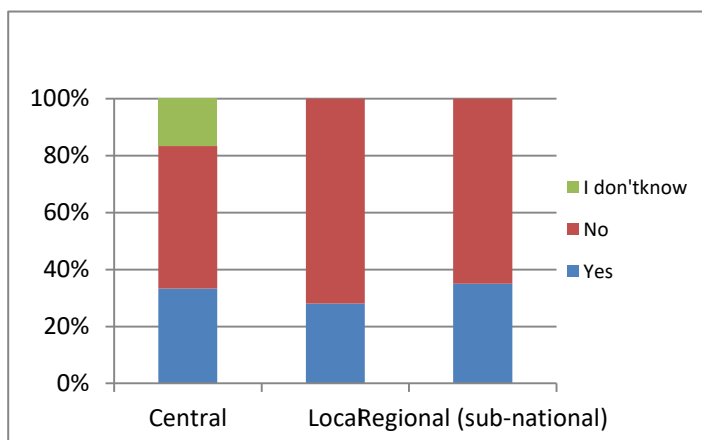
Substantial effort will be required to address the lack (of knowledge) of policies and procedures in place that regulate services design and re-design requests and procedures. Lack of policies and/or procedures or sound knowledge of their existence and applicability is especially evident at the sub-national levels.

The **administrative levels have not started to measure systematically client satisfaction** with public services delivered, as noted in the RAP 1 2017 Progress Report.

This is corroborated by the information collected via the Online Questionnaire, as 65% respondents believe the institutions do not regularly measure user satisfaction with the public services they deliver or are unaware of such regular monitoring of user satisfaction/feedback.
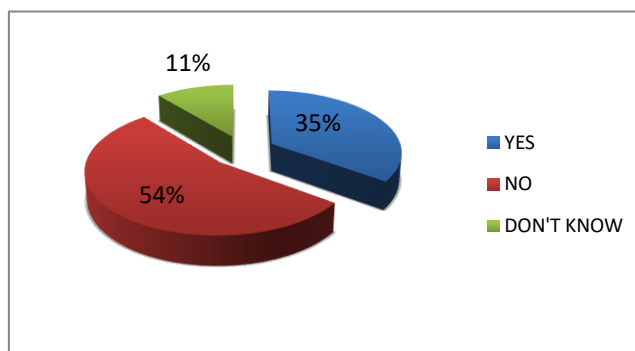
Figure 16: Measurement of User Satisfaction on a Regular Basis

Knowledge of the institutional set-up (e.g. internal follow-up/assessment structure and processes in place) for assessing service delivering processes is among the lowest in BiH institutions, compared with public institutions in the other Western Balkan countries included in the Online Questionnaire.

This is also the only activity in the area of administrative procedures and administrative services that has not been systematically initiated but implemented by ad-hoc decisions, and it indicates a clear lack of client orientation in the implementation of the RAP 1 although a number of institutions at the state, entity and cantonal levels are already conducting regular client satisfaction surveys or are showing high interest in doing so (see the section on Quality Management below).

Government policies should be revised (where applicable) and include client satisfaction measurement. Institutions conducting client satisfaction surveys should systematically publish reports and survey results, preferably including a plan for improving actions in the next (ideally two-year) cycle. This is crucial to demonstrate that client feedback has been taken into account and that strategic system measures are undertaken to meet client expectations.

Figure 17: Institutionalised User Feedback Measurement
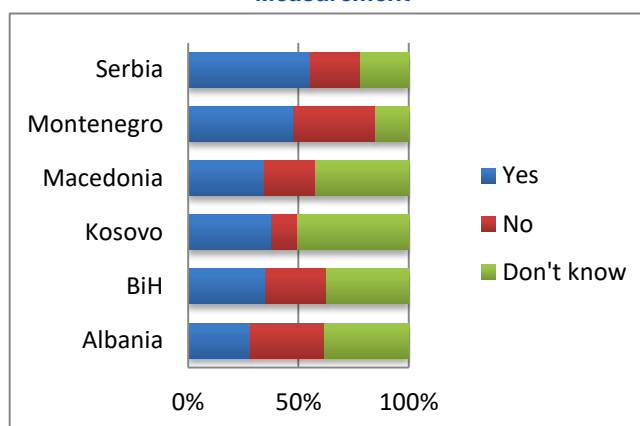
In mid-May 2018, the Transparency International (TI) BiH office presented the 'Perceptions of Public Administration Reform' report[106] together with CIN,[107] and with the support of the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). A total of 1,564 citizens took part in the survey of public perceptions of public institutions in 2017 (+2.48 stat. error). TI report`s findings and those of the 2018 Balkan Barometer[108] reveal similarities in most of the cases, e.g. the perceptions can be confirmed:

According to the TI report, the conclusions of the survey of public perceptions in 2017 can be summarised as follows:

> ➢ Citizens do not frequently use the complaint mechanisms and feel insufficiently informed of the complaint process;[109]
> ➢ Citizens perceive the administrative procedures as too complicated, they feel insufficiently informed, they believe that the deadlines by which decisions on their applications must be made are too long, and that they have to visit too many places to finalise their applications;
> ➢ On the other hand, the level of unfriendliness of public servants has decreased and a 12% increase in trust in local service provision was recorded.

The 2018 Balkan Barometer[110] shows an increase in public dissatisfaction with the administrative services at the central level:

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[106] Presentation of the 'Perspective on Public Administration Reform' report, 17 May 2018, Sarajevo, Transparency International, BiH Office.

[107] Centre for Investigative Journalism, https://www.cin.ba/

[108] https://www.rcc.int/seeds/results/2/balkan-public-barometer

[109] Question 19 of the Transparency International survey dealt with the subject of complaints – Have you ever filed a complaint against the work of civil servants, and if yes, how? The percentage of citizens who had not complained fell from 80.5% in 2014 to 78.2% in 2017. This is proof of insufficient citizen involvement, as well as insufficient information and transparency of the complaint mechanisms. Public awareness of this matter must be covered by the future activities of public institutions at all levels, with significant support from CSOs, the EC, donor/technical support in BiH, et al.

[110] https://www.rcc.int/seeds/results/2/balkan-public-barometer

How satisfied are you with Administrative services from central government?

Economy	I'm completely dissatisfied	I'm mostly unsatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	I'm mostly satisfied	I'm completely satisfied	DK/refuse
Balkan Barometer 2018						
Bosnia and Herzegovina	23	20	31	22	4	1
Balkan Barometer 2017						
Bosnia and Herzegovina	18	20	31	24	5	2

There are reasonable grounds to believe that implementation and citizen satisfaction results will be improved by the adoption and implementation of the new GAPA regulation at the RS level, but **there are no major developments in implementing the reduction of administrative barriers** across BiH at present, although several rulebooks and decisions have been adopted. The FBiH Government discussed the Analysis of Application of Regulative Impact Assessments, and the same approach was evident at the state level.

One additional positive aspect, which cannot yet be fully evaluated due to the lack of a final report, is the implementation of the 'Establishment and/or Strengthening of Capacities of the Institution/s for Control of Regulations and Establishment of the System of Reduction of Administrative Barriers'[111] – a project funded by the PAR fund and led by PARCO and the relevant Supervisory Team for Administrative Procedures and Administrative Services.

The following institutions are the beneficiaries of the project: General Secretariat of the BiH Council of Ministers, BiH Ministry of Justice, BiH Council of Ministers Legislative Office, General Secretariat of the FBiH Government, FBiH Ministry of Justice, FBiH Government Office for Legislation and Alignment with the EU *acquis*, General Secretariat of the Republic of Srpska Government, Republic of Srpska Government Legislation Secretariat, Republic of Srpska Ministry of Economic Relations and Regional Cooperation, Republic of Srpska, Ministry of Administration and Local Self-Governments, BD Government Secretariat, BD Legislative Office and the BD Administrative Inspection. Hence, the entire territory of BiH is covered.

The following major results have so far been achieved by the implementation of the project, consisting of four components:

➢ Strategic framework for RIA at BiH and Brčko District levels (strategies for improving RIAs have been developed), and the RIA system at the Brčko District level developed. The institution in charge of reduction of administrative barriers in Brčko District identified (Legislative Office – RIA Department);
➢ Capacity development at all four levels regarding RIA conducted. Almost 500 public servants passed the training on RIA and reduction of administrative barriers;
➢ Six pilot projects on RIA implemented at all four levels (Law on Public-Private Partnerships and other laws of relevance to reducing administrative burdens); and
➢ Terms of Reference for equipment purchase and for the development of a new software application developed (public call finalised, implementation under way).

The project deliverables and results will be adopted by all tiers of government and adequate actions will be taken to implement the findings and utilise the complete project results. The impact of the project cannot be evaluated since it is in its early phase of implementation, but it may be concluded that good preconditions have been established, both at the strategic level and at the level of building the public service's capacity to remove administrative barriers and

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[111] http://parco.gov.ba/en/projekti/lista-projekata/projekti-finansirani-iz-fonda-za-rju/uspostavljanje-iili-jacanje-kapaciteta-institucijea-za-kontrolu-propisa-i-uspostavljanje-sistema-redukcije-administrativnih-prepreka/

improve service delivery in the future. Positive changes are visible in the BD, notably with respect to the establishment of RIA and institutional, legal and capacity development. Also, the IT capacities for RIA and public-private partnerships have been improved at the entity levels.

b) Digitalisation and e-Government

The problem of fragmentation and overly complicated institutional set-up is even more pronounced in the area of digitalisation and e-Government implementation, two critical areas for service delivery. There is no central coordination of digital government projects, but rather a decentralised one, mirroring the complex structure of the BiH: state, entity, cantonal and local levels. This complex set-up impedes but does not render impossible chances of significant progress.

To have an insight in the current situation, the RAP 1 progress report as of June 2017 must be consulted. The lowest percentage of developments is in the e-government area, with lowest progress achieved as of June 2017[112]: State level 48%, FBiH 41%, RS 71%, BD 39%, with a minimum of progress achieved in 2017. The calculated average is 50%. The numbers are not encouraging, neither is the situation in the field. The Republic of Srpska has achieved 8 out of the total of 22 objectives and the BiH level fulfilled only 1 objective. The rest of the objectives are either in the implementation phase or partly achieved.

Aiming to assess the impacts, the BiH Audit Office concluded in October 2017 an impact assessment of the use of e-services[113] at the State level. The findings are similar to those of SIGMA, namely that the institutions have not created preconditions for improving e-services and e-communication G2G, G2B and G2C. The existing ICT systems are primarily silo-based, where the lack of data exchange is compensated by users visiting many public authorities and acting as couriers. **There is an urgent need for adequate coordination in implementing ICT systems, which would contribute to compatible and interoperable systems supporting the required data exchange.** The BiH Audit Office prepared recommendations for the Council of Ministers on how to improve e-service implementation, but the data are not available online for conclusions to be drawn.

The interoperability framework was developed in 2012 with a view to developing and defining standards, EU benchmarks, guidelines and optimal solutions for different administrative levels to achieve interoperability between public administration institutions, both at the same administrative level and between institutions at different administrative levels,. The developed interoperability framework was adopted at all government levels. However, operationalisation is not at a satisfactory level and coordination is still missing, in particular coordination of activities among different administrative levels. As per entity administrative levels, RS has a well-established structure for coordination of activities on interoperability and FBiH established coordination for interoperability for the FBiH Government in 2016. Some tangible results are presented in the Chart below:
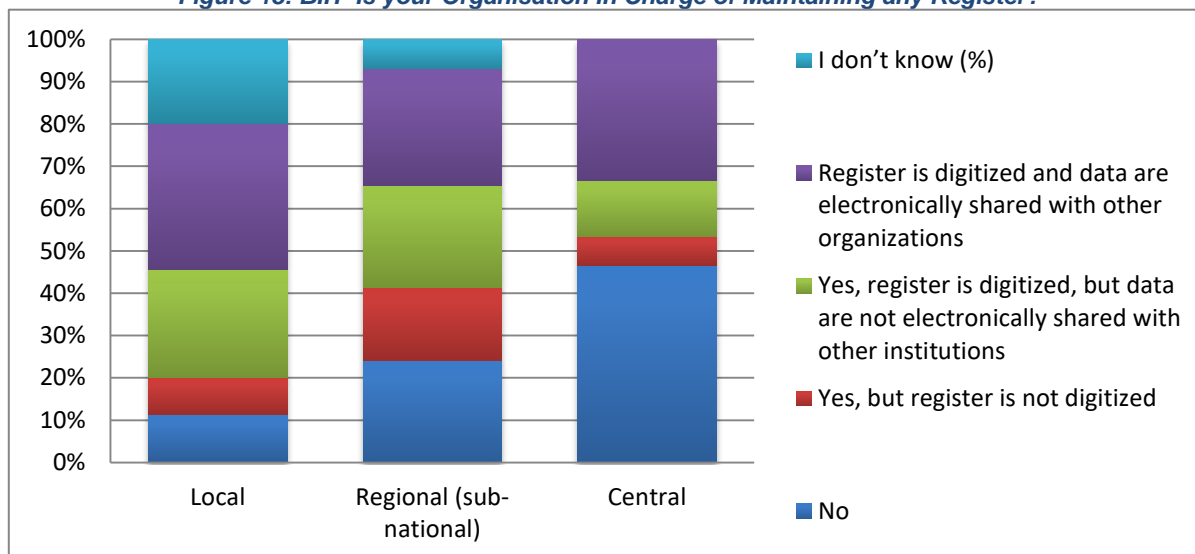
Despite some progress in digitalising the basic registers and starting electronic data exchange, BiH public administrations lag far behind the region in ensuring that citizens and businesses supply the same information only once to a public administration when seeking their services. **Given that most prerequisites, such as digitised basic registers and interoperability platforms, have recently been put in place, the focus should now be on redesigning public services and obliging service providers to electronically collect the available data they need from the other public institutions through the interoperability platforms in order to shift BiH public administration towards a more citizen-oriented service delivery.**

Figure 19: BiH - Is the 'Once only' Principle Respected in the Services you Organisation Provides
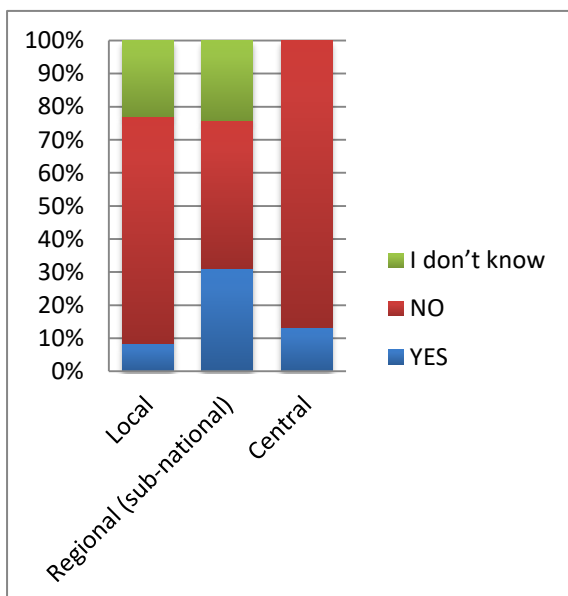
Implementation of e-identification and e-signature has not reached the satisfactory level, also being dependent on different interpretations of laws (see Legal chapter). The e-ID and e-signature for BiH citizens have been made available through the new ID cards issued by the Agency for Identification Documents, Registers and Data Exchange of Bosnia and Herzegovina (IDDEEA), supported by the EC and IPA grants to enhance the full utilisation of e-services. However, the new ID cards are not used for the provision of e-services, e-identification or e-signing, due to the lack of a common understanding and different interpretations of the relevant laws at different administrative levels. **In order to ensure the multipurpose use of electronic identification and signatures (for more services) across the country, public administrations at all administrative levels need to mutually recognise all accredited trust services providers in the BiH and usage of the available eID for citizens needs to be operationalised. Implementation of a central mobile phone authenticating/signature building block is highly recommended to further facilitate ease of use as it enables use of electronic signatures via a mobile phone and, as opposed to the card-based citizen card, installing software and additional hardware (card reader) will no longer be necessary.**

Common guidelines for government websites mostly exist, compliant with WCAG. At present, only the FBiH cantonal level114 lacks common guidelines. As far as accessibility, openness, transparency, security, multi-channel, user friendliness, clear advice and guidelines on accessing public services are concerned, we can only speak of exceptional cases at all administrative levels, such as the BiH Public Procurement Agency (Inspiring Practice No. 5) and the Republic of Srpska Agency for Intermediary, IT and Financial Services (Inspiring Practice No. 3). Two major projects in the e-Government and digitalisation area stand out among the current projects and activities in BiH: 'Implementation of Common Building Blocks for e-Services'[115] and ICIS, supported by the World Bank. The goal of ICIS was to build the capacities of the state and entity governments by creating mechanisms for data exchange and interoperability of the public registers and institutions at all three levels. Implementation focused on establishing an interoperability platform - Government Service Bus (GSB) through which information from various sources (databases, registers, records etc.) would be exchanged and integrated, which would increase utilisation of the available information. The data exchange is solely G2G, with the final impact for citizens/clients. The final result is one single point of access to information regardless of the location and source of information. The interoperability platform is used through an application that provides access to information and/or through information exchange services that provide the mentioned exchange of information at the level of applications/software. The interoperability platform was implemented as four separate Government Service Bus instances, one for each government level, through which information from various sources is exchanged, all within their government tier. However, in order to support cross-government level data exchange scenarios, a separate component was developed to mediate service requests between different GSB instances in a scalable manner. **In order to fully utilise this enormous investment, a policy framework for (mandatory) use of the GSB should be set up.** The other above-mentioned project resulted in the development of common building blocks for e-services, such as the authentication and identification block, e-payment building block, as well as portals pertaining to life events for the Federation and BD (this was earlier achieved in Republic of Srpska with the establishment of the e-Srpska portal,[116] whereas the BiH level had been completed earlier). However, no deadlines or details of operationalisation could be materialised and the current portals do not provide a single transactional online service. A summary of available enablers, e-services building blocks and their usage is provided in the table below:

BiH Inspiring Practices Nos. 2 and 3: One Stop Shops in Republic of Srpska

Republic of Srpska has undertaken serious steps to amend its legislation and reduce administrative barriers in order to create a more user-friendly and business-oriented environment.

The two one stop shops for business registration and construction permits in this entity are inspiring. One is the Construction Permit Centre within the Banja Luka City Administration and the other the Business Registration OSS at the Republic of Srpska Agency for Intermediary, IT and Financial Services.

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[114] SIGMA 2017 Monitoring Report Bosnia and Herzegovina, p. 134.

[115] http://parco.gov.ba/en/projekti/lista-projekata/projekti-finansirani-iz-fonda-za-rju/implementacija-zajednickih-servisa-za-eusluge/

[116] http://www.esrpska.com/

Portal	Enablers	Building blocks	Registers
Single sign on available: No	e-ID available and used: Available-Yes, Used-No	Number of information systems interconnected to the Government Interoperability Platform: circa 20	Basic registers digitised and some of them shared
Service catalogue available: yes	e-Documents circulating: No	e-Forms available: Not used	
No of transactional e-services available: 0	Mobile authentication available: No	e-Payment available: Not used	
No of transactions/services rendered per year: 0	e-Signature available and used: No	e-Invoicing available: No	
Personalised My Portal with my data and my e-Documents available: No	No of registered e-Signature providers: 1	e-Delivery available: No	
	No of e-Signatures issued: ca 300		

The above table demonstrates that no legally valid electronic documents circulate in BiH. **As the adequate legal framework was established years ago, it is high time that public administrations in BiH start issuing valid e-documents and thus facilitate digital transformation.**

BiH Inspiring Practice No. 4: Digital Learning Courses in the Civil Service Agency

The BiH Civil Service Agency has been successfully introducing new types of training of civil servants since 2014: webinar (real-time distance learning via the Internet), e-learning (distance learning via the Internet with the help of lecturers), e-learning on demand (distance learning via the Internet where the trainees dictate their own pace of learning), as well as in-class learning for specific topics that are processed digitally. Six self-paced training courses on the following subjects have so far been developed and are in regular use: mobbing, introduction to quality management, introduction to strategic planning, introduction to e-Governance, environmental management and employment of civil servants. Blended courses are arranged in a way allowing the public servants to master them at their own pace, without impinging on their daily obligations.

The 2018 Balkan Barometer measured the satisfaction of citizens with accessibility to public services via a digital channel, including all sophistication levels, and came up with the following results:[117]

How satisfied are you with Accessibility to public services via a digital channel?

Economy	I'm completely dissatisfied	I'm mostly unsatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	I'm mostly satisfied	I'm completely satisfied	DK/refuse
Balkan Barometer 2018						
Bosnia and Herzegovina	23	14	27	21	5	11
Balkan Barometer 2017						
Bosnia and Herzegovina	13	14	30	29	8	5

Digitalisation of services is generally underdeveloped in the entire country and is not consistently applied across the administrations; nor does it cover a sufficient scope of service delivery which can be felt by the users. Still, islands of excellence for e-service development and implementation exist at all levels, state, entity and local alike.

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[117] https://www.rcc.int/seeds/results/2/balkan-public-barometer

To mention just a few examples: e-consultations on public policies at the Ministry of Justice BiH,[118] e-residence applications for foreign citizens in BiH,[119] driving licence tests in the Una-Sana Canton[120], e-Srpska portal providing all the relevant information online (albeit still at the informative stage, with a new portal to be launched soon), digital learning programmes of the BiH and FBiH Civil Service Agencies.

BiH Inspiring Practice No. 5: "e-Procurement - Public Procurement Agency BiH

Following the establishment of the national e-Procurement portal, the PPA implemented several successful projects to boost the effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of public procurement procedures. They include:

- Development of the knowledge base of procurement-related rulings by the complaints review board called the Procurement Review Body (PRB) and the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Enabling the electronic publication of tender documentation in procurement procedures via the portal;
- Introduction of the electronic communication module where bidders can ask questions and get answers to clarify issues regarding ongoing procurement procedures; and finally
- Launch of the e-Auction module providing for the extension of the bidding and allowing bidders to offer lower prices or better terms than they had initially in their bids.

It is important to note that the Government of the Federation of BiH has adopted a Long-Term Implementation Plan for the Interoperability Framework, which creates preconditions for the implementation of projects in order to develop electronic administration, modernise registers and develop e-Services. The Plan has been prepared and proposed by the FBIH Interoperability Framework Coordination Body (comprising representatives of the federal ministries), which should be responsible for all IT projects and become an Agency or a separate department of the Ministry.

Implementation of the **ICIS project** established the infrastructure for data exchange from the registers and within the Federation of BiH, which is the basis for the establishment and development of the e-Service in the Federation of BiH. It is necessary to digitise data within institutions and allow all FBiH institutions to use them through the system. The FBiH Government adopted a Decision on the Establishment of a CERT (Computer Emergency Response Team) for the entity institutions. The working group, which is to become the FBIH CERT, is actively working on the preparation and adoption of the necessary regulations in this field, with a view to developing an Information Security Management Policy in FBiH institutions, which is prerequisite for all future activities. The adoption of the draft Policy was pending at the time this Study was finalised.

Next, the drafting and adoption of the Law on Information Security for the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the establishment of a permanent CERT and the creation of the capacity to combat illegal content on the Internet and the collection of electronic evidence for the processing of cybercrime, is on track. The dynamics of establishing CERT and raising the level of computer security will depend primarily on financial resources, which will have to be provided from extra budgetary funds.

c) Quality Management in Service Delivery

Total quality management (TQM) is characterised by the permanent mobilisation of all the resources (people in particular) to constantly improve: all the aspects of an organisation, quality of goods and services delivered, satisfaction of its stakeholders, and integration of the organisation into the environment. The first and final goal of TQM is to meet customer

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[118] https://ekonsultacije.gov.ba

[119] www.estranac.ba (Ministry of Security BiH)

[120] Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Una-Sana Canton.

expectations. Therefore, active commitment of all employees, as well as comprehensive information systems that collect and process information with regard to customers, suppliers, and corporate-wide processes are required.[121] TQM is usually used synonymously with continuous quality improvement (CQI), stressing TQM involves cultural change.[122]

BiH Inspiring Practice 1: Introduction of Quality Management at State and Entity Levels
In 2010, PARCO began cooperating with the GIZ Strengthening of Public Institutions Programme, where QM was identified as one of the measures to pursue. In 2013, the Programme initiated a comparative study in cooperation with PARCO, to evaluate and recommend the best systems and models for quality management in public administration in BiH. The study identified poor use of quality management and irregular implementation of client satisfaction measurements in BiH. Hence, the recommendation was to gradually introduce ISO 9001 or CAF, depending on the set-up and general practice of the institutions. In the meantime, PARCO, CSA BiH, CSA RS and CSA FBiH are proactively reaching out to other institutions, coaching and introducing CAF in a number of institutions.

Quality management was previously included in HRM area (RAP 1). It was mentioned as a new approach in the new reform process, which is interconnected with all other areas of the public administration reform and which can ultimately have a more prominent and explicit place in the new strategic documents. This is evident in the cross-cutting quality-assurance and client-orientation dimension of the RAP 1. **The new PARS will most likely address QM in the area of public services, along with quality management mechanisms: CAF, EFQM, ISO and regular client satisfaction measurement.**

PARCO introduced capacity development in the QM area in 2014 and 2015, supported by the GIZ Strengthening of Public Institutions Programme in cooperation with the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA), in unison with a Comparative Study on QM in BIH and the 2015-2016 Roadmap towards Sustainable QM in BiH. A CAF Resource Centre has been established at the PARCO, CAF coordinators and CAF trainers from the PARCO and CSA are strengthening, promoting and delivering training in quality management, in particular CAF, to the interested institutions. Scaling up of knowledge, methodologies and products exists at the state level with good prospects of greater collaborative work with the entity authorities, especially their CSAs, which were supported by ReSPA and KDZ in CAF implementation and capacity development.

As service delivery of the public administration strongly depends on the processes, ownership of the processes, regular optimisation and in some cases, redesign of final services and products, the deployment of quality management tools and systems could be beneficial for overall stakeholder and client-orientation. The QM is not a politicised tool and the managers can directly measure the impact for their institutions.

The major conclusion of the QM initiative in BiH is to follow the recommendations in the ReSPA QM Baseline study, ReSPA Feasibility Study on Establishment of a QM[123] Centre and for BiH, especially for PARCO and the Civil Service Agencies, as well as for the BiH Institute of Standardisation to proactively use the channels of the international and local frameworks to successfully implement the next cycle of CAF or ISO 9001.

Staff at the operational level of public institutions in BiH is extremely familiar with the benefits of QM. Awareness needs to be raised further, through trainings, study tours and other measures targeting senior officials.

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[121] Löffler, E. (2002) 'Defining and measuring quality in public administration. in: Caddy J. and M. Vintar (eds.) Building better quality administration for the public, Slovakia, NISPACee, pp. 15-37

[122] Beckford, J. (1998) Quality. A critical introduction. Routledge, London, p. 35

[123] https://www.respaweb.eu/library

Use of citizen-oriented tools and techniques is generally low, as the public institutions' responses to the Online Questionnaire indicate. Surveys and complaint management are the exception, but their use is still limited.

Figure 20: Use of Citizen - oriented Tools and Techniques
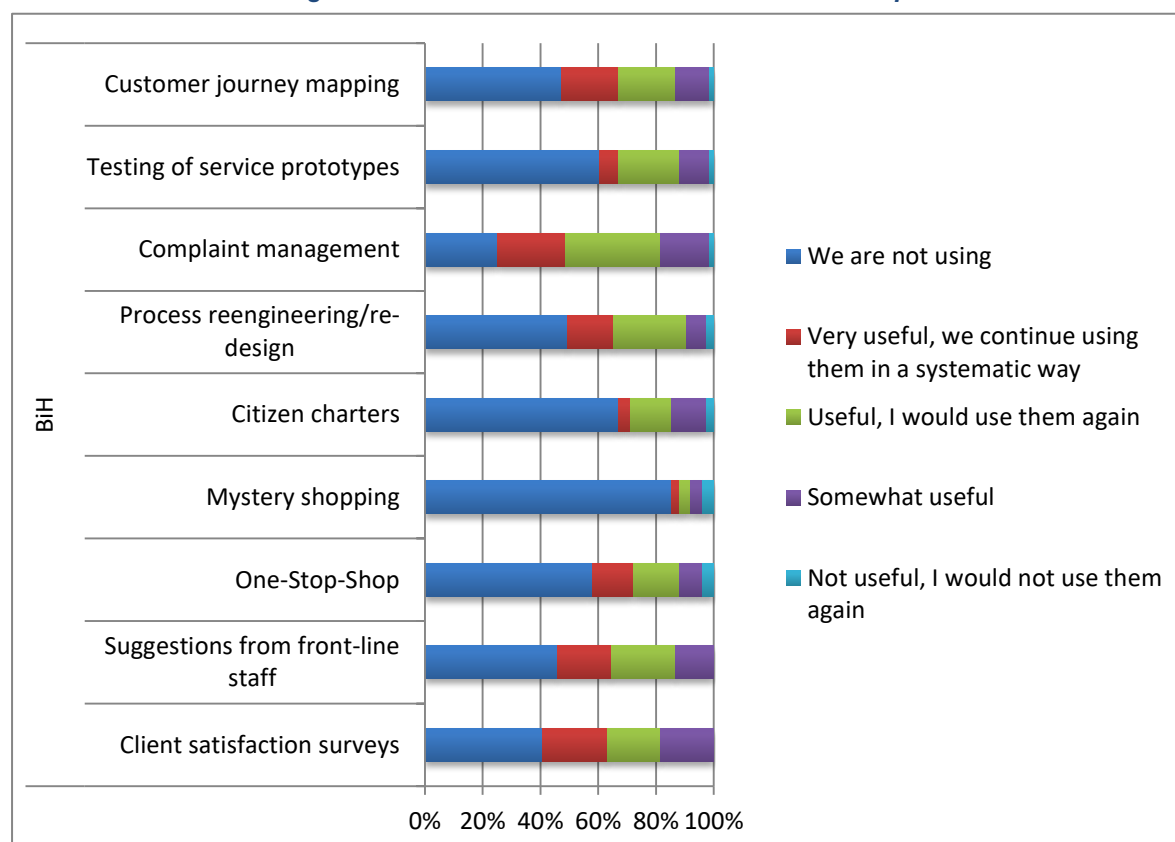
The partnership between state-entity-cantonal-local and donors/technical assistance/EC in BiH must be further developed with a view to strengthening political will and involvement of citizens and clients in public policies, and by regularly assessing their satisfaction. Nevertheless, there is a clear lethargy on the part of BiH's citizens when it comes to cooperation with and engagement in government policy-making, as the results of the 2018 Balkan Barometer indicate:

Have you ever done something that could affect any of the government decisions?

Economy	Yes, I did, I took part in public debates	Yes, I did, I took part in protests	Yes, I did, I gave my comments on social networks or elsewhere on the Internet	I only discussed about it with friends, acquaintances, I have not publicly declared myself	I do not even discuss about it	DK/refuse
Balkan Barometer 2018						
Bosnia and Herzegovina	5	7	5	28	50	7
Balkan Barometer 2017						
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2	8	3	24	56	9

We cannot speculate on the reasons for the extremely low citizen/user interest in engaging in government decisions, but it would be worthwhile exploring them in other studies.

3.2.5. Accessibility and Service Delivery for Vulnerable Groups

Although the policy framework for serving people with disabilities has been in place since BiH ratified the UN Convention on the Rights with Disabilities in 2010, it may be concluded that BiH has still a long way to go when it comes to accessibility and service delivery for people with disabilities and vulnerable groups. BiH still lacks an optimised environment and services to ensure equal access to premises, services and digital information. Notwithstanding the progress made in promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, including the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and adoption of strategies to improve the social position of persons with disabilities at the entity levels, persons with disabilities remain one of the most vulnerable groups in BiH society and fall within groups most exposed to discrimination in all areas of life (including employment, transportation, education, social protection, sports, etc.).[124]

Herewith how SIGMA sees accessibility in its 2017 Monitoring Report:[125]

"Overall, limited accessibility of services (online and offline) for people with disabilities is a major problem. BiH signed in 2009 and ratified in 2010 the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) and its Optional Protocol. However, the legal framework and institutional setting are fragmented, and implementation suffers from the absence of clear and common definitions of disability-based discrimination. No integrated strategy has been elaborated to deal with the problem of accessibility in premises that deliver public services. No systematic system has been established to report incidents of discrimination. […] The above issues result in a situation where the accessibility of service delivery cannot be monitored and analysed by using reliable data.''

And yet, some administrative levels have adopted strategies for improving the position for persons with disabilities, but they are merely some exceptional positive practices, mainly triggered by associations of persons with disabilities and financed by donors (mostly MyRight) and not necessarily combined with public service delivery.

A strategic approach is still missing. **Further efforts need to be made to improve the accessibility of public services, e-services for users with special needs and vulnerable groups, by taking into account their specific needs in the action plan(s) for service delivery, which can be broken down into specific activities for entities and the BD.**

Consultation with people with disabilities and vulnerable groups regarding public policies and services is one of the main recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in its Concluding Observations on BiH's Initial Report.[126] BiH needs to speed up the process of engaging all citizens in policy making.

The 2018 Balkan Barometer indicates higher awareness of the importance of inclusion of Roma and persons with disabilities:

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[124] www.myright.ba

[125] SIGMA 2017 Monitoring Report on BiH, p. 135

[126] https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD/C/BIH/CO/1&Lang=En

The Government should provide affirmative measures - promote opportunities for equal access to Roma population when applying for a public sector job

Economy	Totally disagree	Tend to disagree	Tend to agree	Totally agree	DK/refuse
Balkan Barometer 2018					
Bosnia and Herzegovina	5	9	34	49	3
Balkan Barometer 2017					
Bosnia and Herzegovina	5	10	39	43	3

The Government should provide affirmative measures - promote opportunities for equal access to persons with disabilities (including persons with special needs) when applying for a secondary school or university

Economy	Totally disagree	Tend to disagree	Tend to agree	Totally agree	DK/refuse
Balkan Barometer 2018					
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	3	24	70	2
Balkan Barometer 2017					
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3	5	32	58	2

3.2.6. Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Short-Term Recommendations

- ➢ GAPA1. The RS Government should adopt the new PARS; the way(s) of implementing the respective action plans focusing on designing and delivering citizen- and business-oriented services must be agreed upon, in line with the big picture of the PARS.
- ➢ GAPA2. Governments should steer and coordinate the implementation of an overall public sector reform vision and prioritised objectives in the area of service delivery.
- ➢ GAPA3. Establish a database containing all services offered by public institutions in BiH, including data on the relevant regulations in the GAPA(s) and explore the scope and justification for the exemption of regular procedures. Such a database should be established at all BiH administrative levels and be accessible to all institutions, key stakeholders and the general public. This would increase transparency and promote the accessibility of public services
- ➢ GAPA4. Since Republic of Srpska has amended the GAPA, which now includes strong, clear and efficient provisions, BiH and FBIH governments are encouraged to review the Republic of Srpska law and follow suit. This would reduce fragmentation to the lowest level possible; the cantons would apply the FBiH regulation and the new legislation would be harmonised. The process should build on the established practice of harmonising the legislative frameworks.
- ➢ eG1. Standardisation in digital services delivery is to be systematically introduced in BiH.
- ➢ eG2. Interoperability Framework operationalisation is needed, including proper coordination and communication among various administrative levels.
- ➢ eG3. Interoperability and recognition between all the accredited certifiers in BiH territory should be provided by law and use of all accredited and qualified e-Signatures for all services offered by the public administration in BiH should be enabled.
- ➢ eG4. In order to fully utilise the recently established GSB and centrally developed common building blocks, a policy framework for their (mandatory) use should be put in place.
- ➢ eG5. There is an urgent need for adequate coordination in the implementation of ICT systems that will contribute to compatible and interoperable systems supporting the required data exchange.
- ➢ eG6. Usage of the available eID for citizens should be operationalised.

- QM1. Evaluate BiH level achievements at the end of 2018 (when the QM Action Plan expires) and develop a new QM Action Plan.
- QM2. Develop the entity QM Action Plans, including good practice examples and lessons learned at the state level and scale up the products and inter-institutional working group (knowledge management).
- QM3. Ensure that the new PARS and Action Plan address QM in the area of public services, along with quality management mechanisms: CAF, EFQM, ISO and regular client satisfaction measurement with increased user satisfaction.
- QM4. The next cycle of CAF and ISO implementation should be supported by the CAF Resource Centre at PARCO (state level) and the entities should consider establishing CAF Resource Centres at their levels to work in close cooperation with PARCO, CSA and other state institutions in scaling up the products as well.
- QM5. Train public servants, including managers at all levels, in client satisfaction management, the role and responsibility of public servants towards clients and citizens and "how" to use tools and complaint mechanisms.
- Accessibility1. Further efforts need to be made to improve the accessibility of public services, e-services for users with special needs and vulnerable groups, whilst taking into account the specific needs in the action plan(s) for service delivery, which can be broken down into specific activities for entities and the BD.
- Accessibility2. Consultations with people with disabilities and vulnerable groups on public policies and services are to become a routine practice involving strategic dialogue with the relevant ministries and associations.[127] BiH needs to speed up the process of engaging all citizens in policy making.

Mid-Term Recommendations

- GAPA1. Public administrations at all levels should continue reviewing their services in the light of the "smart regulation" concept, entailing continuous reduction of administrative barriers instead of once-only reforms, which will lead to simpler, more integrated and user-oriented services.
- GAPA2. Public administrations at all levels should make full utilisation of the PAR project "Establishment and/or Strengthening of Capacities of the Institution/s for Control of Regulations and Establishment of the System of Reduction of Administrative Barriers' and its outcomes at the strategic, legislative and operative levels.
- eG1. Improvements need to be made to foster genuine dialogue, coordination and replication of successes, regardless of the level at which they are achieved, especially between the IDDEEA (e-ID), AIDRS, BiH Ministry of Transport and Communication and the FBiH Ministry of Transport and Communication. The ReSPA and the international community may wish to consider providing a special platform of communication.
- eG2. Design new strategic documents and harmonised policies in the ICT area to ensure development of aligned legislation and changes at different government levels.
- eG3. Given that most prerequisites, such as digitised basic registers and interoperability platforms, have recently been put in place, the focus should now be on redesigning public services and obliging service providers to electronically collect the available data they need from the other public institutions through the interoperability platforms in order to shift BiH public administration towards a more citizen-oriented service delivery.
- eG4. Public administrations in BiH should start issuing valid e-documents and thus facilitate digital transformation, as such documents would simplify the life of the citizens because they could easily be reused by other parts of the administration.

- ➢ eG5. Implementation of a central mobile phone authenticating/signature building block is highly recommended to further facilitate ease of use as it enables use of electronic signatures via a mobile phone and, as opposed to the card-based citizen card, installing software and additional hardware (card reader) will no longer be necessary.
- ➢ QM1. Since services to citizens, businesses, governments and other clients are provided at four different administrative levels, all levels should start systematically measuring client satisfaction, expectations and needs, properly analysing the results and proactively publishing the results of surveys, as well as improvement plans on their websites, with indicated deadlines, resources and budget needed for implementation. This will help increase the level of proactiveness and openness, as well as feedback to clients. In the long run, users should be full partners in the redesign of services. The methodology/guidelines for client satisfaction surveys of the inter-institutional group for QM can be widely used and adopted where needed.
- ➢ QM2. Systematic assessments of public administration staff satisfaction should be launched and client satisfaction surveys should be further developed.
- ➢ QM3. Conduct systematic employee satisfaction surveys and open dialogue with the management. Public servants face twofold requirements and expectations: on the one hand, the rightsizing of the public administration, and on the other, constant new requirements and changes to their daily work. The public servants' opinions and their level of satisfaction could provide valuable inputs for further improvements and actions in service delivery, but also in other respective areas.

Long-Term Recommendations

- ➢ GAPA/QM1. In case the PAR fund is not used for future activities (systematic client satisfaction at all levels), consider the following: a) How can the public administration at all levels efficiently approach client satisfaction management by using the existing methodologies, knowledge and resources without extra cost; b) BiH, entity, cantonal and municipal governments should decide on the "where and how" the systematic client/citizen satisfaction and feedback is collected, measured and acted upon c) explore the possibility of raising funds from donors and/or the international community to support this project to use the existing products and practices and develop new ways of obtaining client feedback (such as desktop and mobile applications).
- ➢ GAPA2. Improvements need to be made to foster genuine dialogue, coordination and replication (standardisation) of GAPA successes, regardless of the level at which they are achieved. The key institutions for service delivery, coordination and implementation should be formally identified once the 2018-2022 PARS is adopted.
- ➢ eG1. Inter-institutional communities of practitioners at different administrative levels can provide significant input, guidelines and methodologies, and facilitate coordination of e-projects in BiH.

3.3. Service Delivery Country Report for KOSOVO*[128]

"The Government of Kosovo* is committed to build an administration through a reform process in some areas, in line with the citizens' and EU accession requirements, thus creating a sustainable system of public service delivery.

Provision of public administrative services requires political engagement, vision, strategies, priorities and clear activities, but it also creates citizen's trust towards the state.

In this regard, the Ministry of Public Administration (MPA), in the framework of public administration reform, is working on reforming the civil service system by reforming the legal basis, reforming the organization of public administration, issuing an effective and efficient legal basis in terms of the payroll system in the public administration and a better quality of delivery and modernization of administrative services for the citizens in order that the administration is closer to the citizens.

The MPA, as the Ministry in charge for public administration reform process, is working on advancing the coordination of administrative policies and procedures, reducing the procedural bureaucracy, creating opportunities for equal access to everyone, managing the human resources system and payroll system in public sector, training of civil servants, upgrading information technology (IT) infrastructure, improving the infrastructure for accommodation of public administration staff, delivering open statistical and analytical data of public administration, as well as providing mitigating conditions for the registration of non-governmental organizations.

In this regard, our focus will be the implementation of reforms in recruitment, compensation and promotion in the civil service, according to the principle of merit and professionalism. Our efforts for sustainable services delivered to the citizens, which needs to be addressed on the basis of modern concepts, can only be achieved through the engagement of all stakeholders of the society and through policies and administration by acting and interacting together.

It must be stressed that the Government has approved the Open Data Charter, which guarantees to individuals, media, civil society and businesses access to government data. With this important project, we will increase transparency and accountability from which public and private institutions and all citizens will benefit. Another important project is the development of the Interoperability Platform (Government Gateway), which will enable interconnection and communication of electronic systems. To date, some basic systems have been incorporated into this Platform, such as civil register, business register, addresses, property tax, NGOs and notaries. By 2020, most electronic systems are expected to be interconnected to this platform.

The Single Contact Point or e-Kosovo Portal is another step towards better delivery of services. Citizens, businesses and NGOs will receive various electronic services through this Portal. Whereas, with regard to the Centers for Service Delivery to Citizens (One Stop Shops), the Ministry has foreseen the creation of three Centers as Pilot Projects. These centers will deliver concentrated services in central and local level institutions. Another project that needs

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[128] *This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Advisory Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

to be further developed is the measurement of citizen's opinion on the quality of administrative services (OPI).

We remain committed to equal, fair, transparent and accountable public administration by creating opportunities for fair, affordable and effective services."

Mr. Mahir Yagcilar, Minister of Public Administration of Kosovo*

3.3.1. Acronyms

AIS	Agency for Information Society
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
DNGO	Department of Non-Government Organisations
EC	European Commission
eID	Electronic identification
EU	European Union
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
KIPA	Kosovo* Institute for Public Administration
KBRA	Kosovo* Business Registration Agency
~~OGP~~	Open Government Partnership
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
OSS	One Stop Shop
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
PAMS	2015-2020 Strategy for Modernisation of Public Administration
PKI	Public Key Infrastructure
PAR	Public Administration Reform
GAPA	General Administrative Procedures Act
MPA	Ministry of Public Administration
MAPL	Ministry of the Local Government Administration
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
NDS	National Development Strategy
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
ReSPA	Regional School of Public Administration
RIA	Regulatory Impact Assessment
SCM	Standard Cost Model
WeBER	Western Balkans Enabling Project for Civil Society Monitoring of Public Administration Reform
WCAG	Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

3.3.2. Executive Summary

The Public Administration Reform in Kosovo* is a continuous process involving changes of the legal and organisational structure of the central and local administration, personnel management, capacity development, service delivery, as well as regulatory reforms.

Good progress has been achieved in simplifying administrative procedures upon entry into force of the General Administrative Procedures Act (GAPA) in June 2017, but administrative capacity for the effective implementation of the new GAPA remains a challenge. The government has made an inventory of laws that contain special administrative procedures. These laws now need to be amended to avoid contradictions with the new law. Significant efforts are needed to inform and educate the Kosovo* administration and public about their rights and obligations under the new law.

The institutions of Kosovo* have started devoting attention to the service delivery process only in the recent years. The Ministry of Public Administration (MPA) is the institution responsible for creating a sustainable and impartial public administration at the service of citizens and businesses. There is now a need to build the institutional and human capacities of MPA and Kosovo* administration for effective delivery of services. The Kosovo* Government has a short history of providing e-services, but agencies have already called for greater coordination, consolidation of strategy for government processes dictation, reducing time for end-to-end processes, establishing interoperability protocols and a central interoperability hub, visibility of the established endpoints and flexibility to implement the changes more rapidly. Work on administrative arrangements within the MPA should continue, especially with respect to e-Government priorities, such as interoperability and other service delivery issues.

The MPA has identified the services provided by institutions and is finalising the inventory of central government services. This process will serve as a basis for planning the next steps for revamping service delivery.

Legislation on equal access to services exists, but its enforcement is a challenge, particularly with regard to persons with disabilities. However, equal access to public services should be ensured also to other vulnerable groups.

3.3.3. Service Delivery Framework

a) Policy and Strategic Framework

The 2016-2021 National Development Strategy (NDS),[129] under the Good Governance and the Rule of Law pillar, aims to improve service delivery to businesses and the public by creating an integrated information system for public administration services, rendering the administration's work more effective, decreasing costs for all, including citizens and businesses. This means that citizens and businesses should benefit from simplified procedures to obtain services. The aim is to establish a horizontal approach to services through the creation of unified information windows, which contain all public services relevant to citizens and businesses. NDS envisages the gradual expansion of online services. To achieve this strategic objective, the NDS Action Plan foresees: a) establishment of a register of all public services both at the central and local levels, which will

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[129] Office of the Prime Minister, 2016-2021 National Development Strategy, Pristina, January 2016: http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/National_Development_Strategy_2016-2021_ENG.pdf

facilitate the creation of an integrated information system between various services; b) establishment of a central database for public services that will serve as a data repository for different information systems, thus eliminating the need for the citizens to provide information the state already possesses; c) establishment of a system of regular information updates on services within the Ministry of Public Administration; d) further approximation of legislation on services with the EU Services Directive.

In line with the public administration reform process already underway, NDS aims to expedite and decrease the number of procedures and administrative fees the businesses have to go through in the course of their work. The key measures will include simplifying the service provision process and decreasing the number of licences and permits required and their implementation will help cut business transaction costs. This will also diminish opportunities for bribery and favours for public officials. Simplification of and reduction in the number of administrative procedures will cut the costs of doing business, consequently strengthening the private sector, by facilitating investments and economic growth.

The strategic framework on service delivery consists of two strategies: 1) the 2015-2020 Strategy on the Modernisation of Public Administration (PAMS),[130] and 2) the 2017-2021 Strategy for Better Regulation.[131]

Citizen orientation, increasing efficiency, transparency and accountability of public action towards citizens and businesses, and elimination of administrative burdens are identified as the major objectives of PAMS. PAMS aims to improve service delivery, especially the quality and accessibility of administrative services to citizens and businesses. In doing so, the Strategy puts focus on reasonable administrative procedures, and client-oriented delivery methods. These methods should be based on the interoperability of the government ICT systems and databases in order to increase the level of electronic governance, which is a precondition for the modernisation of public administration, and the rationalisation, optimisation and digitalisation of administrative processes. It also aims to address accountability of institutions through harmonising lines of responsibility across and within institutions, clarify the standards of conduct required of their employees, and increase the transparency of the public administration in its contacts and interactions with the public.

The policy for administrative simplification is provided by the 2017-2021 Better Regulation Strategy, that aims to support the Government of Kosovo* in developing a programme for a) effectively reducing administrative burdens; b) introducing impact assessments; c) improving stakeholder consultation; and d) advancing policy communication based on in-depth analyses of the current situation.

The Government of Kosovo* has over the past decade produced various strategic documents serving as guidance for digitalising the public administration and shifting towards eGovernment. They include:

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[130] 2015-2020 Strategy for the Modernisation of Public Administration: https://map.rks-gov.net/institucion/Plan-and-Strategies/Strategjia-e-RAP.aspx

[131] Better Regulation 2.0 Strategy 2017-2021 http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/Better_Regulation_Strategy_2_0_for_Kosovo_-_ENGLISH.pdf

1. The 2009-2015 Electronic Governance Strategy[132] and its Action Plan[133]
2. The Interoperability Framework Kosovo*
3. The 2013–2020 Electronic Communication Sector Policy – Digital Agenda for Kosovo*
4. The Draft 2016-2020 Strategy for Electronic Governance

As indicated by its title, the Electronic Governance Strategy expired in late 2015, leaving the Government of Kosovo* without a comprehensive and an all-encompassing strategy, which would create the basis for the provision of future electronic services in the public sector. The expired strategy, nonetheless, has been considered the most relevant state document in promoting the digitalisation of the public sector over the past few years. Generally, it intended to guide governmental institutions towards improving IT services, as well as promoting the establishment of an electronic governance platform.

Within its efforts to reduce procedural and administrative barriers and improve efficiency, the Ministry of Public Administration (MPA), specifically its Agency for Information Society (AIS), prepared the 2016-2020 Strategy for Electronic Governance, which aims to create better access to ICT management to enable the Kosovo* Government to respond to future challenges with professionalism and the necessary flexibility in this area. This Government has not yet adopted this strategy.

The establishment of the national Interoperability Framework of Kosovo* derived from the obligations set out in the Electronic Governance Strategy and in its Action Plan. It draws on the model of the European Interoperability Framework. The main objectives of the Framework are to: a) establish inter-institutional cooperation and coordination of digital information exchange; and, b) ensure effective and secure dissemination and distribution of information within public institutions and agencies. The Framework sets out the guidelines for interoperability between different systems within the government agencies and ministries, thus enabling easier integration in the future. The document provides very important recommendations on aspects of data exchange, security, public key infrastructure (PKI) and public administration reform. A set of general specifications have been defined within the Framework that enable government institutions to procure and implement both technical and logistical aspects of IT infrastructure; however, none of the standards in terms of hardware/software or other aspects of IT infrastructure have been clearly defined. This is clearly necessary when dealing with interoperability aspects.

The 2013–2020 Electronic Communication Sector Policy – Digital Agenda for Kosovo* is a document produced by the Ministry of Economic Development (MED) that focuses on developing information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure, transforming government services into digital public services and enhancing the citizens' ability to use ICT tools. It addresses: i) development of the ICT infrastructure; ii) development of electronic content and services and promotion of their use; and, iii) enhancement of the Kosovo* residents' ability to use ICT. The Strategy briefly touches upon ICT in the public sector and does not target this sector per se. According to the Agency for Information Society (AIS), its section on digital public services is no longer considered relevant to the current strategic framework after the adoption of the PAMS and the preparation of the 2016-2020 Electronic Governance Strategy. A great deal of this strategy, indeed, focuses on developing and promoting ICT infrastructure, as well on enhancing the ICT skills of Kosovo* residents. The strategy deals with Internet and mobile access in the

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[132] Available at:
http://testmap.rks.gov.net/userfiles/file/Strategjit%C3%AB%20dhe%20Planet/e_Governance_Strategy_2009_2015_approved_on_12122008_en.pdf
[133] Available at: https://map.rks-gov.net/institucion/Plan-and-Strategies/Strategjia-e-e-qeverisjes.aspx?lang=en-US

telecommunication field and services to be established in the coming years, and presents the facts regarding Internet and mobility access in the entire territory of Kosovo*, including rural vs. urban areas access in percentages. The Strategy also sets a recommended course of action in order to:

1. Ensure geographically consistent development of broadband electronic communication networks throughout Kosovo*,
2. Ensure the security and integrity of the electronic communications networks and services, to increase public and business confidence in cyberspace,
3. Encourage the residents to use online public and administrative services,
4. Use ICT to promote Kosovo* culture and languages,
5. Promote the development of e-business,
6. Encourage Kosovo* residents to gain the skills and knowledge they need to successfully use ICT and engage in information society.

Overall, the document is a solid framework that can help various institutions, businesses, and individuals understand the many aspects of the current situation and challenges of the ICT sector.

b) Legal Framework

The new General Administrative Procedures Act (GAPA),[134] adopted in May 2016 by the Assembly and published in the Official Gazette in June 2016, came into force in June 2017. The new GAPA recognises all the major principles of good administrative behaviour, such as: proportionality; equality and non-discrimination; objectivity and impartiality; legitimate and reasonable expectations; open administration; de-bureaucratisation and efficiency of administrative proceedings; provision of information and active assistance; minimising procedural costs; and the right to legal remedies.

The new GAPA introduces certain institutes the aim of which is to improve citizen-centric public administration. The new law is drafted in the broadest sense (Art. 2 and 3), incorporating not only traditional unilateral decision-making but also public services, and administrative contracts (Art. 60–68, with explicit provisions on the resolution of administrative disputes). On the other hand, the new GAPA contains a special principle (Art. 10) on the de-bureaucratisation and efficiency of administrative proceedings. Articles 26 and 27 on accountability of responsible officials are of interest to the ADR concept. In addition, Article 33 on the points of single contact stipulates, inter alia, that their task is to advise and inform the applicants, including, notably, of legal remedies available in disputes.

The Law on Information Society Government Bodies,[135] which entered into force in April 2013, defines the competent institutions, their functions and responsibilities in the development and implementation of information technology in the institutions of Kosovo*, provides for the establishment of the Agency for Information Society, as well as consolidation of functions and responsibilities in the ICT field. The Agency for Information Society has been established within the Ministry of Public Administration pursuant to this law and is tasked with the implementation of the provisions of the law, as well as with the preparation and management of the necessary secondary legislation as required.

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[134] General Administrative Procedures Act (Law No. 05/L-031), available at: https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=12559

[135] Law No. 04/L-145 on Information Society Government Bodies, adopted on 18 April 2013: https://www.kuvendikosoves.org/common/docs/ligjet/Law%20on%20information%20society%20government%20bodies.pdf

The Law on Information Society Services, adopted in April 2012, legally equates electronic documentation with its traditional counterpart in paper format, in order to facilitate electronic services including, but not limited to, consumer shopping and sales over the Internet (e-Commerce), electronic banking and financial services (e-Payment), government provision of services (e-Government) and electronic purchasing by enterprises (e-Procurement); it is applicable wherever electronic signatures are used. The purpose of this law is to establish convenient possibilities and circumstances for the development of electronic trade, use of electronic transactions and electronic signature by the Government, businesses and citizens alike. The Law on Information Society Services also aims to reduce the potential problems and abuses during electronic transactions as well as address IS safety. Oversight of the enforcement of this Law is performed by the MED, which is also in charge of developing secondary legislation as required.

c) Institutional Framework and Set-Up

The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) is the institution responsible for guiding and coordinating the activities of the Government of Kosovo*. In order to achieve its mission and objectives, the OPM has established a number of structures, tasked with delivering services to businesses.

The Ministry of Public Administration (MPA) is the institution responsible for creating a modern, sustainable and unbiased public administration at the service of citizens and businesses. As the authority charged with ensuring the proper functioning of the public administration, it has over the past few years engaged in digitalisation and providing better services to citizens, businesses, NGOs and the state institutions themselves.

The Agency of Information Society (AIS) drafts and coordinates policies establishing the framework for ICT in the Kosovo* public administration. AIS defines and monitors/implements the strategies on e-Government, leads and monitors ICT related projects, encourages and supports the development of ICT infrastructure (hardware and software) for the institutions within the public administration. AIS administers many systems used by the public institutions[136] and owns and manages the portal that offers all the electronic services to the citizens of Kosovo*.

3.3.4. Analysis of Service Delivery of Key Thematic Fields

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[136] **E-treasury** – this is a system designed to manage all public assets. It is used by a range of state institutions, including ministries, agencies, municipalities, and by other relevant state institutions. The system is developed in MS-SQL, ASP.NET.

E-archive – is a system developed to electronically archive the official documents of state institutions, and create a centralised electronic archive for Kosovo* institutions. The system is being implemented in most municipalities, ministries, agencies and other institutions of Kosovo*. However, despite its great advantages, the system is not implemented by all the institutions, partly due to the fact that their public officials are reluctant to use it. The system was also developed in MS-SQL, ASP.NET.

Work Attendance System (SMVP) – As the name indicates, this system was developed to electronically keep record of the attendance of public institution staff. It was developed in Access, ASP.NET.

Document Management System (SMD) – This system was created to enable centralised document management in public institutions. Like the first two platforms, it, too, was developed in MS-SQL, ASP.NET.

Human Resource Management System – This is a system developed to help public administration bodies manage human resources but its use is still not at a satisfactory level. It was developed in MS-SQL, ASP.NET.

E-portal – Was initially designed to provide central access to information and services provided by government institutions. However, this website is not fed sufficient information and is yet to be linked with the websites of other Government bodies in order to provide online services. It was developed in ASP MSSQL. All these systems are hosted by the National Data Centre.

a) GAPA Implementation

One of the major recent developments in the regulatory framework was the adoption of the General Administrative Procedures Act, which came into force in June 2017. The main noveliteis in the new GAPA concern: the protection of citizens' rights; greater emphasis on the principle of proportionality; the introduction of administrative contracts; the regulation of electronic communication within the administration; the protection of citizens in their relations with providers of services of general interest; the simplification of procedures; the simplification of extraordinary legal remedies and the creation of one stop shops.

GAPA recognises the possibility of the separate public entities/institutions to offer their services pursuant to a separate law. The government has made an inventory of laws that contain special administrative procedures. These laws now need to be amended to avoid contradictions with the GAPA. Regarding this issue, the EC recommended in its 2018 Progress Report that Kosovo* "… improve legal predictability for citizens and businesses by gradually amending the identified special laws and implementing *regulations that contradict the new Law on General Administrative Procedures and address the current backlog of administrative cases*".[137]

While its impact is yet to be assessed, the subsequent actions to support GAPA implementation are still in the planning phase. **Adoption of the new general administrative procedure law needs to be followed by guidelines and standards binding on government institutions.**

There are several institutions involved in GAPA implementation, such as the MPA, the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Office of the Prime Minister, which have been conducting similar activities **but not in a coordinated** manner.

MPA, as the responsible institution, is supported by the EU Technical Assistance Project[138] in the process of identifying institutional mechanisms that will be responsible for developing policies and will monitor the implementation of the new GAPA by Kosovo* institutions at the central and local levels. The new institutional set up is expected to be functional in 2018.

Administrative capacity for the effective implementation of the new GAPA remains a challenge in Kosovo*. The GAPA is not implemented sufficiently by the public administration at this stage. Hence, **the improvement of the law's implementation is the top priority for decision makers. One of the preconditions is to provide a clear definition of the duties and responsibilities of institutional mechanisms responsible for leading, planning, implementing and monitoring and evaluating policies and legislation to modernise public administration/services and implement the GAPA**. **Implementation of the new GAPA requires a parallel inventory of special administrative procedures, which need to be either abolished or brought in line with the GAPA.**

The implementation of GAPA **requires the training of civil servants and awareness raising campaigns targeting both government agencies and the public at large.** MPA has provided initial training on the new GAPA to more than 1,800 civil servants in central and local governmental institutions, with a view to strengthening their capacity for applying the new GAPA. Several consultations on GAPA with representatives of public institutions in five Kosovo* regions,

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[137] EC 2018 Progress Report on Kosovo*, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-kosovo-report.pdf

[138] EU Technical Assistance Project "Support to the Public Administration Reform"

two workshops and conferences, in which civil society participated, were organised during the 2017.

It is encouraging that there are mechanisms in place to systematically identify training requirements and needs for staff directly involved in service delivery. The majority of staff engaged in service delivery in Kosovo* are able to express their training needs in systematic Training Need Analyses (TNA) that represent the basis for the subsequent organisation of training opportunities. This positive systematic approach is to be developed also in other public administrations in the region.

Figure 21: Identifying Training Needs
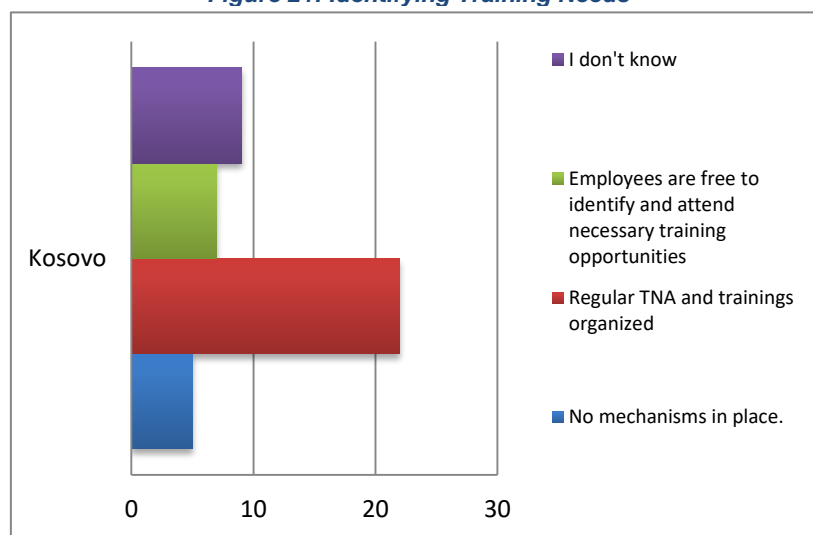
According to the 2018 Balkan Barometer[139], only 26% of Kosovo* citizens believe that the law is applied and enforced effectively, 57% of citizens agree that administrative procedures in public institutions are efficient; and only 21% agree that the law applies to everyone equally. These figures indicate that there is a significant need to improve the quality of administrative decision making.

Figure 22: Are Users Informed When Your Products or Services Change?
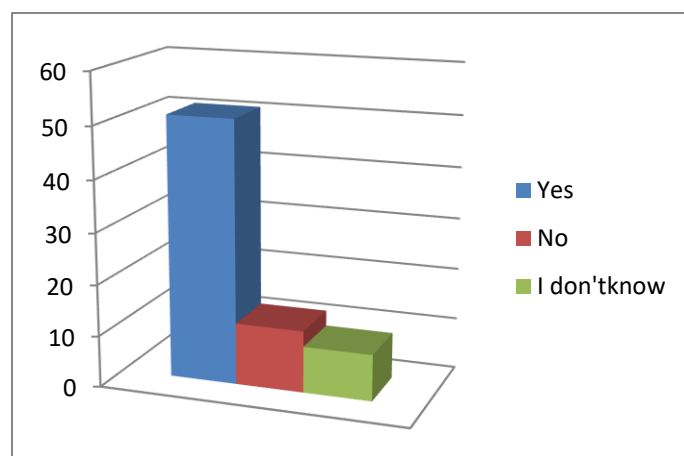
The survey on public perceptions of the public administrations' citizen orientation, conducted within the Western Balkans Enabling Project for Civil Society Monitoring of Public Administration Reform (WeBER)[140] in October – November 2017 indicates generally positive public perceptions of administrative services: 56.2% of the respondents were aware of the government's administrative simplification efforts in the past two years, and the vast majority of them (92.6%) confirmed that such efforts have improved administrative service delivery. As a result, 63% of respondents agreed that dealing with the administration has become easier and 66.4% agreed that they now needed less time to obtain administrative services.

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[139] RCC "Public Opinion Poll – Balkan Barometer 2018"

[140] "Public perception of state administration's citizen orientation" conducted within the Western Balkans Enabling Project for Civil Society Monitoring of Public Administration Reform – WeBER", 2018, http://www.par-monitor.org/posts/first-results-from-par-monitor-positive-public-perception-of-state-administration-s-citizen-orientation

No general awareness-raising events to educate the public on the services provided/developed and their accessibility have been held to date.

Notwithstanding, most Kosovo* institutions included in the WeBER Online Questionnaire sample are convinced that the users are well informed of all changes to the services they deliver. This represents an important aspect that needs to be carefully addressed when designing general awareness raising, information and training opportunities for the citizen/end users of public services. Particular emphasis should be put on the systematic and permanent nature of such learning and interaction opportunities.

b) Digitalisation and e-Government

Although the Kosovo* Government has a short history of providing e-services, agencies and citizens have already called for coordination, consolidation of strategy for government processes dictation, reduction of time for end-to-end processes, establishment of interoperability protocols and a central interoperability hub, visibility of the established endpoints and flexibility to implement the changes faster. This has also been recognised by the general public as, according to the WeBER survey, 64% of the respondents recognised the administration's efforts to move towards digital government, despite the fact that slightly over half of them (50.8%) were aware of the availability of e-services, and only 30.5% of those who knew how to use e-services actually did use them.

Of those aware of the availability of e-services, more than half (57.4%) of them were informed about the ways to use these services, whereas 80.5% of the users considered them user-friendly.

The policy framework to improve public administration and service delivery is largely established, with the PAMS being the main strategic document in the service delivery area. PAMS aims to improve service delivery by using client-oriented delivery methods based on the interoperability of the government's ICT systems and databases in order to increase the level of application of electronic governance, which is a precondition for the modernisation of public administration, and the rationalisation, optimisation and digitalisation of administrative processes. The 2013-2020 Electronic Communications Sector Policy – Digital Agenda for Kosovo*[141] focuses on developing ICT infrastructure, transforming government services into digital public services and enhancing the citizens' ability to use ICT tools.[142]

The initial assessment of the legislative framework related to e-Government in Kosovo* shows that the MPA has done a good job in preparing the legal framework and secondary legislation[143]

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[141] 2013 – 2020 Electronic Communication Sector Policy – Digital Agenda for Kosovo* approved in March 2013: http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/Electronic_Communication_Sector_Policy_2013-2020.pdf

[142] SIGMA 2017 Kosovo* Monitoring Report http://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Monitoring-Report-2017-Kosovo.pdf

[143] By-laws adopted by MPA:
Regulation No. 01/2018 on Electronic Databases
Regulation) No. 01/2017 on the Official Electronic Post
Regulation No. 02/2015 on Software and Hardware Standards
Regulation No. 02/2016 on Coordination between the Agency for Information Society and Institutional ICT Units and Staff
Regulation on Personal Points of Contact
Administrative Instruction) No. 01/2015 on the Websites of Public Institutions
Administrative Instruction No. 02/2015 on Official Electronic Accounts
Administrative Instruction on the Government Portal of Kosovo*
Administrative Instruction on the Management and Use of the Internet in the Institutions of Kosovo*

related to various issues concerning e-Government organisation and service delivery. However, other government actors have not followed suit, which has resulted in difficulties in enforcing the provisions of other laws. For example, even though the Law on Information Society Services foresees the use of digital signatures and paperless public service delivery, the government is not offering any services using digital signatures yet.

In March 2018, the Government of Kosovo* approved the "Concept Document on Electronic Identification and Reliable Services with regard to Electronic Transactions".[144] This is the first step towards creating a legal framework for electronic identification, electronic seals, e-filing service and website authentication. The MPA has drafted the relevant law and will submit it to the Assembly for adoption. **The Government of Kosovo* needs to take urgent measures to adopt the new law aligned with eIDAS to enable secure electronic identification and authentication and secure electronic transactions, to ensure secure electronic interaction between citizens, businesses and public authorities and to operationalise it.** Furthermore, responsibilities for service delivery coordination within the MPA are not yet clearly assigned to any specific unit, and the MPA does not have sufficient resources to follow up on the implementation of the service delivery agenda. Therefore, **coordination and a clear division of responsibilities for the service delivery agenda have to be formalised and established as soon as possible.**

Kosovo* Inspiring Practice No 1: Interoperability Platform
The Interoperability Platform, as the common platform for electronic services, is a complex project that involves the coordination, engagement and cooperation of many institutional actors possessing information and non-institutional systems (economic operators that maintain or develop the systems).   The scope or the initial steps of the project can be summarised as follows: ➢ The period involving the analysis of the overall development of electronic systems in Kosovo*, various aspects of administrative processes and infrastructural capacities in the field of e-Government in the country;   ➢ The period involving the development of a common platform to interlink the government systems through secure centralised infrastructure called the Government Gateway; and,   ➢ The implementation period involving the integration of the numerous electronic services in the Interoperability Platform, starting with the key registers of strategic relevance to the Kosovo* Government.   The main aim of this project is to create the opportunity to provide services to citizens, businesses and the administration in the long run, using the e-Kosovo portal that will enable the delivery of electronic services to citizens, officials, business representatives and other parties, through the portal, mobile platforms and other channels with state institutions.

The policy framework for interoperability has been established, but interoperability between systems is in early stages of development. Funds have been allocated to the AIS to initiate the first pilot project but only four information systems (Property Register; Residence Register, Civil Register and Business Register) are at the moment interconnected via the Interoperability Framework. Ten other systems are to be interconnected via the Interoperability Platform by the end of 2018.

A good example of the usage of central registers has been noted at the local level, e.g. in the municipality of Pristina where citizens can obtain their civil status documents through the e-Kiosk system. **The MPA should make the basic registers available through the Interoperability Platform and**

Administrative Instruction on Information Security Management
Administrative Instruction on Database Safety and Access

[144] Government of Kosovo*, Concept Document on Electronic Identification and Reliable Services with regard to Electronic Transactions

introduce the obligation on the fulfilment of the once only principle for each and every available register.

Despite the lack of central coordination and infrastructure, public institutions are nevertheless implementing solutions based on their own experience and skills, without relying on central infrastructure, as the below Chart demonstrates.

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Kosovo* Inspiring Practice No. 2: e-Kiosk - Self-Service Automated Machine in the Pristina Municipality

The idea to have a genuine digital service derived from the service offered at ATMs of commercial banks and the desire to provide public services to citizens in a similar fashion. The workflow process was clearly defined and the equipment needed for this process was subject to approval by the Civil Register Agency of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Personal Data Protection Agency. The Personal Data Protection Agency needed to be reassured that this system did not compromise the personal data of citizens in any way. The only difference lies in the fact that citizens can obtain their civil status documents from the e-Kiosk and their money from the ATMs.

Six types of documents can be issued by the self-service automatic electronic system.

➢ Birth extract;
➢ Birth certificate;
➢ Marital status certificate;
➢ Citizenship certificate;
➢ Children's certificate; and
➢ Residence certificate.

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Figure 23: Kosovo*- How Manu of These Services Do You Provide Online?
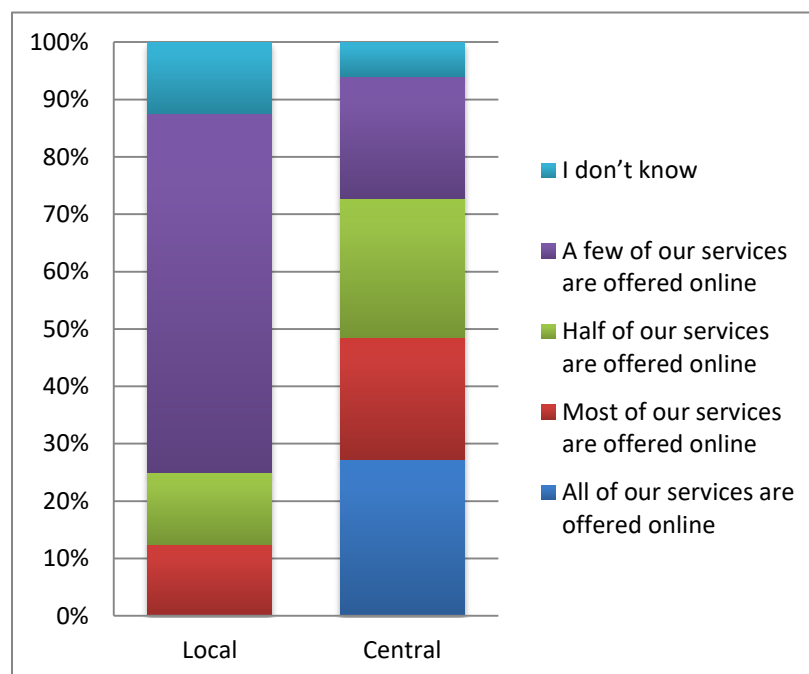
For example, the Kosovo* Business Registration Agency (KBRA) has been successfully implementing tools to register businesses online, but has not been using the central eID tools to authenticate users or to provide an electronic signature option in the application process, particularly because it is not fully aware of the status of these tools. KBRA has worked around this by enabling online uploading of a scanned business application during the submission process (the original must be delivered to the authority when the applicant collects the new business documents). This has resulted in a reduction in the average number of days needed to set up a business from 11 (2015) to 1.6 (2017), ranking Kosovo* 10th in Starting a Business in the World Bank's Doing Business 2018

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report[145] and among the top 10 economies worldwide with the most notable improvement in doing business reforms.

Many other institutions are not, however, reforming their services, claiming they cannot start their reforms in the absence of central tools (such as an interoperability solution, eID tools and a government portal), although they could take the first steps and review procedures or introduce digital applications to reduce the need for in-person contact during the service delivery process. **Introduction of a mechanism facilitating urgent simplification of the legislation during service redesign and streamlining** would also assist the process. Mainly relying on the support of international agencies, Kosovo* public institutions have over the past years been investing in IT

> **Kosovo* Inspiring Practice No. 3: Digital Platform for Public Participation in Pristina Municipality**
>
> The Digital Platform for Public Participation enables citizens to communicate in an interactive and transparent manner with their municipal officials. The former can use it to make proposals, share their ideas or recommendations with the district or municipality they live in. Communication between the citizens and the Municipality of Pristina is provided via the municipal website, a mobile application, as well as its accounts on social networks (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and Google).
>
> The Digital Platform for Public Participation is a viable and practical tool facilitating communication between municipal authorities and residents and public participation.
>
> This is an important element of good governance and democracy in general that compels cities to involve citizens in institutional decision-making.
>
> The Pristina Municipality is involved in this new digital trend in the world that aims to strengthen the role of citizens in decision-making, active participation and budgetary planning, and advance the transparency of the local government in Pristina.

infrastructure and have set up a number of electronic systems in order to improve the provision of services.

The Kosovo* Government has established a central e-portal (e-Kosovo) where citizens, businesses and others can access the most relevant information on public services. AIS plans to start its development and enable access by the citizens and business only after the technical solution for interoperability is in place. AIS is in the phase of analysing the current situation, with the support of an expert engaged through an EU (IPA II) project. These activities are to be completed in 2018. **E-Kosovo is expected to start providing services to citizens and businesses in 2018.**

The level of digitalisation of services varies across institutions. However, there are common challenges that characterise each institution. Without underestimating the other challenges, lack of central coordination, budget constraints and lack of

> **Kosovo* Inspiring Practice No. 4: EDI Electronic System**
>
> The EDI is a modern, fast and easy way to declare taxes. This system allows taxpayers to create online accounts with TAK, where they can complete, declare, pay, check their tax histories, as well as receive other services without visiting TAK at all.
>
> The EDI has its advantages compared with the manual system, since it reduces the number of required documents and visits to the TAK office; saves time and money; enables immediate, reliable and secure submission of tax declarations and payment of taxes 24/7 and quick and accurate processing of declarations, etc.

professional IT staff in institutions, as well as inadequate contracts with IT companies seem to be the most chronic challenges impeding the advancement of electronic services. Nevertheless, **the institutions that are responsible for public service delivery should clearly define the e-**

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[145] World Bank Doing Business 2018 report, available at: http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2017/10/31/doing-business-2018-kosovo-among-top-ten-reformers-in-the-world

services and take ownership of them. The digital transformation of their functions calls for challenging capacity building of their staff.

Kosovo* Inspiring Practice No. 5: NGO Electronic System
The project aims included: digitalisation of the NGO registration procedure and other services provided by the Department for NGOs, provision of more efficient and effective services to citizens and NGOs, digitalisation of NGO data, centralisation of services for NGOs, process harmonisation, accurate and real-time reporting, interoperability of data on NGOs in other Kosovo* institutions, increased transparency and accountability, etc. The Electronic System for NGOs was developed in the Microsoft.NET framework, which is a more flexible, robust and powerful software development environment that supports several programming languages and libraries to build apps that meet the institution's needs.

The below Chart and Table provide a summary of available enablers, e-services building blocks and their usage:

Portal	Enablers	Building blocks	Registers
Single sign-on available: No	e-ID available and used: Available-Yes, Used-No	Number of information systems interconnected to the Government Interoperability Platform: 7	Basic registers digitised and some of them shared
Service catalogue available: Yes	e-Documents circulating: Yes	e-Forms available: No	
No of transactional e-services available: 0	Mobile authentication available: No	e-Payment available: No	
No of registered users: 7	e-Signature available and used: No	e-Invoicing available: No	
No of transactions/services rendered per year:	No of registered e-Signature providers: 0	e-Delivery available: No	
Personalised My Portal with my data and my e-Documents available: No	No of e-Signatures issued: 0		

While AIS should continue building the common building blocks for quick e-service deployment (single sign-on, e-payment gateway, My Portal), there is still a need to raise the service providers' awareness that they can use the available IT facilities to offer their e-services.

Regarding the establishment of a one stop shop system offering services to citizens/ businesses, the MPA reports that the process has been initiated. The identification and registration of all services has been planned. e-Kosovo shall be a single domain, although harmonisation among all institutions is still missing and might present an obstacle to the full implementation of one stop shops. Ten municipalities, including the Pristina Municipality, have established one stop shops, physical centres for administrative service delivery at the local level; some services extended by central institutions are provided at these one stop shops as well.

Standards to improve service delivery quality have not been introduced, because the AIS has been focusing on hardware and software usage by public institutions, in other words, only on the basic government electronic infrastructure. In addition, the re-use of already existing data, the so called "once only" policy and other key concepts, such as standards and guidelines for ensuring high usability and accessibility of in-person and e-services, are not in place. That said, the "once only" principle is one of the priorities under the Interoperability Framework.

c) Quality Management in Service Delivery

The strategic framework for service delivery is in place, but does not clearly articulate the Government's vision of service delivery transformation. It currently consists of the 2015-2020 Strategy for the Modernisation of Public Administration (PAMS) and the 2017-2021 Better Regulation Strategy 2.0, which aims to reduce administrative burdens. The 2016-2020 Strategy on Electronic Governance has been prepared by the Government, but has not been approved yet.

Public administration is a platform, the success and results of which depend on the development and implementation of government policies in the broader context, especially those for economic development and the delivery of administrative public services to citizens and businesses.

The Kosovo* institutions have started devoting attention to the service delivery process only in the recent years. Therefore, institutional responsibility is still not well defined. The institutional set-up for the development and implementation of the public service delivery policy is fragmented. Some e-service development initiatives are managed by the Ministry of Public Administration (MPA) and the Agency for Information Society (AIS) operating under the MPA. Plans for improving services for businesses are developed by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), while business registration and other important services to businesses are managed by the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

Despite notable progress made in terms of service delivery, the administration lacks a strong cooperative relationship with citizens when it comes to the administration's responsiveness to suggestions. More precisely, according to WeBER, only 33.2% of respondents agree that the administration asked for proposals and suggestions on how to improve its services; 87.5% of them confirmed that government has taken on board their proposals.

The MPA is the institution charged with creating a modern, sustainable and impartial public administration at the service of citizens and businesses. As the authority responsible for the proper functioning of the public administration, the MPA has over the past few years engaged in digitalisation and providing better services to citizens, businesses, NGOs and the state institutions themselves. The MPA's capacity to steer reform is insufficient, due to a shortage of staff and unclear distribution of responsibilities. In result, monitoring of the implementation of the reforms in the area of service delivery has been inadequate.

The MPA is reviewing the 2015-2020 Strategy for the Modernisation of Public Administration and drafting the new Action Plan for the 2018-2020 period. The new Action Plan foresees the establishment of a unit at the central level that will be charged with ensuring coordination and coherence of activities undertaken by various actors in this area.

The level of information exchange among institutions involved in services provision is low, due to the fragmented system. State institutions often ask citizens and businesses to provide information the state already possesses. There is not yet a unified policy on administrative public service delivery standards. The obligation of institutions offering administrative services to report to MPA needs to be introduced by law. On the other hand, the MPA should be obligated to regularly update the list of follow-up actions, including those envisaging the possibility of centralising information and coordination and advancement of policies towards services. This would facilitate the generation of statistics informing in-depth planning in this sector.

The central institutions of Kosovo* provide 629 public services and municipalities extend 100 services. Of these services, around 575 services are used by businesses in the course of their operations, including for obtaining licences and permits. Such a large number of administrative processes and institutions involves high expenditures and increases the costs of doing business. The costs of all these processes sustained by local businesses are estimated at 130 million EUR annually.[146]

The Government of Kosovo* has drafted the Policy on Cost Reduction of Services and the OPM has prepared and approved the Standard Cost Model (SCM) Concept Document to be used by the line ministries and agencies offering public services. The concept of administrative burdens and the Standard Cost Model (SCM) are relatively new to the Kosovo* administration. They have not been integrated into the policy or legislative development processes. The Government of Kosovo* therefore has to ensure that civil servants familiarise themselves with the SCM and can apply it. First and foremost, this means that the necessary data for SCM calculations need to be available and that civil servants need to be trained in SCM application. Any future programme for reducing administrative burdens needs to take into account the complexity of introducing the SCM into the policy development process. Work on this has already started and should continue in the coming years.

A policy for administrative simplification is in place (the 2017-2021 Better Regulation Strategy), but Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) is at an early stage of development. At present, legislative proposals are not reviewed with a view to assessing their potential impact and avoiding additional administrative burdens for businesses before they are submitted to the Government for endorsement. Kosovo* has an excessive number of administrative procedures related to licensing and permits (around 66% of administrative procedures are of this nature). Attempts are being made to expedite the procedures and decrease their number through the Law on Permits and Licensing System and by adopting a Law on Administrative Procedures. However, a substantial amount of effort needs to be invested in implementing the laws and harmonising the systems.[147]

According to the EC Progress Report 2018 "…*The government of Kosovo* promotes a user-oriented administration, but lack of clear vision, leadership and coordination hamper reform efforts. Many institutions have therefore started to implement their own solutions outside the central electronic identification (eID) tools that are being developed. Central tools to collect public and business feedback on service delivery are at an early stage of development. Technical solutions for interoperability are yet to be developed. Legislation on equal access to services exists, but applying it is a challenge, particularly as regards persons with reduced mobility. Simplification of administrative procedures has moved forward with the entry into force of the Law on General Administrative Procedures in June 2017. The government has made an inventory of laws that contain special administrative procedures. These laws now need to be amended to avoid contradictions with the new law. Considerable efforts are needed to inform and educate the Kosovo* administration and public on obligations and rights under the new law."*[148]

Generally, half of Kosovo* institutions responding to the WeBER Online Questionnaire indicated they measured user satisfaction in a systematic manner.

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[146] Government of Kosovo* - 2016-2021 National Development Strategy, Pristina 2016

[147] *Ib idem*

[148] https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-kosovo-report.pdf

The MPA has identified the services provided by institutions and is finalising the inventory of central government services. This process will serve as the basis for planning the next steps for revamping service delivery. Once this activity is completed, the next step should be **to create a database of the services institutions provide citizens, businesses and NGOs**. This database (service catalogue) will contain detailed information on services such as: the name of the service, the service provider and beneficiaries (citizens, businesses or NGOs), the method of application (physically, online), the way of receiving the service, the responsible institution, the data of the responsible person (name, surname, telephone number, e-mail), required documents, service cost, time, legal basis, level of service (central, regional, local), the document being obtained (certificate, licence, etc.), as well as the interconnection of the service with other institutions. No metrics, such as the volume of transactions, cost per service transaction, satisfaction rates, complaints or digital uptake, are currently included in the public services catalogue. The AIS is now in the process of preparing the Terms of Reference for the development of the Electronic Services Application, where all data related to public services will be displayed.

There is no systematic approach to quality assurance or service modernisation, although some initial efforts were undertaken in the past by the MPA (within the National Quality Management Programme). The KIPA is the only state administrative authority that has introduced a quality management scheme, based on the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards. KIPA conducted introductory training on the CAF in 2015-2016, but there has been no concrete follow up since responsibility for managing this area is not clear within the MPA. The CAF instrument has been in place in some of the independent institutions, such as the Civil Aviation Authority of Kosovo*, etc.

As per the municipalities, the Ministry of the Local Government Administration (MAPL) has drafted a methodology for measuring the annual performance of each local government unit. Some of the indicators in it measure administrative public service delivery.

In cooperation with ReSPA, KIPA in 2018 organised the training of trainers with the aim of introducing the CAF in a selected number of pilot institutions (notably, the MPA, MIA, OPM, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Economic Development and the municipality of Gjilan). Discussions are under way on developing a broader CAF strategic plan for the coming years, including the establishment of a national CAF centre within the MPA, that will serve as an info and service point for the Kosovo* public sector.

User engagement and feedback tools are in the initial stages. The MPA finalised its e-Box Project in 2016, and electronic, touch screen-enabled feedback devices were installed in 35 public institutions providing over-the-counter public services (28 of them at the central level). The system allows users to provide feedback on services delivered in specific offices, but its design does not lead to pertinent and usable feedback from users. For instance, the system permits the users to provide feedback multiple times and accepts comments on any service listed, not necessarily the service received by the contributor.

Best practices in the service delivery area are not shared. Therefore, although some institutions have found ways to work around the missing central components, others have had no opportunity to learn from their experience because, in the service delivery area, contact among institutions is not facilitated and experience is not shared.

Some public entities/institutions, such as the Kosovo* Business Registration Agency and the Tax Administration, have made valuable progress in improving service delivery, but this has been achieved at the initiative of the agencies themselves, without central management or guidance.

3.3.5. Accessibility and Service Delivery for Vulnerable Groups

The Government of Kosovo* has approved the **2013-2023 National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.**[149] This document represents the guideline for advancing, empowering, protecting and further promoting the rights of persons with disabilities as respected citizens with equal rights.

The Strategy aims to enable the access of persons with disabilities, on equal terms with others, to the physical environment, transportation, information and technology and information systems, and to other facilities and services.

A regulatory framework to ensure accessibility to public buildings is also in place and proper accessibility standards are laid down in the Administrative Instructions under the Law on Construction. **This by-law provides specific guidelines on implementing accessibility standards to ensure persons with disabilities can access buildings, but practical enforcement is weak**.

The majority of public buildings, even new ones, are not accessible to people of limited mobility. In some cases, accessibility solutions have been implemented (e.g. ramps), but they do not follow the standards set out in the regulations and are not usable in practice (e.g. the ramp is too steep). Moreover, in many cases, the solutions are partial and do not ensure actual accessibility. For instance, even when a ramp has been installed, the surrounding street and pavement, as well as the restrooms in the building, are not wheelchair-accessible, making it impossible for people using wheelchairs to access or spend an adequate amount of time in the building. Inspections of new buildings to determine whether accessibility standards are being met are deficient.

WCAG and use of sign language indicate that some progress has been made in the field of ensuring to public services for persons with disabilities accessibility. However, **equal access to public services should be ensured also to other vulnerable groups,** such as persons belonging to the Roma community, minorities, women, etc.

The Government of Kosovo* should take **measures to improve the accessibility of public services for people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups (including through e-services) by preparing a roadmap for an improved feasible model with special consideration of the interconnection between central and local governments to ensure reach, especially of the vulnerable groups, as well as support its implementation**.

3.3.6. Recommendations

Short-Term Recommendations

➢ GAPA1. Strengthen the MPA's administrative capacity for the effective implementation of the new GAPA.
➢ GAPA2. KIPA and MPA should design and implement an intensive training programme for the public administration on GAPA and conduct an awareness raising campaign targeting both government agencies and the public at large.

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[149] Government of Kosovo*, 2013-2023 National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/STRATEGJIA_NACIONALE_PER_TE_DREJTAT_E_PERSONAVE_ME_AFTESI_TE..._Shq +Ser+Ang.pdf

- ➢ GAPA3. Clear definition of duties and responsibilities of institutional mechanisms responsible for leading, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of policies and legislation to modernise public administration/services and implement GAPA is prerequisite for the successful implementation of GAPA and the PAR process in general.
- ➢ eG1. The MPA should establish a legal framework for the use of electronic signatures and promote its use.
- ➢ eG2. The MPA should make available basic registers through the Interoperability Platform and introduce the obligation on the fulfilment of the once only principle for each and every available register.
- ➢ eG3. Introduce a mechanism facilitating urgent simplification of legislation during service redesign and streamlining.
- ➢ eG4. The e-Kosovo portal should provide electronic services to citizens and businesses as soon as possible.
- ➢ eG5. Coordination and a clear division of responsibilities for the service delivery agenda has to be formalised and established as a matter of priority.
- ➢ QM1. With a view to increasing their transparency and simplifying the services they are offering citizens, businesses and NGOs, public institutions should publish on their websites information about the services they provide (including the legal grounds and documents for those services)
- ➢ QM2. The public administration needs to familiarise itself with the Standard Cost Model (SCM) and be able to apply it in the policy development process.
- ➢ QM3. The MPA should establish a mechanism or instrument to measure public opinion on the quality of received public services.
- ➢ Accesibility1. Ensure equal access to public services also for other vulnerable groups, persons belonging to the Roma community, minorities, women, etc.

Mid-Term Recommendations

- ➢ GAPA1. Adoption of the new GAPA needs to be followed by the adoption of guidelines and standards binding on government institutions.
- ➢ GAPA2. The obligation of institutions offering administrative services to report to MPA needs to be introduced by law. On the other hand, the MPA should be obligated to update efficiently the list of follow-up actions, including those envisaging the possibility of centralising information and coordination and advancement of policies towards services. This would facilitate the generation of statistics informing in-depth planning in this sector.
- ➢ GAPA3. Efficient and effective coordination of GAPA implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation of its impacts, need to be put in place.
- ➢ eG1. The institutions that are responsible for public service delivery should clearly define the e-services and take ownership of them. The digital transformation of their functions calls for challenging capacity building of their staff.
- ➢ eG2. Raise awareness among institutions of the possibility of using IT facilities to offer e-services;
- ➢ eG3. The MPA should take the initiative to draft the State Databases Law;
- ➢ QM1. The capacity of the MPA to steer public service delivery transformation needs to be strengthened. Responsibilities for service delivery co-ordination within the MPA should clearly be assigned.
- ➢ QM2. There is a need to build institutional and human capacity for effective service delivery in the entire Kosovo* administration (develop legal and human infrastructure to facilitate the upgrade of the system and service forms).

- QM3. The Government of Kosovo* should create a database of the services provided by institutions to citizens, businesses and NGOs.
- Accesibility1. The Government should take measures to improve the accessibility of public services for people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups (including through e-services) by preparing a roadmap for an improved feasible nationwide model.

Long-Term Recommendations

- GAPA1. Improve legal predictability for citizens and businesses by gradually amending the identified special laws and implementing regulations that contradict the new GAPA and address the current backlog of administrative cases.
- eG1. AIS should build common building blocks for quick e-service deployment (single sign-on, e-payment gateway, My Portal);
- QM1. There is a need to standardise the forms and contents of the documents throughout Kosovo*, to ensure that citizens can easily identify the type and nature of service; the legal framework and its implementation in Albania can serve as a good practice example of standardisation;
- QM2. Customer feedback mechanisms should be revised and promoted, to obtain regular information on satisfaction with specific service delivery situations. The MPA should support the customer-centric approach of public institutions by introducing quality management tools and standards to promote continuous improvement of performance.

3.4. Service Delivery Country Report for MACEDONIA

"The government in the 21st century is very different from the government in the 20th century. I have dubbed today's governing process Government 2.0. I like these tech terms, since I have an ICT background. The government of the past used to deliver legislation and monitor its implementation. Whoever complied was fine, the rest were fined. Government 2.0's job is to tell the citizens that there is a problem or an issue. And to invite them to the table to discuss it. To jointly reach a decision. This is easy to do nowadays, thanks to ICT. Anyone can do it. The Internet is not a weapon, as many politicians would say in the wake of growing problems with fake news. The Internet is a wonderful tool, which we can use to have much more direct democracy. To involve as many people as possible and fight extremism and fake news.

Our Government's approach to PAR is designed to complement our EU integration activities, which is why we have shown strong commitment and political will for ensuring that all processes are transparent, inclusive, participatory and open to dialogue. Not because of EU accession or the EU administration. Rather, because that is what the citizens of our country need. As the Council of Europe correctly noted in its Guidelines for civil participation in political decision making, "participation of citizens is at the very heart of the idea of democracy".

The public administration reform has always been one of our fundamental and top priority issues. We need to prepare the country for the European Administrative Space.

Our vision is to have a depoliticised, efficient, effective and accountable public administration that provides quality, easily accessible and cheaper services to citizens and the business community across Macedonia. A public administration that is based on European principles and values and contributes to sustainable economic development, rule of law, social cohesion and well-being.

The digitalisation of the administrative processes and services is also one of the key tools for fighting corruption in the administration. The automation of the administration's service delivery to the citizens eliminates opportunities for corruption. Records are tracked and anyone can be held accountable.

Having said that and before I conclude, I want to point out the importance that all of us here understand that reforms are a process, just like decision and policy making. As government officials, we must provide citizens with means to hold us accountable for our actions.

Therefore, it is of crucial importance to keep the processes open, transparent and inclusive, to nurture, cherish and encourage dialogue, as that is the core of democratic principles and values."

Mr Damjan Mančevski, Minister of Information Society and Administration, Macedonia

3.4.1. Acronyms

Cadastre	Agency for Cadastre
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
eIDAS	European Directive on Services
EIF	European Interoperability Framework
ERP	Economic Reform Program
GAPA	General Administrative Procedures Act
GWP	Government Work Program
HLAD	High Level Accession Dialogue
LAS	Law on Administrative Servants
LDE	Law on Data Exchange
LEM	Law on Electronic Management
LoB	Line of Business
LOOAB	Law on the Organisation and Operation of Administrative Bodies
LPE	Law on Public Sector Employees
LQMSCAF	Law on the Quality Management System and Common Assessment Framework
MIF	Macedonian Interoperability Framework
MISA	Ministry of Information Society and Administration
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
OGP	Open Government Partnership
PA	Public Administration
PAR	Public Administration Reform
PFM	Public Financial Management Report
PIFC	Public Internal Financial Control
PPD	Public-Private Dialogue
PRO	Public Revenue Office
RC	Register of Citizens
SAI	State Administrative Inspectorate
SALARC	State Administrative and Labour-Related Appeal Review Commission
SCPC	State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption
URP	Urgent Reform Priorities

3.4.2. Executive Summary

Public administration reform is one of the key priorities on the political agenda of the Macedonian Government. The overall objective of this modernisation process is to adjust the status of the Macedonian Public Administration (PA) to rapidly changing societal and government needs.

Macedonia has done a lot in terms of investment and development of public services and their digitalisation. Significant progress can be noted in this area since the Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA) took charge of reforming the public administration and public services under the 2011 amendments to the Law on the Organisation and Operation of Administrative Bodies (LOOAB).[150] The following developments have taken place since: a large number of laws governing the status of employees in the public sector, as well as the new General Administrative Procedures Act (GAPA),[151] were adopted; an interoperability system enabling interconnection of the institutions was established; the new Public Administration Reform Strategy for the 2018-2022 period (PARS)[152] was adopted; the number of digital services has been increased. The Register of Citizens (RG) and the new Portal for Services (PS) were due to be completed by the end of 2018. The established strategic framework and the developed legislation in the field of public services are a solid basis for further developing public services. The development of a system for the digital integration of the institutions and the digitisation of databases and their interconnection should enable the full transformation of the Macedonian public administration into an active service for the citizens and enable the integration of the Macedonian administration in the European Administrative Space.

Notwithstanding, there is ample room for improving public services, especially in terms of simplifying and reengineering the services, digitising and interconnecting the public registers, and establishing a mechanism for systematically measuring the quality of PS.

This country profile, which has been produced based on the research of the strategic documents and legislation, the data obtained during the interviews[153] conducted with the officials in institutions leading on and implementing public administration reform, as well as the data obtained from the Focus Group,[154] aims to provide a clear overview of the current situation in the area of public services, on the one hand, and to suggest potential avenues for improving the state of public services in the future, on the other.

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[150] http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/00E4D4F3FC23794C946EECD276FBF419.pdf

[151] http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/648214cd0c3541cea73333d3bcb1342d.pdf

[152] http://mioa.gov.mk/sites/default/files/pbl_files/documents/strategies/srja_2018-2022_20022018_mk.pdf

[153] Interviews were conducted with representatives of MISA, the Health Insurance Fund, the Insurance Supervision Agency and the Ombudsman.

[154] The Focus Group meeting was held at the Skopje Club of Representatives on 27 March 2018. It was attended by ReSPA's local expert for Macedonia and other representatives, as well as the representatives of the Ministry of Information Society and Administration, the State Administrative Inspectorate, the EU Delegation in Skopje, the NGO sector, the academic community, and the Association of Local Self-Government Units,

3.4.3. Service Delivery Framework

a) Policy and Strategic Framework

According to the SIGMA 2017 Monitoring Report[155] covering the 2015-2017 period, progress in reforming the PA was very limited in the reporting period due to the political situation. A continuous pre-electoral period spanning nearly all of 2016 and the prolonged period of forming the Government after the December 2016 elections, paralysed policy planning and policy development, halted the implementation of new laws governing the area of public service and human resource management, and proper implementation of the GAPA, and had significant impact on the budgetary calendar. The prior PARS expired at the end of 2015 and the new one was drafted and adopted in February 2018.

Significant progress has been made in establishing a strategic framework for public administration reform since the new government took office on 1 June 2017. Namely, the authorities adopted several strategic documents directly regarding PAR, and including public services and their promotion as an integral element:

1. The Public Administration as a Public Service chapter of the 2017-2020 Government Work Programme (GWP)156 says that the government will work on creating a professional, efficient, accountable and transparent administration that will provide quality services to citizens and the business sector and protect their rights.
2. On 4 July 2017, the Government of Macedonia adopted the "3-6-9 Plan"157, which contains all the government's reform priorities with respect to the country's Euro-Atlantic integration aspirations. The course of the reforms proposed by the government presented in the Plan, are based on the 2017-2020 GWP, and take into account the Political Agreement of Przino and the recommendations of the high-level meetings with the representatives of the EU institutions, the EC 2015 Urgent Reform Priorities (URP) guidelines, the recommendations of the 2015 Senior Experts' Group on systemic Rule of Law issues relating to the communications interception led by Reinhard Priebe (Priebe Recommendations)158, as well as a series of recommendations to the Government made by the Council of Europe (Venice Commission, GRECO), OSCE/ODIHR, the EC in its annual reports, including the HLAD, the conclusions of the Ministerial Dialogue on the ERP, the conclusions of the regular meetings of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement bodies, the document prepared by a group of civil society organisations entitled "Proposal for Urgent Democratic Reforms" (Blueprint), and the conclusions based on consultations with civil society. According to the 3-6-9 Plan, PAR is one of key priorities of the Macedonian Government in the short, medium and long terms, and it will start with the development of a high quality and widely accepted PAR Strategy with the aim of creating a fully depoliticised and professional public administration and developing a quality and service oriented administration, which will function and work in improved working conditions by using all possibilities of modern access through e-Government, e-services and interoperability.

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[155] http://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Monitoring-Report-2017-the-former-Yugoslav-Republic-of-Macedonia.pdf

[156] http://vlada.mk/sites/default/files/programa/2017-2020/Programa_Vlada_2017-2020_MKD.pdf, p.35

[157] http://vlada.mk/sites/default/files/programa/2017-2020/Plan%203-6-9%20ENG.pdf

[158] https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/news_corner/news/news-files/20150619_recommendations_of_the_senior_experts_group.pdf

3. The new PAR Strategy, adopted in February 2018, broadly addresses reform in the following priority areas:

> - Policy-Making and Coordination;
> - Public Service and Human Resource Management;
> - Responsibility, Accountability and Transparency;
> - Public Services and ICT Support to Administration; and
> - Public Finance Management.

A depoliticised, efficient, effective and accountable PA that provides quality and easily accessible services to citizens and the business community across the country is the overall goal and vision of the new PARS. The work of the PA is to be based on European principles and values and contribute to sustainable economic development, rule of law, social cohesion and well-being.

The new PAR Strategy defines the following goals in the area of service delivery:

1. Rational investment in the development of digital environment, which includes: a strategic approach to the digital transformation process, centrally coordinated management of projects related to e-Government and ICT, improvement of e-communication channels in the administration and implementation of standards to create a digital environment for the administration;
2. Increased quality and availability of public services, which includes: improved accessibility of institutions for all citizens, improvement of the quality management system, standardisation of data in public registers and unified delivery of services, simplification of services, introduction of single point of contact service centres, notifying the administration and the public of services and customer satisfaction measurement; and,
3. Developed digital setting that provides access to and possibility for using e-services, which includes: increasing the number of highly sophisticated e-services available in one place, introduction of eID for using e-services and digitising service registers.

The 2018-2022 PAR Strategy is in direct correlation with the strategic documents in different areas that are broadly covered by the public sector reform, such as:

1. 2018-2021 PFM Reform Programme of the Ministry of Finance (MoF);[159]
2. MoF Draft PIFC Policies for the 2018-2020 period;
3. 2017-2022 Judicial Sector Reform of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ);[160]
4. State Programme for the Prevention and Suppression of Corruption and Reduction of Conflict of Interests with the 2016-2019 Action Plan of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC);[161] and,
5. 2016-2018 OGP National Action Plan (MISA).[162]

Another document that needs to be mentioned with respect to public services is the National 2016-2017 Short-Term ICT Strategy,[163] which covers the following areas:

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[159] https://finance.gov.mk/files/Programa%20za%20upravuvanje%20so%20javnite%20finansii%202018-2021_0.pdf

[160] http://pravda.gov.mk/documents/F0.pdf

[161] https://dksk.mk/fileadmin/Drzavni_programi/Drzavna_programa_2016-2019.pdf

[162] http://www.mio.gov.mk/?q=node/4176

[163] http://mioa.gov.mk/files/dokumenti/Kratkorocna%20IKT%20Strategija_avgust2015.pdf

1. Provision of business support to ICT companies;
2. Creation of an ICT society;
3. Promotion of Public-Private Dialogue; and,
4. Improvement of formal and informal education, including lifelong learning.

Given the fact that the implementation period of this Strategy had overlapped with the political crisis in the country, it did not yield the expected results.

The Macedonian Interoperability Framework (MIF)[164] (legal, organisational and semantic interoperability), which is in compliance with the European Interoperability Framework (EIF)[165] was finalised by the end of 2015 and has been used to promote and support the delivery of Macedonian public services by fostering cross-border (with the Ministries of Interior, Pension Funds and other institutions of the neighbouring countries), cross-organisational and cross-sectoral interoperability; guide the public administration in its provision of public services to businesses and citizens; and complement and interlink the various Organisational Interoperability Frameworks (OIFs) at the national level.

In conclusion, the strategic framework for PAR has been established, public service delivery being one of the main pillars of the public administration reform. This also includes the framework for quality assessment of the public services, as well as the digitalisation of the public services.

b) Legal Framework

The GAPA, which was adopted in July 2015 and entered into force on 1 August 2016, should be the basis for one of the biggest changes in the past years when it comes to the reform of the public administration and its transformation into a genuine service for citizens and businesses. The principles of the new GAPA shall be applied – as a rule – to every administrative action in order to ensure unified administrative procedures. Transparency, predictability and legal certainty in decision-making, as well as the standards of good administration, require a coherent, unified system of administrative procedures with a minimal number of special procedures. Such uniformity also reduces administrative costs, speeds up administrative decisions and increases the effectiveness and efficiency of public administration. It is opportune for both citizens and civil servants to have most of the procedural rules in the same law. Therefore, special administrative procedures (i.e. those not governed by GAPA) should be subject to rigorous scrutiny and their number reduced as much as possible. The more administrative procedures are covered by the GAPA, the more likely it is that the procedures are known and observed. GAPA has been drafted in accordance with SIGMA principles[166] and encompasses all modern institutes, which are part of the European Administrative Space, as well as the ones stated in the European Directive on Services (eIDAS).[167]

Some special procedures may be appropriate in specific areas, but they must be special only in as much as it is absolutely necessary. Those institutions that propose the enactment of special procedures shall bear the burden of explaining why special legislation is needed. If special

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[164] http://www.mio.gov.mk/sites/default/files/pbl_files/documents/Macedonian_Interoperability_Framework%20MIF_v2.0_mk.pdf

[165] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2c2f2554-0faf-11e7-8a35-01aa75ed71a1.0017.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

[166] http://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Principles-of-Public-Administration_Edition-2017_ENG.pdf

[167] https://www.eid.as/home/

administrative procedures cannot be avoided, the degree of such deviation from the general procedure must be minimised and special procedures, as far as possible, combined with the legal institutes of the GAPA.

In 2016, 169 laws were harmonised with the new GAPA to facilitate full implementation. The harmonisation of the substantive laws with the new GAPA aims at simplifying procedures, shortening case processing timeframes, strengthening data exchange and document exchange mechanisms in electronic format, delegation of powers, including better accountability of all officials involved in the procedure.

The Law on Data Exchange (LDE)[168] and the Law on Electronic Management (LEM)[169] and the relevant by-laws have been in place since 2011. In order to align the LDE and LEM with the future Register of Citizens, the central database of Macedonian citizens that will be used by all institutions providing administrative services, several new laws have been drafted: the Law on the National Population Register, the Law on Electronic Documents, Electronic Identification and Confidential Services and the Law on Electronic Management and Electronic Services. Those laws will establish a new legal framework for e-services. **These laws, which are to be adopted by the end of 2018, will complete the legal framework for the establishment and maintenance of the RC, the functioning of the PS, and ensure full compliance of the new regulations with the eIDAS.**

The 2013 Law on the Quality Management System and Common Assessment Framework (LQMSCAF)[170] for the efficient delivery of services in the public sector puts in place the grounds for introducing international and domestic quality management standards (ISO 9001 and CAF). Several systems have been introduced for measuring client satisfaction: Civic Journal; Quality Barometer Methodology[171]; and the No Wrong Door concept.

Despite the fact that the basic strategic and legal framework for public services and their improvement, including the framework for quality assessment of the public services and digitalisation of public services, was established over the past two years, the process of simplifying and digitalising public services has slowed down due to the political crisis. The overly strict personal data protection standards are another reason for the stagnation of the simplification and digitalisation process.[172]

c) Institutional Framework and Set-Up

An appropriate mechanism for monitoring and coordinating the implementation of the PAR Strategy[173] has been established. According to the PAR Strategy, the PAR Council has been established for the purpose of achieving the goals set forth by this Strategy, but primarily to coordinate the overall PAR process at the political level. Due to the complex and horizontal nature of PAR, political leadership has been ascribed to the Prime Minister who chairs the PAR

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[168] http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/837e7dd305e640288b79ffb8cee71c88.pdf

[169] http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/5D888FFC157875458C3F5CA01FC392FF.pdf

[170] http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/44a789b431e143599914432d25bdf4c8.pdf

[171] http://mioa.gov.mk/sites/default/files/pbl_files/documents/legislation/Metodologija_Barometar.pdf

[172] This problem was mentioned at the FG meeting. The citizens whose personal data are at issue must give a statement allowing use of their personal data, which complicates the procedures.

[173] Part 4 of the PAR Strategy http://mioa.gov.mk/sites/default/files/pbl_files/documents/strategies/srja_2018-2022_20022018_mk.pdf

Council.[174] The PAR Secretariat has been established to extend professional and technical support to the PAR Council, composed of senior administrative officials of institutions leading on and participating in the activities defined in the 2018-2022 PARS Action Plan. The MISA will be the key institution responsible for managing and monitoring the PAR implementation process in Macedonia while all other stakeholders leading on or participating in the activities will be responsible for implementation.

At the operational level, MISA is the institution responsible for coordinating the PAR process, wherefore it is responsible for the implementation of efficient and effective public service delivery. However, this coordination process is extremely complex and needs further legal and operational revision in view of the fact that the Macedonian public sector comprises around 1,300 institutions, most of which provide public services.

The Law on Administrative Inspection established a mechanism for adequate oversight of GAPA implementation – the State Administrative Inspectorate (SAI). The competences of the administrative inspectors are clearly defined at all stages of the procedure, starting from dealing with cases within the legally prescribed deadlines, obtaining data and evidence ex officio, involving interested parties in the procedure, enforcing administrative enactments, recovering procedural costs and dealing with all other procedural violations. SAI performs regular and extraordinary oversight of GAPA implementation. Regular oversight is conducted in accordance with SAI's annual programme and monthly plans, while extraordinary oversight is conducted in response to complaints by citizens or companies.

3.4.4. Analysis of Service Delivery of Key Thematic Fields

a) GAPA Implementation

Although the GAPA has been in force over two years (since 1 August 2016), there **are no relevant indicators for its implementation**. According to SAI's 2017 Annual Report,[175] **many inconsistencies in the enforcement of GAPA have been identified**, e.g. the administrative enactments are not in accordance with the GAPA; adequate communication and exchange of documents and data between the authorities has not been established; there is no adequate evidence of proper delivery; the complete case files are not submitted to the commission or administrative court reviewing appeals; the legal deadlines for taking action and providing public services are not respected; the responsibilities for the public services have not been delegated from the politically appointed officials to civil servants; evidence and data are not obtained ex officio (except by institutions connected through the Interoperability Platform), there are no decisions on the merits of the appeals, the decisions are quashed and the cases remitted, which is not in compliance with the principle of efficiency

In the course of 2017, SAI carried out 2,933 oversights. 2,037 were in regards to the implementation of GAPA. SAI issued 1,009 decisions, which means that its inspectors identified one or more irregularities in 1,009 cases.

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[174] The Deputy Prime Minister responsible for the implementation of the Framework Agreement, the Minister of Information Society and Administration, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, the Minister of Local Self- Governments, the Secretary- General of the Government, the Secretary of the Legislation Secretariat, the Director of the Agency for Administration and a representative of the Association of Local Self – Government Units are members of the Council.

[175] http://duinspektorat.mioa.gov.mk/node/17

Out of the total number, 1,186 oversights were performed in response to complaints by citizens or companies; and 742 of these complaints were founded to be warranted, which is an indicator that citizens and companies are facing many problems in obtaining public services.

In its 2017 Annual Report,[176] the State Administrative and Labour-Related Appeal Review Commission (SALARC) said it had, in the reporting period, reviewed 4,408 appeals, upholding 1,252, dismissing 2,360 on the merits and dismissing 217 as inadmissible. It discontinued 32 reviews, adopted 14 decisions on the merits and forwarded 237 cases to the competent authorities; the Administrative Court delivered judgments in 296 cases. The fact that **a quarter of the appeals were well-founded is indication that the decisions are of low quality or issued upon the expiry of the legal deadline.**

Another shortcoming in the proceedings can be noted here, the very **small number of decisions on the merits**, which means that the cases are usually remitted, causing a „ping pong "effect and unreasonably prolonging the proceedings. According to SALARC's Annual Report, the public institutions must comply with the GAPA provisions on appeals. In doing so, they should especially make sure that complete case files are properly submitted to the SALACR because the first instance bodies had not sent the case files to the second instance bodies by the legal deadlines at all, which is an obstacle in reviewing the appeals. On the other hand, there are concerns because the Property and Legal Affairs Commission and the first-instance Denationalisation Commission of the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, the Pension and Disability Insurance Fund are not complying with the legal deadlines for the submission of case in appeal cases, wherefore the Commission is unable to review the appeals within the legal deadlines.

Furthermore, when preparing amendments to specific laws, the legislator should submit the drafts the Commission for opinion if it has the competence to review appeals or objections on the matter governed by the regulations. In certain several-stage procedures, the party is entitled to appeal only in one of the stages, which complicates the procedure, and sometimes deprives the party of legal protection.[177]

One of the greatest problems in the implementation of the GAPA is the fact that **other laws[178] do not comply with the GAPA principles**. They prescribe overly complex procedures and obligations for the citizens to submit evidence and data deriving from public registers, do not identify all the public registers, provide staff extending public services with excessive discretionary powers and the legal deadlines are often longer than the general deadline in GAPA. Even though 169 laws have been harmonised with the GAPA, there are provisions that are not in line with it. Even when harmonisation is completed, there will still be room for simplifying the procedures further.

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[176] http://www.dkz.mk/sites/default/files/dokumenti/Godisen%20izvestaj%202017.pdf

[177] Specifically, the Law on Construction, the Law on Construction Land, the Law on the Sale and Lease of State-Owned Business Buildings and Premises, Law on Road Transport (Ministry of Economy, Transport and Communications), Law on Use and Disposal of State and Municipal Property (Ministry of Finance).

[178] Analysis of the LOOAB, Law on Local Self-Governments, Law on Administrative Inspection, Law on Inter-Municipal Cooperation, Law on Tourism, Law on Environment, Law on Waste Management, Law on Food Safety, Law on Agricultural Activity, Law on Agriculture and Rural Development, Law on Fisheries and Aquaculture, Law on Audio and Audio-Visual Media Services, the Law on Copyright and Related Rights, Law on Protection of Cultural Heritage, Law on Recognition of Professional Qualifications, Law on Legal Aid, Law on Expertise, Law on Personal Data Protection, Notary Law and Law on Enforcement shows that none of them are in compliance with GAPA principles.

As an essential tool for simplifying and digitalising public services, a **Catalogue of Public Services (CPS) has been developed, but it has not been completed yet and a formal mechanism for updating its data has not been established**. The New GAPA unified administrative procedures across government structures in Macedonia. The CPS is to complement and complete the process. This Catalogue, which is being compiled at the moment, shall contain data on all administrative services in the country, starting with the legal grounds, names of services, documents and data relevant to each of them, legal protection mechanisms and other information. The Catalogue is expected to be the basis for the further simplification and digitalisation of services. At the moment, the CPS contains more than 300 services, but it should contain over 3,000 services when all the services are entered, tentatively by the end of 2018.

There is **no methodology for measuring fiscal implications of simplifying the services or their budgeting**, which often results in the inaccessibility of certain services for citizens due to wrong assessments and dimensioning. The use of public services is related to financial resources, given that most services (such as social security and health insurance services) are financed from the budget. Therefore, many services guaranteed by law cannot be extended in practice due to lack of funds.

Figure 24: Financial Impact Assessment
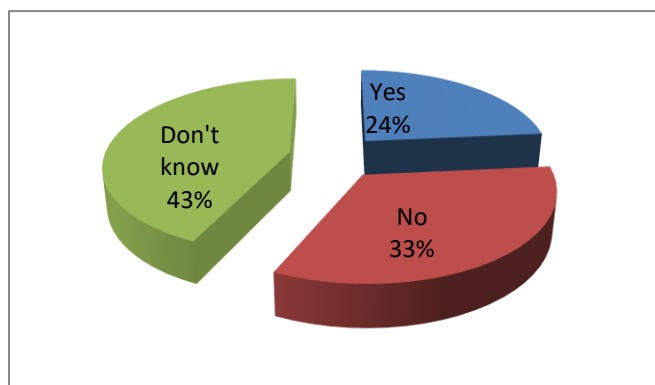
Absence of sound and systematic Financial Impact Assessments in service design seems to be a regional challenge to address in the future. However, knowledge and use of Financial Impact Assessments is the least in Macedonia. The methodology for analysing the financial impact of redesigning processes (costs of maintenance, redesign, simplification of procedures, cutting unnecessary documents, etc.), as well as the policy and legal framework, represents a challenge and an opportunity for the public administration (reform).

The introduction of mandatory ex officio exchange of documents and data among all public authorities should help reduce procedural costs. On the other hand, the simplification of public services and the reduction of administrative barriers by eliminating unnecessary documents required by the public authorities, will reduce revenues from issuing those documents. Some institutions (for example, the Cadastre and the Central Register) are self-financed and earn their revenues precisely from issuing such documents. Therefore, simplification of public services may cause problems in their work if the financial implications of such simplification are not taken into account. If the envisaged funds do not correspond to the actual needs, many of these services cannot be implemented

Indeed, the service delivery process seems to be well documented and the fact of documentation of the service delivery processes well known among public service providers and public administration in Macedonia.

Macedonia Inspiring Practice No. 1 – e-Cadastre - Electronic System of the Real Estate Cadastre Agency

E-Cadastre: the complete digital cadastre of real estate in all of Macedonia connected with all notaries, municipalities, and geodetic companies. Round the clock online access and transparency of the cadastre data are in place and all deeds and other property encumbrances have been transferred from the courts to the Cadastre. The number of registered transactions and deeds has tripled; the efficiency in closing cases has increased; the alphanumeric and graphic data were incorporated through digitisation and harmonisation of the data and cadastre plans in one centralised database set on state-of-the-art hardware infrastructure. The distribution system enables electronic issuance of property certificates, copies of cadastre plans and other data from the Cadastre. These products can be ordered from every home via the Internet. Furthermore, the established Register of Prices and Leases increased the transparency of the property market; a new helpdesk was established for internal and external users; the government NSDI geo-portal was established; and last, but not the least, many studies were developed that helped these important processes in the country. The Agency facilitated the establishment of the geodetic practice, as well as education reforms, notably in geodesy, taught at the Faculty of Civil Engineering.

Based on the e-cadastre system, a mobile application e-Kat was developed. It that enables free of charge access to the cadastral data, cadastral maps, topographic maps, and other WMS services for the data the Real Estate Cadastre Agency is in charge of.

Since 2008, when the project was initiated, the number of days needed to register a property in Macedonia has been halved, while the satisfaction of ordinary citizens and professional users with the Cadastre services has increased significantly.

Figure 25: Is the Service Delivery Process Documented?
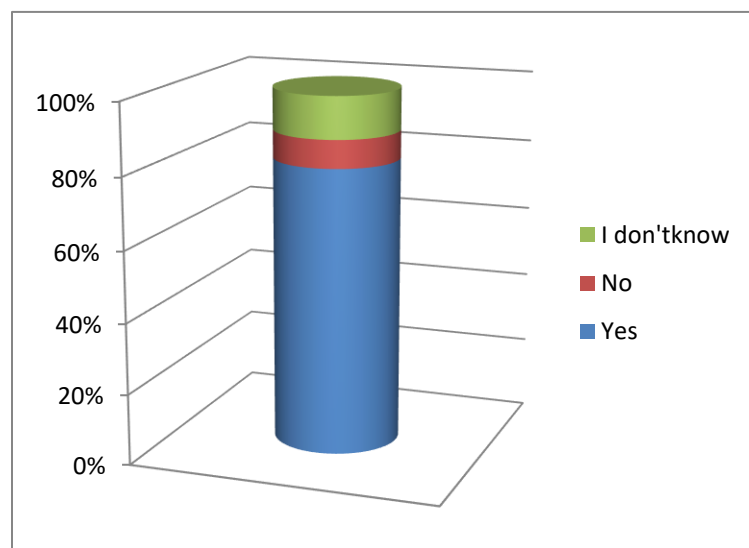
What is missing in terms of **monitoring the implementation of GAPA is an adequate electronic record of administrative procedures, as well as semi-annual reports on the state of play of the administrative procedures in order to follow the case flow in the public institutions**. As opposed to the GAPA in force, its predecessor prescribed an obligation on the management of administrative records and submission of semi-annual reports on the number of administrative cases. However, these records were in paper format only, wherefore their processing and

analysis were extremely limited. This is further constrained by the large number of institutions and SAI's insufficient capacity.

According to the 2018 Balkan Barometer survey, 55% of Macedonian citizens perceive administrative procedures in public institutions as efficient, 33% believe that the law is applied and enforced effectively, and only 22% believe that the law applies to everyone equally. These figures indicate that there is room for improving the quality of administrative decision making.

Similarly, WeBER results show that half of Macedonia's citizens (51.2%) either strongly agree or agree that the government had made efforts or taken initiatives to simplify administrative procedures for citizens and businesses over the previous two years. Furthermore, 71.6% of the citizens aware of government administrative simplification initiatives agree that they have led to improved service delivery.

In addition, 43.8% agree that dealing with the administration has become easier in the past two years, while 47.8% think that they now need less time to avail themselves of administrative services. When it comes to digitalisation, a vast majority of the pollees (71.5%) think that the government has increasingly been moving in this direction.

b) Digitalisation and e-Government Implementation

MISA is responsible for the coordination of the implementation of digital transformation and e-Government. At the moment, the number of available public e-services exceeds 180. However, they are not frequently used because not all of them are available at one single location on the Portal of Services and they are not sophisticated enough.

With a view to centralising the point of access to governmental services, MISA started implementing the Europe Aid /137521/IH/SER/MK "PAR Assistance and strengthening the capacities of MISA" project that aims to support the implementation of e-Government through the development and implementation of a central National Portal for e-Services, as the central interface where citizens and businesses can access all government services. The project commenced in 2016 and was to be completed by the end of 2018.

The new National Portal for e-Services will have online 'life events' for citizens and businesses. The establishment of the Portal will increase the efficiency of state institutions and provide faster and simpler services by creating a single point of contact between citizens and businesses (e-service users) and service providers, and single sign-on in order to accelerate the e-services delivery process. The visual design of the portal, ease of use, easy navigation and use of W3CG standards are particularly important. The e-Services Portal will be connected to the Interoperability Platform, the National Population Register/Central Electronic Population Register and the Catalogue of Services. **The new National Portal for e-Services was expected to become operational by the end of 2018 and provide linkage to other digital enablers.**

An Administrative Register (Civil Register/National Population Register), as the **central database of Macedonian citizens that should be used by all institutions providing administrative services,** will be introduced within the same project. The new Law on the Central Population Register, Law on Electronic Documents, Electronic Identification and Confidential Services and Law on Electronic Management and Electronic Services,[179], which will establish **a new legal framework for e-services,** have already been drafted. The biggest benefit of these laws is that they will put in place the complete legal basis for digital transformation, including all the modern standards on the provision of public services by electronic means, such as electronic identification, electronic exchange of documents and data, efficient delivery of electronic services, etc. Also, the latest amendments to the Law on One Stop Shops and Management of the Trade Register and Register of Other Legal Entities,[180] adopted in 2016, stipulate the introduction of one stop shop system in managing the Trade Register and the Register of Other Legal Entities.

The Interoperability Platform has been up and running since February 2016, providing secure data exchange to 32 state institutions[181] (for now) over 100 developed web services. By October

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[179]   These Laws are available in the Macedonian national Electronic Register of Regulations (ENER) https://ener.gov.mk/default.aspx?item=top_regulation&subitem=view_last

[180]   http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/aa9e244ea1c142f1b6e8d3acde0825e2.pdf

[181]   The following institutions are connected to the Interoperability System: the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Central Registry, Ministry of Finance - Public Revenue Office, Real Estate Agency, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, National Employment Agency, Health Insurance Fund, Fund Pension and Disability Insurance, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of Justice - Directorate for Register of Registers, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Life of Environment and Physical Planning, Ministry of Finance - Property and Legal Affairs, the City of Skopje, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Second Skopje Basic Court, the Administrative Court, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the First Skopje Basic Court, the State Statistical Office, Ministry of Information Society and Administration, Macedonian Academic Research Network, Ministry of Finance - Customs Administration, State Election Commission, State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption and the Official Gazette.

2018, over ten million transactions had been affected via this platform, meaning that as many people had not used the front desk services at the institutions.

The amendments to the Law on Electronic Management, adopted in 2016[182], introduced a new form of electronic delivery of documents, as an alternative to the Interoperability Platform - the "Recommended Electronic Document Delivery Service" that enables the electronic transmission of documents among the authorities themselves, as well as between them and legal and natural persons via the unique environment for the electronic exchange of documents and data; it also provides electronic signature and electronic seal, tracks document transfer, providing proof of sending and receiving documents, and protects the transferred documents from damage or unauthorised changes.

Macedonia Inspiring Practice No. 3 - Electronic Construction Permit Issuance System

e-Construction permits orchestrate and automates the construction permit issuance process by managing all the required legal steps, documents and inter-institutional communication, thus ensuring compliance with regulations and timely service delivery. It reduces the time necessary for submission; defines the roles of all relevant municipal staff; distributes cases within municipalities; tracks time, status and process; provides insight in independent reviews of applications by municipality/case officer/ institution/role/applicant; interconnects all municipalities with external institutions relevant to permit issuance (electrical company, water authority, Cadastre, etc.); facilitates simple and flexible communication between citizens and municipalities and municipalities and institutions; measures the performance of civil servants involved in the process; and, reduces paper usage by municipalities and institutions – green e-solution. Macedonia soared to 1st place in the Doing Business 2015 report in Europe and Central Asia for Dealing with Construction Permits when it launched the system.

This service should be the starting point for the full operationalisation of the new solutions in the GAPA, in terms of mandatory electronic data and document exchange, until the full digitisation of the basic electronic registers and use of the Interoperability Platform by all agencies. This solution not only ensures procedural efficiency, but cost effectiveness as well, whilst fully respecting the highest safety standards. The project was implemented through the so-called "Open Services" model, meaning that the certified private sector companies are entitled to provide delivery services for the government agencies. Two companies have been certified for providing this service (e-Shipment and e-Delivery).This delivery service can be used only by the public institutions not prepared for automated interoperability, and should replace conventional delivery by electronic delivery, cutting the duration of the procedures by at least two days (because the document is delivered at the moment it is sent, while conventional delivery takes two days) and also saves 60 denars (€1) per delivery (delivery of the most expensive package costs 10 denars, while conventional delivery costs 70 denars). Delivery is effected through the interoperability system, which means that this way of document exchange is protected.

In order to facilitate access to services, the system of e-Reminder has been introduced, where citizens/companies can subscribe to SMS or e-mail notifications of the imminent expiry of their travel documents or personal IDs and the need to renew them and that the documents they requested are ready. For now, 29 services of eight institutions are available. Registration of users of the system and registration for an individual service can be performed through the web application or by an SMS message. The telephone number on which the user receives notifications / reminders is the one from which s/he registered on the web portal or sent the SMS registering for a given service from the catalogue of services. The system is available to all citizens of Macedonia who have a mobile phone number of a national operator. The services are categorised by the institutions offering them. The registered user can choose one or more services for which s/he wants to receive reminders. Registration of a user account through the

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[182] http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/605483fb1fca47e2b022848aacef9585.pdf

web application is a free and one-time operation. An SMS message for registration of a service is charged 5 denars excluding VAT. The response to the registration request is free of charge every reminder by SMS is charged 5 denars without VAT. E-mail reminders are free of charge. Registration of an account or a selected service through a web application is free. An SMS message for subscription to a service is charged 5 denars without VAT. Services of the Ministry of Economy, the Public Enterprise for State Roads, the Office for the Management of Birth, Marriage and Death Registers, the Employment Agency, the Agency for Financial Support to Agriculture and Rural Development, the Macedonian Academic Research Network, the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Transport and Communications are available at the moment. At the same time, the e-Payment system enables the payment of administrative and other fees via SMS and is most frequently used by students paying exam fees.

Mandatory e-services for businesses (e.g. mandatory electronic tax registration) have changed the attitude of the business community in favour of e-services. Businesses now expect and foresee the growth of such services in their business plans.

Several internal systems supporting the in-house operations of government institutions have been developed. For instance, the Enterprise Resource Planning system (ERP), comprises modules on budget work, public procurement, material work, basic resources, financial work. It has been fully implemented under MISA's coordination and will be transferred to the Government General Affairs Service to serve 29 institutions. There are many Line of Business (LoB) systems implemented across different government agencies providing electronic public services/services to registered users.

Macedonia Inspiring Practice No. 4 - e-Procurement - Electronic System for Public Procurement

E-procurement: a fully digitised system of public procurement that provides complete process automation, transparent electronic registration and communication of all public procurement stakeholders, and implementation, monitoring and supervision of all procedures and rules laid down in the Public Procurement Law and regulations, thus delivering efficient e-services to the contracting authorities and economic operators. The system increased the efficiency of the public sector; provided time and cost savings in the procedures for awarding contracts and improvements in terms of managing and implementing the awarded contracts; increased the transparency of the expenditure of public finances; contributed to better monitoring and review of contracts and hence greater compliance with rules and policies to minimise corruption and abuse; strengthened competition by improving access to the public sector market; provided better and faster communication between contracting authorities and economic operators; as well as unification and standardisation of the steps. The system has been used by 1,433 contracting authorities and 6,902 economic operators, thus providing about 23,7% savings in the procurement process (or circa € 100 million) a year through the e-Auction module Public Procurement Bureau 2016 Annual Report, p. 106)

http://bjn.gov.mk/content/Priracnici,%20brosuri%20i%20izvestai/ Godisen%20izvestaj%202016.pdf

In addition, many other LoB have been developed, such as:

➢ e-Apply online: a fully digitised system for the labour market, where job vacancies can be published or monitored, as well as the employment status can be registered, cancelled or changed;

➢ e-Business Registration: fully digitised registers and online services for opening and closing companies, submitting annual accounts and verifying company data (a new company is registered within four hours);

➢ EXIM: One stop shop for cross-border trading, which involves 17 state institutions and enables electronic submission of requests for import, export and transit licenses, electronic issuance of licences, monitoring of the status of requests being processed, as well as information on which tariff quotas and from which countries are available;

- ➢ e-Tax: fully digitalised tax system, with the possibility of online submission of tax returns, review and payment of taxes, issuance of certificates and confirmation notes, as well as e-auctions;
- ➢ e-Health insurance and e-Pension insurance: fully digitalised reporting, check-out, checks of or changes in health and pension insurance;

Macedonia Inspiring Practice No. 5 - National e-health System "MojTermin"

National e-health System "MojTermin": The creation and implementation of the National e-health System "MojTermin" has enriched the electronic health record, decreasing the waiting time list, optimising all work process through the health system, management of all health institutions (public and private), integration and certification of all companies that have software in the health sector (more than 100 companies using 200++ web services).

The main purpose of the System was eliminating the non-transparent health system and the huge (above 18 months) waiting lists for certain examinations. The project started at end of 2011 as central booking system for several examinations (MR,CT,X-ray, Mammography), the waiting list for this examinations in average was 12-15 months, there were a lot of duplicate patients in the waiting list in multiple institutions for same examination, or unreal patients. So we managed to build centralised booking system, and we eliminated all bad or duplicate data in Capitol's 3 largest medical centres. With 1 month of usage, we decreased the waiting time list to 1 week maximum per examination, from 77 weeks (18 months) to 1 week! MojTermin was born from a desire to directly improve public health in Macedonia through the implementation of a cloud-based, fully integrated healthcare system.

The system was in continuous agile and rapid development, and it became obligatory government solution for visiting or requiring health service. The benefits exceeded all expectations in a very short period. Actually we managed to multiply the number exams, without investment in beds, doctors, or equipment. The main initiative was to provide a fast health service for every citizen, and to build the Electronic Health Record in dynamic, personalized, understandable and holistic Record.

The Health Consumer Powerhouse publishes the only comparative rankings in Europe based on a consistent methodology, and has been doing so for 20 years. The reports from 2014-2016 are located here and indicate the progress of Macedonia and Serbia over the course of their adoption and usage of MojTermin. Macedonia in 2014 was announced "rocket of the year", jumped 12 places in ranking of Euro Consumer Health Index mainly because the e-health system, and continuously improving.

http://www.healthpowerhouse.com/files/EHCI_2016/EHCI_2016_report.pdf

All of the institutions responsible for these systems are part of the Interoperability Platform and the systems are using this Platform to exchange data wherever the relevant registers have been digitised.

Besides these state-of-the-art systems, the general situation regarding the quality of data in the remaining digital databases is one of the main reasons for the lesser use of the Interoperability Platform. Difficulties in the process of digitalising public services can also be ascribed to the absence of strong semantic standards on the quality of data in the electronic registers, the standardisation and templating of documents, as well as transliteration, in addition to inadequate legal regulation and undefined and unregulated registers that need to be established and managed. The process of further digitalisation of public services is not as fast as it should be because the laws are using different terms for the same data or evidence and there is no clear list of registers to be established under the laws in order to have all the relevant data for all the public services. The Catalogue of Services should resolve these problems.

The standards for the websites of public institutions were set back in 2010, but their visual and content appearance changed over the years. The new open data standards have not been included in the old standards. At the moment, the new phase of standardisation is ongoing and **common guidelines on government websites have to be re-established**. Many institutions do not have web pages at all, which is an additional challenge when it comes to e-services.

Macedonia Inspiring Practice No. 6 – e-Parliament

e-Parliament: the e-Parliament is considered as a continually evolving concept that is embedded in the institutional approach to modern technologies in the complex parliamentary environment. It is defined as the use of ICTs in parliamentary institutions with the objective of enhancing and strengthening their core functions and operations. The objective of the solution is not just to employ new technologies, but to integrate these technologies in the existing rules and procedures, thus resulting in a successful implementation of the e-Parliament system in the everyday operations of the Parliament.

The e-Parliament system is a web application that covers the entire legislation process within Parliaments, including law initiation, preparation and holding of committee and plenary sessions, parliamentary questions, amendments, the work of Table office, MPs and other Parliament officials. The solution transforms the whole legislation process from paper to paperless process, thus providing high level of efficiency, cost-efficiency, mobility, transparency and responsibility. It can be used by all the workers in the Parliament, including the Parliament Speaker, Secretary General, all MPs and department workers within the Parliament. The solution also brings the legislative procedure closer to the citizens, by providing them access to the laws and other public documents on the parliament web site. This is a unique vertical solution for Parliaments that is tailored to the needs of the Parliament to achieve 100% compliance with the Parliamentary Rules of Procedure.

The system is contextual and parliamentary role based (MP, Parliament Speaker, Secretary General, Committee member) that allows information targeting and contextual actions according to the user r e-Parliament covers the following procedures: the whole legislative proceedings, Parliamentary Committees proceedings, Plenary Sessions proceedings, Amendment proceedings, MP question proceedings, Additional information like minutes, recordings, audio and video recordings, voting result sole.

According to the latest processed statistics, 2018: the number of created materials is 664, the number of materials in procedure is 143, the number of created amendments is 37 223, the number of created questions is 174 and the number of answered questions is 160.

A summary of available enablers, e-services building blocks and their usage is given in the Table and Chart below:

Portal	Enablers	Building blocks	Registers
Single sign-on available: No (the National portal under construction)	eID available and used: No	Number of information systems interconnected to Government Interoperability Platform: 27 institutions and 103 web services	All basic registers digitised and shared (Registers of Births, Marriages and Deaths) Yes (digitised) and some (shared)
Service catalogue available: Yes	e-Documents circulating: Yes	e-Forms available: Yes	
No of transactional e-services available: 200 on separate portals (the National Portal is under construction)	Mobile authentication available: No	e-Payment available: Yes	
No of registered users: N/A (the National portal is under construction)	e-Signature available and used: Yes	e-Invoicing available: No	
No of transactions/services rendered per year: 3,000,000 on separate portals (the National portal is under construction)	No of registered e-Signature providers: 2	e-Delivery available: Yes	
Personalised My Portal with my data and my e-Documents available: No (the National portal is under construction)	No of e-Signatures issued: (to be checked with the 2 providers)		
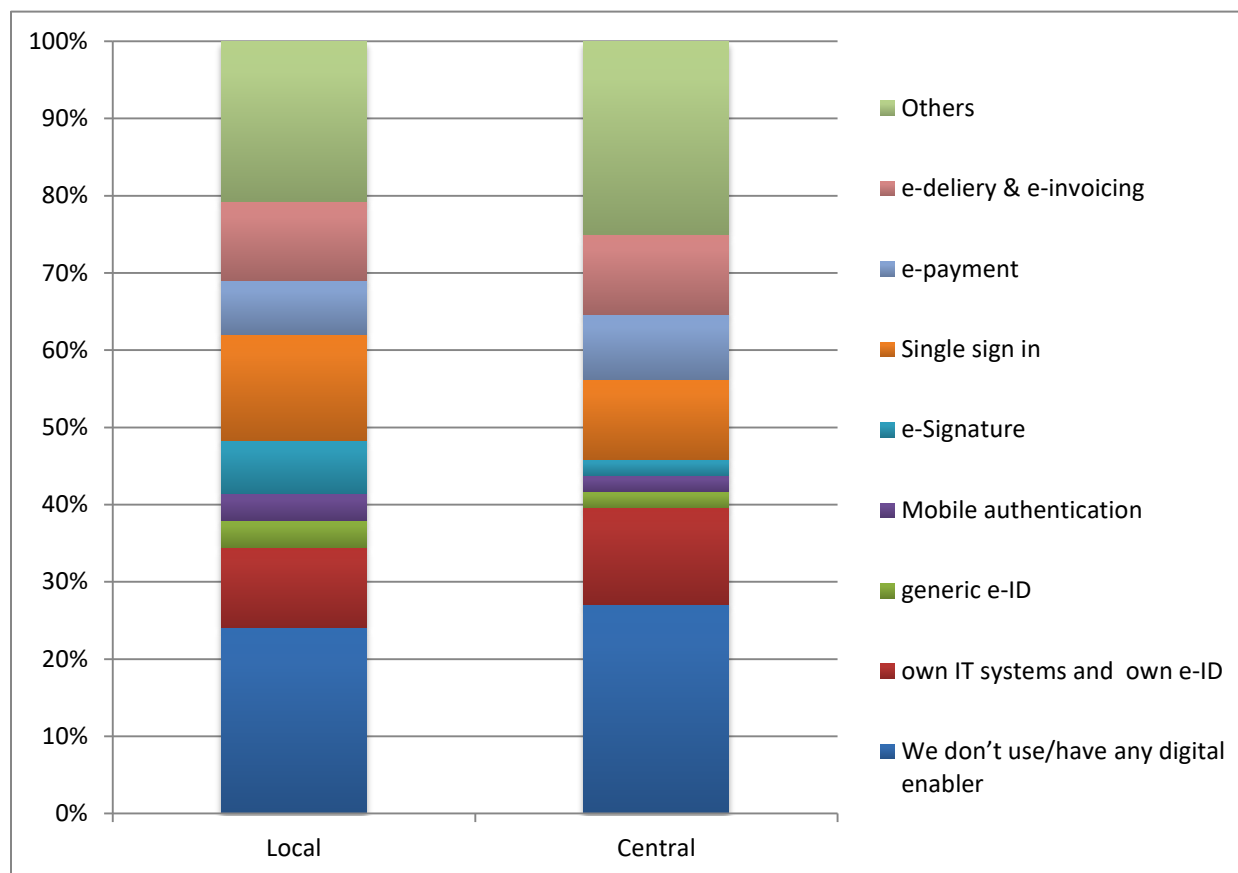
The key digital enablers, such as electronic identification (generic eID including mobile ID), electronic signatures (including legal recognition and affordability), reusable technical building blocks (single sign-on and authentication, e-invoice, e-payment, etc.), **should be made available by government or several commercial providers**.

In order to centralise the point of access to government services, the MISA has been developing and implementing a central national portal for e-services (within an IPA-funded project), which will be the central interface where citizens and businesses can access all government e-services at the highest possible level of sophistication. The goal of the National Portal is to increase the efficiency of state institutions and provide faster and simpler services by creating a single point of contact between citizens and businesses (consumers of electronic services), on the one hand, and the service providers, on the other, and by implementing a solution that will conduct electronic data exchange among institutions to speed up the e-service delivery process. This solution should be in line with the EU's Services Directive and Digital Agenda 2020, in light of Macedonia's aspirations to join the EU. The basis for providing e-services through the portal lies in the adopted legal and organisational and technical measures for the implementation of the OSS system, enabling secure electronic exchange of data among state institutions in accordance with their mandates.

The Portal will be available over the Internet on various web-based platforms, **providing access via mobile phones**. It is therefore vital that the Portal's visual design and style are tailored to the needs of users that it is easily navigable and complies with standards. The project is to achieve

the following results: developed and fully functional national e-services portal using the National Interoperability System in accordance with the Law on Electronic Management; integration of the existing e-services in the portal, upgraded with the possibility of e-payment of all fees and administrative fees; integration of the 20 existing services in the portal; introduction of a system for e-payment for e-services; integrated portal with e-reminder systems; introduction of a system for user management and their authentication; as well as trained employees who will be able to maintain and upgrade the system and developed e-trainings for using the system that should be packaged in accordance with SCORM 2004, ready for installation of the LMS system. Therefore, focus should be on **building the technical capacities of public service providers** for improved provision of e-services and on **promoting use of e-services**.

The WeBER survey results show that that just over half of the population (53.1%) is aware of the availability of government e-services. Of them, 61% state that they are familiar with the ways of using e-services. **Common digital service standards: inclusive, accessible, open, transparent, secure, multi-channel, user friendly, clear advice and guidelines on accessing public services, as well as on the rights and obligations of users and the public institutions providing services, must be developed and established.**

However, utilisation is still low as only 23.7% of the respondents (of those that are informed of the ways to use e-services) have used them 'often' or 'sometimes'. Lastly, when it comes to e-services, most of those who have used them (81.3%) agree they are easy to use.

c) Quality Management in Service Delivery

The legal framework[183] for quality management and a common framework for assessing the operation and provision of services in the civil service have been established, but the **use of these tools in the work of the administration can be improved in practice**. MISA's 2018-2022 National Quality Management Plan in the Public Sector[184] was adopted by the Government in August 2018. According to the findings of the ReSPA Quality Management Study[185], ISO 9001 is the most widely used quality management system in Macedonia; the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) model is also used, but its **application at this stage is limited**.

The following section highlights efforts made in this area in the past few years.

Regarding other tools, complaint management techniques, suggestions from front-line staff and customer satisfaction surveys seem to be the most widespread techniques (albeit **still limited**) in the Macedonian public administration, according to the Online Questionnaire**.**

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[183] http://mioa.gov.mk/files/pdf/dokumenti/zakoni/Zakon_za_voveduvanje_na_sistem_za_kvalitet_konsolidiran_18112015.pdf

[184] http://mioa.gov.mk/?q=mk/node/1769

[185] Thijs N. & T. Puzić (2017), Feasibility Study on the Establishment of a Regional Centre on Quality Management in ReSPA, p. 84, p

Figure 27: The Use of User-orientation Management Tools and Instruments
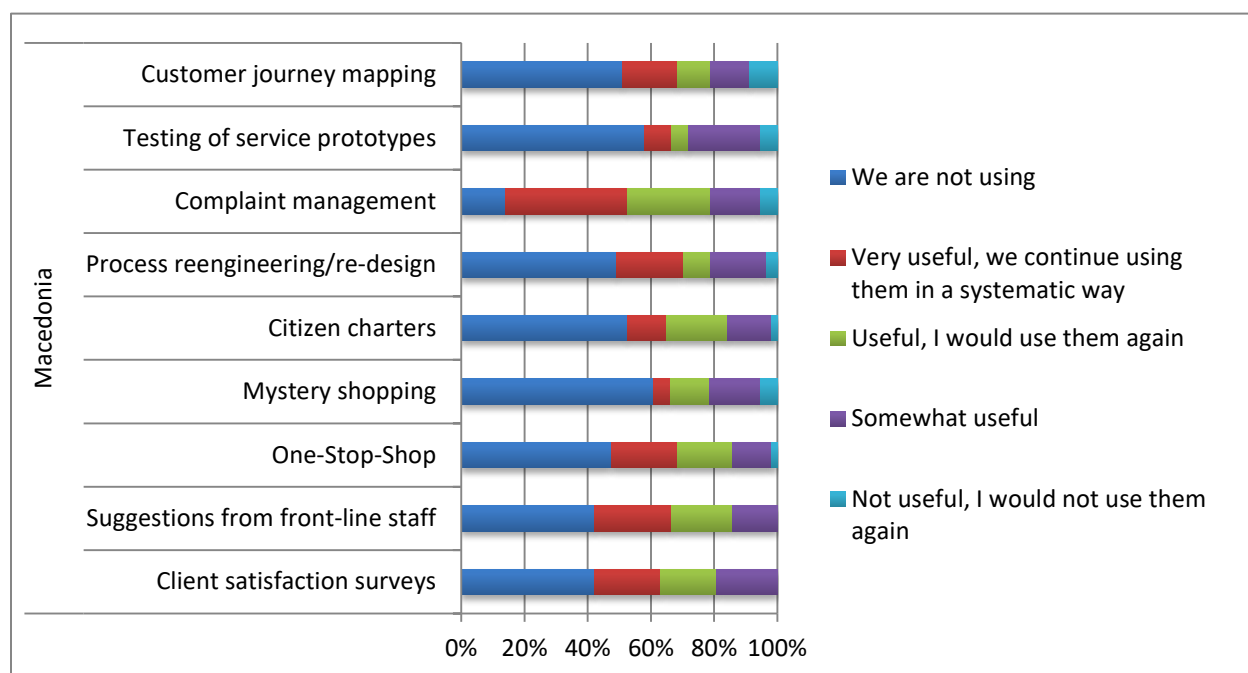
Many institutions in Macedonia have been implementing the ISO 9001 standard in their work. The level of implementation of the ISO 9001 standard in public institutions is: out of 110 state bodies: 51 bodies are certified, 5 bodies are in the final certification phase, 35 bodies have started the procedure, 9 bodies have not started the procedure and 10 bodies have no funds in their budget for this. [186]

Although there are several institutions, such as the State Statistical Office, which use the 2006 CAF model, the coordinated and strategic implementation of the CAF model in the Macedonian institutions started in 2011 and 29 institutions[187] have implemented the CAF model[188] to date.

There are currently 36 certified facilitators/trainers for the implementation of the CAF model in Macedonian institutions. Most of them, 71%, work in public institutions, while the remaining 29% work in NGOs; 35% of the CAF facilitators/trainers were certified in 2012, 61% in 2014 and 4% in 2016. Most of the certified CAF facilitators/trainers in Macedonia have experience in the implementation of the CAF model: 67% of them in implementing it in between one and five institutions, while 9% have experience in implementing it in over five institutions. Most of the

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[186] http://www.mio.gov.mk/sites/default/files/pbl_files/documents/strategies/usvoen_nacionalen_plan_za_upravuvanje _so_kvalitet_2018-2020_lektura_vo_tek.pdf, page 27

[187] Ministry of Information Society and Administration, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, State Statistical Office, City of Skopje, Ministry of Education and Science, Municipality of Ohrid, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Municipality of Tetovo, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Municipality of Centar, the Government General Secretariat, the Ministry of Economy, the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, the Secretariat for Legislation, the Secretariat for European Affairs, the Municipality of Lipkovo, the Parliament, the Municipality of Gostivar, Agency for Administration, Municipality Gorce Petrov, Municipality Zhelino, Agency for Youth and Sport, Committee on the Protection of the Right of Free Access to Public Information, Jegunovce, Tetovo Public Health Centre, Kumanovo, Struga, Kicevo and the Customs Administration

[188] http://www.mio.gov.mk/sites/default/files/pbl_files/documents/strategies/usvoen_nacionalen_plan_za_upravuvanje _so_kvalitet_2018-2020_lektura_vo_tek.pdf, page 28

certified CAF facilitators/trainers assessed their theoretical knowledge of the CAF model as good; however, they did express the need for additional training.

According to WeBER's analysis, less than a third of the respondents (29.2%) said that the administration had asked them to suggest how to improve administrative services in the previous two years. Furthermore, 68.6% of those who confirmed that the administration was asking for feedback said it had used their feedback on how administrative services can be improved.

WeBER survey results also show that over a third (35.9%) of the population think they have the possibility to give their opinions on the quality of the individual services. Of all the citizens who agree that they have the possibility of providing feedback, 71.4% consider the channels for providing their opinions as easy to use.

Although the above results may be encouraging, less than a quarter of the population (22.9%) thinks that citizens or civil society have been involved in monitoring and assessment of administrative services in the previous two years, while a significant majority (68.6%) of those who agree with that statement say that administrative services have been improved as a result of such monitoring.

In 2018, a Macedonian CSO (Centre for Change Management, CUP) performed several surveys of customer satisfaction with the quality of the public service delivery in healthcare[189] and social protection and social security.[190] Although the level of satisfaction with services provided by centrally-controlled institutions is reasonable, the lack of quality of public services at the local level is particularly noticeable. Additionally to this, CUP's research[191] showed that lack of access to public services is particularly prominent in the municipalities. **Decentralisation of municipal services will improve the quality of public service delivery at the municipal level**.

The practical application of the concept "**Public Service Reception Hall"** will enable citizens and businesses to obtain services from more than one institution at the same place. In 2016, MISA started preparing for the adaptation of the first Room for Public Services, which is the former front desk hall of Komercijalna banka in Skopje, where front desks for 11 institutions will be located. The first "Reception Hall", to become operational by the end of 2018, will significantly improve the accessibility of public services.

3.4.5. Accessibility and Service Delivery for Vulnerable Groups

The principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[192] adopted on 13 December 2006, which regulates the rights and needs of persons with disabilities, as well as the participation of the main stakeholders, such as the competent ministries, institutions and civil society organisations, in its implementation, are elaborated in the 2010-2018 National Strategy on Equal Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Revised).[193] The strategy envisages numerous activities to ensure the full social inclusion of persons with disabilities.

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[189] http://www.cup.org.mk/publications/Zdravstvena-zastita_f.pdf

[190] http://www.cup.org.mk/publications/Socijalna-zastita_f.pdf

[191] http://www.cup.org.mk/publications/Barometar_MK.pdf

[192] https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html

[193] http://mtsp.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/FINALNA%20Revidirana%20Nacionalna%20Strategija.pdf

The basic standards on access to public services for persons with physical disabilities have been established, but they need to be elaborated in detail and fully implemented. Standards on the accessibility of electronic public services for persons with visual or hearing impairments have not been developed, wherefore web accessibility of electronic public services for persons with disabilities is low.

In his Annual Report,[194] the Ombudsman found that improvements in many walks of life of persons with physical disabilities have been very slow although six years have passed since Macedonia ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[195]. He concluded that **national legislation was not in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Convention on the Rights of the Child**. The Ombudsman inter alia submitted a request to the Ministry of Education and Science to **establish a mechanism for the systematic identification, registration and monitoring of students with disabilities in mainstream education**, and to put in place an **education support system that will be tailored to the identified abilities and needs of children and youth with disabilities, as well as to ensure full physical accessibility of school facilities in accordance with international standards**, including the interior of the buildings, as well as adequate equipment of the schools for inclusive teaching, and to **establish standards for accessibility of school facilities, equipment and the teaching process in general**.

The Ombudsman also noted in his Annual Report that no progress had been made in the realisation of the rights of children and persons with disabilities and their inclusion in society. **There is no multidisciplinary approach to or inter-ministerial cooperation on improving access to and realisation of the rights of children and persons with disabilities in several areas**.

No data were available on the accessibility of public services for other vulnerable groups, as well as for people with hearing or reading problems.

3.4.6. Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Short-Term Recommendations

> ➢ GAPA1. The delegation of powers from the political appointees to professional administrative servants should be applied in practice by each institution. SAI should have the main role in this process.
> ➢ GAPA2. Inconsistencies and gaps identified in the application/implementation of GAPA should be addressed by each institution, and the administrative practice must be developed and unified as a mechanism for ensuring transparency, legal security and predictability of public services, as well as increasing public trust in the public administration.
> ➢ GAPA3. MISA and SAI should establish a mechanism for monitoring GAPA implementation, which should include electronic records of the administrative cases, document flow and notifications of any wrongdoings by the servants.
> ➢ GAPA4. MISA should organise trainings for public service providers in order to build their capacity for implementing GAPA. In addition, awareness raising activities (including

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[194] http://ombudsman.mk/upload/Godisni%20izvestai/GI-2017/GI-2017.pdf p. 65

[195] Ratification on 29 December 2011.

on the availability of services) targeting both civil servants and the general population should be organised and systematically carried out.

- ➢ eG1. The Catalogue of Services should be prescribed by law and populated by all the existing services.
- ➢ eG2. The new National Population Register should populated by all data and up and running by the end of 2018.
- ➢ eG3. MISA should draft the new legislation on electronic management and e-Services by the end of 2018.
- ➢ eG4. MISA should draft the new legislation on e-signatures and e-documents, in accordance with the EU legislation by the end of 2018.
- ➢ eG5. Build technical capacities of the public service providers to improve provision of e-services.
- ➢ eG6. MISA should promote usage of e-services, by launching a campaign familiarising citizen and the companies with the advantages of using e-services. Thought should also be given to discounted fees for using electronic services.
- ➢ eG7. MISA should revamp the common guidelines on government websites.
- ➢ QM1. The 2018-2022 National Quality Management Plan in the public sector (adopted in August 2018) should be implemented and monitored in practice.
- ➢ QM2. Standards of quality service delivery should be set for the most frequently used services (social protection, healthcare, etc.) delivered by the PA.

Mid-Term Recommendations

- ➢ GAPA1. A horizontal functional analysis of the public institutions should be performed to establish the appropriate institutional set-up for public services (responding to the needs of the citizens and companies); there should be a clear vertical hierarchy (ministries at the top and all the institutions implementing the laws below), managers of institutions should account to their ministers for service delivery.
- ➢ GAPA 2 Harmonisation of other laws with the principles of the GAPA should be a priority, along with the further simplification of the existing public services (regulatory guillotine). This is especially important for the services that are to be digitalised. An action plan and effective monitoring of its implementation should be put in place.
- ➢ GAPA3. MISA should develop a methodology for measuring fiscal implications of simplifying the services and for their budgeting.
- ➢ GAPA3/Accessibility. MISA should develop a policy framework ensuring accessibility of public services for all people with disabilities and prepare an Action Plan on harmonising all the relevant laws with international standards. This issue requires a systematic approach, given the situation in this field.
- ➢ GAPA4/Monitoring MISA and SAI should establish an electronic register allowing automatic processing and alerting to missed actions by public authorities in order to improve the monitoring and implementation of the law.
- ➢ eG1. MISA should prepare and adopt a long-term ICT Strategy, which should be in line with the existing PAR Strategy.
- ➢ eG2. MISA should assume the central coordinating role for digital transformation and e-Government projects; development of separate electronic services should be minimised.
- ➢ eG3. The remaining public registers should be digitised in a consistent manner, in accordance with data quality standards.
- ➢ QM1. Public Service Reception Halls should be established in the municipalities with poor access to public services. The (most frequent) central and local services should be accessible at one place. Thought should be given to establishing a single point of contact for electronic delivery of all services and legal aid for the citizens.

Long-Term Recommendations

- ➤ GAPA1. MISA should perform a review of GAPA implementation and draft amendments to address any problems in its enforcement.
- ➤ eG1. Develop m-government, as complementary to e-Government, enabling use of e-services via mobile telephones.
- ➤ QM1. CSOs should engage more actively in advancing public service delivery and contribute with their innovative ideas, actions and policies. The authorities may wish to consider organising regular service delivery fora (e.g. hackathons) to review and suggest improvements of the existing services and policies and central service delivery building blocks, design of new services, etc.

3.5. Service Delivery Country Report for MONTENEGRO

"The Government of Montenegro has recognised public administration reform as one of the key areas in the EU accession process, in which we need to make significant progress to bring our administration closer to European standards on good governance.

By establishing the Ministry of Public Administration, we have created the conditions to intensify the process of public administration reform in Montenegro and we have made significant progress in the reform, accompanied by constant improvement and harmonisation of the system with European law and best practices.

The 2016-2020 Public Administration Reform Strategy was adopted in July 2016, together with its 2016-2018 Action Plan. In 2018, we adopted the 2018-2020 Action Plan. The Public Administration Reform Strategy defines the strategic framework for improving the situation in the area of public administration in Montenegro. The key objective of the reform is to improve our country's competitiveness, whilst preserving fiscal stability, through the provision of better and cheaper services for citizens and businesses.

Work on improving the institutional framework for public administration reform has been ongoing since the Strategy was adopted. In addition to the establishment of the Ministry of Public Administration, we made an important step forward, guaranteeing greater commitment to the implementation of the set strategic goals – we established the Public Administration Reform Council, which also includes representatives of NGOs, and benefits from high-level institutional and political coordination.

The systemic laws adopted in the area of regulation of the civil service system and the system of local self-governments were commended by the European Commission as one of the most advanced normative frameworks in this area in the region.

We improved the work of electronic government also through the new Law on Electronic Signatures and Electronic Identification and created the conditions for quality electronic business. The electronic government system is continuously upgraded, and today we have 564 electronic services provided by 51 institutions; this is a good indicator of the public administration's progress in introducing e-service delivery. The new General Administrative Procedures Act, introducing the one stop shop, came into force on 1 July 2017. The new legal solutions save the time of our citizens and business and eliminate unnecessary costs.

The Ministry of Public Administration will in the forthcoming period be dedicated to the implementation of the Public Administration Reform Strategy and its Action Plan, in particular to the reorganisation of the public administration through the adoption of the new State Administration Law, and the implementation of the Staff Rightsizing Plan in order to ensure that the administration and its staff pursue the fulfilment of the government goals and tasks. We will continue our activities on upgrading and improving the services on the e-Government portal, as well as establishing the one stop shops in Montenegro."

Ministry of Public Administration, in cooperation with other bodies, is committed to the promotion of public services, and in particular the strengthening of segments of the e-government for citizens and business sector. In that sense, ReSPA's guidelines and recommendations deriving from Comparative Study on Service Delivery are very useful, confirming our vision of good public

administration. In the forthcoming period, we will put our efforts jointly with ReSPA and other partners to achieve these goals.

Ms Suzana Pribilović, Minister of Public Administration of Montenegro

3.5.1. Acronyms

EC   European Commission
ERP   Economic Reform Programme
eDMS   Electronic Document Management System
EGDI   e-Government Development Index
EIF   European Interoperability Framework
IT   Information Technologies
ICT   Information and Communication Technologies
GAPA   General Administrative Procedures Act
MPA   Ministry of Public Administration
NIF   National Interoperability Framework
OGD   Open Government Data
OGP   Open Government Partnership
PA   Public Administration
PAR   Public Administration Reform
PARS AP   Action Plan for the Implementation of the Public Administration Reform
                Strategy
PARS   Public Administration Reform Strategy
ReSPA   Regional School for Public Administration
SIGMA/OECD   Support for Improvement in Governance and Management (OECD
                Initiative)
UN   United Nations
UNDP   United Nations Development Programme
WeBER   Western Balkans Enabling Project for Civil Society Monitoring of Public
                Administration Reform project

3.5.2. Executive Summary

Montenegro has over the past decade put in place solid strategic and legal frameworks in the area of public service delivery. The three medium-term strategic documents - the 2016–2020 Public Administration Reform Strategy (PARS), the Strategy for the Development of Information Society until 2020 and the 2018-2020 Economic Reform Programme – represent the basis for service delivery in the country; they are complemented with other policy and strategic documents governing important aspects of service delivery in the country. The situation is similar with respect to the legal framework, which was completed with the adoption of new General Administrative Procedures Act (GAPA), providing for administrative simplification and thus, creating foundations for the digitalisation of government services, and with the Law on Electronic Government, regulating the manner and preconditions for establishing fully operational e-Government. Montenegro developed and adopted the Methodology for Monitoring and Evaluating GAPA Implementation (hereinafter: GAPA M&E Methodology), the first of its kind in the Western Balkans and one of the best practice examples within the field of service delivery in Montenegro and, undoubtedly, in the region. To sum up, the strategic and legal frameworks create a solid foundation for citizen-oriented public services. However, the implementation of both the strategic and legal frameworks has not been fully achieved yet. There is still a lack of common standards on public service delivery.

There is an appropriate institutional set-up and a clear division of roles among the key ministries and other public administration institutions in the area of public service delivery, but coordination is sometimes lacking. This can mainly be ascribed to the fact that the newly formed Ministry of Public Administration (MPA) needed time to establish its coordination role within the state administration and that it still lacks capacity to efficiently coordinate the overall PAR process.

The harmonisation of other laws with the GAPA is an outstanding issue in the implementation of the latter. More information on potential problems will be available once the GAPA M&E Methodology is applied (well). The following major problems have, inter alia, been identified with respect to the digitalisation and e-Government aspect of the service delivery area covered by this regional Study: underdeveloped technical infrastructure for a fully functional e-Government, the still low (although growing) level of digitalisation of public services and the lack of interoperability among the registers.

Lack of systematic quality management at the level of entire public administration and individual state institutions remains a major problem. There is no systematic measurement of the quality of public services, despite the various ad hoc initiatives for measuring the satisfaction of users with public services in general. Therefore, citizen-oriented service delivery is in place, but there is a need for improving the quality of the services; moreover, not all of them are available in digital format. In addition, systematic mechanisms for monitoring the quality and performance of public service delivery are underdeveloped or non-existent.

3.5.3. Service Delivery Framework

a) Policy and Strategic Framework

The policy and strategic framework, as well as the legal framework for the efficient implementation of the PAR processes, are in place in Montenegro. The policy of improving public services is included in several key strategic documents, and the Government is committed to creating a user-oriented administration.[196] One of the reiterated Government priorities is to have a more user-oriented administration.[197] Montenegro adopted the following three medium-term planning documents - the 2016-2020 Public Administration Reform Strategy, the Strategy for the Development of Information Society until 2020 and the 2018-2020 Economic Reform Programme - which put the focus on important issues, such as monitoring of user satisfaction, developing digital service interfaces, creating interoperability between government information systems, and reducing administrative burdens.

The national 2016–2020 Public Administration Reform Strategy (hereinafter: PARS)[198] was adopted in 2016, and the adoption of the corresponding Action Plans followed. The 2018-2020 PARS Action Plan (PARS AP) goes a step further than its predecessor, especially in the domain of cost estimation, due to the inclusion of a clear costing methodology, but also in the service delivery area of the PAR process. Namely, it envisages activities directly targeting the improvement of the quality of service delivery in the country, such as measuring user satisfaction, introducing quality management, reducing administrative burdens, creating new digital services and developing a government-wide interoperability framework. The MPA is in charge of the overall coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the PARS and its Action Plan, in close coordination with other state institutions in charge of implementing the specific measures laid down in the Strategy.

The Strategy for the Development of Information Society until 2020 (hereinafter: The Information Society Strategy 2020)[199] was adopted in 2016. At the moment of its creation, the implementation of the Strategy was within the responsibility of the former Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications. With the establishment of the MPA, the implementation of this Strategy became the responsibility of the MPA's Directorate for e-Government and Cyber Security. This Strategy defines strategic guidelines on the development of information society, in line with the EU Digital Agenda 2020 and the Single Digital Market Strategy, including, notably, the further development of infrastructure and skills for internet accessibility, a major problem identified within the field of information society in Montenegro.. One of the key chapters of the Information Society Strategy is devoted to e-Government. The Information Society Strategy 2020 identifies open government data as a strategic lever for good administration and better public services; consequently, the Government developed an open data portal – www.data.gov.me (more below).

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[196] Managing Process of Implementation of PAR Strategies in ReSPA Member Countries, p. 76

[197] European Commission, Montenegro 2018 Report, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-montenegro-report.pdf, p. 14

[198] 2016-2020 Public Administration Reform Strategy, Government of Montenegro. 2016

[199] The Strategy for the Development of Information Society until 2020, Government of Montenegro. 2016. Available in English at:
http://www.mid.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=251855&rType=2&file=StrategijaMID_finalENG.pdf

In order to create a business-oriented policy and strategic framework*, the* Government of Montenegro approved **the 2018–2020 Economic Reform Programme (ERP)**[200] in January 2018 as its key document on economic cooperation with the European Union. Various government institutions/ministries are in charge of implementing the measures laid down in this document. The ERP envisages the digitalisation of the land registration service and construction permit issuance and the development of electronic invoicing to address the informal economy; however, these are the only ERP measures related to the digitalisation of public services.

In addition to the three aforementioned strategic documents, the Government of Montenegro also adopted a number of strategic documents contributing further to improved service delivery in the country.

The **National Interoperability Framework (NIF)**[201] adopted in 2011 was not fully aligned with the European Interoperability Framework (EIF). However, the revised 2013 NIF is aligned with EIF, and, moreover, envisages the development of the Law on e-Government, and the Action Plan for e-Government Development.[202] The NIF represents a strategic public administration document aiming to support interoperability; it specifies the rules and manner of introducing interoperability in Montenegro. This document creates the basis for fully functional e-Government in the country, as it contributes to the improvement of data management processes and data exchange among the state institutions, and enables simpler and faster provision of e-services.

Montenegro joined **the Open Government Partnership (OGP)** in 2011, and has since been adopting the corresponding action plans spelling out its commitments related to opening the government and promoting open government data among the users in Montenegro. This is based on and in line with the Information Society Strategy 2020**.** However, the OGP has not been recognised as a driver of good administration or better service delivery by the central Government institutions. Due to the lack of commitment of the central Government to proceed with implementing the objectives of the OGP, the OGP reconsidered the country's status within the Partnership. As a consequence, Montenegro was designated as inactive in the OGP pursuant to the decision of the OGP Steering Committee of June 2017 and given one year to adopt a National Action Plan for the next period. Further activities to be included in the National OGP Action Plan were agreed between the OGP Governing Board and the Government of Montenegro on 13 June 2018 and the development of the AP was under way at the time this Study was finalised.[203]

The Electronic Communications Sector Strategy,[204] developed by the Ministry of Economy, is a general strategic document regulating electronic communications in the entire society. At the same time, the Strategy introduces the rules and tools for electronic communications within the state administration of Montenegro, which are further elaborated and tailored to the specific needs of the administration in the e-Government Strategy by the MPA's Directorate for e-Government and Cyber Security.

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[200] 2018-2020 Economic Reform Programme (ERP), Government of Montenegro, available in English at: http://www.gov.me/en/homepage/Montenegro_Economic_Reform_Programme/

[201] National Interoperability Framework, available in Montenegrin at: https://www.euprava.me/vijesti/164/Nacionalni-okvir-interoperabilnosti.html

[202] E-Government Analysis: from E- to Open Government, ReSPA, 2015, p. 39

[203] See the news available in Montenegrin on the website of the General Secretariat of the Government of Montenegro: http://www.gsv.gov.me/sekretarijat/ogp/

[204] The Electronic Communications Sector Strategy, Ministry of Economy, Government of Montenegro, 2006, available in English at http://www.msp.gov.me/en/library/strategije?sortDirection=Asc.

b) Legal Framework

The legislation on general administrative procedures generally meets the standards of good administration.

The General Administrative Procedures Act (GAPA)[205] came into force in September 2017. It is aligned with the EU principles of good administration,[206] and provides a basis for electronic communications. The GAPA, which regulates the general administrative procedures and the provision of these procedures to the users in Montenegro, is in line with the standards and requirements of good administration. The Law introduces two key legal institutes which are to ensure simplification and, thus, more efficient implementation of administrative procedures – **one stop shops**[207] and the "**once only**" principle.[208] The harmonisation of sectoral laws with the new law has been finalised, although the harmonisation of other laws governing various administrative procedures, in terms of the related requirements, time limits and fees, still remains a challenge for the Government.[209] The MPA started a thorough assessment of the laws and by-laws that need to be brought into compliance with the GAPA, by sending the ministries a questionnaire on the status and current level of harmonisation of legislation within their remit with the GAPA. Given that the GAPA came into force in 2017, more time is needed to monitor and assess its implementation/impact. The MPA developed and adopted *the Methodology for Monitoring and Evaluating GAPA Implementation* (GAPA M&E Methodology, more in the GAPA Implementation section below) but the first report is not due before the end of the first quarter of 2019.[210]

The Law on Services[211] of 2017 provides for directions on introducing the single point of contact concept and principles in Montenegro, wherefore it is relevant to the digitalisation of government services and their availability at one single entry point.

The Law on Electronic Communications[212] of 2012 is much more in line with EU directives in this area than the prior previous legislation. The Agency for Electronic Communications and Postal Services (EKIP), an independent regulator for the sector, is in charge of its development and implementation.

The Law on Electronic Government[213] (hereinafter: the Law on e-Government) of 2014 envisages the development a single infrastructure for electronic data exchange. However, the

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[205] General Administrative Procedures Act, the Official Journal of the Republic of Montenegro Nos. 56/2014, 20/2015, 40/2016 and 37/2017.

[206] Legality, equity, equal treatment, proportionality, lawful exercise of discretion, openness and transparency, impartiality, objectivity and due diligence.

[207] The one stop shops act as the citizens' primary contact point for accessing multiple administrative services and information

[208] In the context of the public sector, the "once only" principle means that citizens and businesses supply diverse data only once to a public administration

[209] As Ms Marija Tomović of the Directorate for Public Administration, MPA of the Republic of Montenegro, said in her interview to ReSPA Regional Expert for Serbia and Montenegro Ms Jelena Miletić, on 1 March 2018 in Podgorica

[210] *Ibid.*

[211] Law on Services, Official Journal of the Republic of Montenegro No. 071/17

[212] Law on Electronic Communications, 2013, Official Journal of the Republic of Montenegro Nos. 40/2013 and 56/2013 – amendments.

[213] The Law on Electronic Government, Official Journal of the Republic of Montenegro No. 32/14.

necessary infrastructure has not been developed yet. Moreover, this Law improves the conditions for the public administration to serve citizens and businesses, by eliminating administrative barriers and reducing significantly the time users spend communicating with the public administration. **The Government withdrew t**he draft amendments to the Law on e-Government from the parliamentary procedure in March 2018.

The Law on Electronic Documents[214] regulates the manner of use of electronic documents by citizens and businesses, as well as by state institutions in legal and administrative proceedings.

The Law on Electronic Identification and Electronic Signature[215] was adopted in May 2017. This law regulates the conditions for the use of electronic signature, electronic stamp, electronic timestamp and electronic delivery service in legal transactions, administrative, court and other procedures and certificates for the authentication of the website, as well as the electronic identification system and the conditions for recognition of electronic identification means of other countries.

c) Institutional Framework and Set-Up

The Ministry of Public Administration (MPA)[216] was recently created and took over the competences of two ministries. It has, on the one hand, assumed the competences of the erstwhile Ministry of Information Society, covering digital government policy and implementation and the use of modern information technologies in the public administration. On the other hand, it has taken over jurisdiction related to the public policy making and implementation regarding local self-governments, public administration reform and administrative simplification, which had been within the remit of the Ministry of the Interior (MoI).[217] The MPA is a horizontal, coordination body in charge of the overall PAR process, including public service delivery policy and digital projects in Montenegro, and, as such, monitors the implementation of the 2016-2020 PARS and the Information Society Strategy 2020. As the key coordination ministry for the overall PAR sector, the MPA should work on the introduction and management of the quality management system in the public administration of Montenegro, which is still missing.

The e-Government policy in Montenegro is within the remit of the MPA, specifically its **Directorate for e-Government and Cyber Security** that deals, inter alia, with information technologies and e-registers. Apart from the Ministry of Finance, the MPA is the only ministry with direct horizontal impact on the work of other ministries.

Pursuant to the Law on Electronic Communications, the **Agency for Electronic Communications and Postal Services (EKIP)**[218] is an independent regulatory agency in charge of this sector and all related issues. Montenegro is the only country in the Western Balkans in which the state no longer has any ownership in the electronic communications sector. The former Ministry of Information Society and Telecommunications (which ceased to exist) had been in

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[214] Law on Electronic Document, Official Journal of the Republic of Montenegro No. 05/08.

[215] The Law on Electronic Identification and Electronic Signature, Official Journal of the Republic of Montenegro No. 031/17.

[216] The website of the Ministry of Public Administration of the Republic of Montenegro: www.mju.gov.me

[217] http://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Monitoring-Report-2017-Montenegro.pdf, p. 97

[218] The website of the Agency for Electronic Communications and Postal Services: https://www.ekip.me/eng/

charge of this sector; information technologies, electronic communications and the related issues within the state administration are now under the jurisdiction of and coordinated by the Ministry of Public Administration, more specifically by its Directorate for e-Government and Cyber Security. This leaves Montenegro without an independent body to implement projects building digital government infrastructure.

3.5.4. Analysis of Service Delivery of Key Thematic Fields

a) GAPA implementation

The adoption of the General Administrative Procedures Act (GAPA) in Montenegro created a solid foundation for the implementation of new principles and institutes, providing for more efficient public services. One of the objectives of GAPA implementation is simplification of administrative procedures, which is supposed to be easier and faster with the adoption of the new legislation governing the implementation of administrative procedures. Namely, digitalisation is one of the instruments for achieving the planned administrative simplification, and the GAPA created the requisite preconditions for the digitisation of the state registers and, thus, the gradual digitalisation of public services. Furthermore, digitalisation is also a precondition for a fully functional electronic government (e-Government), a major factor in creating modern public administration, wherefore the novelties introduced by GAPA represent an accelerator of the overall PAR process. However, the slow pace of simplifying and accelerating administrative procedures remains one of the major challenges for the Government. In addition to the fact that the GAPA is not fully implemented yet and that the demanding and time-consuming process of harmonising other laws with GAPA is pending, not all the state institutions have the appropriate and modern technical equipment necessary for delivering digital services.
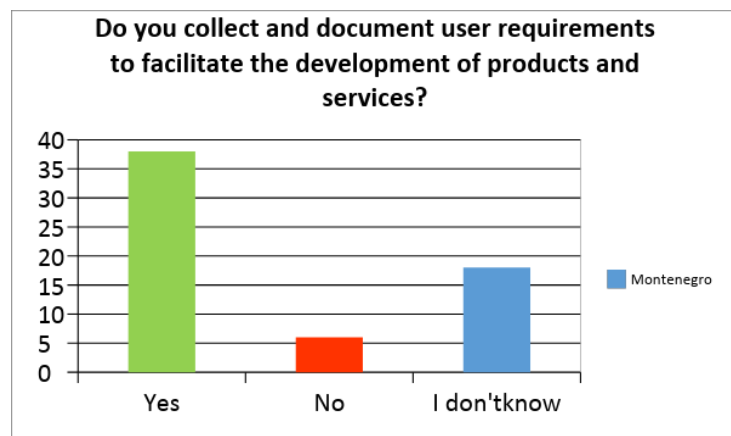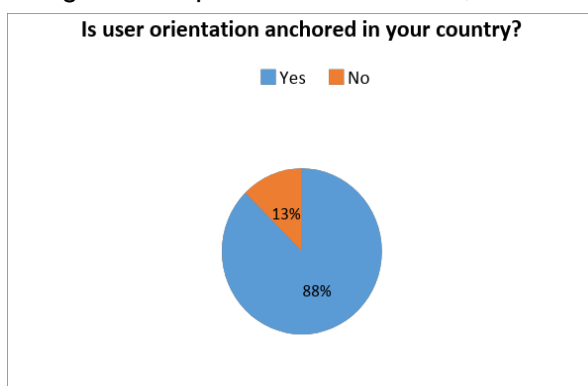
An important development in Montenegro in regard to the GAPA implementation is the development and the adoption of *the Methodology for Monitoring and Evaluating GAPA Implementation.* Montenegro is the only country in the region that has a thorough methodology for monitoring and evaluating GAPA implementation. However, its usability and applicability are difficult to assess at the moment, as the MPA has not envisaged its application before the development of the first report on GAPA implementation, which is to be prepared by the end of the first quarter of 2019.

This is reflected also in the results obtained from the Online Questionnaire. Proportionally and comparatively Montenegro scored the highest results on anchorage of user's orientation in the country.

Similarly, its collection and documentation of user requirements in order to facilitate the development of services is above the Western Balkan average. However, the adoption of the GAPA M&E Methodology represents just the first step and only the results of consecutive monitoring and implementation of conclusions and recommendations will reflect its successfulness. This should assist Montenegro in analysing user needs, not only in the GAPA area, but in the service delivery area in general as well. Administrative simplification in Montenegro started back in 2015. The Council for the Improvement of the Business Environment, Structural and Regulatory Reform (SRR) had been responsible for administrative simplification

Montenegro Inspiring Practice No. 2 –: "No Barriers! So Business Doesn't Wait"
Ministry of Finance Initiative aiming to administrative simplification broader and proactive engagement of the users (mainly businesses) an online platform www.bezbarijera.me. This initiative was implemented as part of the broader framework of the Cutting Red Tape – Public Administration Tailored to the Needs of Citizens and Businesses project implemented by the UNDP in close cooperation with the Ministry of Finance, and with financial support of the British Embassy. The project identified all the administrative obstacles businesses face in their operation. The campaign was partly successful due to insufficient user engagement and inputs to the simplification process. However, the added value of the project is the information on business barriers in term of overregulation and administrative procedures, and concrete recommendations for their improvement, collected within the campaign.

until recently, when it was dismantled. There are numerous initiatives aiming to simplify administrative procedures in the country, implemented by non-governmental actors, with the support of international donors. However, Montenegro still ranks 60th in the 2018 Doing Business report 2018 on the starting a business indicator. To illustrate, it takes 10 days in Montenegro to start a business as opposed to one day in the best ranked countries. Montenegro ranks 78th on issuance of construction permits indicator. Although the number of procedures and the time needed to obtain a construction permit are comparable with other countries in Europe, the procedure in Montenegro is also the most expensive.[219]

There is **no formal monitoring report on administrative simplification**, and thus no proper insight in the current process of administrative simplification. Although the **Ministry of Finance adopted in 2012 the Instructions on the Development of Regulatory Impact Assessment Reports,**[220] **ineffectiveness of RIAs**[221] **is another obstacle to efficient administrative simplification as RIA is one of the mechanisms of great significance for the process of diminishing the administrative burden**.

Public Perceptions of GAPA Implementation

Regarding awareness of government administrative simplification initiatives or projects, 46% of Montenegrin citizens have held the view that the government has made efforts or launched initiatives to simplify administrative procedures simpler for citizens and businesses in the previous two years; 85.5% of the citizens aware of such efforts and initiatives opined that they had led to improved service delivery in the previous two years; 38% of the pollees thought that dealing with the administration has become easier and 41.5% held the view that the time needed to obtain administrative services had decreased in the previous two years. The percentage of citizens who said that the government had increasingly been moving towards digitalisation in the previous two years stands at 63.8%. Only 30.6% of Montenegrin citizens were aware that e-services were

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[219] World Bank 2018 Doing Business report, available at:
http://www.doingbusiness.org/content/dam/doingBusiness/media/Annual-Reports/English/DB2018-Full-Report.pdf
[220] Instructions on the Development of Regulatory Impact Assessment Reports, Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Montenegro, 10 February 2012.
[221] SIGMA 2017 Monitoring Report, available at: http://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Monitoring-Report-2017-Montenegro.pdf, p. 100.

offered in Montenegro. Of them, 69.3% confirmed they were informed of ways to use e-services. Among those familiar with using e-services, 28.6% said they had used e-services sometimes or often in the previous two years. The few that have used e-services, mostly agree that they are easy to use (80.7%).[222]

As noted above, one stop shops and the once only principle are the two novel institutes introduced by the GAPA that have created a solid foundation for administrative simplification and improving the efficiency of public service delivery. As such, they warrant special attention, although additional efforts need to be invested in their full implementation.

(1) One Stop Shops

Montenegro Inspiring Practice No 3 - Social Card – Integrated Social Welfare Information System

One of the first initiatives was the Government ISWIS ("Social Card") supported within the UNDP project "Social Card – Integrated Social Welfare Information System". ISWIS is an electronic data exchange infrastructure which has slashed the number of paper-based proofs, which the citizens need to submit to the Social Welfare Centres when applying for different services. ISWIS covers business processes: case management, social transfers/application for benefits, processing, approval, monitoring and audit, calculations, payments, new record-keeping system, improved supervision and management, reporting and, creation of real-time data for evidence-based policymaking

At the moment, there are one stop shops in Montenegro for only few public services. However, the strategic commitment of the Montenegrin government is to introduce one stop shops for all public services until 2020[223], taking into consideration the importance of developing both digital and conventional one stop shops. Regarding the latter, the Montenegrin Government initiated the development of a conventional one stop shop (based on the Azerbaijan ASAN-hidmat model, as per the Memorandum of Understanding between the Azerbaijan and Montenegrin Governments) until mid-2020.[224] On 23 June 2018, the meeting between the Azerbaijani and Montenegrin government representatives reaffirmed cooperation on the development of the first conventional one stop shop in the country.[225] By focusing on the conventional one stop shop, the Government showed understanding for different social dimensions in the population, i.e. the part of the population that does not use computers.

There are two functional one stop shop services available via the central e-Government portal (www.eUprava.me/en/) – professional development and student loans. Through this service, students can check whether they fulfil all scholarship requirements. Another, not so successful example of simplification of administrative procedure is of the online tax declaration channel for businesses operational since 2014 at the Tax Administration's Central Business Register. However, apart from the fact that it is available only to businesses, this service remains incomplete because businesses cannot perform all procedures at the one stop shop. On the other hand, it is not possible to declare and pay personal income tax online.

[222] WeBER, Public Perception of State Administration's Citizen Orientation, 2017, https://weber-cep.s3.amazonaws.com/data/attachment_394/mne_5sd_p1_i1_summary.pdf

[223] As Director of the Montenegrin MPA Directorate for e-Government and Cyber Security of MPA Ms Milica Janković told ReSPA Regional Expert for Serbia and Montenegro Ms Jelena Miletić during the interview in Podgorica on 1 March 2018.

224 Ibid.

[225] http://www.mju.gov.me/vijesti/186273/Marakes-Nastavak-saradnje-na-uspostavljanju-One stop shop-centara-u-Crnoj-Gori.html

The MPA initiated an electronic one stop shop devoted to one of major life events – birth of a baby (based on the Serbian model, more in the Serbia Country Profile). However, this OSS is not operational yet.

(2) Once Only Principle

Figure 28: Once Only
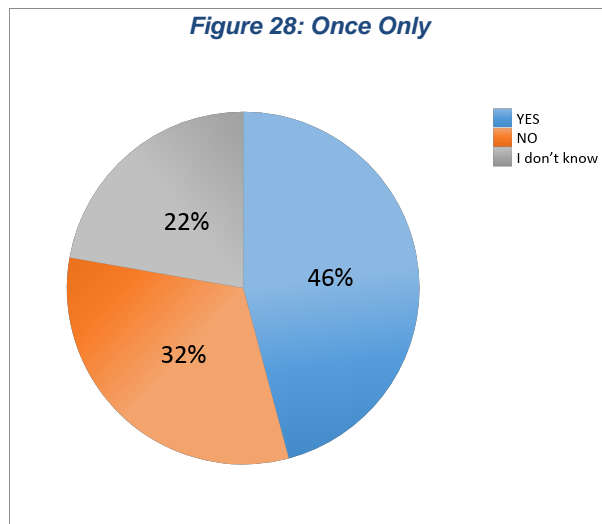
Most administrative procedures still require paper-based submission of information already available to the public administration. Although the GAPA introduces the once only principle, there is no specific time limit or penalty for any state institution that fails to comply with the principle.

This contradicts the assessment of the implementation of the once only principle by the public administration in practice (collected through the Online Questionnaire).

The Single Point of Contact was introduced as a concept and principle in Montenegro under the new Law on Services and the Decree on Service Single Points of Contact, both of which were aligned with the EU Services Directive. The Government's idea was to use the central e-Government portal www.eUprava.me as the single point of contact. Although the Law on Electronic Government imposed upon state institutions the obligation to use the portal as the main entry point for their digitalised services, not all institutions have been offering their e-services through the portal. Furthermore, confusion still arises in practice whether one should access information through the www.eUprava.me portal or the Government's website www.gov.me; the former is the e-Government portal of Montenegro while the latter provides information about the Government and its work. This contradicts the single point of contact principle.

The Government should invest more efforts in the promotion and enhanced functionality of the envisaged single point of contact solution in order to achieve its full applicability in practice.

b) Digitalisation and e-Government

Scoring 0.6733, Montenegro ranked second (preceded by Serbia) among Western Balkan countries on the 2016 UN e-Government Development Index (EGDI).[226] This indicates very fast e-Government policy development of the country. This fast development trend is also obvious from Montenegro's rating on the Online Services Index (OSI) and the e-Participation Index (EPI) – it had soared more than 25 places, specifically – 32 on the latter from 2014 to 2016.[227]

However, both e-services for citizens and businesses and systems that have been introduced within public bodies to increase citizen participation are underused.[228] Furthermore, the regional

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[226] UN e-Government Survey 2016: e-Government in Support of Sustainable Development. United Nations, Department for Economic and Social Affairs, New York 2016. p. 156

[227] *Ibid p. 61*

[228] ReSPA e-Government Study, p. 78

survey conducted within the WeBER project showed that only 31% of citizens were aware of e-services offered to them by their public institutions. In addition, an extremely low share of citizens in Montenegro use online services to e.g. pay bills (only 2%) and government e-services (1 %!), as the 2018 Balkan Barometer survey showed.[229] This indicates low public awareness of the benefits of using the Internet and the digitalisation of public services, and thus calls for Government measures to raise public awareness in this field.

The Government established a central online e-Government portal for public service delivery for citizens and businesses www.eUprava.me, which is more user-friendly and easier to access via mobile devices. The design of the e-Government portal enables all state institutions using it to generate and fully define the structure of an electronic form in line with the services they offer and institutional preferences, after which the form is sent to the MPA for approval. As of 31 December 2017, a total of 249 services of 32 institutions were offered via the e-Government portal. However, a sizeable share of these services – 113 altogether - is still only informative in nature; 136 services are electronic services,[230] only one of which (student loans) is fully provided online. Together with the scholarship application service, it accounts for almost 100% of transactions through the e-Government portal.[231] It can be concluded that the e-Government portal provides valuable information on the offered services and a rather full catalogue of available services rather than being a real one stop shop.[232]

Besides the central e-Government portal, which provides a very limited number of online services to the users, there are a number of other points of entry to various electronic services:

> the country has a functional electronic register of licences (e-licences – http://www.euprava.me/elicence1);
> e-business registration via the Central Business Register Agency;
> e-petitions;
> e-public procurement, which at the moment only enables searches of public procurement notices and Public Procurement Agency reports by notice and period;
> online portal via which citizens can request birth, citizenship and residence certificates (www.dokumenta.me) or the one where they can change their place of residence (www.biraci.me);
> digital systems for budget transparency, et al.

All these different points of entry to a number of e-services represent "islands of excellence". However, the existence of multiple entry points reflects the problem of the lack of offering services through a unique, central portal and in a systematic manner. One of the reasons may lie in the fact that the MPA's Directorate for e-Government and Cyber Security has been calling on state institutions to offer their digital services via in line with the provisions of the Law on Electronic Government while providing them with insufficient technical or other support throughout the process. The Law on Electronic Government (see more above in the section on the legal framework) envisages that all state institutions are obliged to use the e-Government portal to offer their services online. Therefore, the Government, particularly the **MPA, as the coordinator of the overall public administration reform process, should invest additional efforts in**

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[229] RCC, 2018 Balkan Barometer 2018, p. 78

[230] MPA 2017 Report on the e-Government Portal, March 2018

[231] *Ibid, p. 106*

[232] http://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Monitoring-Report-2017-Montenegro.pdf p. 106

assisting service providers in providing their services fully online through the e-Government portal.

As noted, the MPA has been calling on the other ministries and public authorities to digitalise their services, in line with their obligation under the Law on Electronic Government and make them available on the central e-Government portal. As recently assessed, public administration bodies in Montenegro are currently in charge of 153 different electronic registers, but there is no unified record of all registers managed by the public administration.[233] The Government announced the integration of the state institutions' registers by 2020. However, guidelines on the digitisation of registers binding on public administration bodies have not been adopted yet.

Full interoperability has not been achieved yet although Montenegro has an updated NIF in line with the EIF, and thus the basic preconditions for interoperability among the key registers of state institutions, full interoperability is still not achieved. Most main registers are digitised but not all of them are part of the mentioned government interoperability framework yet, which has precluded efficient application of citizen-oriented services, such as one stop shops and the once only principle. When the Government Service Bus (GSB) was launched as an information system for electronic data exchange among state institutions, it linked the registers of six institutions: Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Science, Tax Administration Ministry of Education, Real Estate Authority and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. The GSB recently exited the test phase and additional services can be added to it. **The Government needs to achieve full interoperability, full digitisation and online availability of the basic public registers in order to make a genuine shift towards customer centric service delivery.**

The Government has also initiated the development of the Open Data Portal – www.data.gov.me, which was launched in August 2018. This process has recently started and there is no additional information on its progress. The Government's initiative to update the information in formats which can be reused (open data formats) has been lauded as a positive step forward and crucial progress towards open government. However, the process of opening government data should be further strengthened and receive central Government support to succeed. Currently there are 30 datasets on Open data Portal.

Montenegro Inspiring Practice No. 4 - eDMS in the Ministry of Public Administration
In 2011, the Government started with the implementation of the electronic document management system (eDMS). A total of 331,933 cases and 557,439 documents were uploaded via this electronic system by various state institutions/bodies until 2017. This system plays an important role in the digitalisation and simplification of public service delivery to citizens and users, as it ensures the reduction of the space needed for storing and archiving paper-based documents, faster and easier access to information, improved monitoring and oversight of the state institutions' fulfilment of their tasks and obligations, and unification of business processes (document format and structure). Namely, the risk of misplacing a case/document is reduced to a minimum, and the work of ministries is more efficient in terms of time and document exchange. A mechanism supporting the functioning of e-signatures is organised as an integral part of eDMS, within the Digital Signature module in the system. E-signatures are verified by digital certificates.

This system faced some major technical obstacles to its full functionality. These obstacles can mainly be ascribed to the fact that the system was developed in 2011. However, the technical obstacles were removed, as per the last report on eDMS implementation produced regularly by the MPA, and the MPA vowed to invest additional efforts in advancing the system and its technical

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[233] The New Law on Administrative Procedure: Long-Lasting Goodbye to the Service Counter, Institute Alternativa, p.

redesign.[234] As proof of this commitment, continuous training in using the system is being organised for employees of state institutions, which is prerequisite for improving the technical functioning of the system. So far, 211 users have been trained on the use of eDMS.[235]

The results of the Online Questionnaire conducted among the representatives of public institutions at different levels within the ReSPA Comparative Study on Service Delivery, show the following results for Montenegro in the domain of e-service standards:[236]

Figure 29: Montenegro - Commitments to Service Delivery

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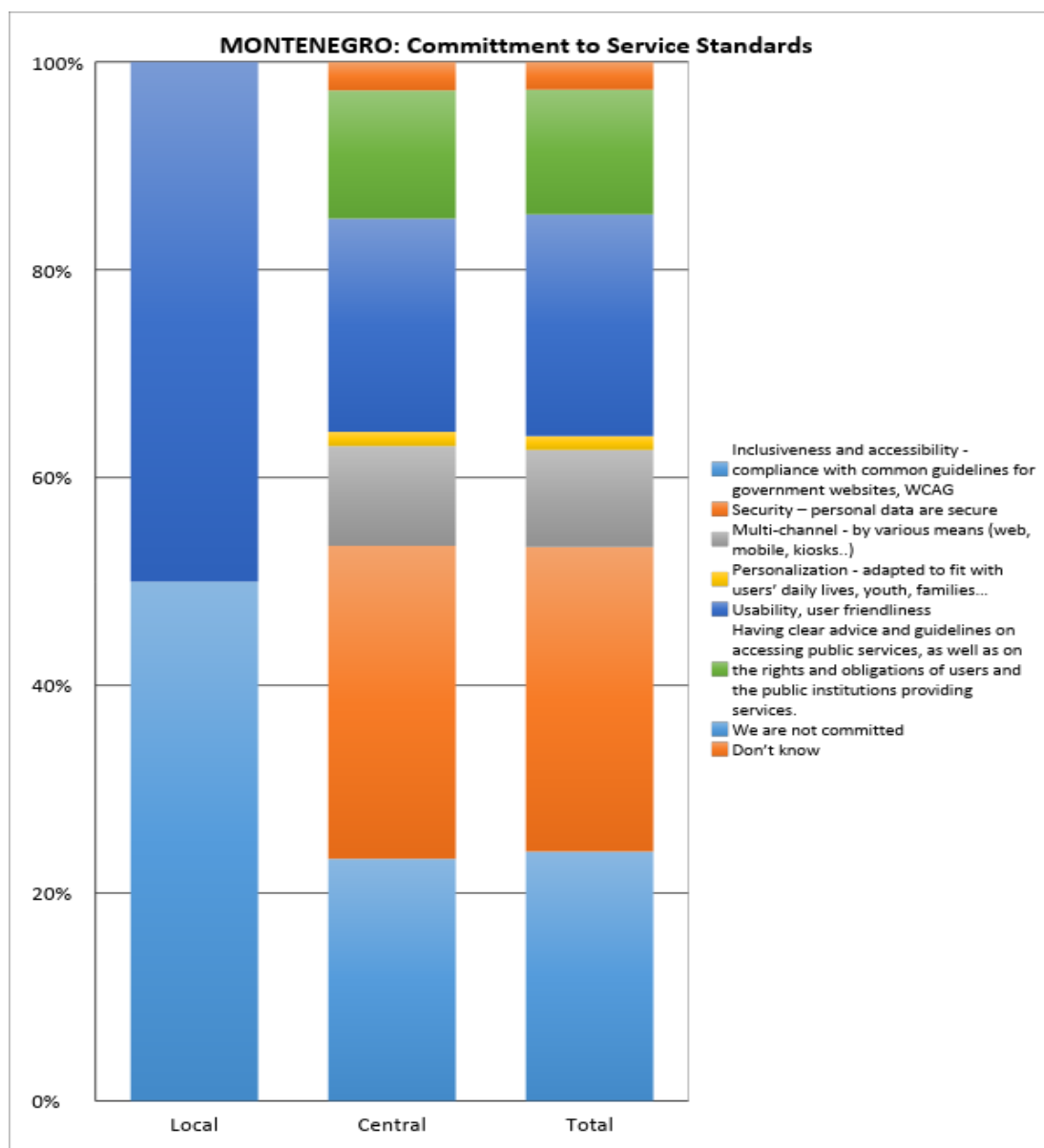
[234] *Ibid.*

[235] *Ibid.*

[236] Online Questionnaire, e-service standards, results for Montenegro

The Questionnaire also examined the perceptions of e-service usability among the representatives of public institutions. The results for Montenegro[237] in relation to this topic are presented below:

Figure 30: What Standard Usability Features Apply to Your e-Services?

What standard usability features apply to your e-services?
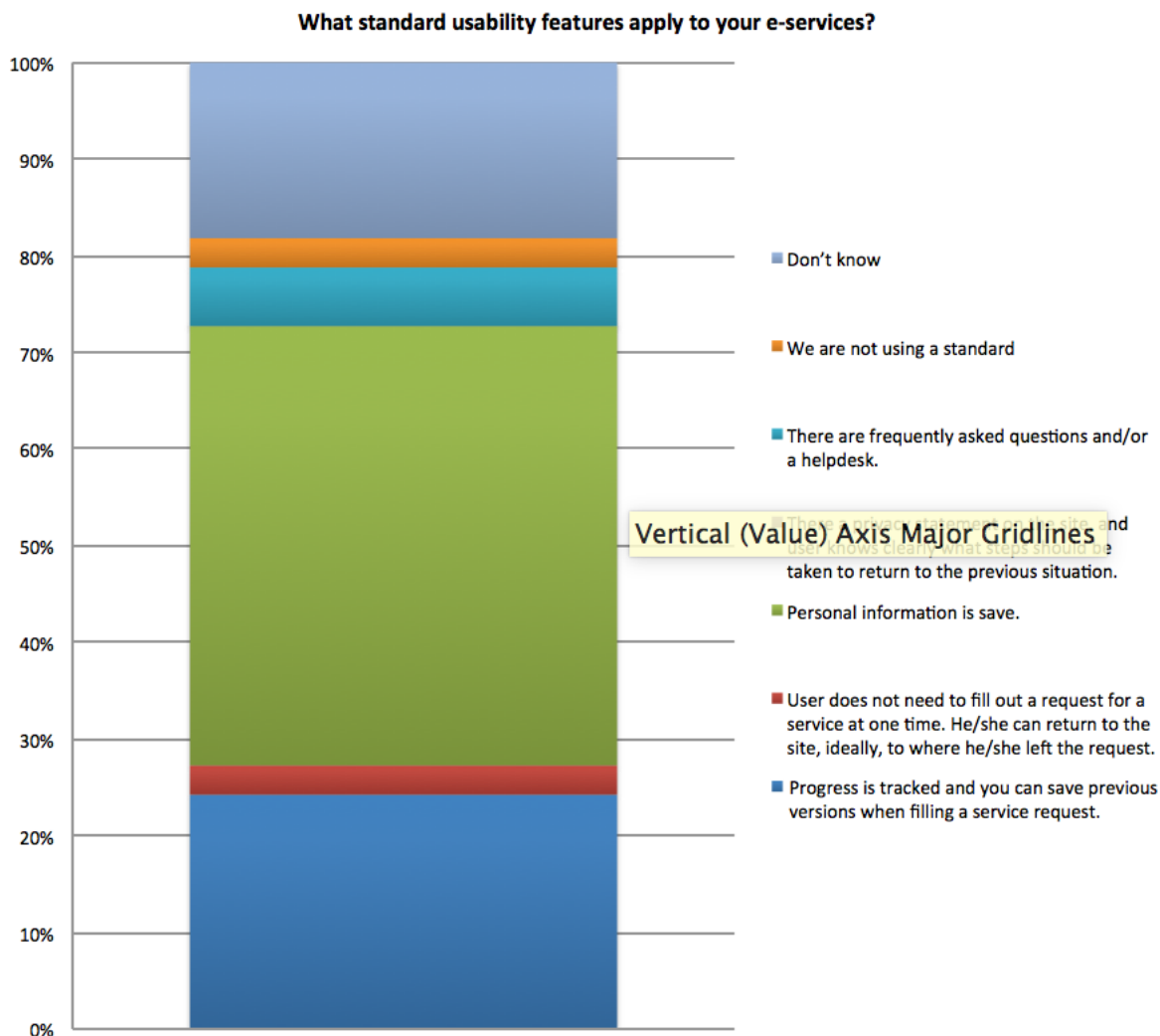
Electronic Signatures are extensively used but mostly by businesses. Like in Serbia, the reason for this lies in the fact that citizens need additional technical equipment and installation of software for the use of the necessary card readers, as it is carried out via the ID cards. In addition, the challenge of high costs of issuing digital signatures remains, as does low convenience and lack of relevant services for which the digital signature can be used. Therefore, the relevant ministry should consider introducing a central mobile phone authenticating/signature building block enabling the use of electronic signatures via mobile phones, not requiring the installation of software or any additional hardware (card reader).

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[237] Online Questionnaire, e-service usability, results for Montenegro

A summary of available enablers, e-service building blocks and their usage is provided in the following Table and Chart:

Portal	Enablers	Building blocks	Registers
Single sign on available: Yes	e-ID available and used: Yes	No of information systems interconnected to Government Interoperability Platform: 0	The majority of main registers are digitised
Service catalogue available: Yes, but not for all services	e-Documents circulating: Yes	e-Forms available: Yes	
No of transactional e-services available: 455	Mobile authentication available: Yes	e-Payment available: No	
No of registered users: 53,515 (as of August 2018)	eSignature available and used: Yes	e-Invoicing available: No	
No of transactions/services rendered per year: 8.369 (in 2017)	No of registered e-Signature providers: 1	e-Delivery available: No	
Personalsed My Portal with my data and my e-Documents available: No	No of eSignatures issued: 7,070 (as of August 2018)		

The responses of public institution representatives to Online Questionnaire questions on digital enablers in Montenegro[238] show the following:

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[238] Online Questionnaire, digital enablers, results for Montenegro

Figure 31: Montenegro - Usage of Centrally Available Digital Enablers?

Legend:
- Others
- e-deliery & e-invoicing
- e-payment
- Single sign in
- e-Signature
- Mobile authentication
- generic e-ID
- own IT systems and own e-ID
- We don't use/have any digital enabler
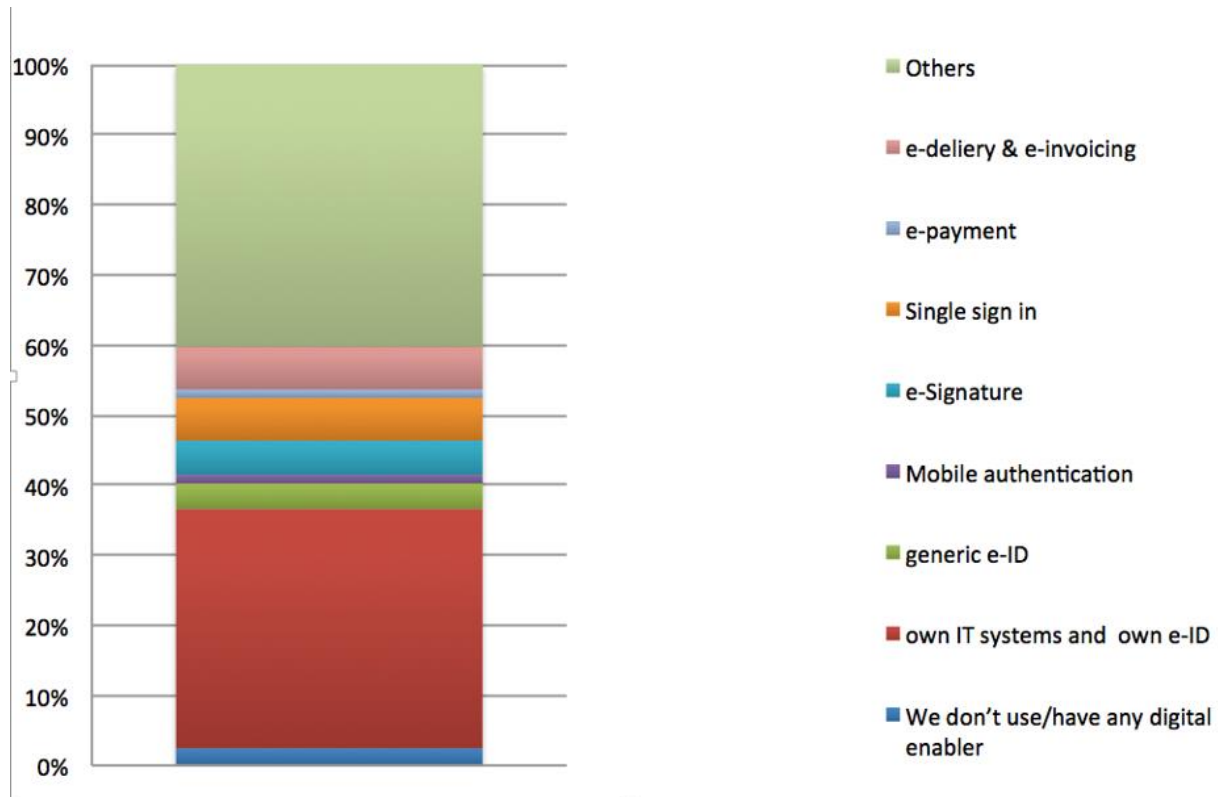
c) **Quality Management in Service Delivery**

There are **no systematic government monitoring mechanisms** in the area of public service delivery. The former Ministry of Information Society conducted ad hoc citizen satisfaction surveys from time to time, in order to establish a trend in the change of user satisfaction with public services. MPA's capacity to centrally monitor service delivery and influence their improvement is still limited.

Figure 32: Systematically Measured of User Satisfaction

This is also illustrated by the number of institutions, which indicated in their replies to the Online Questionnaire that they systematically measured user satisfaction.

The Montenegrin PARS,[239] as the strategic document for the service delivery area of PAR, outlines only a few indicators for measuring the overall impact of reform in the public service delivery area; they focus on the implementation of activities and are not result-oriented (e.g. the indicator is formulated in terms of the number of conducted citizen

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[239] The 2016-2020 Public Administration Reform Strategy, available in English at: https://bit.ly/2JqTMJ6

satisfaction surveys). In addition, the indicators are defined at the immediate, output level, not at the outcome level (e.g. number of e-services). **Quality management in the overall administration is at a very low level**. Only a few individual institutions have introduced quality management (e.g. ISO standards) or conducted customer satisfaction surveys of their own accord. Therefore, a quality management system does not exist at a systematic level but is rather *ad hoc*.

Official performance of public services delivery should be improved, including the one covering digital services.

> **Montenegro Inspiring Practice No. 1 - Methodology for Monitoring and Evaluating GAPA Implementation**
>
> With UNDP's support, the MPA is about to start the implementation of the second phase of the project envisaging the development of a methodology for the systematic measurement of user satisfaction and quality of services, as well as the development of a single index for quality measurement. This composite index will include seven indicators and will be developed for each institution based on the values of these indicators, facilitating benchmarking among institutions based on the quality of their service provision. The Government, more specifically the MPA, announced the launch of a conventional one stop shop in 2020, which will introduce the possibility of measuring user satisfaction by introducing electronic tablets for assessing the quality of the provided service at the place of its provision.

In addition to the official (Government-led) initiatives, there are also a number of projects initiated and implemented by civil society actors, which have contributed to the more efficient monitoring of the national PAR processes, including the service delivery area. One such initiative is the WeBER project,[240] within which the PAR Scoreboard, - a tool for monitoring performance in the Western Balkan countries in the field of public administration reform - was developed. The Scoreboard includes service delivery indicators (and corresponding sub-indicators), each of which is linked to a SIGMA/OECD PAR principle: Indicator 1: Public perception of state administration's citizen orientation (Principle 1); Indicator 1: Public perception and availability of information on citizens' feedback regarding the quality of administrative services (Principle 3); Indicator 1: CSOs' perception of accessibility of administrative services (Principle 4); Indicator 2: Availability of information regarding the provision of administrative services on the websites of service providers (Principle 4). The WeBER project was mentioned in the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Civil Society Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey as good practice example of monitoring progress in the PAR sector.[241]

User Engagement

A quality management system entails, inter alia, systemic checks of user satisfaction with public services provide. Consequently, user engagement tools should be in place and functional as a precondition for overall quality management. Montenegro has no systematic mechanism or initiative to engage users of public services in their design to a greater extent. The survey conducted at the regional level as part of the WeBER project showed that 80% of citizens said they had no opportunity to express their opinion on the quality of services received by the state institutions in the previous two years. **There are no Government initiated, systematically used user engagement tools.**

A number of surveys aimed at either measuring public involvement in defining public services or at collecting information about public perceptions in Montenegro on engagement in service

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[240] More at http://www.par-monitor.org/pages/par-monitor-methodology

[241] https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/csf_evaluation_report_appendices_wbt_dig.pdf

delivery, are presented below. All these surveys indicate generally low user engagement in service delivery:

> ➢ The annual public opinion survey instrument, the Balkan Barometer, commissioned by the Regional Cooperation Council, shows that an alarming percentage of citizens in Montenegro do not even discuss government decisions – 56%, while a fifth of the interviewees stated they discussed government decisions only in private (20%);[242]
> ➢ The regional survey conducted within the WeBER project in 2017 showed that 32.9% of the pollees confirmed that the public administration had called on the citizens to propose improvements to administrative services in the previous two years, and that 82.8% of them said has acted on their feedback and improved the services.[243]

The 2018 Balkan Barometer also provides more detailed information on public satisfaction with the public institutions and services in each of the Western Balkan countries. The results for Montenegro with respect to four different aspects of citizen satisfaction with public institutions and services are presented below: [244]
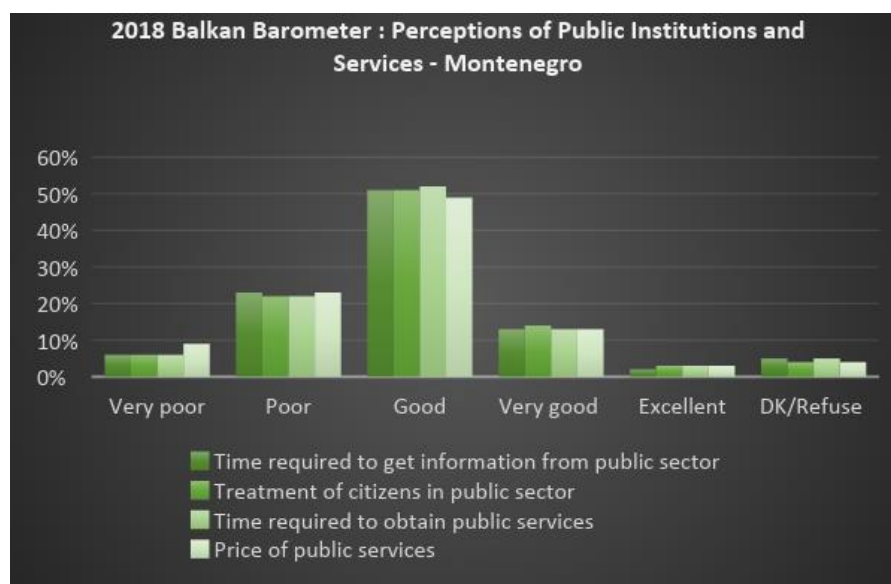
Within various donor supported initiatives, CSOs have been developing and applying different tools to increase engagement of citizens and businesses.

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[242] RCC, 2018 Balkan Barometer, p. 137

[243] WeBER. Public Perception of State Administration's Citizen Orientation, 2017, https://weber-cep.s3.amazonaws.com/data/attachment_394/mne_5sd_p1_i1_summary.pdf

[244] https://www.rcc.int/seeds/files/RCC_BalkanBarometer_PublicOpinion_2018.pdf

Also, **e-participation** as an option that needs to be better promoted so that citizens, civil society and business entities can actively participate in the consultation process. In a word, it is necessary to make changes so that e-participation, reports by citizens and e-petition options for public participation and accountability are used much more.**[245]** Montenegro ranked high on the Online Service Index (OSI) of the UN 2016 e-Government Survey - between 0.50 and 0.76, and very high on the e-Participation Index (sub-set of the OSI indicators on e-Information, e-Consultation and e-Decision Making) the highest in the region, together with Serbia.[246]

3.5.5. Accessibility and Service Delivery for Vulnerable Groups

The Government adopted the strategic and legal frameworks regulating equal accessibility to public services for persons with disabilities and other vulnerable/marginalised groups of society (women, elderly, national minorities, etc.). Furthermore, as part of its commitment to improve accessibility and service delivery to these groups, the Government of Montenegro envisaged that 65% of vulnerable social groups gain IT literacy by the end of 2014 and 85% by 2016,[247] which will enable them to access a number of services in the country that have been, or are about to be, digitalised. In 2009, the Government ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol.[248] Its **2016-2020 Strategy for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities**[249] defines accessibility for this group of the population as one of the seven key areas.

Montenegro has enacted general anti-discrimination legislation: **the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination,**[250] which recognises discrimination against persons with disabilities, and, the **Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities**[251] as a l*ex specialis.* The latter establishes the basis for accessibility to public services for this vulnerable

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[245] ReSPA e-Government Study, p. 80

[246] UN e-Government Survey 2016: e-Government in Support of Sustainable Development. United Nations, Department for Economic and Social Affairs, New York 2016. pp. 59 and 189

[247] Screening Report Montenegro Chapter 10 – Information Society and Media, 2013, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/montenegro/screening_reports/screening_report_montenegro_ch10.pdf, p.3

[248] The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), available at: https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html

[249] The 2016-2020 Strategy for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities, Government of Montenegro, available Montenegrin at: http://www.zaposliosi.me/slike-informacije/19/strategija%20za%20integraciju%20lica%20sa%20invaliditetom%20u%20crnoj%20gori%20pdf.pdf

[250] The Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination, Official Journal of the Republic of Montenegro Nos 46/2010, 40/2011 – other law and 18/2014, available in Montenegrin at: http://www.paragraf.me/propisi-crnegore/zakon-o-zabrani-diskriminacije.html

[251] The Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities, Official Journal of the Republic of Montenegro No. 39/2011, available in Montenegrin at: http://www.paragraf.me/propisi-crnegore/zakon-o-zabrani-diskriminacije-lica-sa-invaliditetom.html

group of the population, by prohibiting discrimination in access to public facilities and spaces, and use of public services, as well as in terms of service delivery. However, **the Law on Spatial Planning and Construction of Facilities**[252] is of particular relevance to accessibility to public services by vulnerable groups. Article 62 of this Law enumerates the urban-technical conditions ensuring access and movement of persons with limited mobility, while Article 165 provides for the adaptation of public facilities to ensure unimpeded access by persons with limited mobility. In addition, the Government adopted **the Rulebook on Detailed Conditions and Manner of Adapting Facilities for Ensuring Access and Movement of Persons with Limited Mobility**, and **the Decision on the Installation, Construction and Removal of Access Ramps, Elevators and Similar Facilities Facilitating Access and Movement of Persons with Limited Mobility**. However, SIGMA assessed in 2017 that the quality and accessibility of public services in Montenegro was moderate (rating it with a 3).[253]

To address the e-inclusion of marginalised groups, the Government undertook some further measures focusing on e-Accessibility for All, Digital Literacy for All and ICT in Business. These measures are also in line with ReSPA's 2015 recommendations on raising the level of accessibility of e-services for all users, especially for national minorities and marginalised groups, and enabling users outside the country to use e-services.[254]

To illustrate, the Government developed Guidelines on the Creation of Electronic Documents in Compliance with e-Accessibility, including, inter alia, instructions on the use of pdf, word and excel documents for people with visual impairments. The MPA commendably developed the Guidelines in close cooperation with the Association of the Sight-Impaired of Montenegro, demonstrating the Government's willingness to make a step towards user-oriented policy for service delivery.

However, **the central e-Government portal** (www.eUprava.me), and the Government website, are **available only in Montenegrin, but not in the languages of the largest national minorities in the country** (especially in Albanian). This renders most of the e-services inaccessible to a significant portion of the Montenegrin population.

3.5.6. Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Short-term Recommendations

- ➢ GAPA1: MPA is to ensure systematic application of the thorough GAPA M&E Methodology, already developed and adopted by the MPA. Once available, the results should be shared and evaluated together with the end users' representatives (including NGOs/CSOs and businesses).
- ➢ GAPA2: Specific time limits and penalties for the public administration's failure to apply the once only principle due to the lack of awareness of its benefits, as defined by GAPA, should be legislated and enforced. This will help eliminate the need to submit information already available to the public administration in hard copy.
- ➢ GAPA3: The Government should make Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIA) more operational and complement them with Financial Impact Assessments (FIA) so that they can be used as effective and efficient mechanisms for reducing the administrative burden.

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[252] The Law on Spatial Planning and Construction of Facilities, Official Journal of the Republic of Montenegro Nos. 51/08 and 34/11

[253] SIGMA 2017 Montenegro Monitoring Report, p. 98

[254] E-Government Analysis: From e- to Open Government. ReSPA. 2015, p. 79

- eG1: The MPA should raise public awareness of the benefits of using the Internet for obtaining government services (e-services).
- eG2: The MPA should assist service providers in providing their services fully online through the e-Government portal.
- QM1: The Government, or the MPA as the ministry in charge, should raise awareness among the public institutions of the benefits of user engagement in service design and measuring their quality.

Mid-Term Recommendations

- GAPA1: Ensure full harmonisation of other laws and relevant legislation with the GAPA.
- GAPA2: Develop a system for the systematic collection of evidence-based data needed for monitoring the implementation of the strategic and legal frameworks on accessibility and service delivery for vulnerable groups.
- GAPA3. Introduce regular reviews/scanning of administrative obstacles in order to be fully aware of them and the required actions, with a view to improving the efficiency of policy making by the key decision makers.
- eG1: The Government should reallocate resources for the development of digital government solutions, following the examples of the leading countries in the region (e.g. Albania).
- eG2: Upgrade the technical capacities of all state institutions (software, e-Documents readers, etc.) necessary for a fully functional e-Government.
- QM1: Improve overall monitoring of public service delivery, for both conventionally offered and digital (e-) services.

Long-Term Recommendations

- GAPA1: The Government should invest more efforts in promoting and enhancing the functionality of the central e-Government portal as the single point of contact in order to achieve full accessibility of the offered e-services through the portal.
- GAPA2: Introduce regular systematic monitoring of GAPA implementation.
- eG1: Achieve full interoperability, full digitisation and online availability of the main public registers in order to make a genuine shift towards open government.
- eG2: Further improve the accessibility of public services for all users through various offline and online channels, especially for vulnerable/marginalised groups of the population.
- eG3: Initiate the development of m-government, as complementary with e-Government, to enable use of government services via mobile telephones.
- QM1: Establish a solid quality management system in the public administration that will be coordinated at the central level and ensure continuous capacity building of the public administration for using user satisfaction measurement tools.
- QM2: The MPA should promote the application of user engagement tools among the state institutions and the Government and require that they are deployed in each and every state institution, at least in the redesign of public services, as well as when asking for user feedback.

3. 6. Service Delivery Country Report for SERBIA

"As noted, Serbia has recently made progress in creating a more user-oriented administration when it comes to public service delivery to its citizens and businesses. The legal framework for efficient public service delivery was put in place with the adoption of the new General Administrative Procedures Act, and after the harmonisation of the valid legislation, this law will provide for significant improvements in this area.

Another opportunity for further advancement in the area of e-Government, with focus on e-services, came with the establishment of the Government Office for Information Technologies and e-Government, as a precondition for full strategic coordination in this area. Herewith some of the best practice examples identified during the development of this Study:

- Public Policy Coordination system developed by the Public Policy Secretariat (PPS), linked with the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Government Programme (APIGP), identifying public service delivery as a key priority area,
- e-GAPA information system launched in 2017 by MPALSG,
- Digital one stop shops for major life events, the first of which is related to the birth of a baby (*"e-Baby"*) and, as of recently, *parental allowances and local benefits*. Both one stop shops were organised to automatically collect information and documentation from several main registers, and the challenge is to ensure that they are available to all citizens as there have been problems in guaranteeing their accessibility to some vulnerable groups and in some rural areas. MPALSG will invest in creating more e-services based on the "one stop shop" principle, which was piloted in around five local municipalities this year, creating the best possible services.

Serbia is keen on improving the availability of public services to all citizens, particularly vulnerable groups, transparency of data, and especially the participatory approach through the Open Government Partnership."

Mr Branko Ružić, Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Governments, Republic of Serbia

3.6.1 Acronyms

AP	Action Plan
e-GAPA	Electronic Online System for GAPA implementation
ERP	Economic Reform Programme
GAPA	General Administrative Procedures Act
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GSB	Government Service Bus
ITE	Central Government Office for Information Technologies and e-Government
LPS	Law on Payment Services
LSG	Local Self-Government
MoI	Ministry of the Interior
MPALSG	Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Governments
MTTT	Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications
NIF	National Interoperability Framework
OGP	Open Government Partnership
PAR	Public Administration Reform
PARS	Public Administration Reform Strategy
PPS	Public Policy Secretariat
RGA	Republican Geodetic Authority
RIA	Regulatory Impact Assessment
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WB	World Bank
WCAG	Web Content Accessibility Guidelines
WeBER	The Western Balkan Enabling Project for Civil Society Monitoring of Public Administration Reform

3.6.2. Executive Summary

The existing policy and strategic framework aiming at improving the service delivery area of the PAR process is in place. The various strategies within this framework are mutually complementary and cover various areas of service delivery in Serbia. Although some elements of various strategic documents appear to overlap, each of them closely regulates a specific part of the PAR process, and more specifically, a particular aspect of service delivery in Serbia. The existence of multiple strategies covering various aspects of service delivery require a central monitoring and coordination mechanism, which is currently under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Governments (MPALSG). MPALSG's declared commitment to and interest in conducting regular systematic monitoring of the overall area of service delivery based on predefined criteria is, however, undermined by its insufficient capacity.

The situation regarding the legal framework is similar. Namely, upon the adoption of the GAPA in early 2016, the main law governing the implementation of administrative procedures and contributing to the improvement of a number of public services in Serbia, the Government adopted and/or amended a set of relevant laws, presented below. Systematic monitoring of GAPA implementation does not exist, wherefore the MPALSG has initiated the development of a methodology for monitoring the implementation of this law. The methodology was not finalised by the time this Study went into print.

Both the implementation of the legislation on general administrative procedures and digitalisation in Serbia have been supported through various donor projects. There is a certain level of complementarity of these initiatives and they generally fill the major gaps in the service delivery area.

Quality management, however, remains one of the major problems, both in terms of the overall public administration reform process and in terms of service delivery. Serbia still has no systematic measurement of the quality of public services, although the MPALSG has initiated the development of a methodology for measuring user satisfaction with public policies.

3.6.3. Service Delivery Framework

a) Policy and Strategic Framework

The policy and strategic framework, as well as the legal framework for the implementation of the PAR processes in Serbia, have been developed and adopted by the Government and include the framework for efficient and quality public service delivery. The Government has over the past decade adopted several strategies and action plans aimed at improving citizen-oriented services, as presented below. The policy and strategic documents have been grouped based on the sector or area they regulate, namely the overall policy and strategic framework, the one more citizen oriented and finally, the framework regulating more business-oriented services:

The over-arching strategic document for the whole public administration reform is **the Public Administration Reform Strategy**[255] (hereinafter: PARS) and its Action Plan[256] for the 2018-2020 period, which is about to be finalised.[257] The PARS, inter alia, deals with open government, e-Government, as well as regulatory reform and public policy management. The area of regulatory reform and public policy management is further elaborated within the 2016 Strategy for Regulatory Reform and Public Policy Management (more below). The PARS monitoring and reporting system has improved. Namely, the MPALSG has been preparing regular six-month reports on the implementation of the PARS Action Plan;[258] it has also published its Report on the entire period covered by the previous, 2015-2017 AP.[259]

The 2016-2020 Strategy for Regulatory Reform and Improvement of Public Policy Management[260] and its Action Plan were adopted in January 2016. This Strategy complements and contributes to the successful implementation of the PARS, and its adoption completes the legal framework for the efficient implementation of the overall public administration reform in Serbia. The Strategy provides strategic guidelines on creating an efficient and effective public administration, fully oriented towards citizens and businesses. Simplification of administrative procedures is one of the four strategic objectives of the Strategy and its fulfilment will directly contribute to the higher quality of public services in the country.

The Action Plan for the Implementation of the Government Programme[261] was prepared in 2015 by the Public Policy Secretariat (PPS). One of its sections focuses on better public service delivery. However, this Action Plan is not publicly available: neither is the system for online coordination, which is under construction.

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[255] The Public Administration Reform Strategy of the Republic of Serbia (PARS), available in English at: http://www.mduls.gov.rs/english/reforma-javne-uprave.php

[256] The 2015-2017 Action Plan for the Implementation of the PARS, available in English at: http://www.mduls.gov.rs/english/reforma-javne-uprave.php

[257] The Sector Reform Contract for Public Administration Reform. Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II) 2014-2020, available at: https://bit.ly/2JytLqJ

[258] All five semi-annual monitoring reports on the implementation of the prior PARS Action Plan are available in English at: http://www.mduls.gov.rs/english/reforma-javne-uprave.php

[259] 2015-2017 PARS AP Implementation Report, available in English at: http://www.mduls.gov.rs/doc/PAR%20Report_eng_mar2018.pdf

[260] The 2016-2020 Strategy for Regulatory Reform and Improvement of Public Policy Management, available in Serbian at: https://bit.ly/2sC2pGr

[261] The Action Plan for the Implementation of the Government Programme is not available at the moment

The 2016-2018 Plan of Priority Activities for the Reduction of Administrative Burdens in the Republic of Serbia (Stop to Bureaucracy Plan),[262] adopted in 2016 aims at improving administrative service delivery. The Stop to Bureaucracy Plan identifies and proposes measures for eliminating administrative obstacles in the citizens' life events.

The 2010-2020 Strategy for the Development of Electronic Communications[263] was the first to set the crucial, key guidance on the development of electronic communications in Serbia. It and the **2010-2020 Strategy for the Development of Information Society**[264] represent the Digital Agenda for Serbia. Serbia aligned its Digital Agenda with the EU Digital Agenda. The implementation of the **2015-2018 Strategy for the Development of e-Government**[265] (hereinafter: e-Government Strategy) is under way and its Acton Plans are regularly adopted, albeit with some delay, the effects of which are examined in greater detail below. The Central Government Office for Information Technologies and e-Government (ITE) regularly publishes annual reports on the implementation of this Strategy.[266] The Digital Agenda (i.e. the two aforementioned strategies regulating electronic communication and information society), which is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications (MTTT), provides general guidance and rules on the use of information technologies, as well as tools for e-communication for all users in the Serbian society in all areas. These two strategies mutually complement each other, although they appear to overlap in certain parts. On the other hand, the e-Government Strategy is under the jurisdiction of MPALSG and, relying on the Digital Agenda adopted by MTTT, it defines the electronic functioning of the public administration and additionally elaborates and tailors the general guidelines, rules and tools to the specific needs of the public administration institutions in their provision of public services to citizens and businesses in Serbia.

To illustrate, the MTTT defines electronic documents for the needs of the entire society, while the MPALSG accepts the general definition of the electronic documents but adds to them the specificities of the public administration's way of functioning.

The National Interoperability Framework (NIF)[267] was developed and adopted in January 2014 by the Government, setting the basis for a common interoperability framework with agreed services, timelines and objectives. The NIF includes the technical standards and is established on the data exchange infrastructure – Government Service Bus (GSB) developed on the Microsoft Platform. In January 2018, the Office for Information Technologies and e-Government developed and adopted an additional document accompanying the NIF – the List of Interoperability Standards.[268] The NIF is prerequisite for better quality, faster, and cost-efficient delivery of public services to

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[262] The Plan is available in Serbian at: www.mduls.gov.rs/doc/Stop%20birokratiji%20konacni.doc

[263] The 2010-2020 Strategy for the Development of Electronic Communications, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia No. 68/10.

[264] The 2010-2020 Strategy for the Development of Information Society, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia No. 51/10.

[265] The 2015-2018 Strategy for the Development of e-Government in the Republic of Serbia, available in Serbian at: http://www.mduls.gov.rs/doc/Strategija%20razvoja%20eUprave%20sa%20AP%202015-2018.pdf

[266] The reports on the implementation of the Action Plans for the Implementation of the 2015-2018 Strategy for the Development of e-Government are available at: http://www.ite.gov.rs/latinica/dokumenti-izvestaji.php

[267] The National Interoperability Framework, Ministry of Trade and Telecommunications, January 2014, available in Serbian at: http://mtt.gov.rs/download/2/18/NOI%20Srbija2013.pdf

[268] Interoperability Standards v 2.1: Technical Interoperability, Office for Information Technologies and e-Government, January 2018, available in Serbian at: https://bit.ly/2LVP6Zj

citizens and businesses in Serbia and the implementation of the "once only" principle and "one stop" government.

The 2018-2020 Action Plan for the Implementation of the Open Government Partnership (OGP)[269] was being drafted at the time this Study was finalised and was to be published in the coming months.. The Independent Review Mechanism (IRM)[270] noted in its draft 2014-2016 evaluation report some improvements in the implementation of the OGP Action Plan. One of them pertains to the increase in the use of digital technology for a more open government.

The 2015-2017 National Programme for Countering the Shadow Economy[271] aimed, inter alia, to do away with de-stimulating tax policies and the huge administrative burden as one of the causes of shadow economy. More specifically, the third objective of the Programme was to reduce the administrative and para-fiscal burden on businesses and citizens. The analysis of the causes and effects of shadow economy in Serbia included in the Programme concluded that there were "relatively high tax and para-fiscal burdens with added administrative barriers and high administrative costs for citizens and businesses."[272]

The 2018–2020 Economic Reform Programme (ERP),[273] adopted in January 2018, was qualified as "a progressive improvement" by the European Commission in its latest Serbia 2018 Report. The EPR is the key strategic document in Serbia's economic sector; its parts related to the business environment and the fight against the grey economy, which regulate complexity and business costs, and the one related to digital economy, are of importance for the quality of service delivery. Since 2015, Serbia has been among the top ten countries when it comes to the number of implemented regulatory reforms reducing complexity and business costs.[274]

b) Legal Framework

The adoption of the new **General Administrative Procedures Act (GAPA)[275]** created the foundations for the more systematic improvement of administrative procedures in Serbia. As various public services and their implementation are closely linked with a number of administrative procedures, the GAPA is simultaneously one of the major preconditions for improving the functioning of the administration and the realisation and protection of citizens' rights and interests. In addition to the GAPA, the Government adopted a number of other legislative enactments, which contribute to the improvement of services in the country. Although the impact of Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIAs) increased in the last period, their quality, as well as the measurement of the laws' real impact based on RIAs, is at a low level.

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[269] The 2016-2017 Action Plan for the Implementation of the Open Government Partnership, available in English at: http://www.mduls.gov.rs/english/reforma-javne-uprave.php

[270] The European Policy Centre (CEP) www.europeanpolicy.org is the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) for OGP in Serbia.

[271] The National Programme for Countering the Shadow Economy, December 2015, available in Serbian at: http://uzmiracun.rs/images/preuzmite/Nacionalni_program_za_suzbijanje_sive_ekonomije.pdf

[272] *Ibid.*

[273] The 2017-2019 Economic Reform Programme, Government of the Republic of Serbia, available in English at: http://www.eu-pregovori.rs/files/File/documents/ERP_2017_2019/ERP_2017_2019_ENG.pdf

[274] The World Bank 2017 Doing Business report: Equal Opportunity for All, available at http://www.doingbusiness.org/reports/global-reports/doing-business-2017

[275] The General Administrative Procedures Act, available in Serbian at: https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon_o_opstem_upravnom_postupku-2016.html

The new GAPA, which was adopted in early 2016, includes provisions aiming to improve the availability and accessibility of public information, introduces a new system of legal remedies, electronic communication, guarantee act, administrative contracts, nomotechnical and linguistic improvements of the traditional legal institutes and one stop shops[276] to facilitate service delivery at single points of contact, and the once only[277] principle. Moreover, the new GAPA sets the deadline for obtaining data from other institutions (15 days), encourages electronic transfer and institutes misdemeanour fines for non-compliance. As required by GAPA, the Government adopted the Decree on Obtaining, Processing and Sharing Data about Facts Registered in Official Records and Necessary for Administrative Decision-Making,[278] which provides state institutions with basic guidelines on the manner and tools for electronically exchanging data among themselves.

The Law on Electronic Documents, Electronic Identification and Trust Services for Electronic Transactions[279] was adopted in October 2017 and took the place of the former Laws on Electronic Signatures and Electronic Documents. The new Law introduced the electronic seal and signature, electronic delivery, time stamps and digital identity assurance levels as additional digital enablers for the provision of e-services. Under the Law, during the provision of electronic services, public authorities, as well as private companies, may perform the electronic identification of the person to which the respective service is being provided, while e-documents will be treated the same as paper documents. This Law is expected to improve the speed and efficiency of doing business, and the functioning and work of public authorities, as users need less time to obtain a service. This piece of legislation is another step forward in the ongoing process of the digitalisation and modernisation of the public administration in general. As the Law recently entered into force, more time will be needed to assess its real effects on the quality and efficiency of public services. Finally, under this Law, by-laws enacted pursuant to the Electronic Signatures and Electronic Document Laws (neither of which is valid anymore) will apply even after the expiry of these laws, until the adoption of appropriate regulations pursuant to the new Law (unless they are contrary to its provisions). In addition, the certification bodies, authorised to issue qualified electronic certificates and registered under the Electronic Signatures Law, will continue to operate, but are under the obligation to harmonise their business with the provisions of the new Law within the following 12 months.[280]

The 2014 **Law on Payment Services** (LPS)[281] provides a legal framework for digital payments and electronic money. The LPS marks a significant step towards the alignment of national payment service regulations with the EU regulatory framework, as it transposed into Serbian law Directive 2007/64/EC on payment services in the internal market (the Payment Services Directive) and Directive 2009/110/EC on the taking up, pursuit, and prudential supervision of the business

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[276] One stop shops act as the citizens' primary point of contact for accessing multiple administrative services and information.

[277] The "once only" principle in the context of the public sector means that citizens and businesses supply various data only once to a public administration.

[278] Decree on Obtaining, Processing and Sharing Data about Facts Registered in Official Records and Necessary for Administrative Decision-Making, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia No. 56/2017-3, available in Serbian at: https://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/reg/viewAct/7c6490d4-d845-4f4e-9ea6-8b1eb27489a8

[279] The Law on Electronic Documents, Electronic Identification and Trust Services for Electronic Transactions, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia No. 94/2017, available in Serbian at: https://bit.ly/2HjuIOi

[280] Assessment of the Law on Electronic Documents, Electronic Identification and Trust Services for Electronic Transactions, https://www.geciclaw.com/news-on-conducting-business-electronically-in-serbia/

[281] Available in English at: http://www.fic.org.rs

of electronic money institutions (the Second Electronic Money Directive). However, this Law does not provide for the introduction of electronic payments at public service delivery points.

c) Institutional Framework and Set-Up

As regards the institutional set-up for public service delivery, the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government (MPALSG)[282] is the main coordination body for the public administration reform process, including the service delivery area. However, there are still no resources and capacities to monitor and harmonise service delivery at the central level (MPALSG employs approximately 100 civil servants). MPALSG initiated the creation of an organisation unit in charge of coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the new GAPA within its Good Governance Sector. The capacity building of this unit will be supported through a donor supported project "Support to PAR Process in Serbia".[283] The project will build the staff's capacity the monitor GAPA implementation and the harmonisation of the valid legislation with the GAPA more efficiently. The Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications (MTTT)[284] is in charge of the development, revision and monitoring of the guidelines and tools for electronic communications and information technology for the needs of Serbia's entire society (e-signature, e-documents, e-certificates). In line with its remit, MTTT monitors the implementation of the national Digital Agenda (namely, the two mutually aforementioned complementary strategies). The MPALSG thus operates on a narrower scale than the MTTT as it tailors the rules and instruments developed for the needs of the entire society to the specific needs of the public administration. Although the division of roles is clear, and the two ministries cooperate well, there have been occasions when they had disputes about jurisdiction, e.g. when electronic delivery needed to be included in the Law on e-Government with all the specificities so it could be used by the state institutions, although it had been previously defined as a service under the Law on Electronic Documents that is within the MTTT's remit.

The Central Government Office for Information Technologies and e-Government[285] (hereinafter: ITE), which is directly accountable to the Prime Minister, was established in 2017 as the e-Government body with horizontal jurisdiction over all other state institutions and for all aspects of e-Government. This has been assessed as the major precondition for achieving strategic coordination in the e-Government area. Alongside the MPALSG's Good Governance Sector/Group for Support to e-Governance, which will be developing policy and strategic documents in this field, the ITE plays a major role in implementing and monitoring the e-Government related strategic and legal framework developed by MPALSG, coordinating electronic services provided to citizens and businesses, consolidating the state IT resources, ensuring the connectivity of various information systems and providing strong support and the basis for the development of Serbia's e-governance. However, neither the central institutions mentioned here, nor the e-Government Working Group created under the PAR Council, have formal authority to review or monitor government IT projects across the board. The Office is now in charge of preparing Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) for public websites and e-service channels of the national, provincial and local authorities (Version 5.0[286] was published in

[282] MPALSG's website: www.mduls.gov.rs

[283] The project "Public Administration Reform in Serbia" is supported by GIZ

[284] Website of the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications of the Republic of Serbia: www.mtt.gov.rs/en/

[285] Website of the Office for Information Technologies and e-Government: www.ite.gov.rs

[286] The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) for public web pages and e-service channels of the state, provincial and local self-government authorities, ETI, available in Serbian at: http://www.ite.gov.rs/doc/Smernice_5_0.pdf

2017). The e-Government Working Group, comprising government and non-government representatives, operates under the ITE. This Working Group used to be headed by the Director of the Directorate for e-Government. After the establishment of ITE as the central office in charge of e-Government, it is coordinated by the Head of that office. In addition to this centrally positioned institution in charge of e-Government, the Government Unit for the Implementation of Strategic Projects (the Delivery Unit) was established at the Prime Minister's Office to manage strategic initiatives at the highest Government level. The Delivery Unit is funded as part of the UNDP supported project – "Management of Citizen-Centric Policy Measures – Office of the Prime Minister", which is another government initiative aimed at improving citizen-oriented policies and the corresponding services.

3.6.4. Analysis of Service Delivery of Key Thematic Fields

a) GAPA Implementation

Figure 34: Is User Orientation Anchored in Your Country?
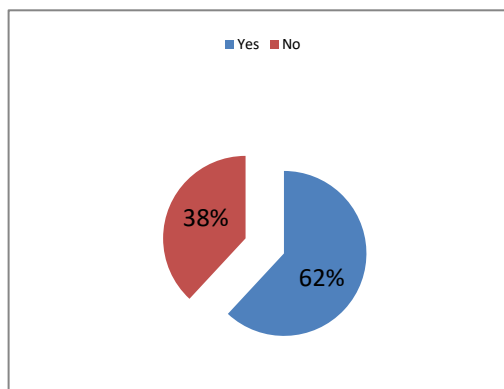
The adoption of the new GAPA in early 2016 created the preconditions for simplifying administrative procedures in Serbia and thus put in place solid foundations for the systematic improvement of service delivery in the country. **Systematic monitoring of the legislation regulating the general administrative procedures in the country is still lacking**, but the Government invested serious efforts in improving the situation. The quality of Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIAs) has significantly improved,[287] which is also prerequisite for the systematic reduction of administrative burdens. However, although the quality of RIAs and their impact may have improved with the introduction of Articles 39 and 40 of the Government Rules of Procedure,[288] mandating the estimation of administrative burdens incurred by any new law, such impact may still be limited. **However, the quality of RIAs is still not at the optimal level and measurement of the laws' real/operational impact is not ensured**, necessitating in the Government's greater focus in the coming period. An impact assessment of the new GAPA had been conducted, covering all the major challenges and including all major aspects of its impact on the society. Alongside regular measurement of GAPA's impact on society, regular monitoring of its implementation and measurement of its real impact every few (e.g. three) years should be performed through continuous communication and cooperation with civil servants applying the GAPA, including also those drafting amendments to other laws, and administrative court officials reviewing appeals against the decisions of government institutions. In addition to monitoring the application of the GAPA, the MPALSG

Figure 33: Financial Impact Assessment

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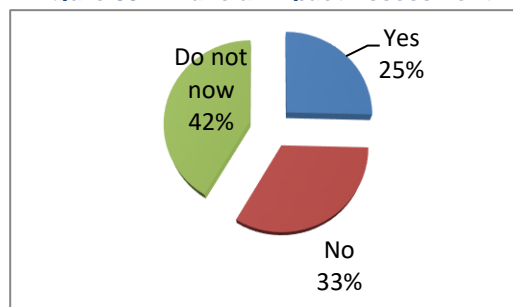
[287] The Public Policy Secretariat has provided detailed guidance on conducting RIAs.

[288] Rules of Procedure of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia No. 51/06, available in English at: www.legislationline.org/documents/id/16068, pp. 14-15.

should introduce continuous trainings and other tools for building these officials' knowledge of GAPA.

The level of anchoring the users' needs in development and implementation of public services in Serbia is at the regional average. There is a lot of room for improvement in this respect at the national level. Interestingly, focus on the users' needs is more clearly defined and embedded in the services delivered at the local level.

User orientation should be further ensured and embedded by an operational RIA methodology that is systematically applied, as well as the development and systematic application of Financial Impact Assessments (FIAs) of services envisaged to be redesigned or developed.

Although not the only one, but certainly one of the most valuable objectives and benefits of GAPA implementation in terms of efficient public service delivery, is the introduction of new instruments and legal remedies, which had not been in place before its adoption. This has provided a solid basis for the simplification of administrative procedures in the country and for the more efficient and user-friendly implementation of the legislation governing general administrative procedures. After the successful completion of the first phase of the electronic application of GAPA (see below), digitalisation of all the public services in the coming period remains in the focus of the second phase of e-GAPA implementation. The Government Service Bus has been established to facilitate data exchange among the state institutions.

At the time of its establishment and application for the exchange of documents among public administration institutions, the e-GAPA faced a major challenge, which is now being dealt with - resistance of the public administration staff to use the interoperability platform for electronic exchange of data and documents among themselves–compelling the public administration to use the interoperability framework. The reluctance was reflected in the state institutions' initially low interest in participating in the Working Group set up by the Government to coordinate the harmonisation of other laws with the GAPA. In addition, they requested the adoption of a formal regulation on the manner and reasons for collecting the data. In result, the **Decree on Obtaining, Processing and Sharing Data about Facts Registered in Official Records and Necessary for Administrative Decision-Making**[289] was adopted. However, their resistance started ebbing once they recognised the real impact and benefits of the system, which are twofold – on the one hand, the public institutions as the users of the system need less time to collect the necessary data and exchange them amongst themselves, relieving them of their workload; on the other hand, citizens and businesses as the users of the institutions' services, need less time to obtain public services. The assessment performed before the system was developed had indicated that the benefits of the system for the state institutions would be higher than its costs from the very start. The MPALSG has been fulfilling more easily its strategic role in the **coordination of state institutions' databases, which is the main precondition for a fully operational electronic government in Serbia**.

However, the one **remaining challenge regarding GAPA implementation is the MPALSG's lack of resources for efficient oversight and insufficient monitoring capacity**. Another challenge for Serbia, also recognised by the EC in its Serbia 2018 Report,[290] **is the**

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[289] Decree on Obtaining, Processing and Sharing Data about Facts Registered in Official Records and Necessary for Administrative Decision-Making, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia No. 56/2017-3, available in Serbian at: https://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/reg/viewAct/7c6490d4-d845-4f4e-9ea6-8b1eb27489a8

[290] EC, Serbia 2018 Report, April 2018, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-serbia-report.pdf. p. 13

harmonisation of a significant number of sector laws providing for special administrative procedures with the GAPA. More specifically, Serbia needs to harmonise over 200 laws and regulations with the GAPA. MPALSG planned to harmonise the existing regulations with the GAPA, while tracking new legislation, by June 2018. This has not been achieved yet, apparently for several major reasons. The first may lie in the lack of political will to find an efficient solution to the problem.[291] The second is the **poor responsiveness of ministries and other state institutions to the need to harmonise their legislation with the GAPA caused**, on the one hand, **by lack of impetus** from the top of the Government, and on the other hand, by their **low awareness of the importance of the harmonisation process**. The major problem identified in relation to the harmonisation of other laws with the GAPA arises in the second-instance state institutions as they are in charge of implementing these laws, most of which are not in line with the GAPA.

Let's take the case of the Competition and Monopoly Commission – GAPA lays down that it shall take a decision on a monopoly within two months, but the market analysis it needs to perform before issuing such a decision takes approximately 6 months!

Furthermore, there are several examples of institutions, which recently adopted new legislation without first aligning it with the GAPA. This is the consequence of **the lack of a centrally coordinated mechanism/body tasked with determining the level of alignment and harmonisation of the draft legislation with the GAPA before its adoption**. This is the case with the recently adopted Law Amending the Tax Procedure and Administration Law drafted by the Tax Administration.

Although efforts have been made to complete the harmonisation, the Government Coordination Body for Harmonisation of Laws with the GAPA concluded after one of its meetings that this would be a continuous process, with no end date for its completion. Although the goal was to **create legal security, the lack of harmonisation of other laws with the GAPA resulted in creating additional legal insecurity.**

Public Perceptions of GAPA Implementation

Regarding public perceptions of various government initiatives or projects related to the implementation of the GAPA the public perceptions survey conducted within the WeBER regional project showed that 55% of Serbian citizens agreed that the government had made such efforts or launched initiatives to simplify administrative procedures for citizens and businesses in the previous two years. Moreover, almost 76% of citizens aware of such initiatives agreed they had led to improved service delivery. However, only around 42% of citizens agreed that dealing with the administration had become easier in the previous two years, which closely corresponds to the share of citizens agreeing that the time needed to obtain services has decreased – 44%. On the other hand, more than two-thirds of the citizens (70.3%) agreed that the government was increasingly moving towards digitalisation. Slightly over 41% of citizens were aware that e-services were offered in Serbia and a vast majority of them (over 80%) described themselves as generally or fully familiar with the way to use them. Yet, utilisation of e-services in the previous two years was low, given that less than 35% of those knowing how to use e-services said they

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[291] Based on the results of the Focus Group meeting in Belgrade on 5 March 2018, organised and moderated by the ReSPA Regional Expert for Serbia and Montenegro

had used them often or sometimes. Lastly, a large majority of those who used e-services (86.2%) opined they were easy to use.[292]

<table>
<tr><td>Serbia Inspiring Practice No. 1 - e-GAPA - Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Governments</td></tr>
<tr><td>The e-GAPA was introduced as an electronic tool for the implementation of the GAPA. The introduction of e-GAPA has been applied in phases to facilitate its full applicability. The software integrates all the central registers of the state institutions and offers certain datasets to public institutions requiring various data in possession of other state institutions in order to render their administrative decisions. The e-GAPA, as the Government Service Bus, is based on a simple technical solution – the e-Government Portal (where the e-GAPA system is situated), which is accessed via an Internet browser for free and ensures the provision of web-based services and access to various databases to public administration institutions and local self-government authorities by means of a single sign-on. At the same time, it ensures a sufficient level of control over the institutions' actions by the e-GAPA administrator and high-level security of data exchange among the institutions. For citizens, this means spending less time waiting for various documents or issuance of personal documents, and thus more efficient public services, but also greater protection of their personal data in the possession of the state institutions. Another added value of the e-GAPA technical solution is that it allows the constant improvement of the system and inclusion of new services (and the corresponding forms and templates). Also, the technical solution is temporary, before the e-GAPA implementation is potentially transferred to the central GSB. The exchange of data among state institutions is regulated by the Decree on Obtaining, Processing and Sharing Data about Facts Registered in Official Records and Necessary for Administrative Decision-Making. Thanks to e-GAPA, a number of administrative procedures have been simplified, and thus, digitalised.</td></tr>
</table>

Electronic System for GAPA Implementation (e-GAPA)The e-GAPA (GSB) initially linked the registers of eight central institutions, which had centralised databases and were connected to the central system, all in all around 80% of all data in the official records: the registers of the MPALSG, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Finance – Treasury and Tax Administration, National Pension and Disability Insurance Fund, the National Employment Service, the Mandatory Social Insurance Central Register, the Republican Geodetic Authority (RGA) and the Ministry of Justice with 18 databases (register books − births, deaths, marriages, civil status documents, residence permits, unemployment records, tax debt records, etc.).[293] The RGA is now one of the strongest promoters of e-GAPA as it advises the other state institutions to request data from them exclusively via the e-GAPA system, despite the fact that the GAPA still allows exchange/ request of data from other state institutions in the form of a hard copy document, i.e. the official letter is still a valid form of data exchange. State institutions have been sending requests to MPALSG to add various services and documents to the e-GAPA system, wherefore the system is being gradually expanded.

The Government also invested significant efforts in integrating administrative procedures at the local level in the new e-GAPA. The MPALSG has identified 188 administrative procedures at the local level, including various procedures for citizens and businesses, while an additional 8-13 administrative procedures have been identified during the process of the preparation of the Law on Planning and Construction. The e-GAPA also enables electronic communication between the local self-governments (LSGs) and the largest public service owners, such as the Ministry of the Interior. There is an ongoing process of connecting all LSGs to e-GAPA to enable them to access the databases and automatically exchange data in the process of conducting administrative procedures. Some LSGs translated their administrative procedures into the languages of their national minorities (e.g. various personal document forms, such as birth or death certificates, the marital status certificate, e-Government services, etc.).

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[292] https://weber-cep.s3.amazonaws.com/data/attachment_393/srb_5sd_p1_i1_summary.pdf

[293] 2015-2017 PAR AP Report, available in English at: http://www.mduls.gov.rs/doc/PAR%20Report_eng_mar2018.pdf

Coordination of the PAR processes in Serbia, including the ones crucial for the service delivery area, is performed at the central Government level. Namely, besides the MPALSG as the main policy making body, various PAR processes, including service delivery and related GAPA implementation, have been entrusted to **the Delivery Unit established within the Office of the Prime Minister**. The Delivery Unit's PAR remit is mainly reflected in its coordination of the Stop to Bureaucracy plan (see the policy and strategic framework section above) aiming at simplifying administrative procedures and improving public services in Serbia. Furthermore, there is the ITE as the central government institution in charge of implementing e-Government related processes (more above, in the section on the institutional framework). Central cooperation of PAR processes, including many aspects of GAPA implementation, gives an important strategic impetus to the overall PAR process, and provides for improved communication and increased synergy among different state institutions. Still, there is a risk of turning processes related to administrative procedures into something reserved only for the central Government level.

For example, a project centrally managed by the Delivery Unit, which aimed at developing a one stop shop for registering the birth of a child, known as e-Baby (more below), was implemented thanks to the major efforts of the Delivery Unit that coordinated the linking of registers of various state institutions, the process managed by another central state institution – the MPALSG. This resulted in the introduction and application of the system without any major problems.

The implementation of the Stop to Bureaucracy Plan, one of major strategic documents targeting the simplification of administrative procedures in Serbia, is another positive example of a centrally managed and coordinated process aimed at improving public service delivery, backed by high-level political support, which led to good coordination and relatively quick and clear results (see the section on the policy and strategic framework above).

In addition, multiple ongoing donor-funded initiatives in Serbia have been addressing administrative simplification and aim at implementing the provisions and instruments introduced by the GAPA. This, above all, requires the integration of administrative procedures, which is still not at the optimal level in Serbia. However, mutually linked e-services are supported through various projects and by various donors, whose occasional lack of coordination has impeded full coordination and exchange of information among these projects and the relevant institutions. **Although they fill small gaps in overall GAPA implementation, these initiatives do not represent a systematic solution to the full implementation of the law.**

One such example is the Public Policy Secretariat (PPS) project aiming to improve the business environment in Serbia through the simplification and digitalisation of administrative procedures[294] and complementing its two-year initiative, e-Paper, which aims to establish registers of all administrative procedures in Serbia, optimise the 500 most frequently used and most expensive procedures, digitalise 100 licence issuance procedures, and reduce costs for businesses by at least 15% until 2021.[295]

Another complementary initiative aimed at fostering e-Government development is e-archiving, i.e. abolishing the obligation to store paper-based documents, and providing PA institutions with

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[294] Funded by the UK Good Governance Fund.

[295] http://www.rsjp.gov.rs/konferencija-e-papir/t

the possibility of storing them in digital form;[296] the new e-document authentication and e-signature system facilitated the process. Another initiative enabled the ministries to provide citizens and businesses with information on the status of their identification documents in a quicker and more efficient manner (e.g. the MoI will be able to send SMS to citizens notifying them their IDs are about to expire). Furthermore, there is an action to provide citizens and businesses access to the new digital certificates on a cloud. As part of the process, amendments to eight by-laws are being prepared.[297]

One stop shop and the once only principle are the two institutes/principles introduced by the GAPA, which created the foundation for administrative simplification and, subsequently, digitalisation of public services. However, the full implementation of these two institutes is still impeded in practice, as outlined below:

(1) One Stop Shops

Serbia Inspiring Practice No. 2 - Central Register of Integrated Procedures and the e-Construction Permit System

A central e-construction permit system is another business-oriented one stop shop. The system is hosted by the Business Registers Agency as it enables the electronic exchange of data in different registers, thus significantly reducing issuing times and in-person visits, without jeopardising process quality. The unique feature of this system is that the whole process is performed electronically, documents are originally in an electronic format. The average time for obtaining a construction permit dropped from eight months in 2012 to 28 days in 2018.

In its Serbia 2018 Report, the EC noted an increase in the provision of integrated e-services to citizens and businesses through digital one stop shops in the 2015-2017 period.[298] A number of both physical and digital one stop shops are operating in the country. Some of the most successful one stop shops in Serbia are mentioned and explained below:

Simplified business registration was among the first one stop shops enabled by the electronic transfer of Serbian Business Registers Agency data to the Tax Administration, Social Insurance

Serbia Inspiring Practice No. 3 - Automation of Life Events - Delivery Unit

A pioneer and most promoted citizen-oriented digital one stop shop developed within the project Welcome to the World Baby! (also known as e-Baby) is one of the best practices identified in Serbia. The system focuses on a life event (birth of a child) and automatically collects information and documentation from several main registers. The implementation of the initiative was efficient thanks to the fact that it was coordinated by the Delivery Unit (at the central Government level), as it required cooperation and coordination of a large number of various institutions in order to connect their registries and enable data exchange among them. The value added of this strategic project coordinated by the Delivery Unit is that it represents the first one stop shop for an administrative procedure and provides MPALSG (and other state institutions) with an example of how to optimise similar procedures for the users. It is at the moment being replicated to parental allowance and local benefits services, requiring interoperability and linking of ten different registers. The new services are piloted in three LSGs. This will ensure that these services are added to the existing procedure so that a parent does not have to go separately to apply for them, and thus represents a major step forward.

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[296] The project is implemented by the National Alliance for Local Economic Development (NALED)

[297] NALED, with support of GIZ

[298] EC, Serbia 2018 Report, April 2018, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-serbia-report.pdf, p. 13

Office, the National Bank and the national Statistical Office. Starting a business in Serbia used to take approximately 60 days in 2015 and now takes around two weeks.

Both the electronic business registration and e-construction permit systems contributed to the improvement of Serbia's ranking on the World Bank's Doing Business list in the relevant categories. In the 2017 Doing Business report, Serbia was ranked 32nd on starting a business and 10th on dealing with construction permits globally; it was ranked 43rd overall.[299]

This initiative is also coordinated by the Delivery Unit, which provides strategic impetus from the central Government level. In 2016, the e-service for enrolling children in preschool institutions (e-Kindergarten) was also introduced as an additional one stop shop.

The most recent example of a one stop shop is the one providing all employees and self-employed citizens (including farmers and some other categories) in Serbia with the possibility of electronically applying for the certification of their e-health cards. This was enabled by the system of integrated tax payments in the Tax Administration in 2014, which made it possible for the national Health Insurance Fund to automatically use the TA data and link them with the automatic certification of health cards. Electronic registration of entrepreneurs was launched on 1 January 2018; however, this platform for a public e-service is rarely used by citizens, and thought should be given to solutions/options for its optimal use (e.g. the Slovenian VEM ("*Vse na enem mestu*") project). The possibility provided to the users of public services in Serbia to electronically replace their driving licences with new ones is another e-service recently launched in Serbia.

(2) Once Only Principle

As noted, the once only principle was introduced by the GAPA, which came into effect in July 2016. Although this principle is one of the major novelties of the GAPA and creates an important basis for administrative simplification, the public administration's resistance to electronic exchange of official data remains high, as confirmed by the analysis of the results of the Online Questionnaire. Serbia is below the regional average. Less than one-third of public service providers believe that the once only principle is implemented. The principle is an untapped potential for administrative simplification, increased efficiency and effectiveness of the public administration and improved quality in service delivery.

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[299] http://www.doingbusiness.org/rankings

Figure 35: Once Only
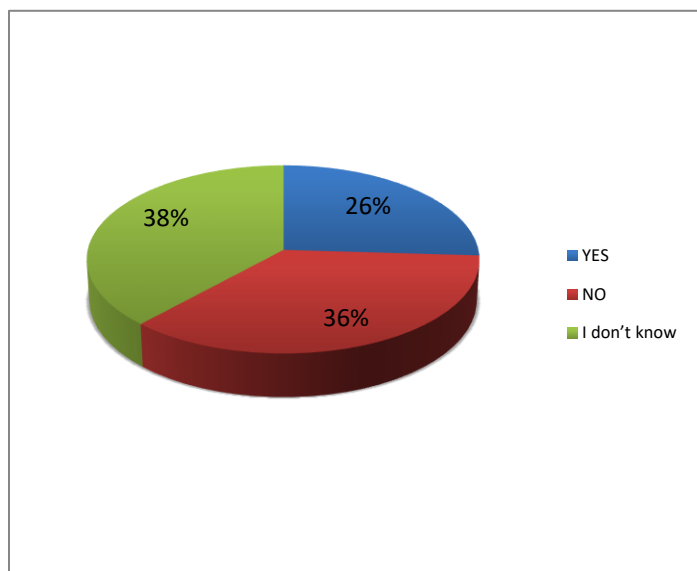
Still, for a certain number of administrative procedures (the MPALSG does not have their exact number), the relevant state institutions require paper-based submission/transfer of information although they have the possibility of exchanging them electronically. Citizens occasionally report these cases or insist on electronic exchange of data, depending merely on their level of knowledge about the related GAPA provisions. The situation has, however, been improving as the state authorities are becoming increasingly aware of the benefits in terms of time and effort needed for electronic data exchange. The e-GAPA system is to enable sending of applications of variable format with electronic signatures, their reception and subsequent delivery of replies in the form of an electronic document. However, the reason why some institutions still demand paper-based documents lies in the fact that not all of them have a document management system that would accept an electronic document as valid.

Full application of the once only principle by some institutions is hindered by the different quality of the main registers, preventing interoperability among these registers (more in the following section).

b) Digitalisation and e-Government

The country has recently slipped in the area of e-Government development compared with 2010, although its performance can still be qualified as average.[300] However, the Government's commitment to e-Government is reflected in its various strategic documents and legislation, as well as projects and activities within donor-supported projects contributing to opening government data, digitalisation, creation of new e-services and, eventually, to a fully operational e-Government.

Based on the Digital Agenda of Serbia – the e-communication and information society strategies defined by the MTTT (see above) both adopted in 2010, and the 2015-2018 Strategy for the Development of e-Government and the corresponding Action Plans for its implementation (more above) were developed to regulate the electronic functioning of the public administration. The adoption of the e-Government Strategy was in line with one of the results defined by the 2015-2017 PARS Action Plan, which envisaged the finalisation and adoption of the e-Government strategic framework. The 2017-2018 Action Plan for the implementation of the e-Government Strategy had been finalised almost at the end of the period covered by the previous Action Plan (2015-2016). This reveals one of the major problems in the Government's strategic planning process – delays in the adoption of action plans for the implementation of major strategic documents, which have impeded the monitoring of progress in the achievement of the envisaged results.

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[300] ReSPA, E-Government Analysis: From e- to Open Government, 2015

As described above, the Serbian Government adopted the NIF and the guiding document with all the technical standards of interoperability. The establishment of a central register of citizens and improvement of the existing registers are among the Government's strategic commitments for the 2018-2020 period, as reflected in the strategic objectives of the PARS AP. The NIF represents a common set of rules, procedures, tools and concepts necessary for non-fragmented interactions between users of public services and various state institutions. The establishment of a central register, prerequisite for achieving full interoperability among various registers, is still pending. However, the varying quality and digitisation of the main registers and often overlapping data in various registers in Serbia are a major challenge to the full implementation of interoperability, and thus, to the public administration's capacity to design more citizen-oriented services. Once digitised, they should be connected to the central **Government Service Bus.**

By the end of 2017, the National Open Data Portal[301] contained 48 open datasets published by state institutions in Serbia. [302] Its role is not only to represent a comprehensive open database, but to serve as an interaction forum with the public, i.e. the users of the data as well. The portal provides the users with cases of data usage, such as mobile applications or web applications using open data, their visualisation, maps, and other forms of open data usage. Open data requires the existence of data in digital format, but also in machine-readable, clearly organised and explained format, and, as such, is a major precondition for the operationalisation of e-Government.[303] In 2016, the Government established the Open Data Working Group comprising representatives of state institutions and civil society organisations. However, there is a need for a more active promotion of government openness in the administrative culture. All these considerations reflect the Government's decision to invest more efforts in opening government data, providing opportunity for increased engagement of citizens with public institutions and the well-informed public, resulting in more citizen-oriented services. Additional support to the Government in the area of data opening has been provided through various donor supported initiatives/projects, which have the full support of the beneficiary state institutions, thus reflecting the Government's commitment to the process of opening and digitalising data. Given that one of the major goals of opening government data is to allow public scrutiny and draw insights from the datasets that the Government does not analyse itself, citizens have the possibility of requiring access to these datasets and contributing to the design of citizen-oriented public service delivery.

"Open Data – Open Opportunities" is one such initiative, implemented with the support of UNDP and the World Bank since 2016.[304] This project succeeded in 2015 in motivating the pilot institutions - the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development; the Ministry of the Interior; the Public Procurement Office; the Agency for Environmental Protection; the Agency for Medicines and Medical Devices - to provide the first datasets in the open data format.

The Chart below presents the responses of Serbian institutions to the question on the use of e-services in the Online Questionnaire conducted as part of the ReSPA Comparative Study on Service Delivery:[305]

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[301] www.data.gov.rs/en

[302] 2015-2017 PAR AP Report, available in English at: http://www.mduls.gov.rs/doc/PAR%20Report_eng_mar2018.pdf

[303] http://workspace.unpan.org/sites/Internet/Documents/UNPAN95212.pdf

[304] http://www.rs.undp.org/content/serbia/en/home/ourperspective/ourperspectivearticles/open-data--open-opportunities.html

[305] Online Questionnaire, e-service standards, results for Serbia

Figure 36: Serbia - Commitments to Online Service Standards

SERBIA

Legend:
- Don't know
- We are not using a standard
- There are frequently asked questions and/or a helpdesk.
- There a privacy statement on the site, and user knows clearly what steps should be taken to return to the previous situation.
- Personal information is save.
- User does not need to fill out a request for a service at one time. He/she can return to the site, ideally, to where he/she left the request.
- Progress is tracked and you can save previous versions when filling a service request.

Some central digital enablers are well used. The digital signature (e-Signature) has been widely used by businesses since the adoption of the 2014 Law on e-Signatures, when electronic filing became mandatory for the value added tax (it became mandatory for corporate income tax and regular company financial statements in 2015). Use by natural persons is, however, lagging. This is mainly due to a low number of digital/electronic services available to citizens and technical inconvenience as most of the services require the possession of an ID card reader token by citizens (hardware for reading cards and corresponding software installation on the citizens' personal computers) which would enable them to use their e-signature. These technical difficulties are to be overcome by introducing the system of dual/two-factor authentication requiring pin-based authentication of users and no additional hardware for the users/citizens.[306] The fact that some state institutions still do not have a document management system that accepts electronic documents reflects their still low technical capacities to provide electronic services, as well as to

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[306] As MPASLG Adviser Mr Milan Josimov told ReSPA Regional Expert for Serbia and Montenegro Ms Jelena Miletić during the semi-structured interview on 10 July 2018

communicate electronically with each other. This form of authentication will enable the full application of m-government, which is in its initial development phase in Serbia. In addition, submission of tax returns does not exist at the local level.

The Government developed a single e-Government online portal (e-Government Portal. www.eUprava.gov.rs) for providing public services to citizens and businesses, which serves as a one stop shop for 760,000 registered users, both citizens and businesses and extends 710 different services made available by 143 state authorities.[307] The e-Government portal provides convenient access to information and a small but growing number of transactional services. The central portal has recently been technically improved.

In addition to the central government portal, there are several other online/e-services provided to users of public services in Serbia:

 ➢ Electronic payment service (e-Payment+) was initiated in 2017 with the aim of integrating the payment of administrative fees via independent applications of institutions offering their own electronic services. It envisages e-banking and/or m-banking payments by payment cards at the portal;
 ➢ The e-Public Procurement Portal (http://portal.ujn.gov.rs/), launched in 2015 under the amendments to the Public Procurement Law;[308]
 ➢ Government Portal for Electronic Tax Application (e-Taxes, http://eporezi.poreskauprava.gov.rs);[309] and,
 ➢ Electronic invoicing (e-Invoice) valid without e-signatures, developed as part of the EU funded e-Business Development Project.[310]

The Government has vowed to start the **development of m-Government** in Serbia, which will enable citizens in Serbia to **use the available public services via their mobile phones**.

The Chart below shows how representatives of public institutions in Serbia responded to the question on digital enablers in the Online Questionnaire:[311]

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[307] 2015-2017 PAR AP Report, available in English at: http://www.mduls.gov.rs/doc/PAR%20Report_eng_mar2018.pdf

[308] The Law Amending the Public Procurement Law, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia No 68/15.

[309] http://eporezi.poreskauprava.gov.rs/user/login.html

[310] More about e-invoicing in Serbia at: https://europa.rs/images/publikacije/E-Invoicing_ENG.PDF

[311] Online Questionnaire, digital enablers, results for Serbia

A summary of available enablers, e-services building blocks and their usage is provided in the following Table and Chart:

Portal	Enablers	Building blocks	Registers
Single sign on available: Yes	e-ID available and used: Available-Yes, Used-Yes	Number of information systems interconnected to Government Interoperability Platform:20	The main registers are digitised
Service catalogue available: Yes	e-Documents circulating: Yes	e-Forms available: Yes	Strategic commitments of the Government for the period 2018-2020, reflected in the PARS AP strategic objectives, include the establishment of the central register of citizens and improvement of the existing registers.
No of transactional e-services available: 12	Mobile authentication available: No	e-Payment available: Yes	There is still no a central citizen registry integrating the information from all the key registries.
No of registered users:760.000	eSignature available and used: Yes (but less by individuals in comparison to businesses)	e-Invoicing available: Yes	
No of transactions/services rendered per year: 710	No of registered e-Signature providers: 6	e-Delivery available: Yes	
Personalised Portal with personal data and e-Documents available: Yes	No of eSignatures issued:?		

More assistance should be provided to service providers to use centrally developed digital enablers to facilitate the development of their online services and integration with the e-Government Portal and GSB.

c) Quality Management in Service Delivery

There is no Government mechanism for monitoring the quality of public service delivery and quality management is not systematically applied. There have been few ad hoc initiatives by public institutions to introduce certain elements of quality management in their work, but none of them had been sustained. The MPALSG performs semi-annual monitoring of the PARS, including service delivery, according to the methodology established under the 2015-2017 PARS AP.[312] However, **MPALSG lacks the capacity to coordinate the systematic monitoring of the area of service delivery**. As regards the other relevant ministries/institutions, the MTTT, for example, collects data only on digital signature certificates, but does not systematically collect or monitor all data related to digital communication and electronic services. However, they are not systematically integrated into the monitoring of PARS implementation or crossed referenced with other data relevant to e-services and digitalisation.[313]

The same applies to **monitoring GAPA implementation**. The methodology for monitoring the implementation of this law is being developed within the GIZ "Public Administration Reform in Serbia Support to PAR Process" project in Serbia, and will upgrade the existing methodology for monitoring GAPA implementation by integrating all the new legal institutes under the new GAPA. The future methodology will essentially provide for activity-based monitoring rather than systematic result-oriented monitoring.

Despite the well-established institutional set-up in the area of e-Government, there is **no effective promotion of quality management or best user orientation practices**, due to lack of capacity and human resources. There are no available data for the indicators related to the proportion of institutions using quality assurance tools and techniques (e.g. EFQM, CAF, etc.) or the share of institutions conducting customer satisfaction surveys on a regular basis (at least twice a year) according to the SIGMA methodology for measuring progress in PAR. The Serbian Chamber of Commerce and Industry is a good example of an institution in Serbia that has been successfully applying quality management and user satisfaction methods and tools since 2005, in line with ISO 9001:2015 standards.

In its latest report of 2017,[314] SIGMA/OECD report praised the Western Balkan Enabling Project for Civil Society Monitoring of Public Administration Reform (WeBER),[315] for developing an online regional benchmarking tool for monitoring PAR processes at national and local levels by the civil society in the six Western Balkan countries – the Regional PAR Scoreboard.[316] The PAR Scoreboard includes a set of indicators (and corresponding sub-indicators) for the service delivery

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[312] 2015-2017 PARS Action Plan, available in English at: http://www.mduls.gov.rs/english/reforma-javne-uprave.php

[313] The results of the regional survey conducted within the ReSPA Comparative Study on Service Delivery will be integrated here.

[314] http://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Monitoring-Report-2017-Serbia.pdf

[315] WeBER project website: www.par-monitor.org

[316] The Regional PAR Scoreboard is an online regional benchmarking tool, containing an interactive map of the Western Balkans and the possibility to choose from a set of PAR principles/indicators for each country. More precisely, the Scoreboard benchmarks Western Balkan countries against the set of criteria (PAR Principles) measured by two groups of indicators: 1) those developed under the SIGMA methodology; 2) those developed through the WeBER PAR Monitor Methodology, available at: http://www.par-monitor.org/regional_par_scoreboard

area, each of which is linked to one of the SIGMA/OECD PAR principles: Indicator 1: Public perception of public administration's citizen orientation (Principle 1); Indicator 1: Public perception and availability of information on citizens' feedback regarding the quality of administrative services (Principle 3); Indicator 1: CSOs' perception of accessibility of administrative services (Principle 4); Indicator 2: Availability of information regarding the provision of administrative services on the websites of service providers (Principle 4). The WeBER project was mentioned in the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Civil Society Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey[317] as a good practice example of monitoring progress in the PAR sector. The recent public opinion survey conducted in the six Western Balkan countries within the WeBER project showed a low level of awareness of the availability of e-services across the region – only 4 out of 10 citizens. In Serbia, 41% of citizens are aware of the e-services offered by their public administration institutions, while an alarming 59% are unaware of them.[318]

User Engagement

Every quality management system should take into consideration the satisfaction of its users with public services as part of overall quality measurement and management. Therefore, user engagement tools should be in place and functional. In Serbia, there is an insufficient number of initiatives aimed at engaging users in the design of public services, as also confirmed by the EC, which said in its Serbia 2018 Report that "**mechanisms and resources to measure citizen satisfaction with the delivery of public services are not in place.**"[319] The results of the Online Questionnaire carried out within this Study (and presented in the following Chart) also indicate that public institutions are not systematically using instruments and tools.

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[317] EC, Mid-Term Evaluation of the Civil Society Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey, December 2017, available in English at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/csf_evaluation_report_appendices_wbt_dig.pdf

[318] The low absorption of users of e- and online services was additionally verified by the results of the analysis of the Online Questionnaire conducted within this Study.

[319] EC, Serbia 2018 Report, April 2018, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-serbia-report.pdf. p. 13

Figure 38: The Use of User-orientation Management Tools and Instruments
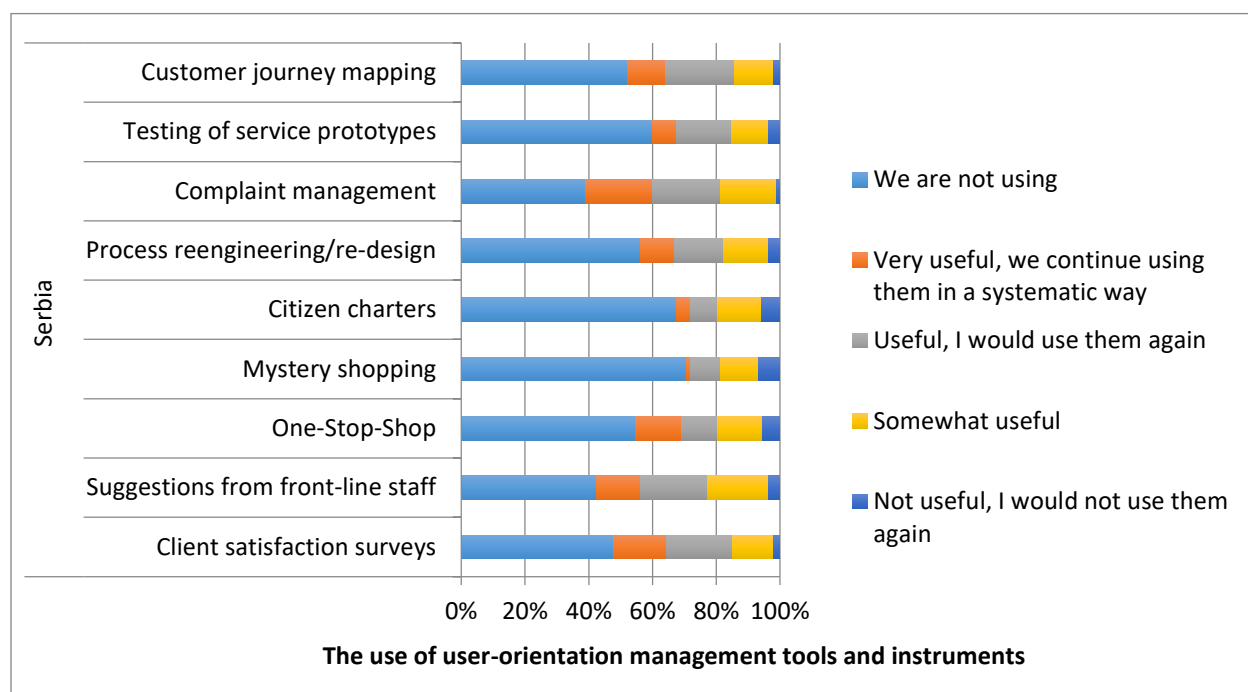
The lack of user engagement tools is reflected in the poor use of user inputs in the policy making process and public service development. The e-Government portal includes a webpage devoted to public hearings and debates. In addition, e-Participation and e-Forum are widely used user engagement tools. However, there are several initiatives aiming at improving public feedback on the provided services, launched either by the relevant state institutions, or within various initiatives in the country.

The "Public Administration Reform in Serbia" project funded by GIZ[320] will support its institutional partner, MPALSG, in developing a systematic methodology for measuring the satisfaction of public service users. This methodology was to be finalised and applied by the end of 2018.

As part of the same project, and in relation to user engagement, a set of recommendations for improving the functionality of the government e-Participation portal were developed and it is now a sub-portal of the central e-Government portal. The MPALSG has been measuring satisfaction of citizens with public services at the local level; user satisfaction surveys were conducted in 2010, 2013, 2015, and 2017, but they were **not based on a systematic and comprehensive methodology, applying the same set of indicators for measuring user satisfaction.** Consequently, the MPALSG has been unable to compare the results of different LSGs and for different years. The gap has been filled mostly by non-government actors. The National Alliance for Local Economic Development (NALED), for example, has regularly been conducting business perception surveys and construction permit issuance performance monitoring.

A number of surveys aiming at either measuring public involvement in defining public services or at collecting information on perceptions in Serbia of public engagement in service delivery, are

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[320] GIZ, Public Administration Reform in Serbia, available at: https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/61258.html

presented below. What the results of all the below listed surveys have in common is that they indicate generally low user engagement in service delivery:

> The recently published annual public opinion survey results of the Balkan Barometer, commissioned by the Regional Cooperation Council, showed that an alarming percentage of citizens in Serbia do not even discuss government decisions – 46%, while almost a third of the interviewees stated they discussed government decisions only in private (32%).[321]

> The regional survey implemented within the WeBER project (www.par-monitor.org), conducted in 2017, showed that roughly one-third of Serbian citizens agreed that the administration had asked the citizens to suggest ways of improving administrative services in the previous two years. Furthermore, almost 88% of them held that the Government had taken their suggestions on board.[322]

> The UN 2016 e-Government Survey,[323] measuring the Online Service Index (OSI), showed Serbia scored 38 on the e-Participation Index (sub-set of the OSI indicators on e-Information, e-Consultation and e-Decision Making), significantly lagging behind Montenegro and Albania ranked the best among the six Western Balkan countries. Also, the contact form is mandatory for all the government websites in Serbia.

> The portal www.mojauprava.rs was developed within another, USAID supported project aiming to improve public services in Serbia,[324] as a tool for collecting citizens' responses and stories about their experiences with public administration service provision, together with their recommendations on what should be improved. The portal provides citizens with the possibility of commenting any public service delivered. The results of a survey conducted within this project showed that citizens in Serbia were dissatisfied with the organisation of work, long waiting times, inefficient schedule appointment system and poor equipment of institutions offering public services. In addition, citizens were found to be generally insufficiently informed of their rights and mechanisms to protect them.[325]

The 2018 Balkan Barometer[326] also provides more detailed information on public satisfaction with the public institutions and services in each of the Western Balkan countries. The results for Serbia with respect to four different aspects of citizen satisfaction with public institutions and their services are presented in the following Chart:

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[321] RCC, 2017 Balkan Barometer, July 2018, p. 137

[322] https://weber-cep.s3.amazonaws.com/data/attachment_393/srb_5sd_p1_i1_summary.pdf

[323] The UN E-Government Survey 2016: E-Government in Support of Sustainable Development. July 2016, available at: http://workspace.unpan.org/sites/Internet/Documents/UNPAN97453.pdf

[324] "Partnership for Public Administration Reform and Public Services in Serbia – Partnerships", implemented by the European Movement in Serbia and the European Policy Centre (CEP)

[325] The results of the survey are available at: www.mojauprava.rs

[326] https://www.rcc.int/seeds/files/RCC_BalkanBarometer_PublicOpinion_2018.pdf

2018 Balkan Barometer: Perceptions of Public Institutions and Services - Serbia

Legend:
- Time required to get information from public sector
- Treatment of citizens in public sector
- Time required to obtain public services
- Price of public services
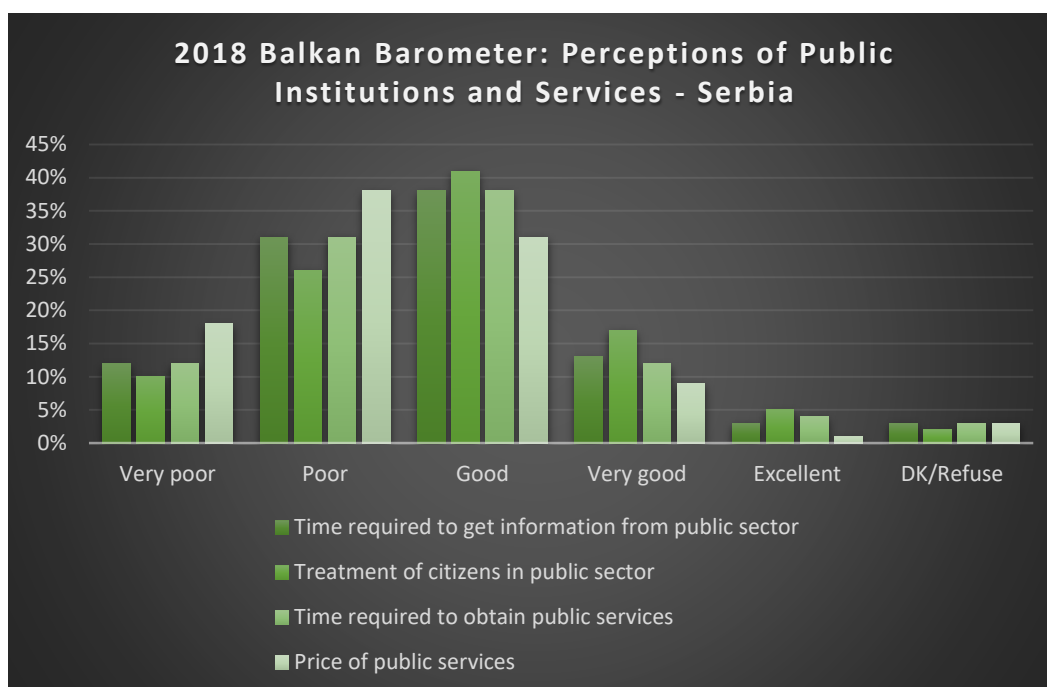
3.6.5. Accessibility and Service Delivery for Vulnerable Groups

The policy framework for serving people with disabilities is largely in place. The UN Convention on the Rights with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol (CRPD),[327] which the Republic of Serbia is party to, ensures universal access to premises, better access to some types of digital information, and addresses the vulnerability of women with disabilities. The MPALSG, as the ministry in charge of PAR coordination, promotes the policy of equal service delivery to all its citizens.

To illustrate, Serbia is the first ranked country in the region by the number of its ethnic Roma citizens entered into the civil register books.[328]

The implementation of the aforementioned legal framework is still impeded by the lack of systematic monitoring of service delivery arrangements and access barriers. Namely, there is no systematic collection of evidence-based data needed for monitoring public service accessibility and delivery to vulnerable groups and improving the overall Government approach in this area. For example, there is a lack of data, which would serve to draw concrete conclusions on the implementation of the CRPD, which is crucial for providing insight into the position and status of these groups of the population. Awareness of the needs of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups and the problems they face in terms of accessibility of public services is still low in most public institutions in Serbia

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[327] The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), available at: https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html

[328] Based on the interview ReSPA Regional Expert for Serbia and Montenegro, Ms Jelena Miletić conducted with MPALSG representatives in Belgrade on 6 February 2018.

Serbia Inspiring Practice No. 4 - Personal Assistance Service
The Personal Assistance Service in Serbia (SPAS) was identified as one of the best practice examples of public service accessibility in Serbia in this area. The system was developed as part of the Personal Assistance Project by the Centre for Independent Living in Serbia (CILS) in 2003, on the *cross-disability principle*, CILS has since managed to keep the PA service alive through various projects funded by donor agencies, government sources and resources of the National Employment Agency. In cooperation with the Living Upright Centre and the Novi Sad Association of Students with Disabilities, CILS in 2008 started extending the personal assistance service to ten users and their number has been increasing every year. Since 2011, CILS has been supporting around 50 persons with disabilities annually through the employment of 50 personal assistants.

Again, some excellent examples of improved service delivery to vulnerable groups and their accessibility to public services are coming from local self-governments (LSGs) and the NGO sector. The agreement on cooperation signed between the Ombudsman, the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit (SIPRU) and the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM)[329] aimed to improve the status of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups in the Republic of Serbia by assessing the LSGs which have contributed the most to the development of various forms of accessibility. This assessment showed that a significant number of LSGs have improved accessibility of their services to vulnerable groups, in terms of the design of public institutions and facilities, by having their staff learn sign language to assist persons with communication disabilities, etc.

Serbia Inspiring Practice No. 5 - Accessibility Audit Association, Interactive Accessibility Map
Another best practice example in the area of accessibility of public services is the development of an interactive accessibility map with relevant information on the accessibility of public institutions in Serbia, aimed at people with limited mobility and developed by the Accessibility Audit Association, in cooperation with the Ombudsman. The map is a tool for continuous monitoring of the situation in this field, as new information on accessibility of public institutions is regularly added. However, various severe problems with accessibility of public services have been identified based on the results of the analysis of data gathered from state and public institutions and LSGs. For example, only 26 of circa 170 Serbian Social Work Centres are accessible to people with movement limitations.

As mentioned earlier, the ITE has been developing and regularly updating the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) for public web pages and e-service channels since 2005. WCAG provides standardised guidance on the use of web content by persons with visual impairments or other disabilities. The ITE publishes the Guidelines on its website. In its 2014 Conclusion No. 093-12777/2014, the Government imposed the obligation to apply the Guidelines on the central institutions and urged the provincial and local authorities to follow suit. The Government should perform annual analyses of compliance with the Guidelines by the central and other authorities based on the mandatory annual reports the ITE submits to it. However, the last available report on compliance of the web content published on the ITE website dates back to 2015. In addition, awareness of its availability and usefulness to the disabled population in Serbia should be increased among the state and other public administration institutions.

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[329] "Agreement on Cooperation Signed between the Ombudsman, Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, and the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, SIPRU press release, available in English at: https://bit.ly/2JehlEU

3.6.6. Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Short-Term Recommendations

- ➢ GAPA1: Regulatory Impact Assessments of draft laws and/or services should be complemented with Financial Impact Assessments. Functionality, usability and user-friendliness should be the guiding principles in developing RIAs and FIAs.
- ➢ GAPA2: Strengthen human and organisational capacities for coordinating the implementation of GAPA related activities.
- ➢ GAPA3: Develop a functional system for evidence-based monitoring of GAPA implementation, under the coordination of the MPALSG / relevant Unit.
- ➢ eG2: Eliminate overlapping data from the registers and link the registers of all state institutions to the Government Service Bus.
- ➢ QM1: Increase the number of user engagement tools and instruments and enable their systematic use when planning improvements in GAPA implementation.

Mid-Term Recommendations

- ➢ GAPA1: The Government should ensure the full harmonisation of other laws and relevant legislation with the GAPA, and, moreover, that the new legislation is also aligned with the provisions of the GAPA by forming a central government body in charge of harmonisation and coordination.
- ➢ eG1: Ensure the high quality of data in all registers of state institutions, by performing a systematic review of all the registers in terms of data quality, and ensure the same level of development of the registers in order to achieve better interoperability among them.
- ➢ eG2: Introduce electronic payments at public service delivery points.
- ➢ eG3: Develop m-government, as complementary to the e-Government, to enable use of the existing government services via mobile telephones.
- ➢ QM1: Raise awareness of the public institutions of the benefits of measuring the quality of their performance through various user engagement tools.

Long-Term Recommendations

- ➢ GAPA1: Develop an action plan (and ensure funding) for systematically tackling challenges related to accessibility and service delivery for vulnerable groups, under the guidance of the relevant ministries and with the support of the highest Government echelons.
- ➢ eG1: Build the technical capacities of all state institutions so that they can support the provision of electronic services and, in particular, use centrally developed digital enablers to develop their online services more easily and integrate them in the e-Government portal and GSB.
- ➢ QM1: Establish a quality management system in the national public administration that will be coordinated at the central level (by the institution/ministry in charge of the overall public administration reform).
- ➢ QM2: Develop and apply quality management instruments to ensure systematic measuring and monitoring of the quality of public services provided to the users (citizens and businesses) in Serbia.

CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSIONS FROM THE ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction

According to the agreed on and in previous chapters elaborated methodology, the Study will provide an in-depth overview and analysis of the actual state-of-play in the key thematic areas of service delivery (GAPA implementation, e-Government and Quality Management) at the operational level. Although the scope of the Study is central government services (due to the constitutional set-up of the countries in the Western Balkans as well as for a comparative review), we have also been able to produce an analysis and assessment of services at the sub-national level.

This distinct in-depth information on the implementation of the above-defined delivery dynamics have been obtained by means of an online Questionnaire. The Questionnaire allowed targeted questions to be asked to respondents at either the central government level or at all the sub-national levels (*de facto* this means one questionnaire with general and specific questions for each respondent's group).

The first iteration of the Questionnaire was developed by the key-expert team on February 5, 2018 and presented to the Regional Experts, ReSPA national coordinators, as well as representatives of OECD-SIGMA. Following this in-depth discussion, a revised version was prepared by the whole research team and translated in local languages in addition to English. All language versions were then uploaded to the SurveyMonkey®[330] tool and tested during the month of March 2018.

Figure 39: Respondents of the Online Questionnaire
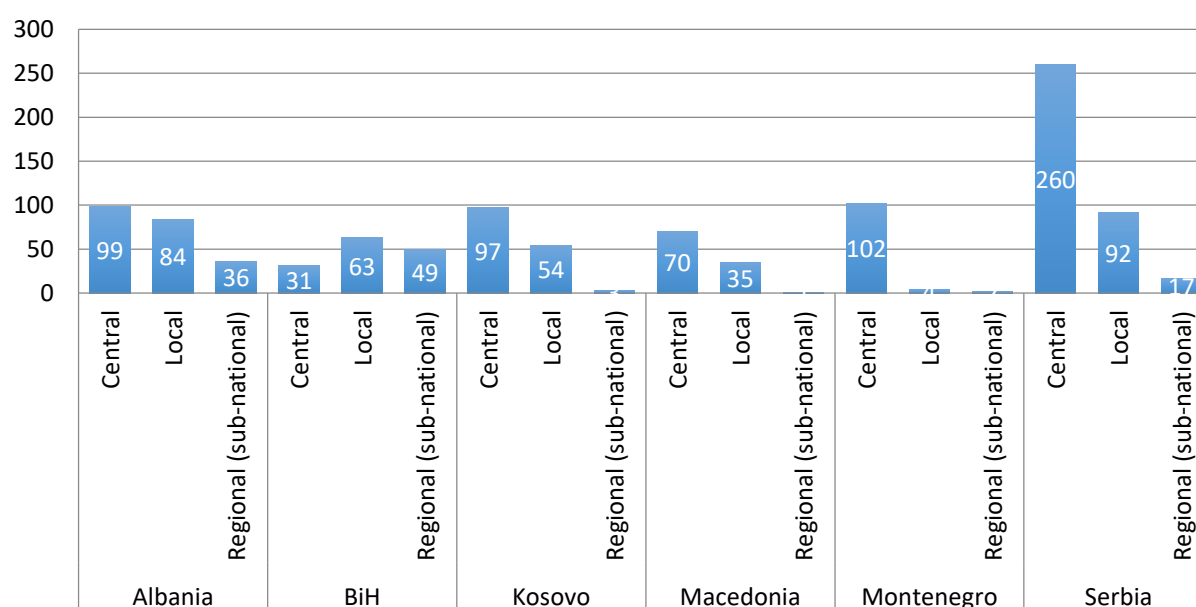
Simultaneously, a respondent list for all the 6 countries was created with the support of ReSPA national coordinators. With the invitation letters sent to respondents, the online Questionnaire was

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[330] https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-9G5K3G77L/

launched on April 2, 2018. Two reminders were sent to the respondents until May 7, 2018, when the collection of data was closed, at which point 1099 valid and complete responses were collected.

We believe that the unique Western Balkans' practitioners' insight, analysis and comparative overview represents one of the major value-add of this study, as well a distinctive and complementary information/element in comparison to studies, analysis and public opinion surveys already implemented to this day (ReSPA previous Studies, Balkan Barometer surveys by RCC, WeBER, SIGMA...).

Despite the limitation that the opinion expressed via the online Questionnaire might reflect respondents' personal perception, which might differ from the official institutional opinion, it provides valuable insights, operational ideas and recommendations for further improvement of service delivery.

Overall, 1099 complete and valid answers to the Questionnaire have been collected in local languages and English. Particularly well represented are the respondents from Serbia (at both central and local level). Due to constitutional reasons, the number of respondents at the sub-national level in Bosnia in Herzegovina is higher than the number of respondents at the central level, but proportionally the highest among the Western Balkans countries (while on the other hand, the overall number of respondents being one of the lowest compared to the overall number of inhabitants).

Overall, 60% of respondents are active in the service delivery at the central level and 40 % at the sub-national level. Due to the constitutional and administrative set-up, the regional/sub-national level is underrepresented in Montenegro and Kosovo*. The same limitation for both mentioned countries is also applicable for the information provided at the local level. However, in general, a relatively high response rate from the sub-national levels alone is a success of this study as, for the first time, it provides an operational comparative insight on the service delivery at the sub-national/local level in the Western Balkans. This valuable information collected in the Questionnaire and Focus Groups are additionally highlighted in the selected Case Studies.

In terms of sectorial coverage, the highest group of respondents affiliated themselves as part of the Local Administration (18%). This is followed by the Management of Public Administration sector (16.3%), the Justice and judicial system related sector (11%) and the Economy, Agricultural and Fisheries sector (9,5%). The remaining respondents are more or less equally distributed among other sectors (with Social Affairs, Customs and Taxation and Transport sectors being among leading in terms of respondents).

The largest number of respondents comes from medium-size organisations (100-500 employees) according to most of the common business classifications. However, in regional view and perspective of Western Balkan, this means that majority of respondents come from larger administrative bodies (ministries). To this group and classification, we could also add respondents from third largest group (50-100 employees). It is interesting that almost one third of all respondents come from smaller organisations (10-50 employees). This large group mainly corresponds to the respondents coming from the sub-national level.

Figure 40: Size of the Organisations
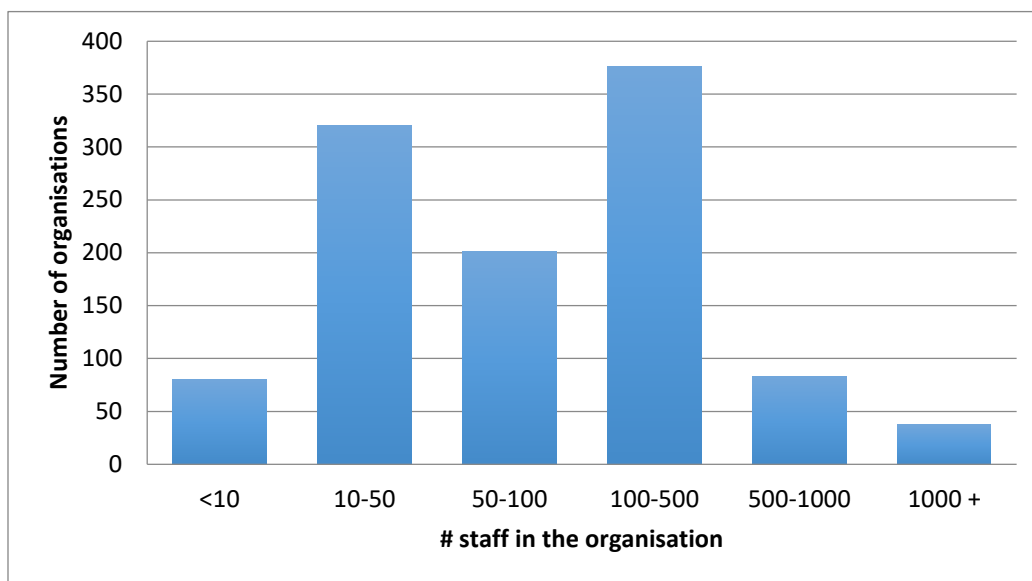
4.1. General Service Delivery Outlook in the Western Balkans

Service delivery in most organisations (56%) is organised at a centralised level. Having a more detailed look into the different Western Balkan countries, this conclusion still stands, except for Macedonia and Albania where organisations seem to have a more decentralised service delivery model and users can go to regional/local offices (or similar).

Besides the basic organisational set-up, it should be noted that organisations are delivering a multitude of services. More than half of the organisations are delivering several different kinds of services. 18% is delivering between 5-10 different services and 48% of the responding organisations are delivering more than 10 different kind of services or products.

Figure 41: Service Delivery Organisation
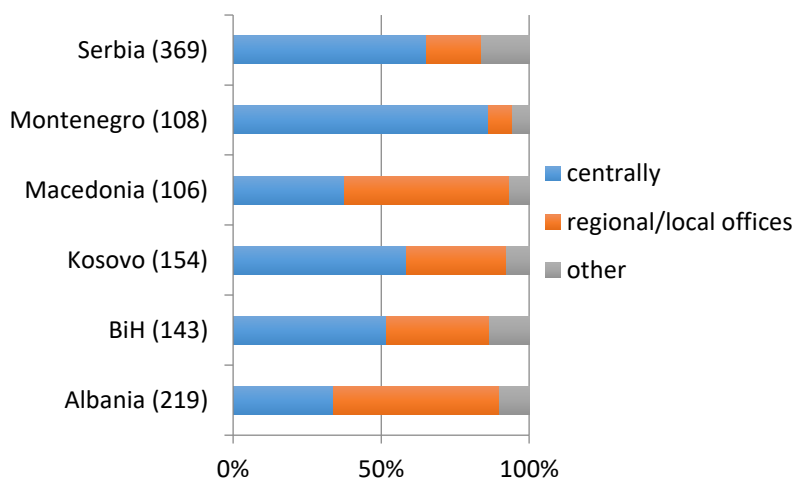
Figure 43: User Profile (%)
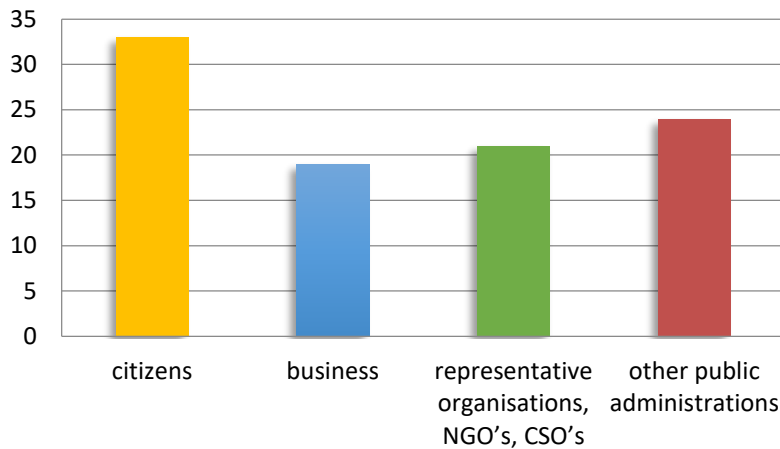
From all organisations, it is a rare exception to only have one kind of user (being citizens or business). Almost all are serving a multitude of different kind of users of which the largest group are individual citizens (33%). It is remarkable that other public administrations are the second largest group of users (24%). In this way the 'output' of one public sector organisation will quite often be an 'input' for another organisation to continue working with in order to provide 'final' service delivery to the end-user. Public sector service delivery in this way becomes a "chain approach" in which the overall coordination of the processes (and governance of the system/back-office) becomes a crucial aspect for many public sector organisations, policy areas and governments. Elements of interoperability of systems, coordination of processes and efficient exchange of data (and documents) are thus pivotal in improving service delivery in general.

Figure 42: Organisatonal Unit
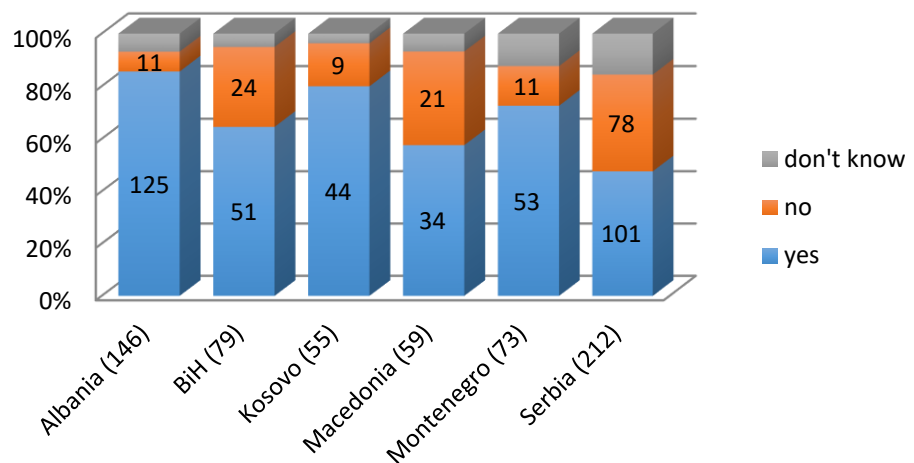
65% of the organisations indicate to have an organisational unit responsible for the delivery of services. This practice seems to be quite commonly spread over the region, except maybe Serbia (and Macedonia to a lesser extent).

4.2. User Orientation Status & Culture

In the first part of this study, the importance of service delivery and its improvement has already been highlighted by the key policy makers in the respective countries. All countries without exception have been, are, or will put this topic on the (reform) agenda. The high level of importance of this topic is confirmed by the organisations on the ground as well. 47% indicate user oriented public services are an indispensable part of the organisation's culture. For 17%, it

is highly valued and systematically used. For 22%, the principle is well-known. 14% of these are

Figure 45: Trend of User Orientation Over the Last 5 Years

Trend of user orientation over the last 5 years
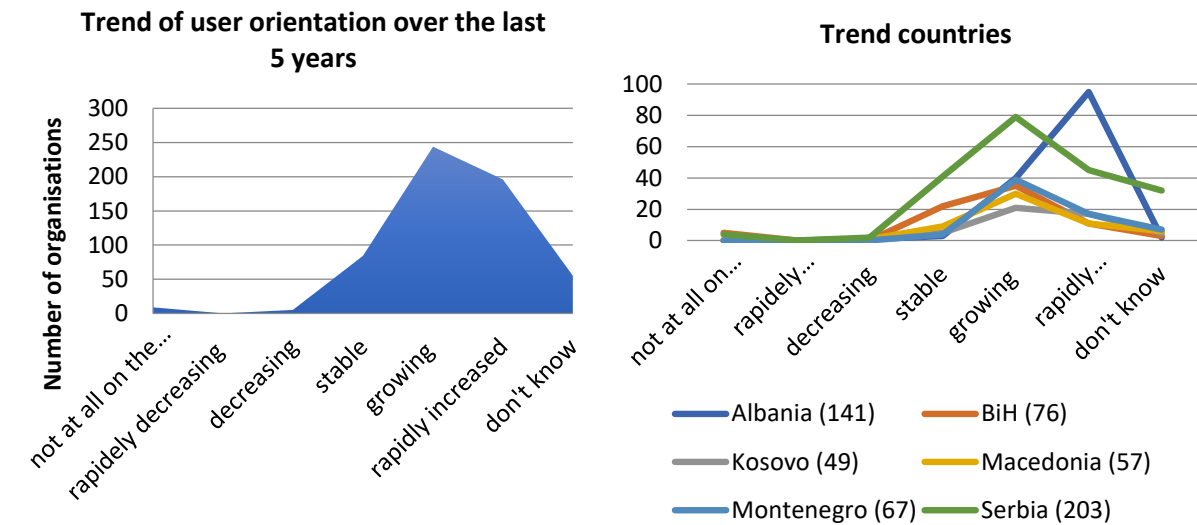
Trend countries

Figure 44: Importance of User Orientation (%)
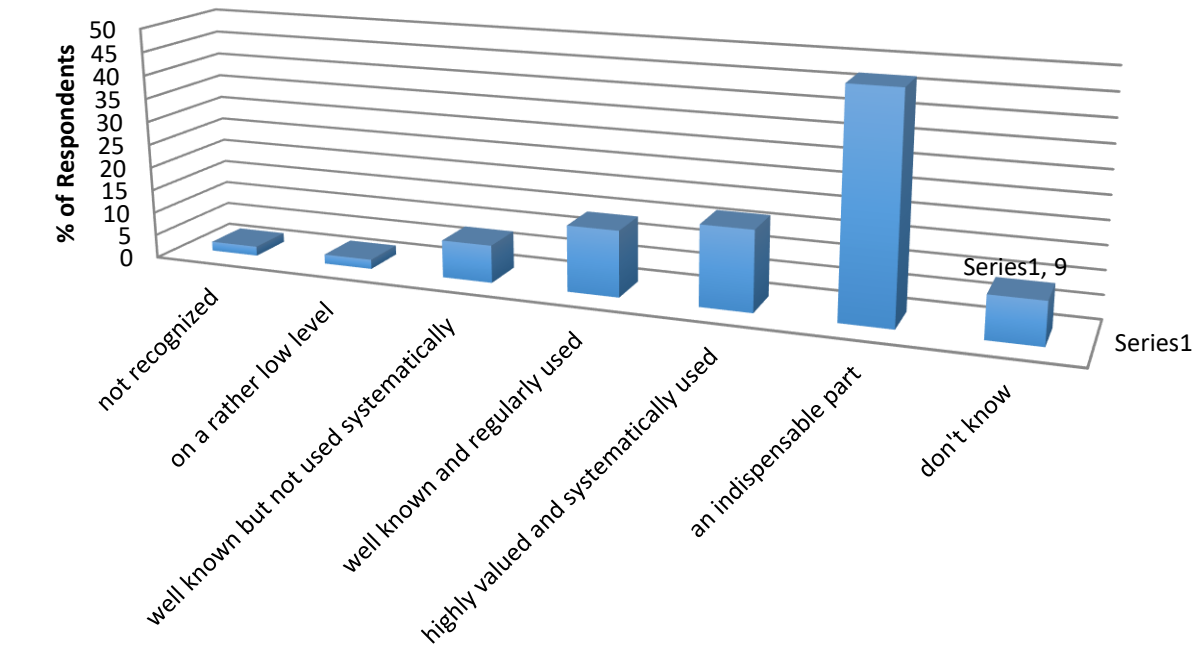
also regularly applying. For the remaining 8%, it stays at the level of awareness, but no use.

This image is very similar in all the countries surveyed. Also, when organisations are asked about the trend of user orientated public services in their organization over the last 5 years, the overall

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image looks positive. The importance seems to have increased, to even rapidly increase in the whole region. A more detailed look at country level still confirms this overall trend, with a slight nuance for BiH, where the trend could be best described as stable to slightly growing, whereas for most of the other countries the trend is generally growing. The Albanian trend could be identified as rather tending to rapidly growing.

So at a general level, the user orientation and its awareness is on the agenda of most organisations and in all countries its importance has been growing over the recent years. This seems to be in line with the strategic and central position the user centricity and service delivery was put in, in all PAR strategies in the region in the recent past.

The next part of this study will analyse in detail the policies at the country level. One striking general conclusion is that several strategies (from GAPA and accessibility, over reducing administrative burdens to digital plans) have been developed in all countries, but a serious implementation gap (including monitoring and reviewing) has been noticed. This core finding from the analysis in the country reports is supported by the online Questionnaire results. 63% don't know if, and how, user orientation is anchored in their country (e.g. policy paper, action plan, strategic documents, standards…). 14% says it is not anchored and only 23% report it is anchored (and they can indicate how). When these figures are broken down at the country level, the difference between the different tiers of government should be noted. Whereas the knowledge on a user-oriented policy is still present (but already limited) at the central levels in the different countries, this is dramatically more limited at the sub-national and local levels. Exception in this is BiH, where some awareness is present not only at the central level, but also at the other entity, cantonal and local government levels.

Figure 46: User Orientation Policy

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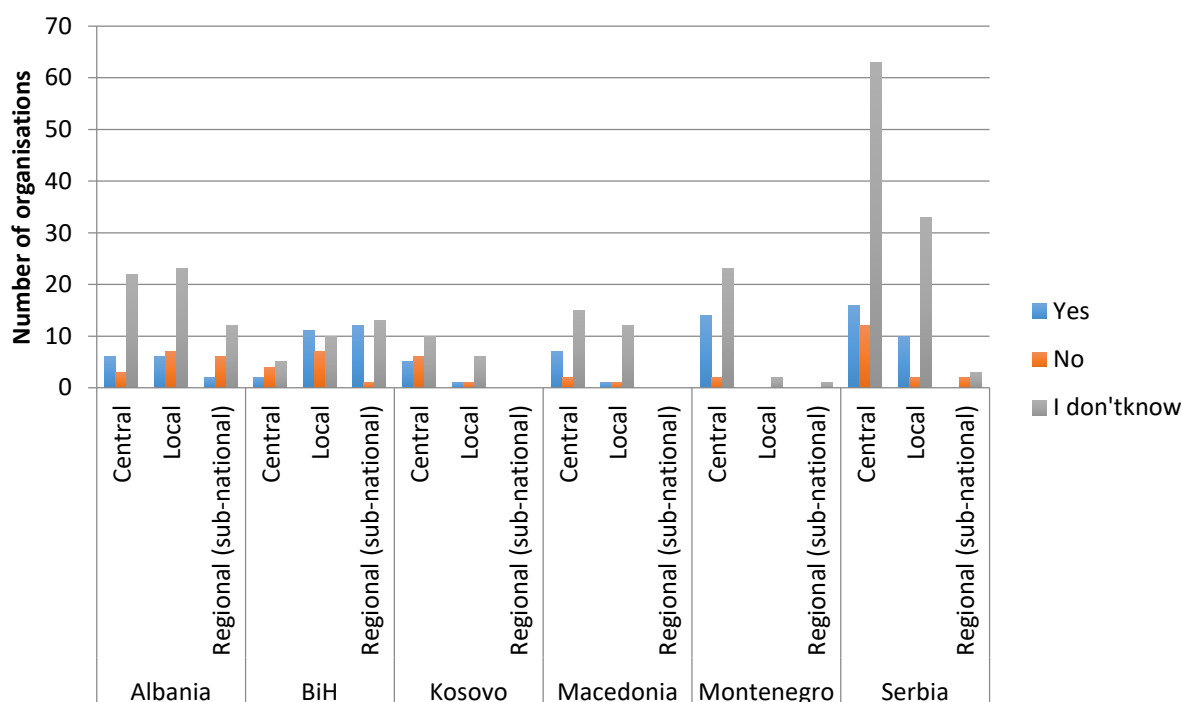
This overall rather poor awareness is also translated into the operational use of user-oriented tools and instruments. The measurement and management of satisfaction is discussed further in part 4. But at this stage, in drawing conclusions on the general maturity and state of affairs on user-orientation of service delivery in the region, it should be noted that for all the tools, instruments and approaches listed below, the usage is still fairly limited across the region. In the cases in which the organisations are or have been working with an approach it was considered as at least useful, towards very useful to the extent is has become common practice in the organisation (see complaint management as the most prominent example) or at least considered to be repeated in the future.

Figure 47: Tools and Instruments
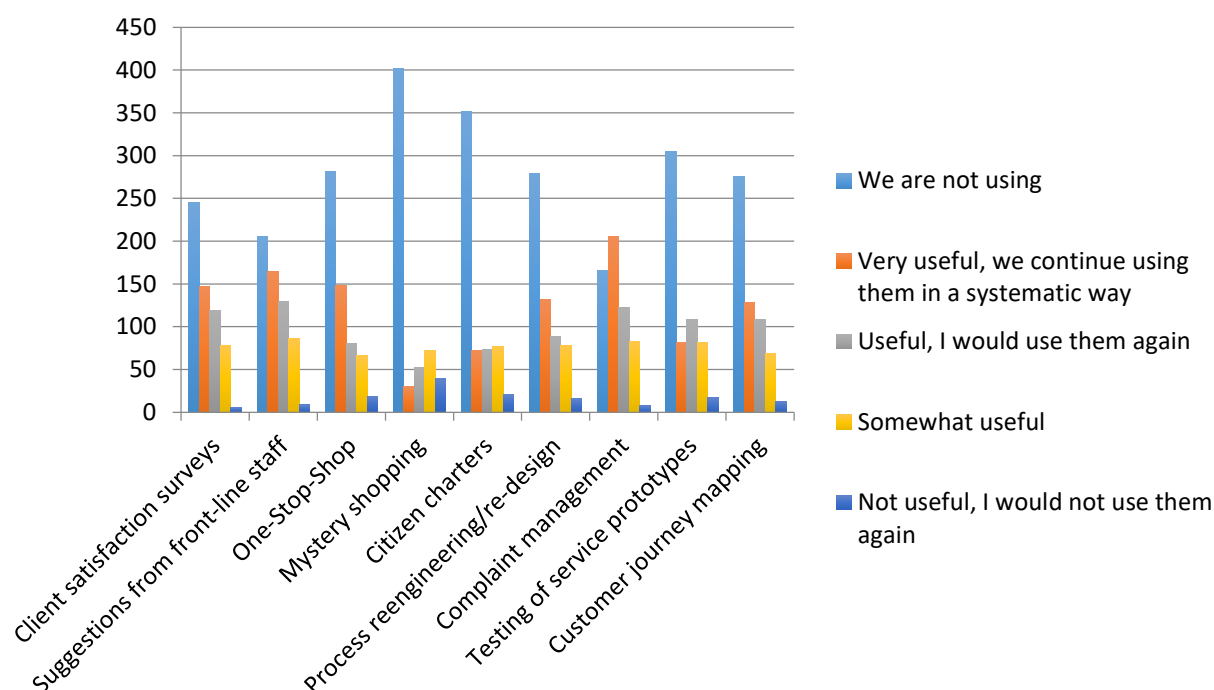
4.3. Maturity in Digital Service Delivery in the Western Balkans

Better services for citizen and business have been embraced in comprehensive public administration reform strategies in the Western Balkans, however delays in implementation remain a concern. To improve service delivery, most Western Balkans countries have focused on introducing online services and this channel of communication is getting more and more used throughout Western Balkans with 28% of respondent institutions using digital channels for interactions in general with citizens and businesses.
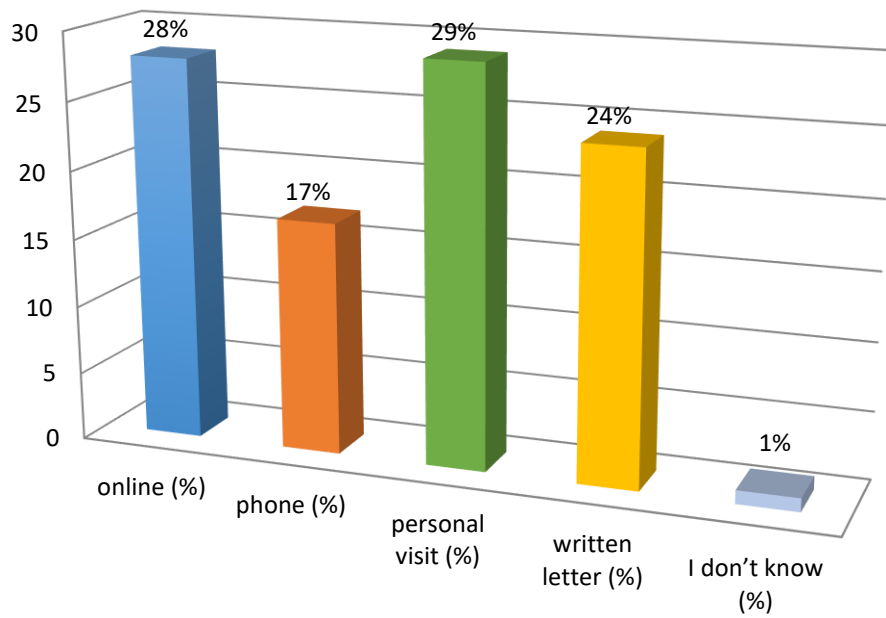
This pattern is more or less similar for receiving the info (e.g. searching for information on a website) and for service delivery (two-way interactions), as well as for dealing with complaints, which is visible on the charts below.

Figure 51: Receiving Info Interaction
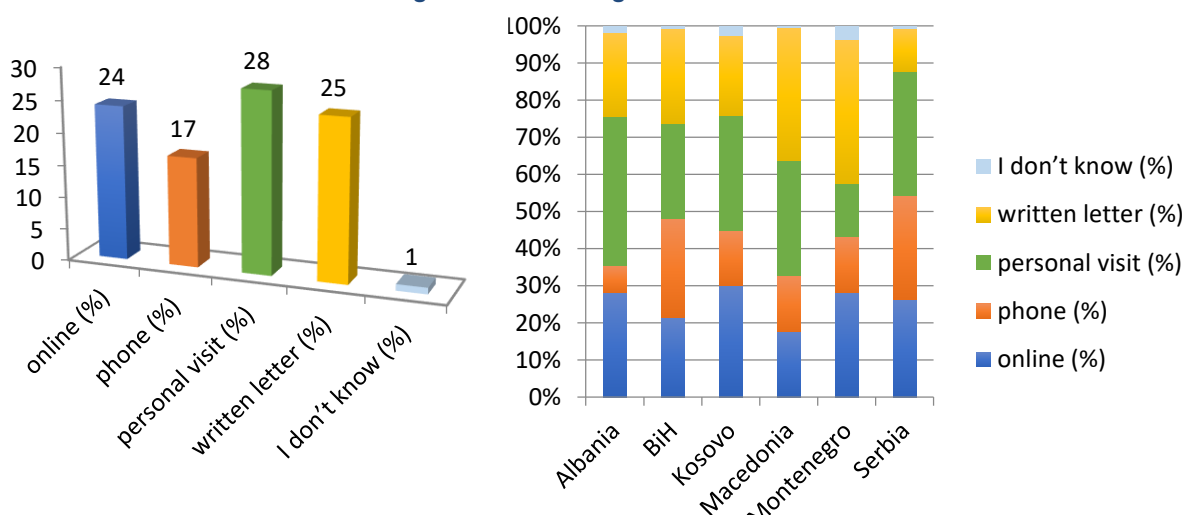
Figure 50: Service Delivery Interaction
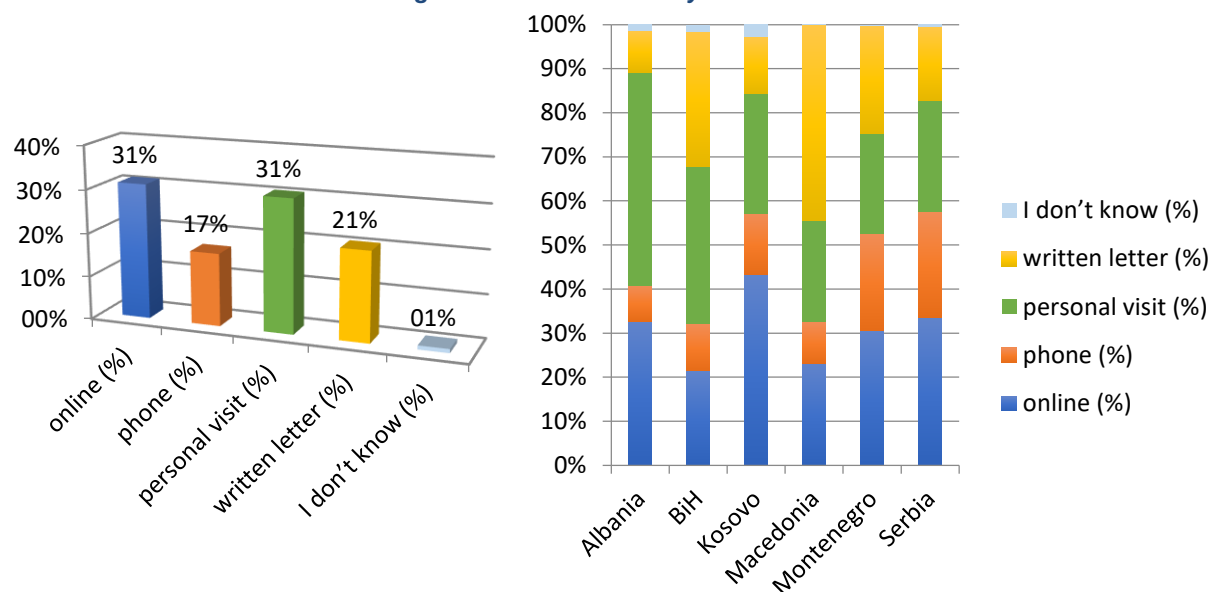
Figure 49: Service Complaints

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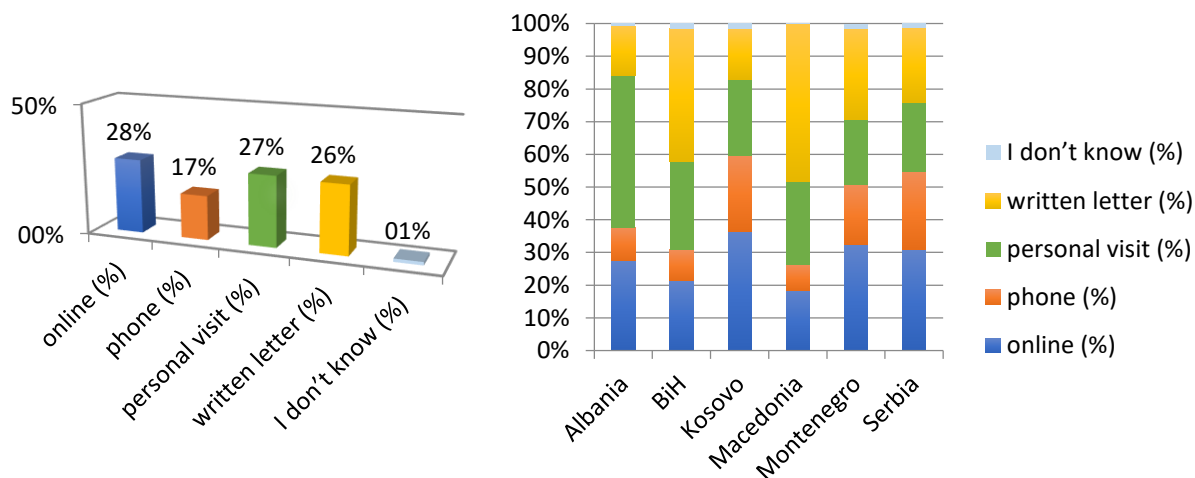
Looking at the charts above, not much of regional differences could be noted between different countries, with all of them still having the highest percentage of organisations interacting with users by means of a personal visit (29% in an average).
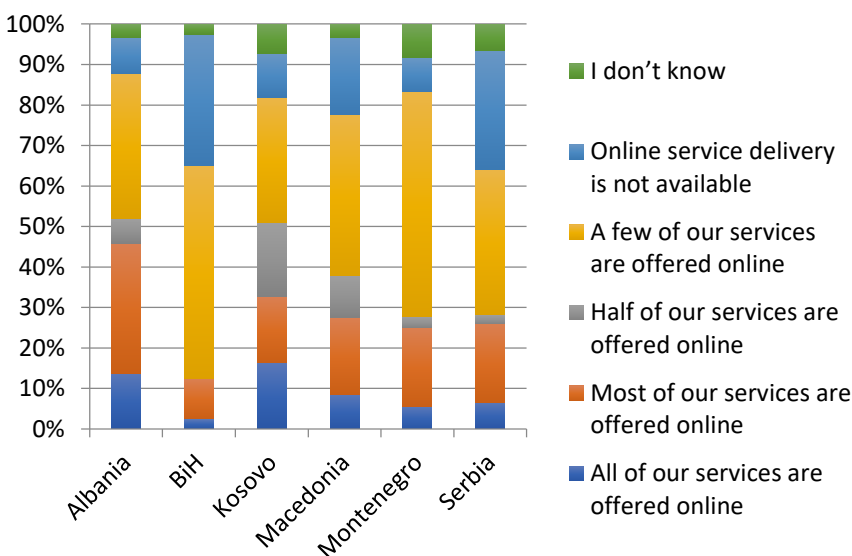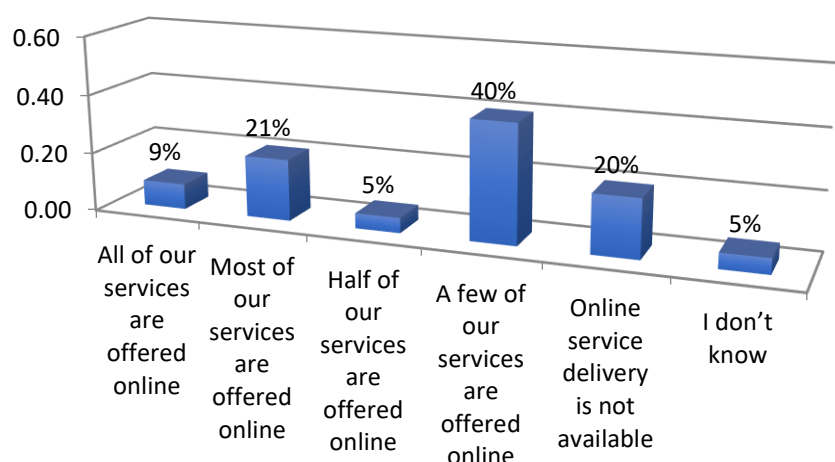
The importance of the use of information technology to facilitate access to public services in Western Balkan is obvious, having only 20% of the total number of respondents declare not to have any service provided online in any form. Albania seems to be a regional front-runner, having most services provided online, with all other countries not lagging far behind. Therefore, it is interesting to note that while services are abundantly online, people seem to prefer other channels of service delivery, primarily due to low level of sophistications, but factors like service standards, usability and convenience are also contributing to this, all presented further in the text.

When it comes to the sophistication of online services provided, they are still mainly at the level of information provision and interaction[331] (62% - information provided and available downloadable

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 Informative only - information necessary to start the procedure to obtain the service available on the web
Interactive, downloadable or printable or electronic forms to start the procedure to obtain the service available on the web
Fully transactional - full electronic case handling of the procedure by the service provider including online payment
Fully transactional and personalized - proactive, automated and personalized service delivery

or printable or electronic forms to start the procedure to obtain the service).

Figure 53: Sophistication on Online Services Provided
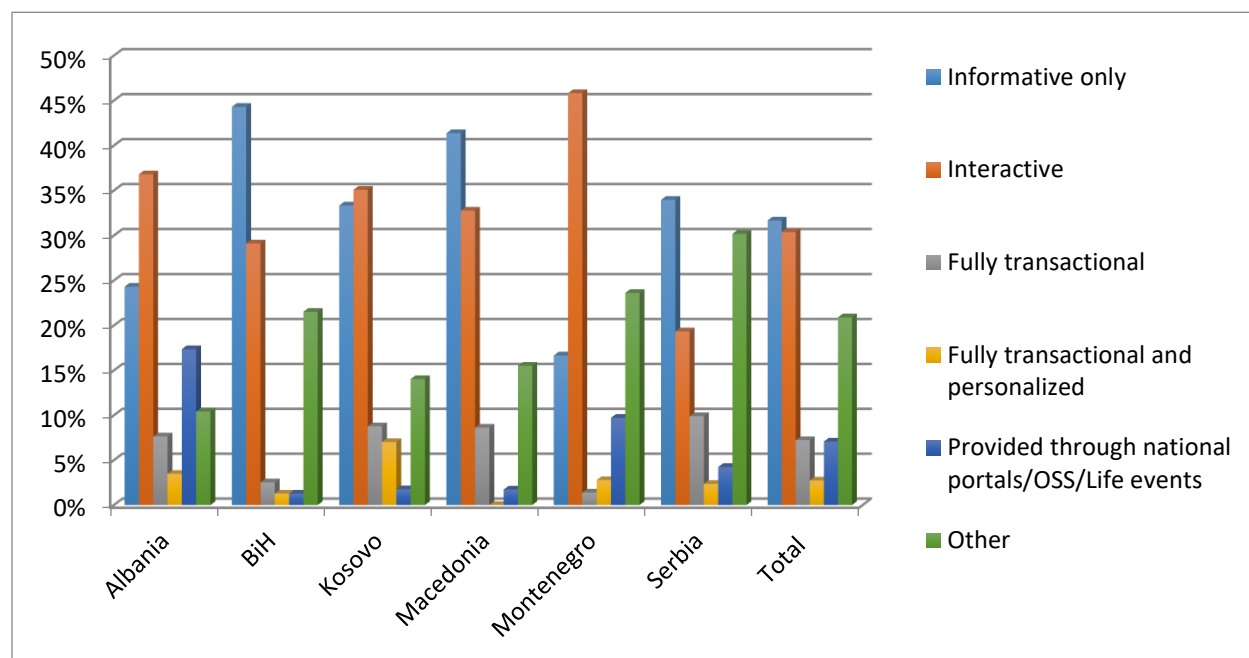
In general, some electronic services in some priority areas, targeting mainly businesses, have been implemented, but the governments now face challenges to systematically expand the positive experience from these selected examples to other areas.

A short table presenting total numbers of fully transactional services available (through national portals and other sites and channels) is presented below:

	Albania	BiH	Kosovo*	Macedonia	Montenegro	Serbia
No of transactional e-services available:	535	0	0	200	455	12

Provision of online public service delivery is a comprehensive reform that includes several complex interventions on the policy, legal, institutional and operational scale. Strategic frameworks and a reasonable regulatory environment for digital government projects and electronic service delivery exists in most of the Western Balkans countries to make electronic service delivery more citizen and business oriented, however, most countries are still struggling in the area of policy implementation, communication, and monitoring.

A number of laws necessary to the establishment of electronic services, such as the law on electronic signatures, the law on electronic documents, the law on electronic legal transactions, etc. are adopted in most of the Western Balkan countries. The equivalence of electronic and traditional (paper) submissions and documents is legislated in all countries, and countries are currently trying to align local legislation with eIDAS (EU Regulation No. 910/2014 on Electronic Identity and Trust for Electronic Transaction Services in the European Internal Market) in order to facilitate a secure electronic transaction, and ensure recognition of all electronic signatures that

meet eIDAS standards for all services offered by public administrations. However, practical application and uptake of electronic signatures is caught in a vicious circle in some countries. For example, in BiH and Kosovo*, there are still no registered trust service (e-signature) providers on the market, as such, business does not seem yet to be profitable for the private sector as there are no services offered through which citizens and business can use electronic signatures, while at the same time, services are not offered as citizens and business do not possess electronic signatures. To facilitate the uptake of e-services, public administrations in Albania and Montenegro became front-runners in using electronic signatures and putting into circulation legally valid electronic documents/certificates and accepting electronic documents/requests/certificates submission from citizens and business.

There are many ways to improve customer experience when providing digital services, to name a few: improving inclusiveness and accessibility by complying with common guidelines for government websites and WCAG, ensuring that personal data are secure, enabling multi-channel delivery (web, mobile, kiosks...), providing personalized services adapted to fit users' daily lives, for example for youth, families, making services usable and user friendly, having clear advice and guidelines on accessing public services, as well as on the rights and obligations of users and the public institutions providing services, etc. Among those, the most attention in the Western Balkans is given to security, inclusiveness and accessibility (common guidelines for government websites, including compliance with WCAG) while multi-channel delivery, usability and user friendliness, clear advice and guidelines on accessing public services seem to be of a lesser importance.

Figure 54: Online Services Standards
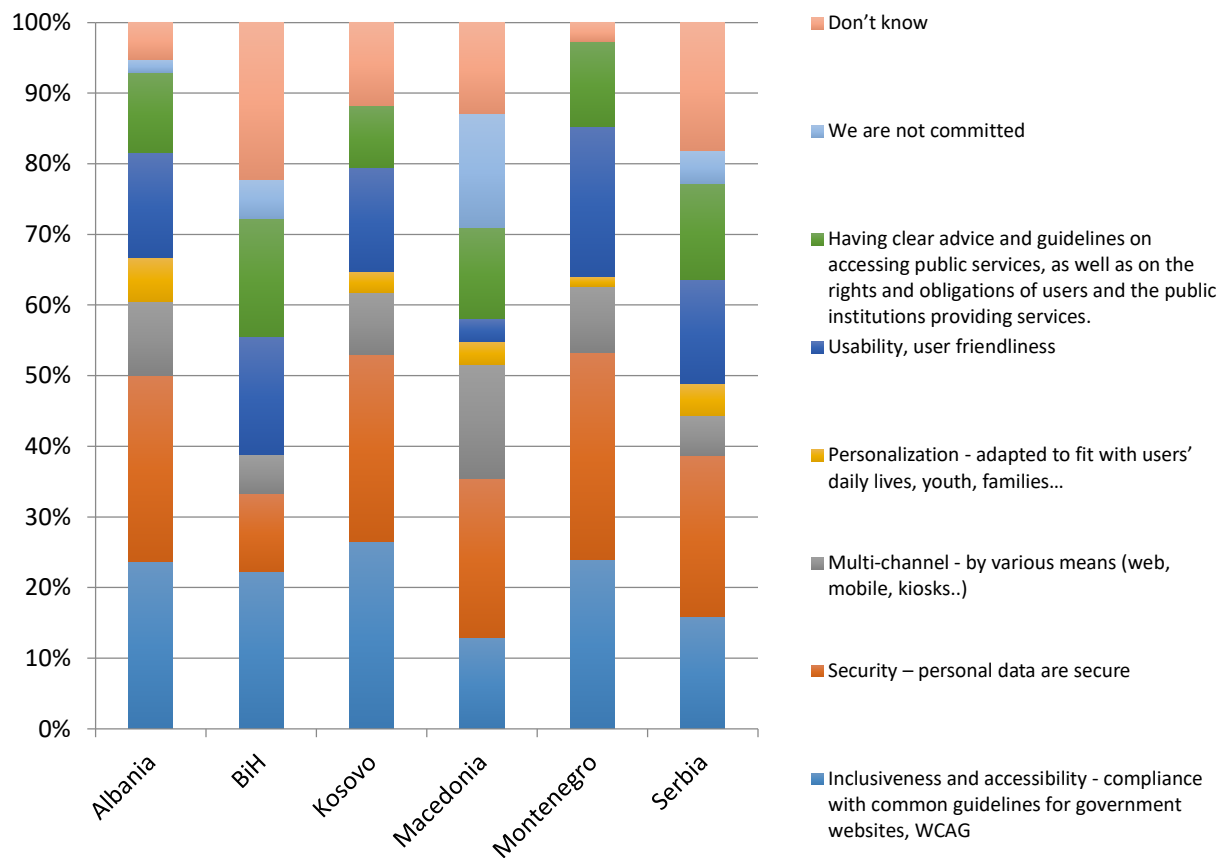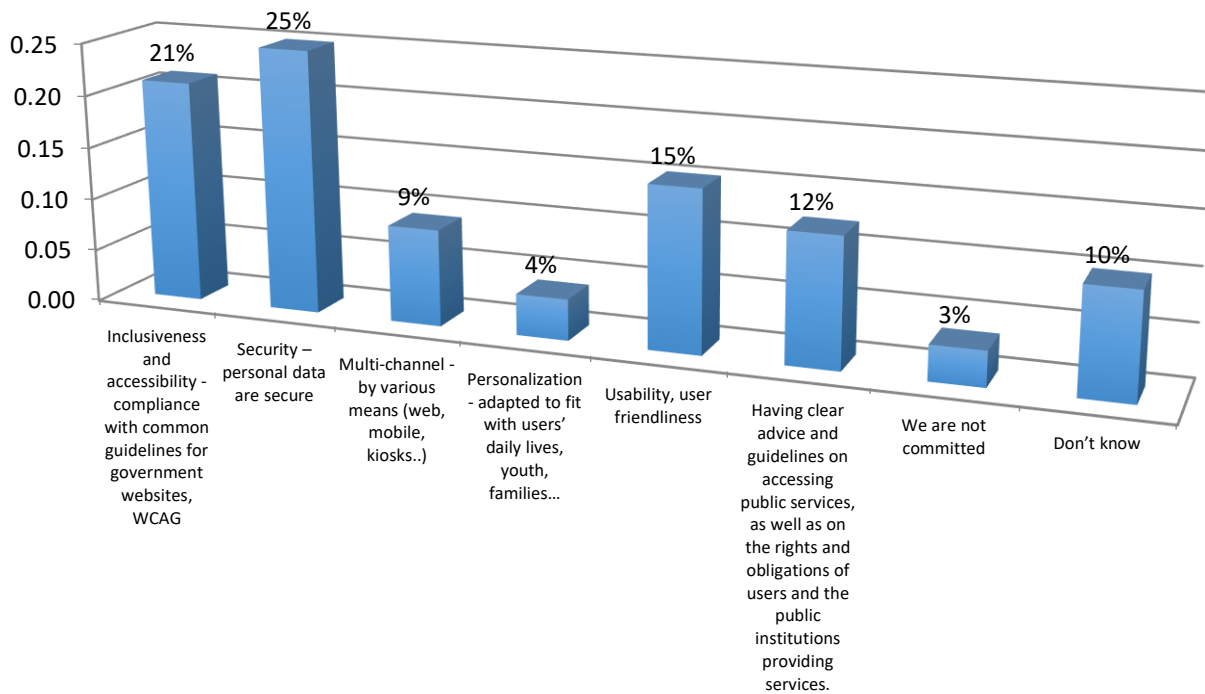
When asked what standard features apply to e-services provided, respondents attach the most importance to personal data security. Governments may have to pay more attention to security in order to not lose trust towards digital government, however in providing digital services attention is also given to good user experience, intuitiveness and ease of use. Details are given in the chart below.

Figure 55: Standard Features of Digital Services Provided
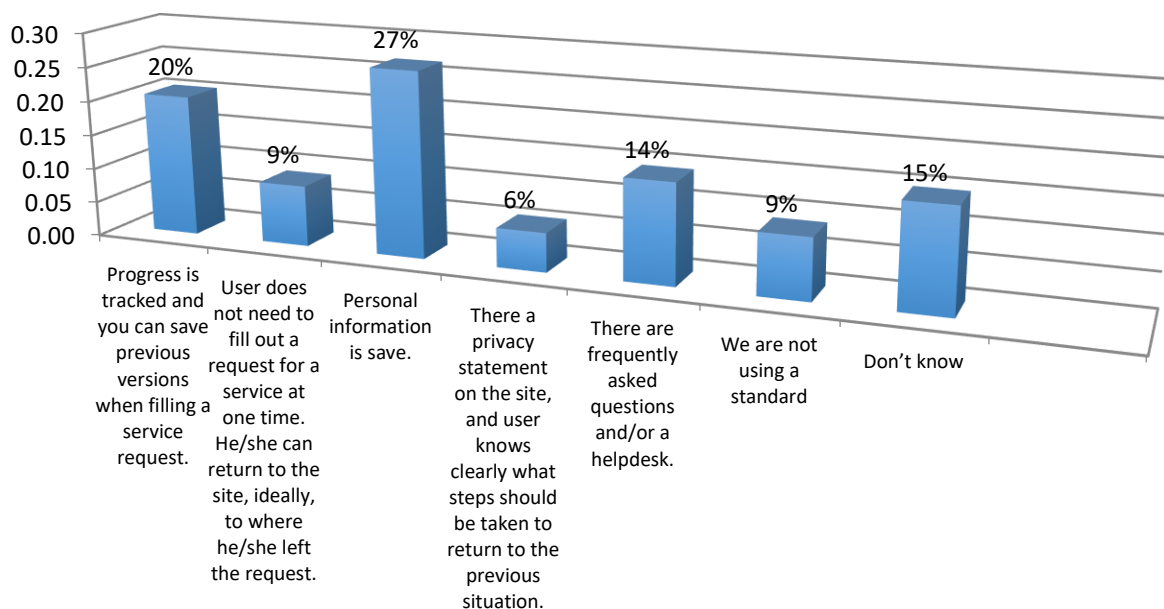
Figure 56: Usage of Available Digital Enablers
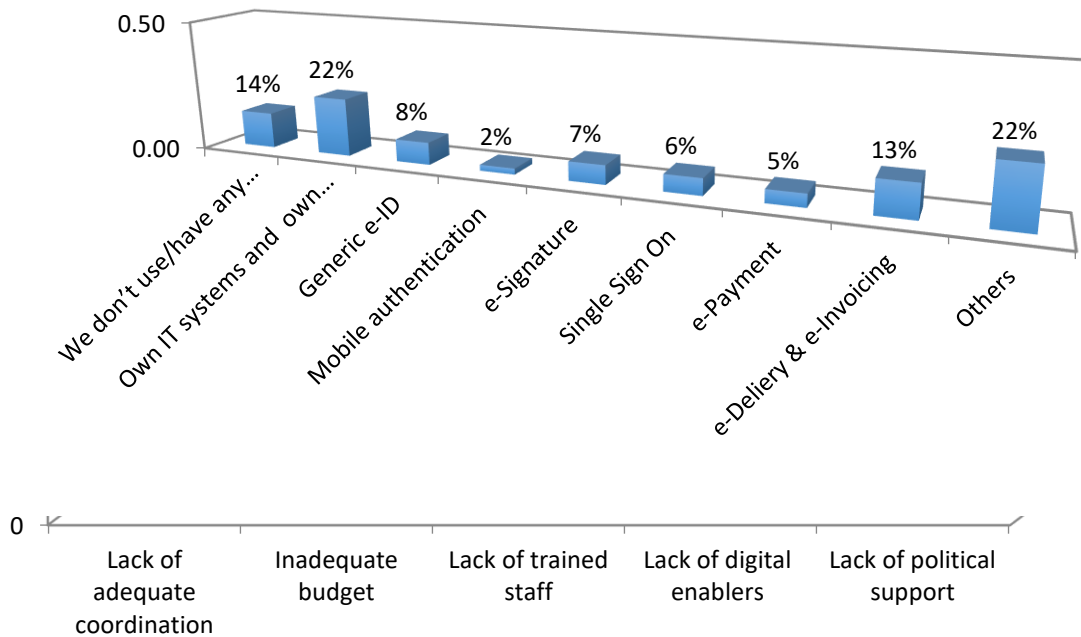
Despite the adequate policy and legal framework, lack of adequate and systematic institutional coordination creates major obstacles in systematic electronic services implementations. Ad-hoc coordination, unclear distribution of responsibilities and shortage of staff experienced in services reengineering and digital enablers seem to be common in the region. Besides, ensuring availability of digital enablers and basic registers is an expensive process and countries are struggling with inadequate budget in an attempt to further increase the number of isolated systems connected to governmental interoperability platforms and the number of electronic services offered on the governments' portals.

Progress has been made throughout the region around the establishment and deployment of ICT tools that enable better electronic service delivery, such as interoperability platform, generic electronic identifications, qualified electronic signatures and other trust services and reusable technical building blocks (single sign-on, mobile authentication, payment gateways). However, their uptake is still limited with substantial existence of silos where, for example, e-ID is used for a particular service only (22%). This practice is not user-centric, as it obliges users to have separate e-ID for each service provided, and it also is financially unsustainable. In general, business users have widely adopted the use of electronic identification/signature to obtain administrative services, however personal use is still marginal, due to the high cost, low convenience and too few services that individual citizens can use it for.

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Figure 57: Usage of Available Digital Enablers
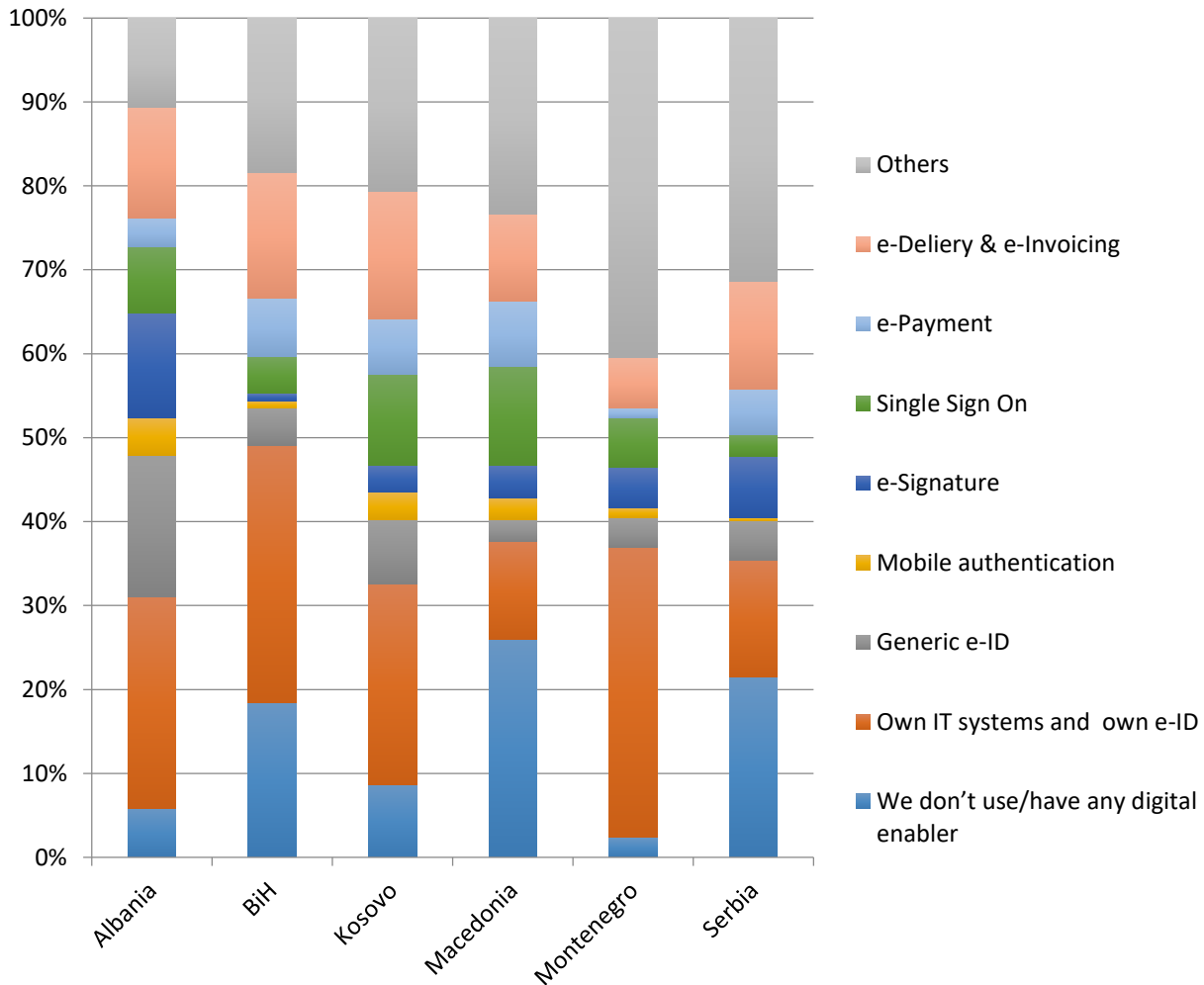
A large majority of respondent organisations are in charge of maintaining a register (e.g. space and facilities, population, legal persons, etc.[332]).

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[332] Catalogue of public registers, Spatial subdivisions, Address records, Land cadastre, Land records (the real estate cadastre), GIS maps, Register of births, marriages and deaths, Citizenship books, Records of residency, Owners of motor vehicles, Driving licenses, Passport records, Records of employed persons, Records of unemployed persons, Civil servants and employees, List of voters, Displaced persons, Work permits and residence permits for foreigners, Records of scholarship holders, Records of pensioners, Records of health insurers, Companies, Crafts, Associations, Institutions, Trusts and foundations, Public administration, Public procurement, Budget classifications, Budget users, Chart of Accounts, Tax records, Capital projects, Pledge registry, Bank accounts, Customs records, Records of incentives, Register of regulations, Catalogue of administrative areas, Strategy catalogue, Register of government decisions at various administrative levels, Long-term plans and programs, National EU accession programs, Statistical registers, Statistical classification, Statistical research programs, Research catalogues, EUROSTAT, KPI Catalogue, BNCH Catalogue, Process catalogues, Glossary, EUROVOC, Register of specific regulations, etc.

Figure 58: Maintaining Registers
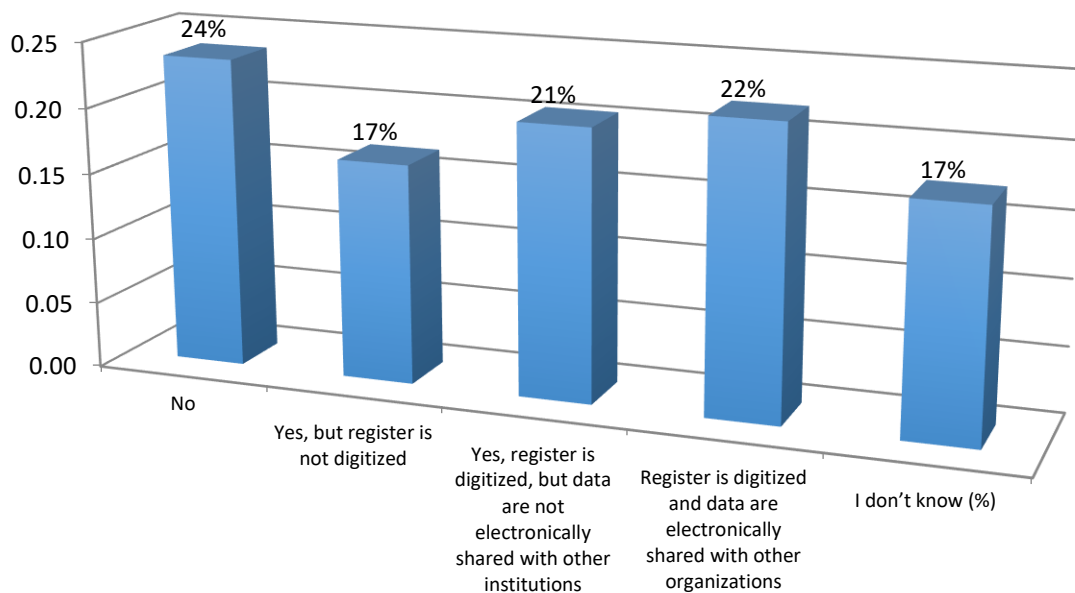
Those registers are primarily digitized (72%) with some good practices of electronic data exchange and sharing for aggregated services (37%).

Figure 59: Status of Registers

- Yes, but register is not digitized
- Yes, register is digitized, but data are not electronically shared with other institutions
- Register is digitized and data are electronically shared with other organizations
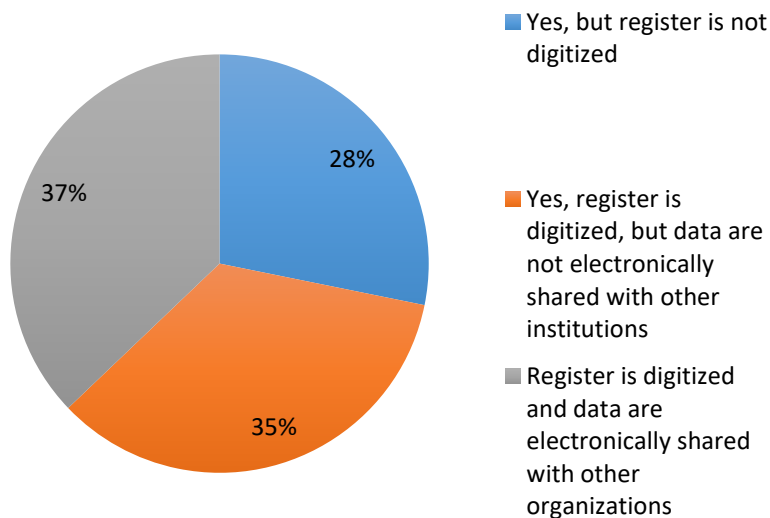
For half of the institutions having digitally available registers, standard procedures are mostly in place for using this data by other institutions when legally required, but the other half of the institutions is not electronically sharing or exchanging data with other institutions. In the context of the above made plea for strong chain and network governance, this is an important finding jeopardizing the interoperability and smooth integrated service delivery to the end beneficiary, whether it is an individual citizen, a representative group or a company.

Interoperability of registries and digital services to simplify procedures for citizens is promoted through the interoperability framework in line with EIF2.0 in all of the countries, but technical preparedness lacks in that respect, as existing data exchange and sharing is usually not yet part of government-wide interoperability platforms for automated data exchanges (only 10%), primarily because those platforms have been implemented only recently in most of the Western Balkan countries. However, this presents enormous groundwork for increasing the administration's capacity to design more citizen-oriented services.

Figure 60: Obtaining Data from Other Public Institutions for Service Provision
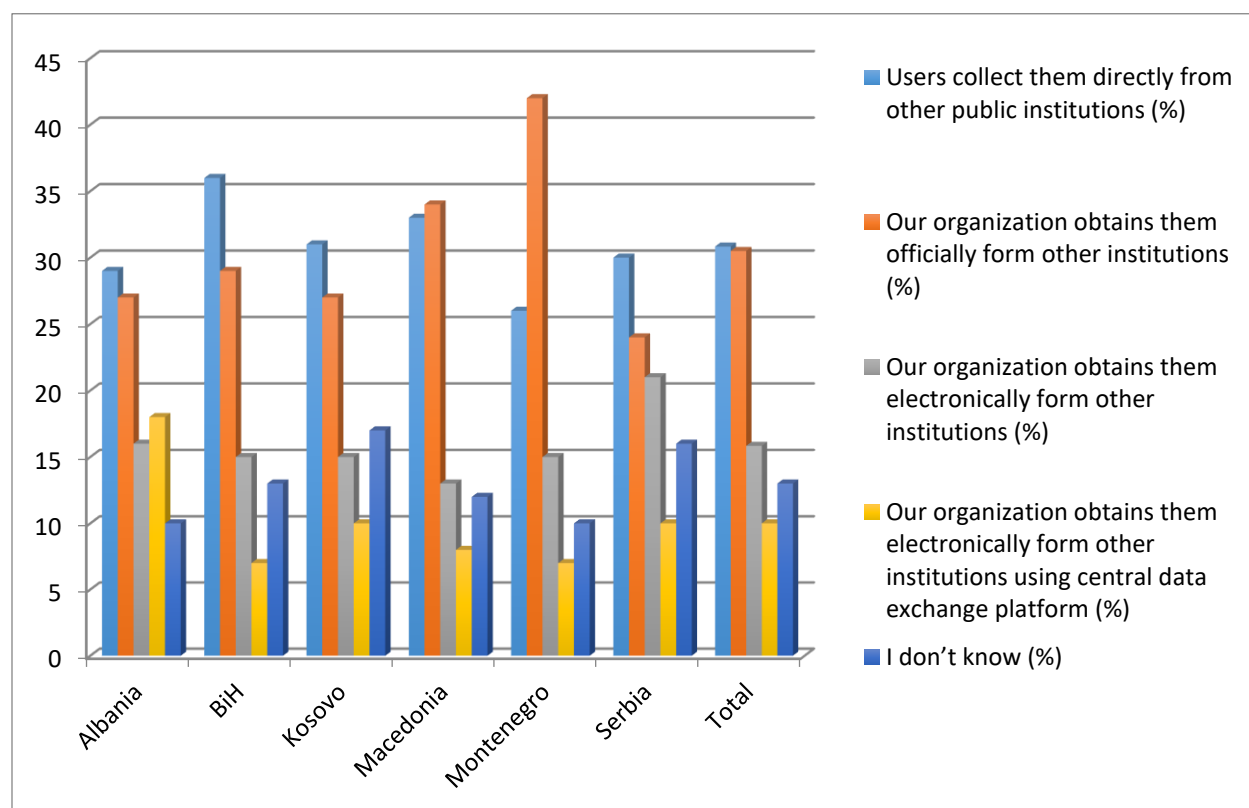
The institutions generally still use citizens and/or business as couriers to obtain data (documents, certificates, information) they need from other public institutions to provide their services to citizens and/or businesses, mainly because, until now, it used to be quicker than by obtaining it officially, directly from other public institutions. With IT systems and new interoperability platforms in place now, this practice should cease to exist.

Institutions in all countries are legally obliged to internally re-use data that already exists within public administration by their respective LGAP, but this is not operationalized yet. The 'Once only' principle ensuring that public administrations enable citizens and businesses to supply the same information only once to a public administration is respected in 33% of respondent institutions, with some countries being just slightly better than the others.

Figure 62: Respecting Once-only Principle

- YES — 33%
- NO — 40%
- I don't know — 27%
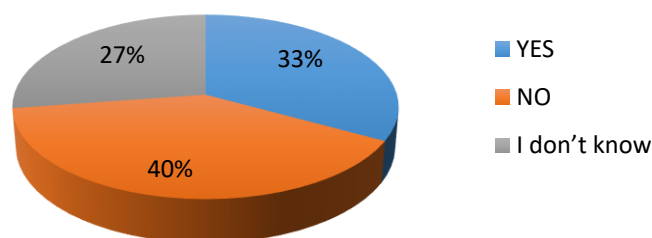
Figure 61: Once Only
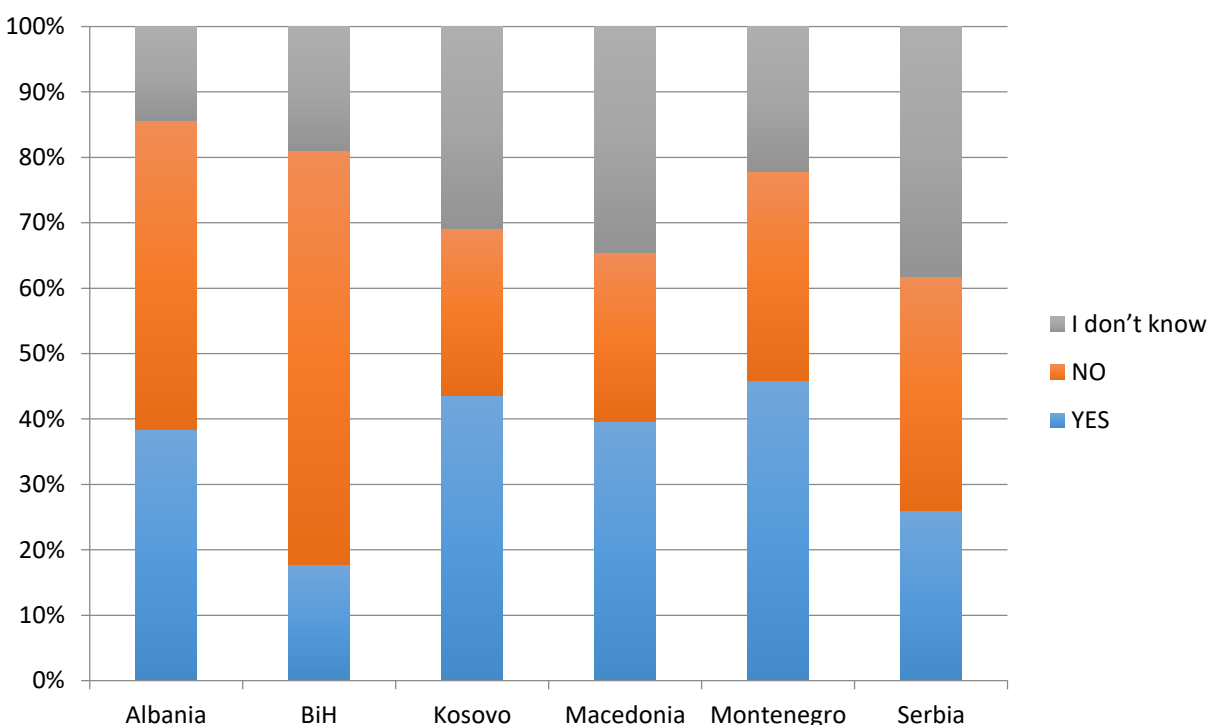
Legend:
- I don't know
- NO
- YES

The number of services provided through the government portals is growing, providing convenient access to information and a growing number of interactive and transactional services, facilitated by the availability of basic registers through interoperability platform, which enables "only once" policy implementation.

While priority services have been implemented or are being implemented, the challenge now is to expand and scale up these initial good practices across administrations where technical readiness varies and administrative burdens persist. Most procedures still require multiple submissions, evidence already existing within pubic administration, individual fee payments, creating inefficiencies, burdens and entry points for bribery.

When these figures are broken down at a country level, the difference between the different tiers of government should be noted with the situation being slightly better at the central levels in the different countries than at the sub-national and local levels. The exception in this is BiH, where the situation is better at the entity/cantonal levels due to the constitutional setting of BiH and the fact that, compared to the other economies in the region, more tasks are delegated to entities.

The way forward is to ensure that every redesign of a service follows the 'once only' principle and removes the burden form businesses and citizens to collect data and information that already exists in public records by obliging all authorities to use interoperability technical solution to access available public registers electronically. Once redesigned, the online services should also be provided through the governments' portals. Common digital service standards such as: inclusive, accessible, open, transparent, secure, multi-channel, user friendly, clear advice and guidelines on accessing public services, as well as on the rights and obligations of users and the public institutions providing services, should be established.

4.4. Measuring & Managing Satisfaction

Managing user satisfaction is indispensable for public organisations, to see if they are doing the right things and if they are doing things right. For organisations, this demands a strategic and practical approach knowing what citizens / users expect from the organisation in terms of services and their delivery (e.g. improving systems and processes, optimizing service delivery, designing the appropriate interface with the administration (service delivery channels) and knowing how satisfied users are with services and service delivery).

Figure 63: Analyzing User Needs and Expectations
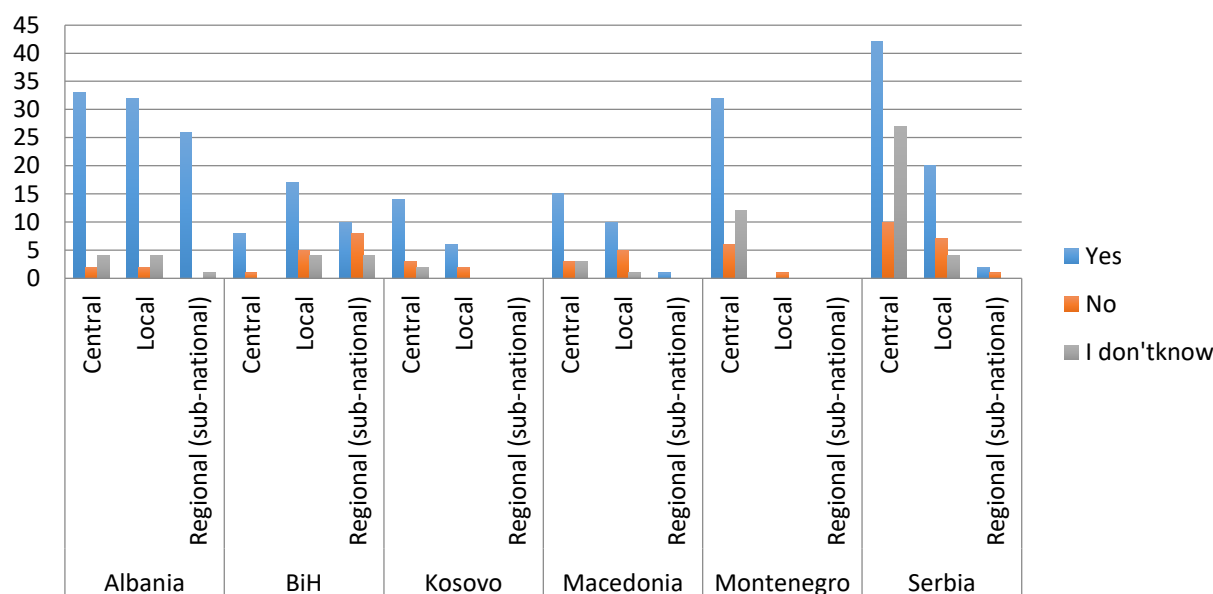
While it is important to improve the functioning of the back-office, it is also necessary to learn from the users about their expectations and experiences in delivering high quality services to the users (and eventually improving them) and to understand the needs and expectations of these users vis-à-vis the public sector organisation. Overall, 69% of the respondents indicate they are analysing the needs and expectations of their users. In general, this seems to also be the case at

the central level and the other tiers of government. Note that for Kosovo*, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, the number of respondents at the regional or sub-national level was limited to none.

However, the translation into concrete service delivery standards seems to be much more limited. 30% of the institutions indicate that they actually have defined and committed to any such standard. From these institutions

Figure 66: Who/What Defines Service Standards

Figure 65: User Groups Measured
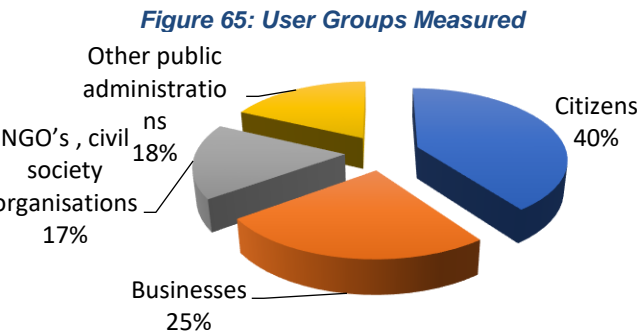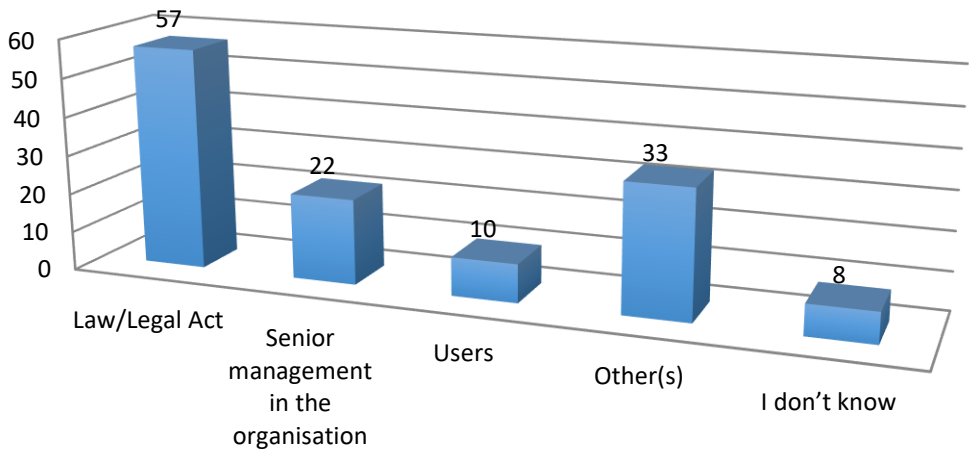
Figure 64: User Satisfaction Measurement
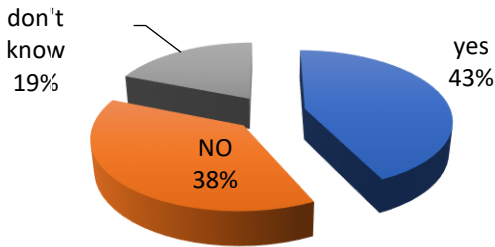
57% of the standards applied where enforced by a legal act. In 22% of the cases, senior management took the initiative to define and commit to the standard.

Besides getting insight in the needs and expectations of the users and potentially also committing to any standard, the measuring of the satisfaction of the service delivered

Figure 67: Use of User Satisfaction Measurement per Country
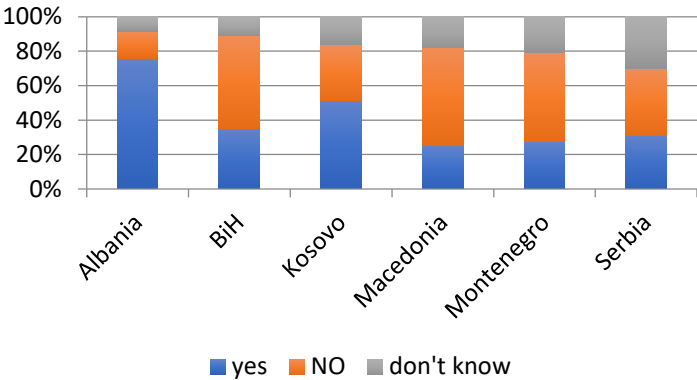
(and the manner in which it was delivered) is a crucial aspect. Overall, 43% of the respondents indicated to measure the satisfaction of its users on a regular basis.

Overall – slightly less than half of the organisations do measure user satisfaction - this might be quite acceptable. But, this picture is highly influenced (and biased) by large regional differences. This is making the detailed picture per country looking less positive. Besides Albania, the practice of systematically measuring user satisfaction still doesn't seem to be widely spread in the region.

For the organisations that do measure user satisfaction (43%), this is mostly done towards citizen (40%) and business (25%) users. The large group of other public sector organisations identified as (intermediate) users above is thus less questioned towards their level of satisfaction of inter-institutional cooperation.

Mostly the overall satisfaction level is measured, but also other elements (determinants for satisfaction) are measured in which the staff (competence and behaviour), the information (quality and accessibility) and the organisation of the service delivery process are the most common elements.

Figure 68: Elements Measured (%)
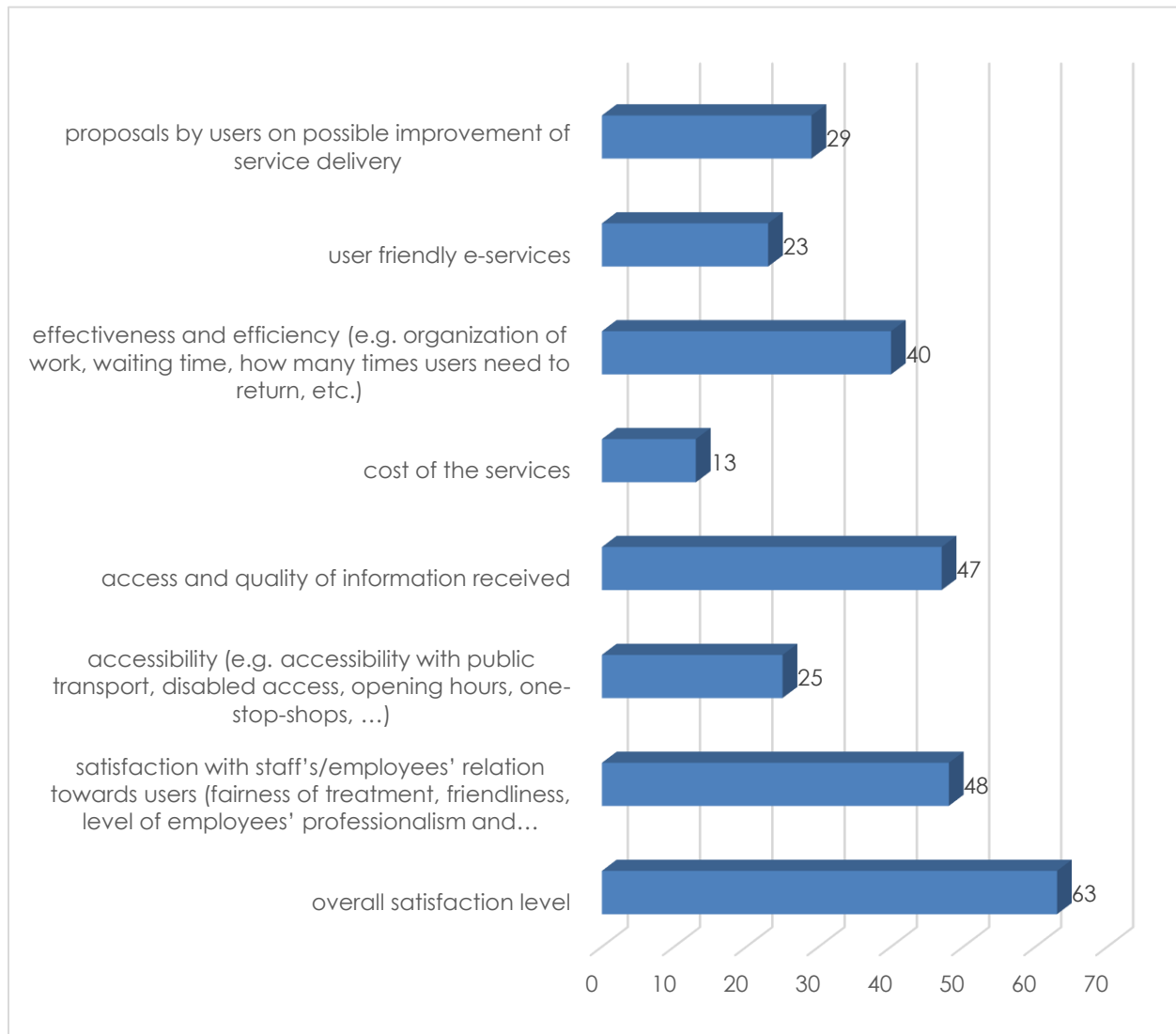
For the organisations that measure, they indicate the overall (average) user satisfaction level is 77%, that the level of satisfaction increased in 71% of the organisations, remained stable in 18% and decreased for 4% of the organisations. These figures are of course the self-reported figures by the organisations themselves. It is interesting to put these figures against the opinions as measured by the citizens/users themselves. The Balkan Barometer 2017 (by the Regional Cooperation Council) provides interesting insights. 7026 respondents, scored 5 dimensions of service delivery on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means very poor and 5 excellent. The below table provides and overview of the scores for the past years. Firstly, the overall satisfaction is not measured, so a direct one-to-one comparison from our findings would not be correct. Nonetheless, we note from the table below that the assessment made by citizen/users is slightly less high as the self-reported scores in our survey. We cannot conclude that self-reports scores

are incorrect. Secondly, the Balkan Barometer also reports a (slight) improvement of the different components over time as is the case from our Questionnaire. It is important to notice that the scores are still at a low level overall.

Measuring and being aware of the perception of the users is important, but not a goal in itself**.** The collected information and insights ideally should trigger a reflection on the improvement of services and the delivery. The positive message is that apparently most of the organisations that do measure are using the results to actually improve their service(s).

Figure 70: Complaints Processing
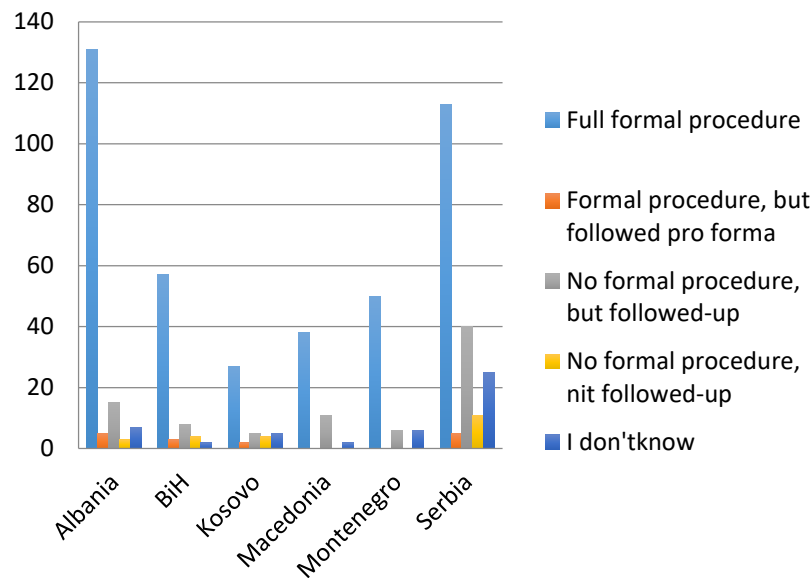
The same can be said about the way in which organisations are dealing with complaints. In section 2 above, it was already mentioned that in general the level of maturity of using different tools, instruments or approaches in the area of management of user satisfaction is rather low in the region, with the exception of managing complaints. This general finding is fully confirmed here, that by far, in all countries institutions indicate to have established a formal procedure that seems functional and not being installed solely for pro-forma reasons.

Figure 69: How Are Results Used?

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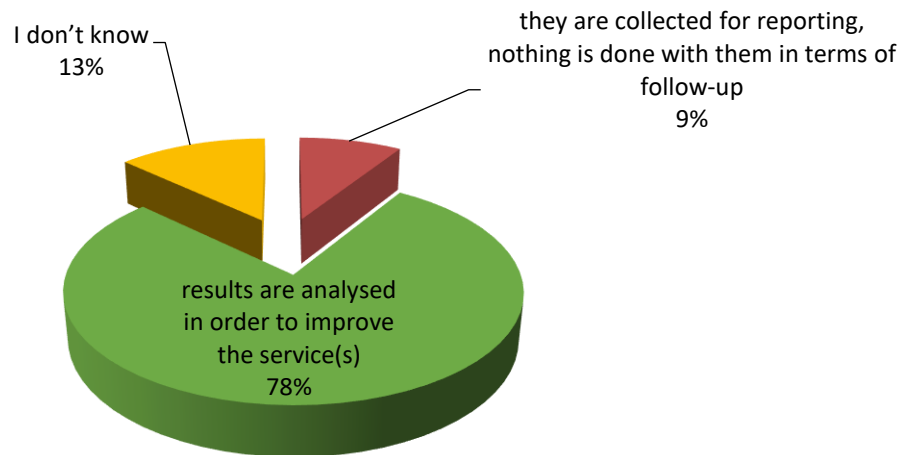
As indicated in chapter 2 of this study, organisations should find a pragmatic way in searching

Figure 71: Documentation of Process
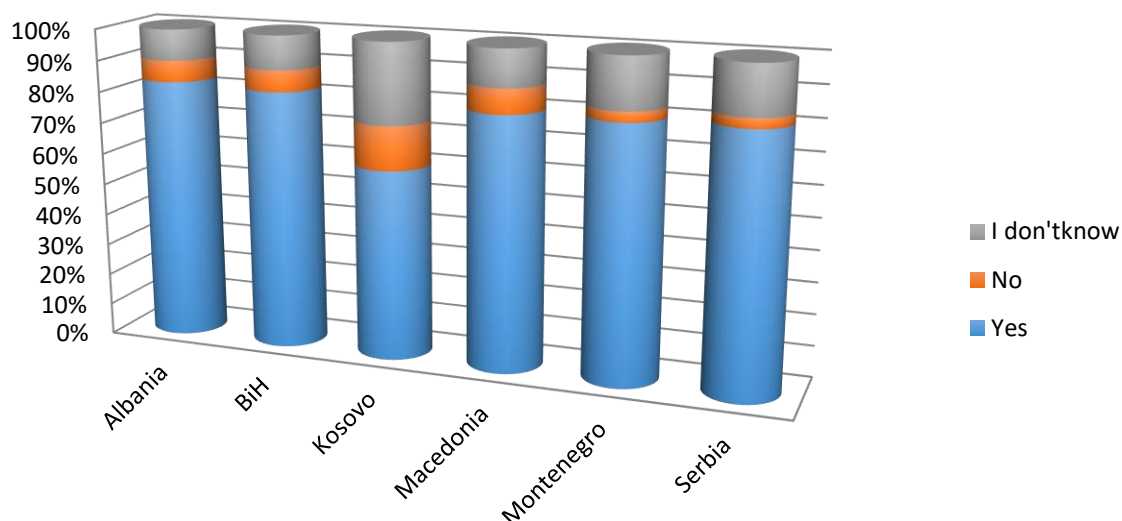
for the right balance in using quantitative instruments (surveys) and qualitative sources of info (complaints, focus groups, mystery shopping).

	2014	2015	2016
Transparency of public services	2,50	2,64	2,70
Treatment of citizens in public sector	2,46	2,58	2,66
Time required for obtaining public services	2,37	2,47	2,55
Time required for getting information in public sector	2,32	2,44	2,52
Price of public services	2,20	2,20	2,37

4.5. (Re-) Designing Service Delivery Processes

In the last group of questions, we have attempted to understand the frequency and communication of re-designs of service delivery processes, existence and usefulness of support provided through documented processes and training opportunities, as well as to understand the existence (or absence) of financial analysis and implications of financial impact of services re-design on service delivery. The information that 80% of organisations' processes at the central and local levels are documented is encouraging. The overall percentage for existence of documented processes for services delivered is very high for all countries of the Western Balkans, except for Kosovo* with a slight smaller percentage (60%).

We wanted to receive a more operational reflection of this information in the case of service delivery. For this reason, we have tested the awareness and knowledge of respondents of last re-design of the services that are delivered and the level of their inclusion in the re-design process.

Figure 72: Latest Redesign of the Services
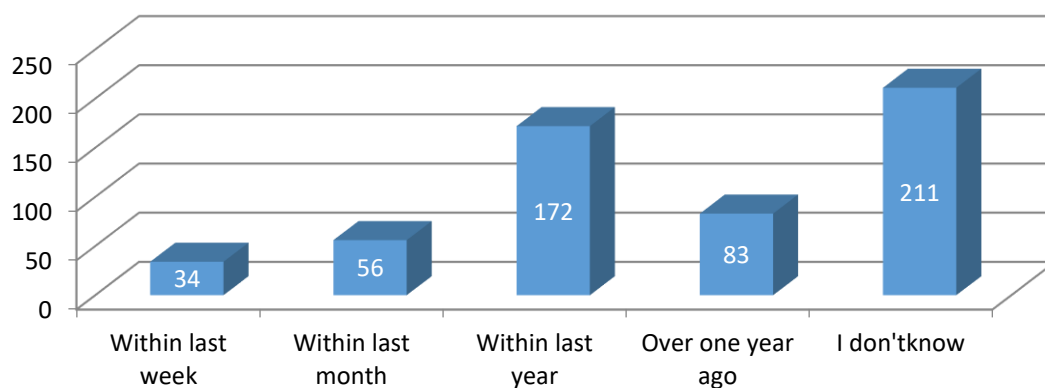
According to the online Questionnaire results, 48% of services have been re-designed in the course of the last year[333]. Despite well documented processes for service delivery (80%), 38% of staff could not remember the last re-design. This could indicate that the staff is not sufficiently involved in the re-design processes, included in the re-design processes or that the information and documentation related to the re-design process is not shared sufficiently with the staff. Both elements are crucial to improve the quality of the services delivered.

At a regional level, 60% of the respondents are formally involved in the re-design process, while 40% are not involved in the process of re-designing the services that they deliver.

Figure 73: Involvement of Staff in the Re-design of Services

■ yes ■ no ■ don't know

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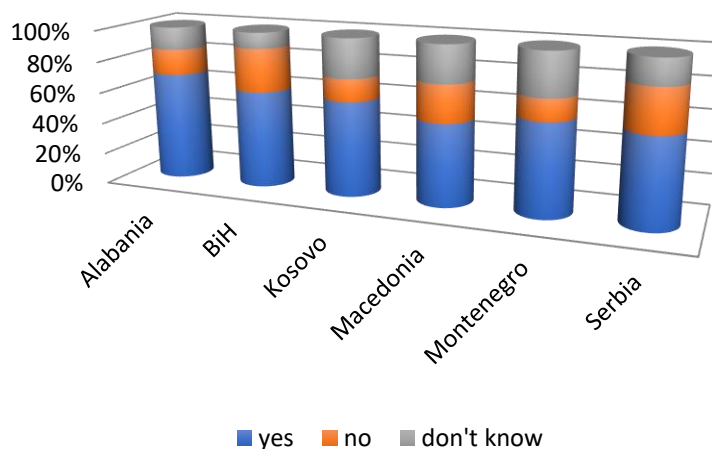
[333] Reference to 2017.
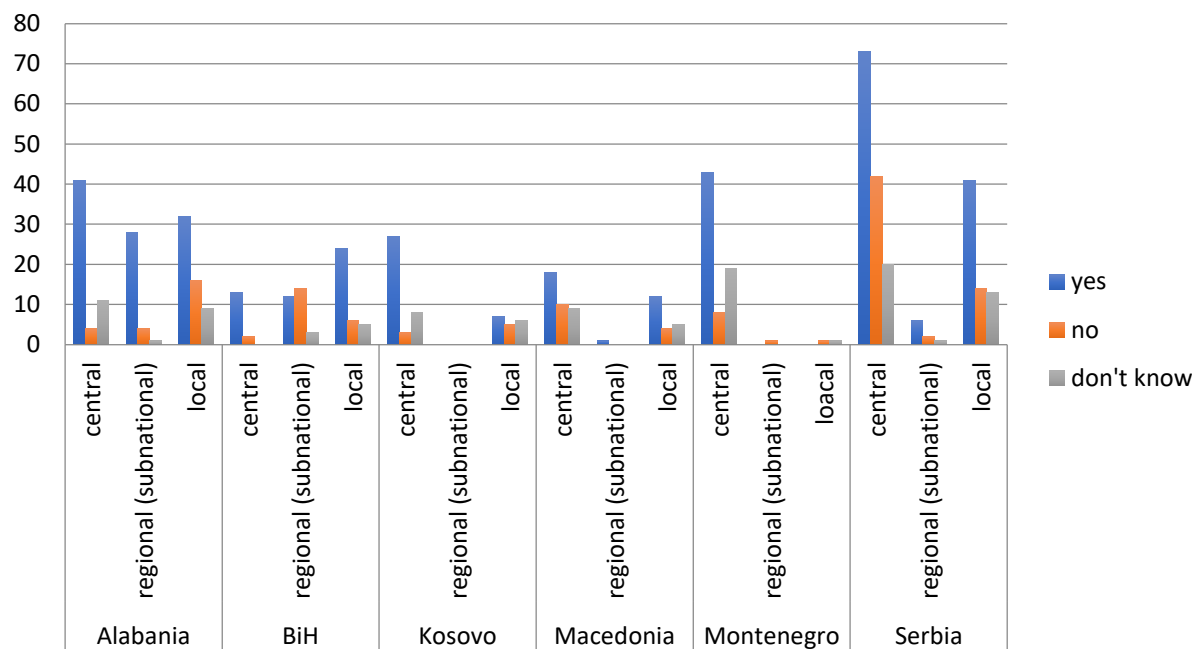
The proportion slightly varies in Albania (highest) to Macedonia (lowest), however, in general, this re-confirms previous findings and calls for a thorough rethink on the service re-design process. Early, full and complete inclusion of all staff in the service re-design process is crucial to ensure

Figure 74: Awareness of Policies and Procedures for Service redesign at Organisation's Level
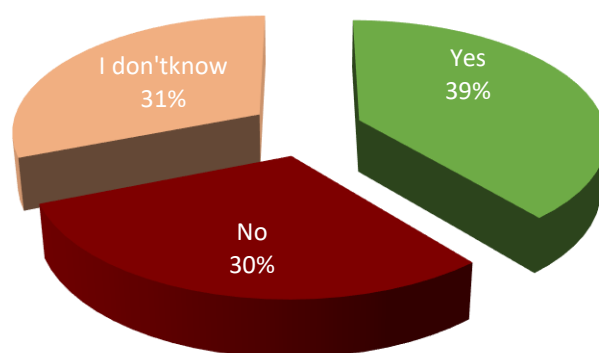
the successful implementation, organisation's and individual's ownership and vitally contributes to the quality of the (re-designed) service.

Complimentary, we have also asked respondents about their knowledge of organisation's policies and procedures in place to initiate and implement service re-design request. At a regional level, 39% are aware of organisation's policies and procedures for services redesign and 61% are not aware or have no knowledge of the policies and procedures applied by their organisations when re-designing the services they implement. The total number of respondents being acquainted with

Figure 75: Awareness of Policies and Procedures for Service Redesign at Organisation's Level
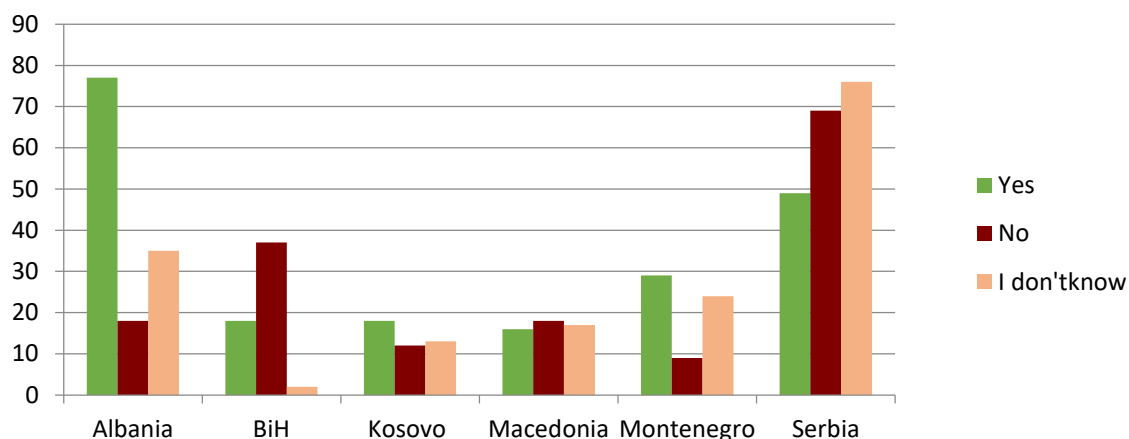
the policies and procedures for service re-design is proportionally the highest in Albania and the lowest in Serbia.

The fact that overall only 39% of respondents are aware of organisations' policies and procedures to initiate and implement the re-design of a service that their organisation provides requires attention and indicates the need for action. This information also means that two thirds of respondents from different layers of public administration are either not aware of, or are convinced that there is a formal policy or process in place that would provide guidance on the service re-design request.

Addressing this knowledge and capacity gap is also related to the topic of quality management. When properly addressed, it would allow for a regular review of the processes, as well as encourage public administrations to measure various aspects of performance, including user and partners' feedback (e.g. CAF, EFQM). It would be sensible to also further explore innovative approaches in service re-design processes and management including product management (as briefly presented in Chapter 2, Part 2). Further complementarity and synergic effects of different

approaches would ensure an integrated approach towards service delivery design and their reforms.

Further analysis has revealed that there is poor awareness of the institutional set up (e.g. internal follow-up/assessment structure and processes in place) for assessing and managing the service delivery processes among staff. Overall, only up to 40% of respondents are aware of the institutional processes. The number is the lowest in Albania (28%) and the highest in Serbia (55%).

Figure 76: Awareness of Service Delivery Assessment Process
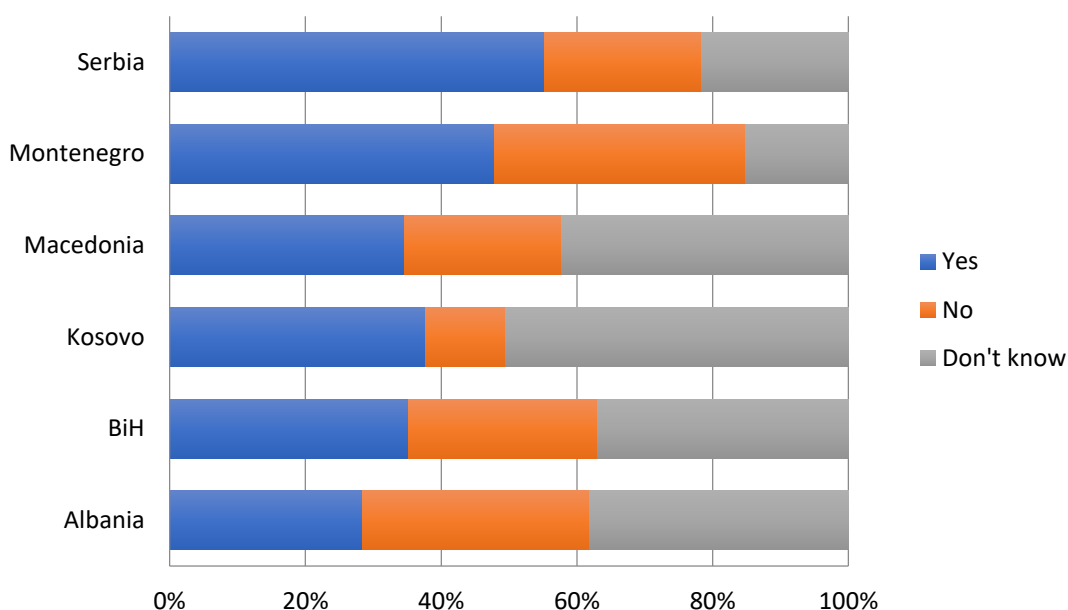
In assessing the service delivery process, we have specifically zoomed-in on two issues: documents and tools for cost assessment of service delivery processes and analysis of financial impact of service re-design.

The issue of systematic assessment of the costs of the service delivery process has not yet been researched at the operational level in the Western Balkans. Post-crisis financial austerity and saving measures, as well as the public opinion, are on the other hand placing increasing pressure on the transparency of public spending, efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery, value-for-money and economic accessibility/affordability of public services.

For this reason, we have gathered information on the existence of documents and tools for the cost assessment of the service delivery processes. We can easily conclude that the aspect of

cost assessment of service delivery has not been substantially developed, nor systematically implemented, by any ReSPA Members or Kosovo*.

Figure 77: Service Delivery Cost Assessment
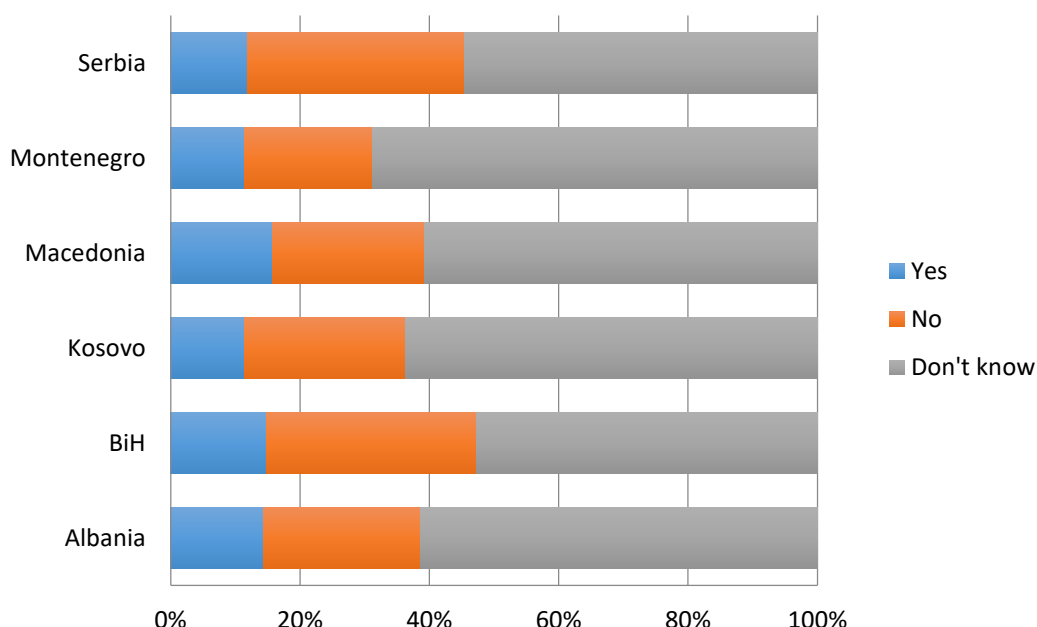
No documents or tools addressing the assessment of costs of public service delivery at the system level have been developed and implemented by any of the countries in the region. "Isolated islands of excellence" can be identified (e.g. Standard Cost Methodology developed in Kosovo*), however these remain limited in scope of the assessment and to assessment of selected services.

Due to the high intensity in reforming public services and public services delivery, we have tried to obtain information on knowledge and use of financial impact assessment of the re-designed public services (costs for maintenance, redesign, simplification of procedures, cutting unnecessary documents, etc.).

Figure 78: Assessment of Financial Impact of Re-designed Services
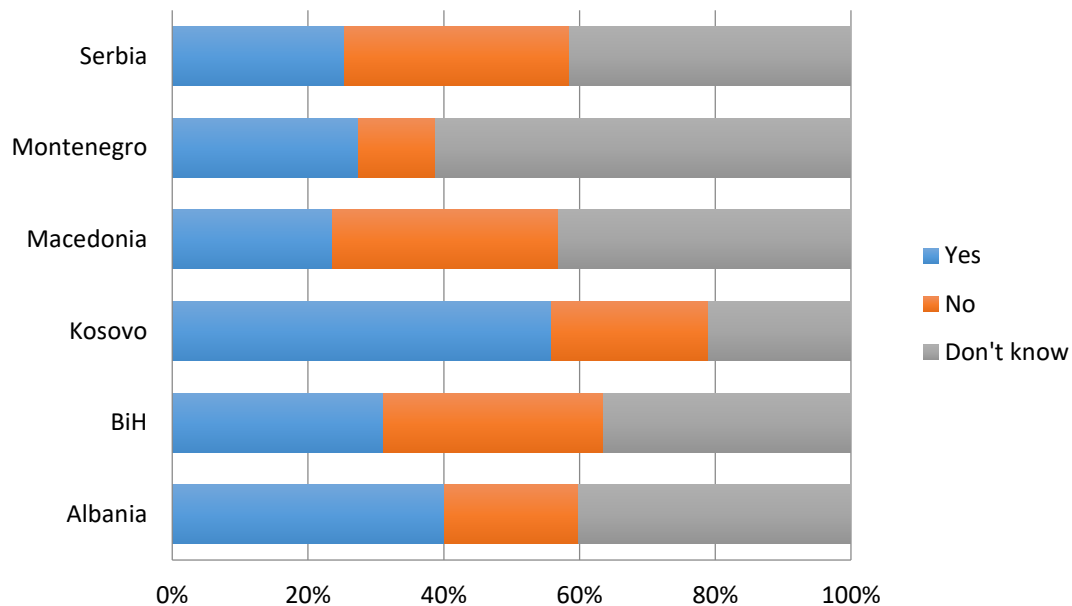
Two thirds of the countries do not perform any, or are not knowledgeable of, assessment of financial impact of re-designed services being performed within their public administrations. Kosovo* and Albania are reginal leaders in implementing financial impact assessment. However, this positive practice identified should not be limited to selected cases, services or sectors, but fully implemented at a system level and across the public administration at the national and local level.

Currently, there is not enough cost-consciousness of the re-design of public services and their delivery in the Western Balkans. There are also no strong requirements to conduct such analysis prior and after the re-design exercise. As in the future more and more demands related to service re-design will be put on the national budgets, in addition to the increasing demand on cost-effectiveness of the Public Administration and requirements of Open Government, the aspect of financial impact of the re-designing of public services would need to be prominently addressed by the national governments. For the purpose of knowing and managing the overall impact of improved service delivery processes in monetary terms, there is a clear need for better tools for measuring and monitoring the financial impact of re-design processes. This is not just important for the re-design of services, it is relevant for other fields as well; especially for the management of ICT resources.

As with time this aspect is becoming increasingly important, we recommend that countries of the region strengthen the development and ensure systematic implementation of documents and tools for service delivery cost assessment. As this is a strategic and overarching horizontal issue, ReSPA might be engaged to facilitate and support this process.

Figure 79: Training Frequency Front-line Staff
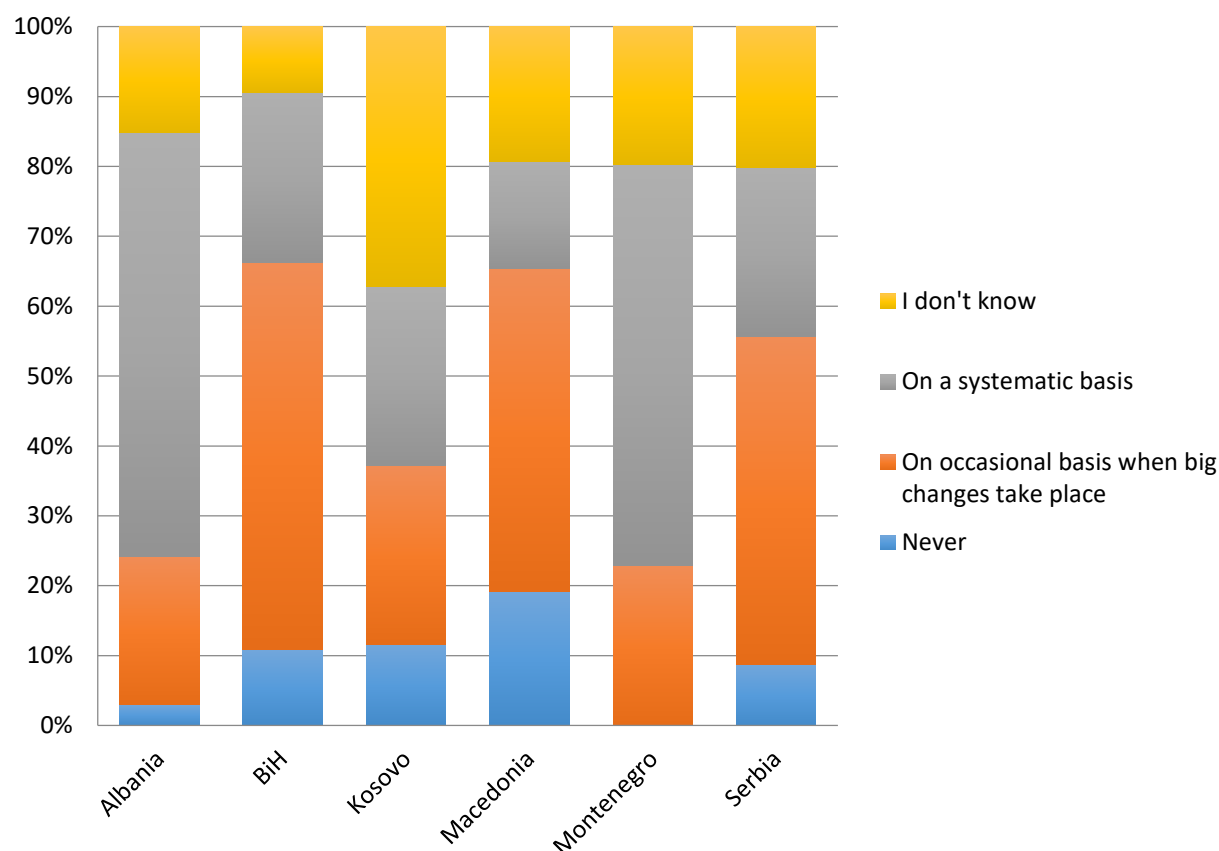
As the re-design and further development of public services remain on the reform agenda in the Western Balkans (see information above) for the foreseeable future, it is encouraging that the front-line/service delivery staff receives specific training related to service delivery and user orientation. This is the case for all countries of the Western Balkans, with a slight exception for Kosovo* (higher absence of information on specific training) and Macedonia (absence of specific training). Despite the general positive trend, it should be noted that only in Albania (60%) and Montenegro (57%), this kind of training is provided on a systematic basis. The rest of the countries provide staff training on improved service delivery and user orientation on a systematic level at a much lower rate – only 25% or even 15% (Macedonia). We advise that in future planning capacity building on the importance and systematic use of cost assessment of re-designed services is included in the training plans of ReSPA Members and Kosovo*.

The above conclusion on the need for systematic training on re-designed services is supported by the data on the mechanisms in place to detect training requirements and the needs of staff directly involved in service delivery. Albania organises trainings predominantly (75%) based on a regular training need analysis (TNA). It is worth considering replicating this mechanism also in

Figure 80: Identifying Training Needs
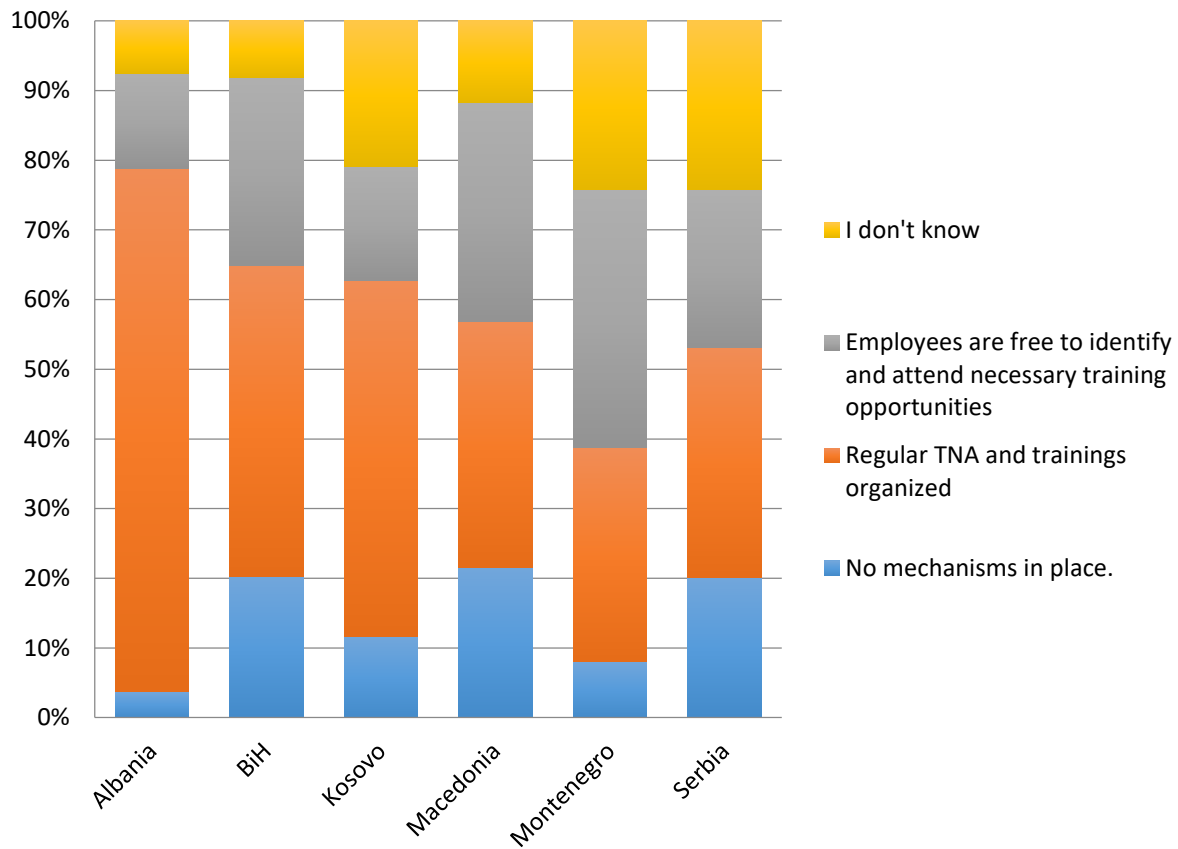
other countries of the Western Balkans. The effectiveness of employees' self-identification of most suitable trainings and their cost effectiveness is questionable. If and where needed, ReSPA should assist its Members and Kosovo* in developing effective monitoring systems for the identification of training needs and in monitoring progress addressing them.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS

Based on the extensive research presented in the previous chapters and synthesising the key findings, in this final chapter we formulate the conclusions and operational recommendations relevant to the majority of Western Balkan countries. We have divided this Chapter into three sections: 1) Strategic Management and Monitoring of Service Delivery Reforms, covering also GAPA implementation; 2) Assessment of Digital Maturity of Service Delivery; and 3) Quality Management and Service Delivery Management.

5.1. Strategic Management and Monitoring of Service Delivery Reforms

General Overview of GAPA Implementation

Notable efforts for reviewing the existing "GAPA legislative frameworks" have been made by the governments of ReSPA Members and Kosovo*. These highly complex, intensive and interrelated processes have mainly been initiated as part of the alignment of the national legislation with the *acquis communautaire*.

Review of GAPA and its related legal framework is a profound and significant intervention and modification of basic and fundamental legal material of national legal systems. GAPA law is *stricto sensu* not a service delivery law. However, it represents the legal grounds for the development of services, defines the rights and obligations between different parties (also between "service providers" and "service users"), frames the service delivery conditions and parameters (time, delivery channels, costs) and puts in place legal protection, measures and remedies in case of complaints and disputes. This makes GAPA one of the central tools for service delivery improvement. This Study addressed the assessment of GAPA implementation in Western Balkan countries due to close interconnectivity and interdependency between GAPA and the service delivery framework and operational implementation of public services.

The GAPA adoption and implementation process is often (but not exclusively) accompanied by the processes of deregulation and administrative simplification. These latter aspects and progress made by the Western Balkan countries have not been assessed within this Study (also due to the limited scope of this Study and limited progress achieved).

A brief overview of the current state-of-play is presented in the table below.

Overview of the Major Developments in GAPA Preparation and Implementation	
Albania	Code of Administrative Procedures (CAP)[334] adopted in 2015 and in force since May 2016. A separate on service delivery - the Law on Public Service Delivery at the Front Office Level in the Republic of Albania adopted in 2016.[335] Harmonisation and coordination of other laws with CAP pending. Deregulation process ongoing since September 2017.
Kosovo*	General Administrative Procedures Act (GAPA)[336] adopted in 2016, in force since June 2017. Harmonisation, operationalisation and coordination of GAPA implementation remains a priority. 2017-2021 Better Regulation Strategy for administrative simplification and deregulation adopted, implementation at an early stage.
Macedonia	General Administrative Procedures Act (GAPA) adopted in 2015, in force since 2016. Monitoring of GAPA implementation and compliance of (by-)laws with GAPA principles is pending. Harmonisation of 169 (by-)laws with GAPA presents a significant challenge for the public administration and progress of the public administration reforms. This also has immediate effect on the administrative simplification and deregulation process.
Montenegro	General Administrative Procedures Act (GAPA)[337] in force since 2017. Methodology for monitoring and evaluation of GAPA implementation in place and should present a solid basis for GAPA review, as well as the simplification and deregulation process – initiated in 2015.
Serbia	General Administrative Procedures Act (GAPA)[338] adopted in 2016. Deregulation and simplification strategically defined and supported through 2016-2020 Strategy for Regulatory Reform and Improvement of Public Policy Management[339] and 2016–2018 Plan of Priority Activities for the Reduction of Administrative Burdens in the Republic of Serbia (Stop to Bureaucracy Plan).[340] Monitoring of GAPA implementation and coordination of recommendations to be further developed.

However, these notable efforts and reforms made in the field of GAPA, are not fully reflected in the perceptions of end users. Although a comparison of results and trends over the past four years revealed improvements in the field of public services delivery, all four measured aspects are rated poorly at the regional level and have received below average scores. Costs of public services have been rated the lowest.

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[334] Law No. 44/2015 - Code of Administrative Procedures (CAP) in the Republic of Albania was adopted on 30 April 2015 and entered into force on 28 May 2016

[335] Law No. 13/2016 - the Law on Public Service Delivery at the Front Office Level in the Republic of Albania

[336] Law No. 05/L-031 - General Administrative Procedures Act (GAPA) of Kosovo*

[337] General Administrative Procedures Act (Official Journal of the Republic of Montenegro Nos. 56/2014, 20/2015, 40/2016 and 37/2017

[338] https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon_o_opstem_upravnom_postupku-2016.html

[339] https://bit.ly/2sC2pGr

[340] www.mduls.gov.rs/doc/Stop%20birokratiji%20konacni.doc

How would you grade the following issues?[341]

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Treatment of citizens in public sector	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.7
Time required for obtaining public services	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.8
Time required for getting information in public sector	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.7
Price of public services	2.2	2.2	2.4	2.5

The implementation of the revised GAPA legal framework, deregulation and simplification of administrative procedures should increase the efficiency of administrative procedures/services delivered, as well as ensure the effective application of laws and equal (legal) treatment of all citizens. Public/end users' perceptions, based on measurements performed within the framework of Balkan Barometer Public Opinion Survey, show only minor positive trends over the last four years. If, according to the citizens, efficiency of administrative procedures has been noticeable and permanently increasing, effective and equal application of laws has improved less and is still well below average.

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[341] 2018 Balkan Barometer: Public Opinion Survey, Table 9, p. 112.

Figure 84: Trends of Administrative Procedure Efficiency Measured by Balkan Barometer
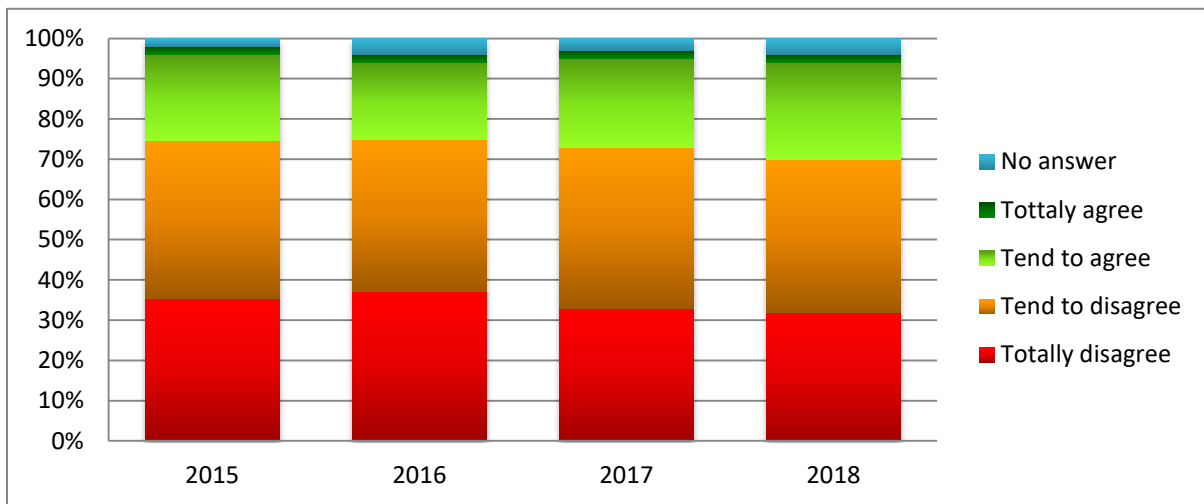
Figure 83: Trends of Effective Application and Enforcement of the Law Measured by Balkan Barometer
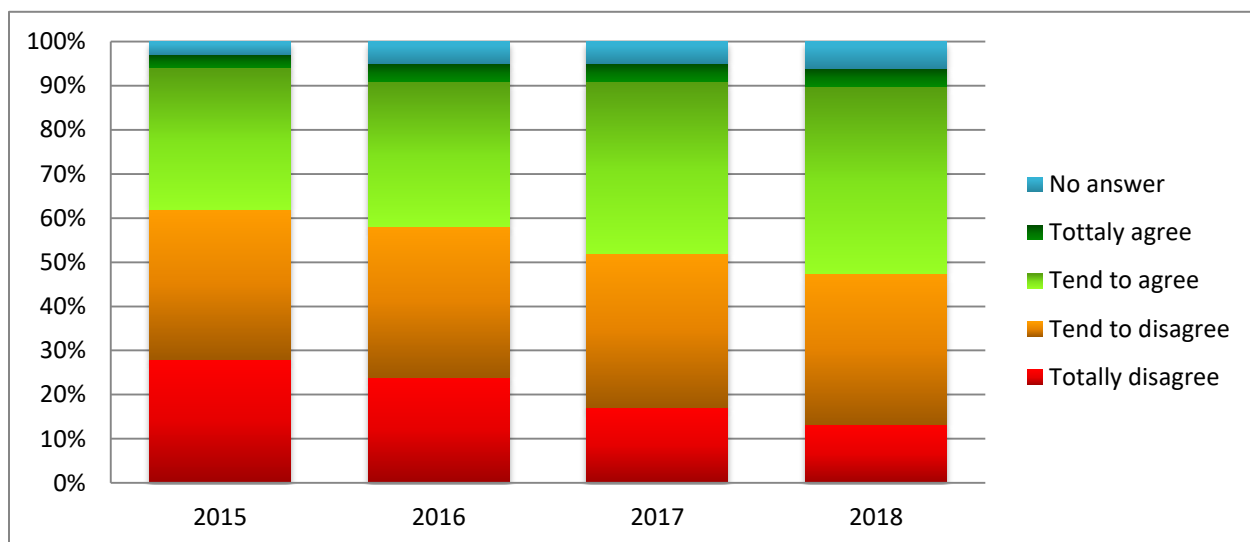
Figure 82: Trends of Equal Application and Enforcement of Law Measured by Balkan Barometer
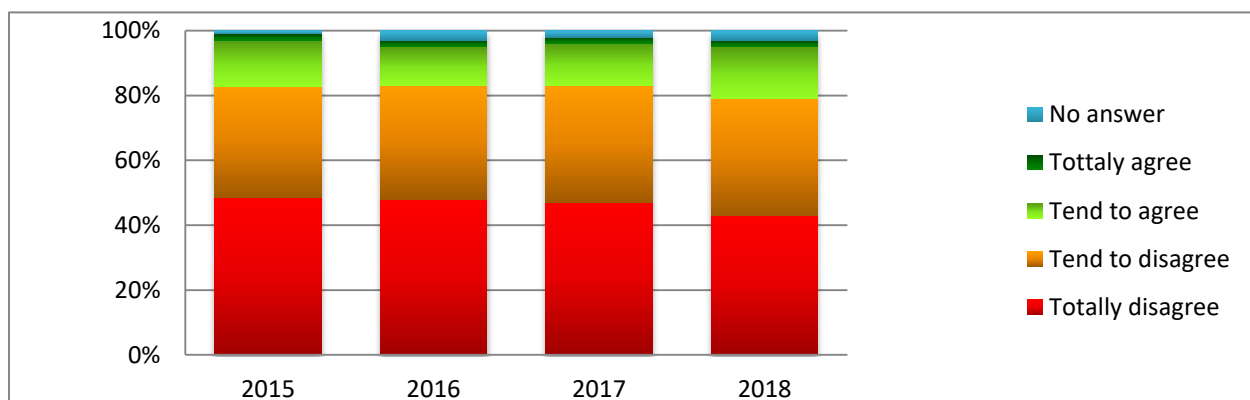
Similarly, the results of the survey conducted within the Western Balkans Enabling Project for

Civil Society Monitoring of Public Administration Reform – WeBER confirm positive trends in the relationship between end users of public services and their providers (public administration) at the regional level: 43% of users say that dealing with public administration has become easier in the last two years. On the other hand, the percentage of people who disagree with that view has also remained relatively high – 37%.

WeBER - Dealing with the administration has become easier in the last two years.[342]
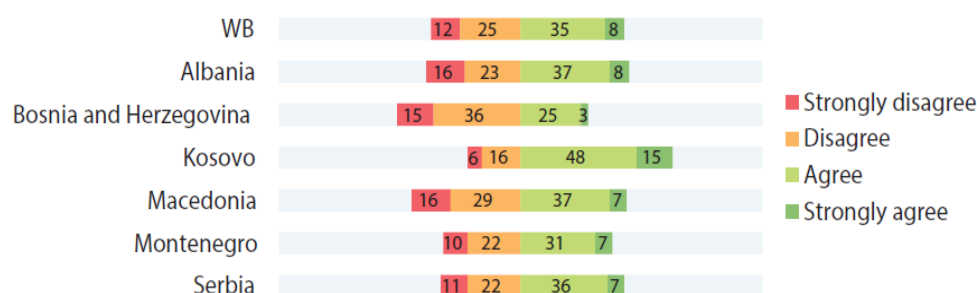
Harmonisation of Other Laws with GAPA

The very process of GAPA preparation and adoption is a cumbersome and demanding one. Therefore, harmonisation of other laws with GAPA and its implementation in practice are equally, if not even more demanding, and crucial for the quality of the delivery of public services.

The process of harmonising other laws with GAPA presents a significant challenge for the Western Balkan countries. The process is pending in most of the countries. Where discrepancies of other legislation with GAPA have been addressed, such harmonisation has been conducted on an *as-need* basis rather than in a systematic fashion.

The completion and finalisation of the harmonisation process should be identified as a priority given the significant impact of GAPA on all administrative procedures and service delivery (through the implementation of users' rights and obligations, as well as process arrangements with and within the public administration). Focus Group conclusions underpin this recommendation by underlining that this process should be implemented in a systematic and coordinated manner. Quality of service delivery will also benefit from the proper and full harmonisation of GAPA and normative enactments. This can be achieved through better provision of information (regarding administrative decisions, e.g. referring always to legal and factual grounds) and presenting decisions in a standardised format. Other impacts of completing the harmonisation of other laws with the new GAPA depend on the specific country contexts.

An important related strategic system decision is the definition (or revision) of the coordination system put in place to facilitate the harmonisation process. An interesting coordination system model was introduced in Kosovo*, where the harmonisation process is centrally coordinated by the Office of the Prime Minister. The positive impact of such an approach might also contribute to the noticeable progress reflected in the (above) WeBER results. However, given that Kosovo* recently adopted the new GAPA (it has been in force since June 2017), additional information would be needed to support this statement.

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[342] Western Balkans Enabling Project for Civil Society Monitoring of Public Administration Reform – WeBER, Figure 6, p. 5.

The successfully addressed GAPA coordination issue would then also allow effective follow-up and monitoring of the impact of (new or revised) GAPA implementation. Information and feedback from authorities reviewing complaints, mainly administrative courts, on the quality of legislation and decisions issued by the administration would present a valuable source of information when deliberating possibilities of setting up such a monitoring and evaluation system. A good example of benefits of taking this information into account is presented in the Country Profile of Macedonia.

One of the expected outputs of PAR in Montenegro envisages the preparation of a system for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the new GAPA. Once completed (and implemented), it should be closely reviewed - also in the light of potential usability and applicability in other ReSPA Members and Kosovo*.

And, last but not the least, the harmonisation process is connected also to the deregulation and simplification processes. In fact, the harmonisation process itself should be considered a process of administrative simplification. Therefore, it is extremely important not to perceive the process of harmonisation of other laws as a purely technical exercise. It represents a more thorough review exercise involving the elimination or replacement of redundant and outdated clauses. For example, all references to paper-based processes should be at least complemented with references to equivalent electronic processes, if not eliminated altogether - e.g. the obligation of classical physical exchange of letters should be replaced with electronic communication. Similarly, the 'once only' principle should be considered and applied as much as possible and, consequently, requirements to submit papers, where data exchanges can be organised, can be eliminated. The harmonisation process is thus more than a mere judicial review process; it is a review where interdisciplinary teams - consisting of e-Government experts, lawyers and service design specialists (as a minimum) - take the lead in creating smart regulation.

Deregulation and simplification of administrative procedures have only had limited success given that proper coordination of harmonisation and implementation of GAPA presents a challenge in all Western Balkan countries. This trend is quite likely to continue, if issues of coordination of the harmonisation of the new GAPA with the existing national legal framework and coordination of GAPA implementation and its monitoring are not resolved.

Coordination of Service Delivery Reform

Results of the Focus Group discussions (as well as the related recommendations) and results of the Online Questionnaire[343] filled by public administrations of Western Balkan countries identify coordination as the biggest challenge in the efficient, effective and equitable delivery of public services and implementation of service delivery reforms.

Figure 86: Main Obstacles to User Centric Service Delivery
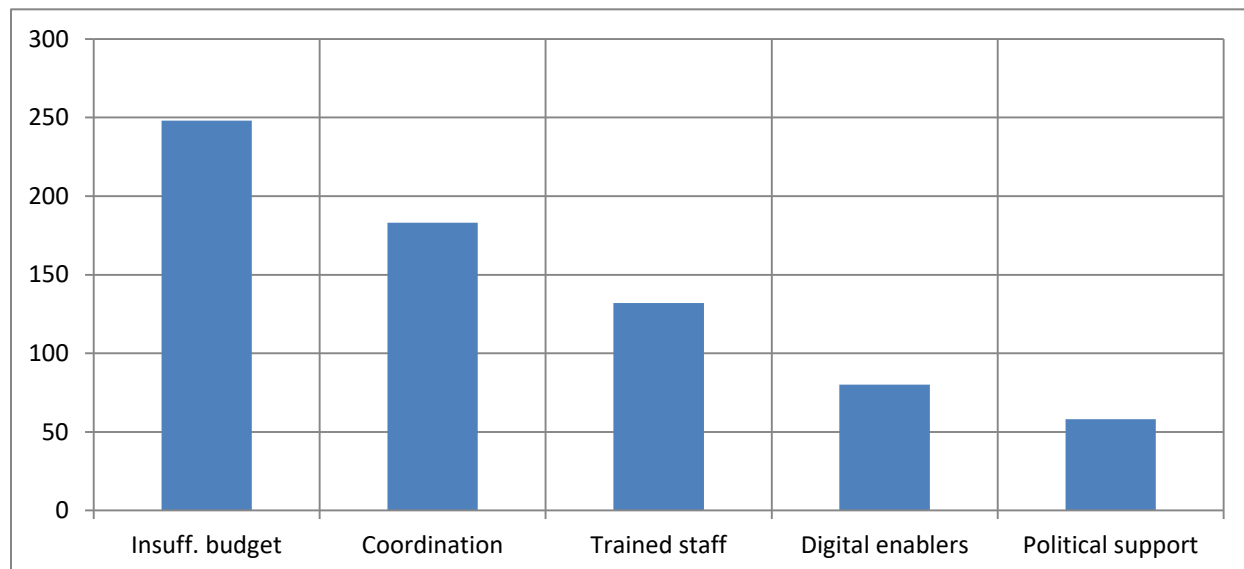
This information is important for gaining a deeper understanding of the contextual and organisational aspects of service delivery (reform) in the Western Balkans.

Results of the Study clearly demonstrate that countries address the improvement of service delivery in several strategic documents. This reduces strategic focus, creates difficulties in prioritisation and possibilities for a disharmonised operational approach. In addition, this creates difficulties in monitoring the progress made and renders feedback-loops ineffective (importance of the monitoring process is further elaborated in the following section). According to the available information, Albania has made reasonable efforts in addressing this issue by adopting a cross-cutting public administration reform agenda and a cross-cutting digital agenda. Combined with a strong outcome-based monitoring and reporting system (see below), it has produced a consistent feedback loop to check whether implementation is on track and real progress has been made.

From the organisational perspective, weak policy coordination and inadequate levers for implementing the reforms throughout the government have a negative effect on service delivery reforms and the quality of the services delivered. Serbia has established an independent IT and e-Government Office that manages and coordinates all IT-related projects. Not diminishing the importance of such a development, the Office's position, inter-connection and synergies with the central policy-making and reform coordinating body should be further developed. This will enable central coordination to address the reform processes in an integrated manner and in strategic perspective, rather than limiting it to the IT perspective. Albania has set up two specific organisations to carry out the service delivery reforms: ADISA as a general service provider (one stop shops) and reform coordination institution with authority to manage cross-departmental reforms, and NAIS, as the technical organisation to provide the enabling framework. Overall, no country in the Western Balkans has established a central strategic decision-making body

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  Online Questionnaire results, Question: *What are the main obstacles to implementing the existing policies on user centric service delivery in your organisation*

responsible for designing, coordinating and managing service delivery reforms, setting standards, monitoring and evaluating progress and providing guidance to the entire administration. In order to address the above weaknesses and issues identified also by the public administration itself, support to the implementation of service delivery reforms and gradual improvement of the quality of services delivered requires investment of additional efforts and money to support improved management of reforms.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Service Delivery Reforms

The WeBER regional results show that more citizens disagree than agree with the statement that, over the previous two years, their governments had asked citizens or civil society organisations for suggestions on how to improve their services or have involved them in monitoring service delivery.

Figure 87
WeBER – Citizens asked to propose improvements[344]

Figure 88

WeBER – Citizens/CSOs involved in the monitoring of services delivered[345]
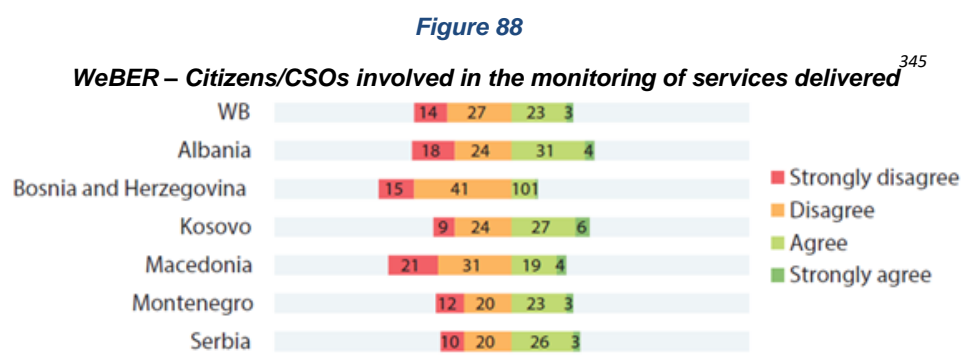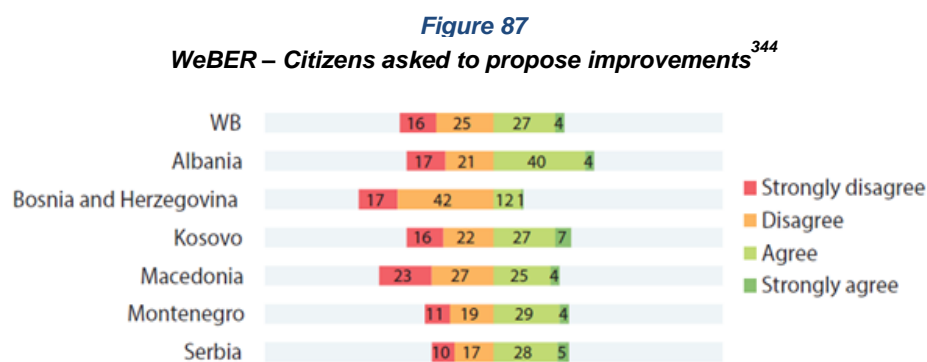
On the other hand, WeBER results show that where citizens/end users/CSOs had been included in the monitoring process, more than 82% of the respondents agreed that monitoring had had impact and that services have been improved.

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[344] WeBER - The government has in the past two years asked the citizens to suggest ways of improving administrative services, Figure 6, p. 5.

[345] WeBER - Citizens or civil society have over the past two years been involved in monitoring services, Figure 17, p. 12.

Figure 89

WeBER – Service improvement as a result of monitoring activities [346]
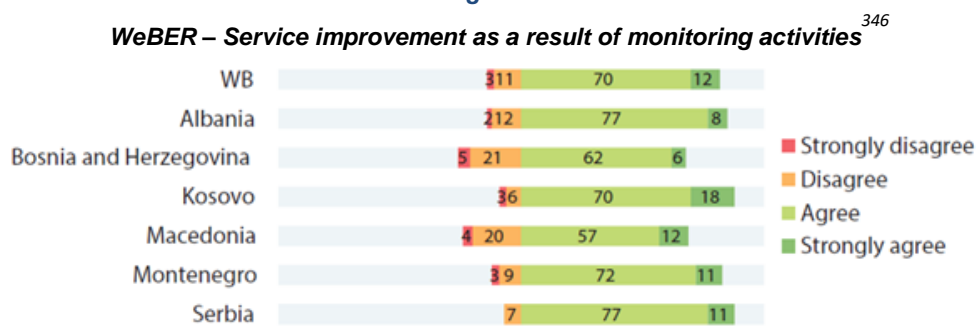
Similarly, the Online Questionnaire results show that only 42% of respondents are aware of institutional set-up (e.g. internal follow-up/assessment structure and processes in place) for assessing service delivering processes. [347] This is even more evident at the sub-national level. It demonstrates that wherever central offices or ministries are in charge of managing the service delivery reforms, they do not reach out to individual government bodies in order to clarify the reform agenda and objectives, let alone support them in their review of administrative services or redesign from the users' perspective.

Figure 90: Awareness of Institutional Set-Up for Service Delivery Management and Assessment
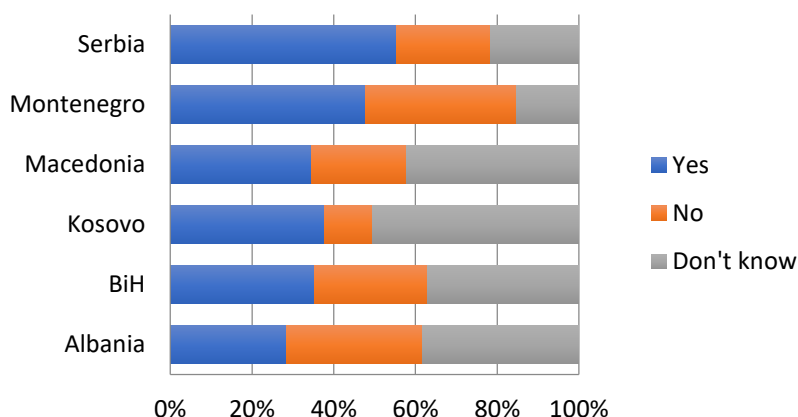
Monitoring progress in the field of service delivery is needed to assess the effectiveness and impact of the implemented reforms, to provide evidence-based support for planning future/revised services, to contribute to the improvement of the quality of the services delivered and last, but not the least, to contribute to the overall assessment and strategic vision of public administration reforms in the respective countries.

Montenegro recently developed a methodology for monitoring and reporting on public administration reforms. [348] The methodology envisages a biannual monitoring and reporting exercise. Monitoring of the public administration reform (including public service reform) is envisaged under the leadership of the Inter-Service Operational Team. Under the Methodology, the reports are sent to the coordinating body – the PAR Council, and, once a year, also to the

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[346] WeBER - As a result of such monitoring, the government has improved services, Figure 18, p. 13.

[347] Online Questionnaire results, Question: Is an institutional set-up (e.g. internal follow-up/assessment structure and processes) in place for assessing service delivery processes?

[348] Guidelines for Monitoring and Reporting on the Implementation of the 2016-2020 PARS, April 2018.

Government. The Methodology provides standard templates for monitoring and reporting on reform progress made at the level of the overall PAR goals, as well as in individual reform activities. The reports should provide clear identification of responsibilities, a qualitative assessment of the achieved progress and recommendations. Establishment of a set of "success indicators" (most probably outcome indicators) to monitor reform progress is also envisaged. Given that the Methodology was applied only once and that the first report is due in 2019, it is hard to assess its full usefulness and replicability. Additional attention needs to be devoted especially to clearer definition and, envisaged use of indicators and their further development. Albania has developed a system for reporting results in terms of outcomes to the highest possible level, i.e. the Prime Minister. According to the information available to the authors of this Study, other countries have not yet set up any publicly usable frameworks to monitor progress in terms of outcomes.

Development of monitoring and evaluation models and development of (output) indicators for regular and systemic monitoring and evaluation of service delivery (reforms) and more broadly - reforms of the public administration - present a horizontal issue that would be sensible to address on a regional level. Central support and coordination through ReSPA would be of significant importance. ReSPA has, through the implementation of this Study, developed an initial model and system of indicators for monitoring and evaluating service delivery from the perspective of public administrations – combining both national and regional levels (through the development and application of the Online Questionnaire). This model could be reviewed and further developed and serve as an integral and complementary database for monitoring and evaluating the state-of-play of implementation of service delivery reforms in the region and as a strategic planning tool for horizontal regional activities.

The results of the Online Questionnaire on the existence of assessment and monitoring tools for service delivery in the Western Balkans bring to the fore two other important aspects: systematic assessments of service delivery costs and analyses of the financial impacts of service redesign/reform.

Systematic assessment of costs related to service delivery is performed in less than a quarter of the countries (24%). A large majority is either unaware (43%) or does not perform (33%) systematic assessments of costs related to services delivery; nor are they aware of specific tools or use them for assessment.

Figure 91

Assessing Costs of Service Delivery[349]
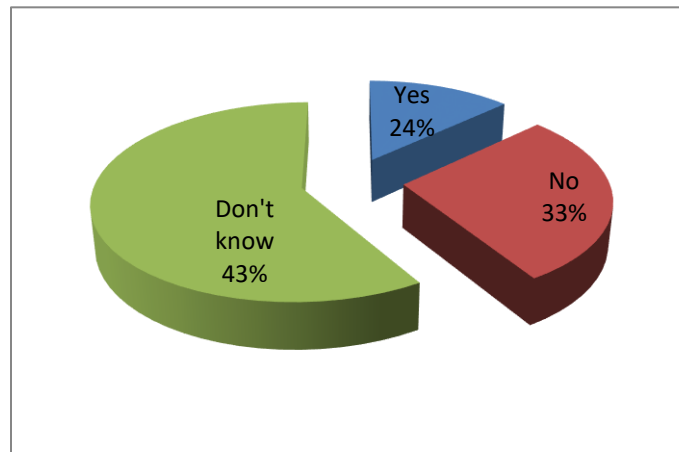
Similarly less than a quarter of the countries performs analyses of the financial impact of service redesign/reform. Financial impact assessments of service delivery reforms are not performed in more than three quarters of the participating countries (77%).

Figure 92

Assessing Financial Impacts of Service Redesign/Reform[350]
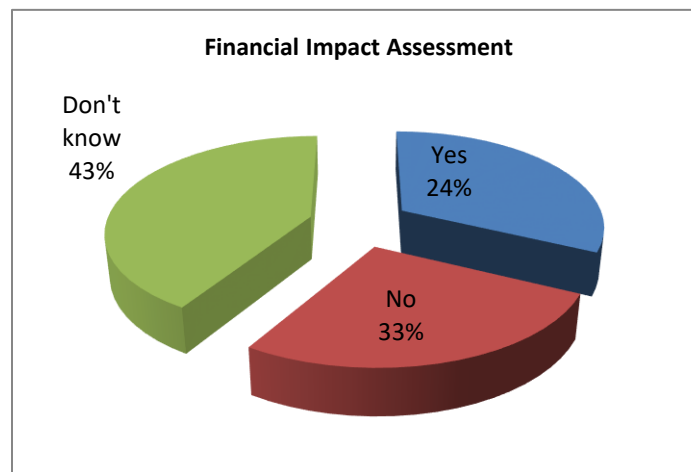
There have been some examples of developing and introducing methodologies for monitoring service delivery costs, which have, however, been limited to the individual service level. For instance, the   Standard Cost Model Methodology - developed by the Kosovo* public administration in order to support the administrative simplification reform - is not implemented on a regular basis; ADISA in Albania has been developing cost assessment methodologies and pilot measurements of costs per transaction; cost assessment has been developed in the unofficial version of the BiH PAR Action Plan. A systematic monitoring methodology on a wide scale has not been developed nor implemented by any ReSPA Members or Kosovo*.

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[349] Online Questionnaire results, Question: Do you have any tools or documents for assessing the costs of the service delivering processes?

[350] Online Questionnaire results, Question: Do you have any documents and tools for assessing the costs of service delivery?

The above examples of good initiatives can be used as a sound starting point for ReSPA as a regional hub and knowledge centre. As the recommendation on the development of a methodology for collecting and systematically monitoring information on the costs of all delivery channels at the individual service and organisation levels is a valid one for all the countries of the Western Balkans, it would be reasonable to address it at the regional level. These efforts should, inter alia, also lead to better service fee predictability and assessment of administrative simplifications measures.

A brief overview of the conclusions related to regulatory – strategic and legal background, as well as the coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation process would be as follows:

➤ The **completion and finalisation of the harmonisation process should be identified as a priority** given the significant impact of GAPA on all administrative procedures and service delivery (through the implementation of users' rights and obligations, as well as process arrangements with and within the public administration). This **process should be implemented in a systematic and coordinated manner, rather than on an** *as-need* **basis.**

➤ **Quality of service delivery** will also benefit from the **proper and full harmonisation of GAPA and normative enactments**. This can be achieved through **better provision of information** (regarding administrative decisions, e.g. referring always to legal and factual grounds) and **presenting decisions in a standardised format**.

➤ An important related strategic system decision is the **definition (or revision) of the coordination system put in place to facilitate the harmonisation proce**ss.

➤ The successfully addressed GAPA coordination issue will allow **effective follow-up and monitoring of the impact of (new or revised) GAPA implementation**. Information and feedback from authorities reviewing complaints, mainly administrative courts, on the quality of legislation and decisions issued by the administration present a valuable source of information when deliberating possibilities of setting up such a monitoring and evaluation system.

➤ Harmonisation process is connected also to the **deregulation and simplification processes**. In fact, the harmonisation process itself should be considered a process of administrative simplification. Therefore, it is extremely important **not to perceive the process of harmonisation of other laws as a purely technical exercise**. It represents a **more thorough review exercise involving the elimination or replacement of redundant and outdated clauses**. Similarly, the '**once only**' principle should be considered and applied as much as possible and, consequently, requirements to submit papers, where data exchanges can be organised, can be eliminated. The harmonisation process should **be steered by interdisciplinary teams** - consisting of e-Government experts, lawyers and service design specialists (as a minimum) - take the lead in **creating smart regulation**.

➤ Deregulation and simplification of administrative procedures **have only had limited success** given that proper coordination of harmonisation and implementation of GAPA presents a challenge in all Western Balkan countries. This trend is quite **likely to continue**, if **issues of coordination of the harmonisation of the new GAPA** with the existing national legal framework **and coordination of GAPA implementation and its monitoring are not resolved**.

➤ In order to address the above weaknesses and issues identified also by the public administration itself, support to the implementation of service delivery reforms and gradual improvement of the quality of services delivered **requires investment of additional efforts and money to support improved management of reforms**.

> ➢ **Development of monitoring and evaluation models and development of (output) indicators for regular and systemic monitoring and evaluation of service delivery (reforms)** and more broadly - reforms of the public administration - **present a horizontal issue** that would be sensible to **address on a regional level**. Central support and coordination through **ReSPA would be of significant importance**. ReSPA has, through the implementation of this Study, developed an initial model and system of indicators for monitoring and evaluating service delivery from the perspective of public administrations – combining both national and regional levels (through the development and application of the Online Questionnaire). This **model could be reviewed and further developed and serve as an integral and complementary database for monitoring and evaluating the state-of-play of implementation of service delivery reforms in the region and as a strategic planning tool for horizontal regional activities.**
> ➢ The results of the Online Questionnaire on the existence of assessment and monitoring tools for service delivery in the Western Balkans bring to the fore two other important aspects: **systematic assessments of service delivery costs and analyses of the financial impacts of service redesign/reform**.
> ➢ As the recommendation on the development of a **methodology for collecting and systematically monitoring information on the costs of all delivery channels at the individual service and organisation levels** is a valid one for all the countries of the Western Balkans, it would be equally reasonable to **address it at the regional level**. These efforts should, inter alia, also lead to **better service fee predictability and assessment of administrative simplifications measures**.

5.2. Maturity in Digital Service Delivery in the Western Balkan

Digital government and service delivery is at the top of every Government (reform) agenda. The EU e-Government Action Plan 2016-2020 is guided by the following vision: "*By 2020, public administrations and public institutions in the European Union should be open, efficient and inclusive, providing **borderless, personalised, user-friendly, end-to-end digital public services** to all citizens and businesses in the EU. **Public administrations use the opportunities offered by the new digital environment to facilitate their interactions with stakeholders and with each other**.*"

The public service delivery reform is a complex, huge and ambitious challenge that pervades all public sectors and levels and their interaction with citizens and businesses. This involves a fundamental shift from operating in a narrow or isolated departmental view within the government, to a more holistic citizen-centric approach by fostering a customer-care culture, enhancing access, strengthening citizen feedback, increasing efficiency and accountability in public administration, and institutionalising the impetus for ongoing improvement. This shift, therefore, relies heavily on innovation and the use of information technology, e.g. digitalisation of services, to improve the organisation of service delivery, standards, procedures, and, ultimately, to facilitate access to public services or improve their quality. Following this global trend, public administrations in the Western Balkans have also been using the opportunities offered by the new digital environment and have recently been actively engaged in digitalising their public services, with some concrete inspiring practices presented in Annex 7 to this Study.

These efforts have already achieved visible impacts, as online modes of interactions between service providers and users are also becoming substantially used throughout the Western Balkans, almost as much as other traditional modes of interactions, such as e.g. personal visits - 28% of the institutions that filled the Online Questionnaire undertaken within this Study (without much regional differences noted between the countries) stated that they regularly used digital

channels for general interactions with citizens and businesses. These interactions include providing information about services, providing services, as well as receiving complaints about services provided.

Figure 93: General Mode of Interaction
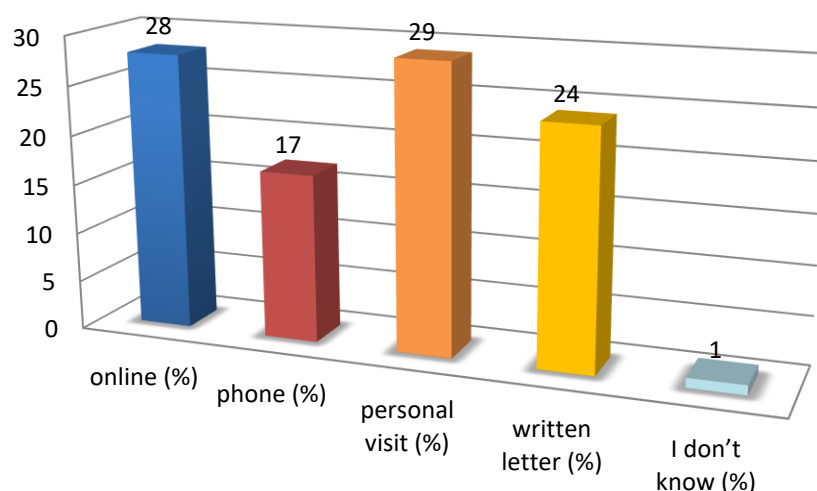
These efforts are also visible from the users' perspective, captured in the *2018 Balkan Barometer,*[351] reviewing four aspects of government performance. Compared with the previous annual surveys, ratings have improved in all aspects across the region. For example, the turnaround time to obtain information from the public sector (data which public authorities have, such as documents, registers, records, etc.) was rated the best by the respondents (2.8 on a scale of 1 to 5), even though all four aspects of government performance under review are rated poorly at the South-East European (SEE) level and receive a below average score (under 3.0). Unfortunately, it was not possible to explore the reasons for such low scores throughout the countries within the framework of this Study

Figure 94: Government Performance in Four Aspects (scores from 1 to5)

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Treatment of citizens in public sector	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.7
Time required for obtaining public services	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.8
Time required for getting information in public sector	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.7
Price of public services	2.2	2.2	2.4	2.5

More concretely, WeBER PAR Monitor indicators[352] measuring public perceptions of the implementation of the citizen-oriented service delivery in practice and covering, inter alia,

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[351] RCC, 2018 Balkan Barometer, https://www.rcc.int/seeds/results/2/balkan-public-barometer, p. 112

[352] http://www.par-monitor.org/pages/results conducted from 15 October to 30 November 2017 and published on 15 January 2018

digitalisation aspects, show that 59% of the citizens on average agree that the governments have been moving forwards digitalisation.

This is further substantiated by this ReSPA Study: only 20% of all public administration respondents declared they did not provide any form of online services. Actually, most respondents (40%) said they were already providing a few services online - which shows that public administrations in the Western Balkans are in the process of digital transformation. However, these governments' efforts need to be supported by adequate awareness campaigns, given that WeBER PAR Monitor indicators[353] show that only 41% (from as low as 19% in BIH to 53% in Macedonia) of the citizens are aware that e-services are offered.

	Moving to Digitalization	Awareness of existence of e-services	User friendliness of services used
Albania	56	49	78
Bosnia and Herzegovina	28	19	76
Kosovo*	64	51	80
Macedonia	72	53	81
Montenegro	64	31	81
Serbia	70	41	86
Average	59	41	80

Furthermore, the scores on the user friendliness of the used services according to the WeBER PAR Monitor indicators[354] are quite high, since 80% of the users of e-services have qualified them as user friendly. This percentage may be so high because those using digital services are probably already familiar with and prone to using the digital environment and user friendliness might not represent a major obstacle standing in the way of their use of the offered digital services. This further complements our findings that, in the process of e-service design and delivery, Western Balkan public administrations are mostly committed to security and personal data safety (25%), inclusiveness and accessibility (21%) and usability and user friendliness (15%).

User testing is usually applied during the piloting of a new IT system and it is in most cases a one-off exercise. These attempts should now be expanded more systematically and built into overall service management.

Public administrations should continue with this trend and, moreover, not just build up service delivery digital tools only for the use by government services (most of the people should not need them more than several times a year), but also cooperate with the private sector that can embed and use these tools in their services (e.g. banks, utility operators etc.).

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[353] *Ibid.*

[354] *Ibid.*

Figure 95: Priority Features of e-Services
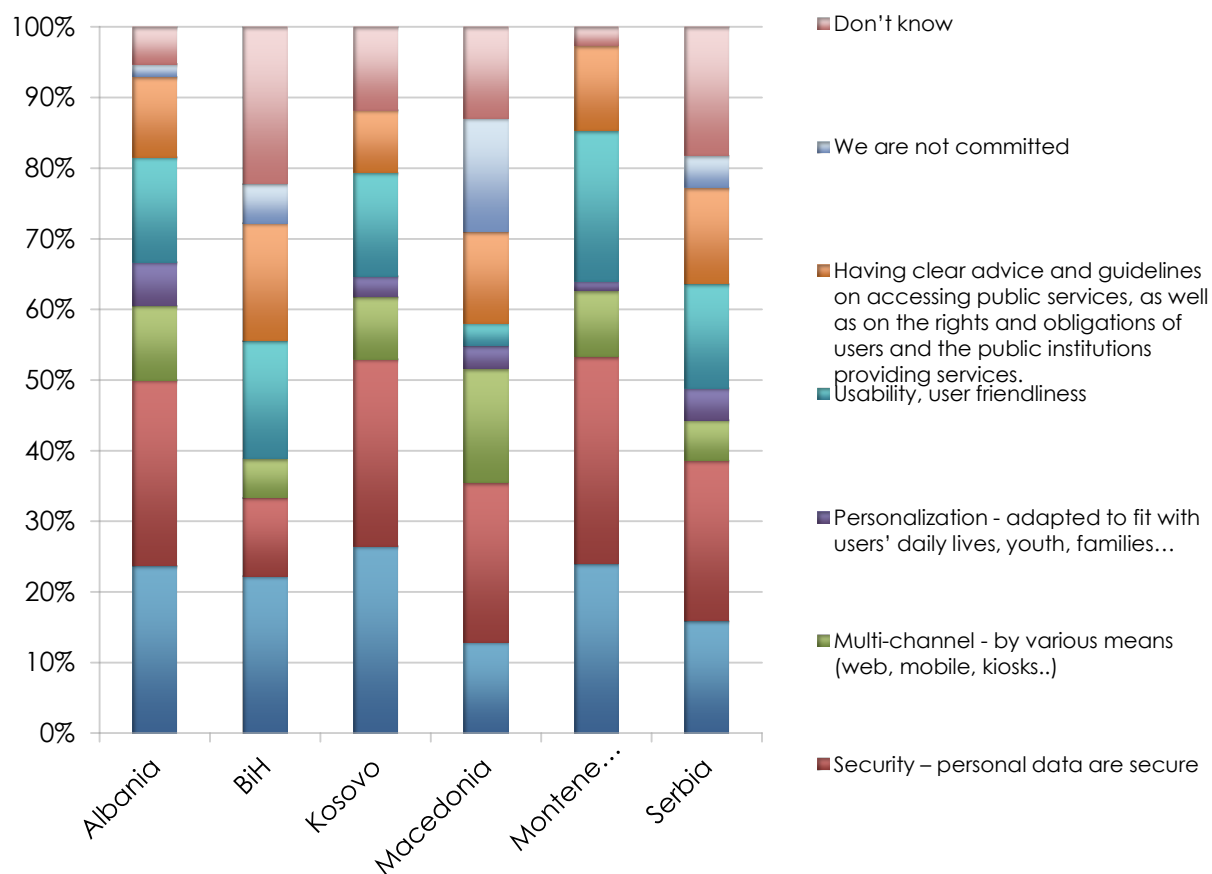
Looking at the quantity of services offered online, Albania seems to be the regional front-runner, with the highest percentage of respondent institutions providing most of their services online; none of the other countries are lagging far behind. The Albanian leap was the result of a comprehensive fast-paced reform that included interventions on the legal, institutional and operational scales, from enacting the law on front office service delivery and putting in place the institutional set-up for public sector service delivery coordination to providing centrally available digital enablers and technical building blocks facilitating the development of e-services.

Online services can be provided at different levels of sophistication:

- ➢ Informative only - information necessary to start the procedure to obtain the service available on the web;
- ➢ Interactive - downloadable or printable or electronic forms to start the procedure to obtain the service available on the web;
- ➢ Fully transactional - full electronic case processing by the service provider, including online payment;
- ➢ Fully transactional and personalised - proactive, automated and personalised service delivery;
- ➢ Provided through national portals

The assessment of the level of sophistication of those services provided online shows that they are still mainly at the level of information provision and interaction - 62% of all digital services

provided in the Western Balkans are at the level of information and interaction. Albania seems to be a champion in this respect too, given that it boasts the greatest number of reformed services fully transactional, personalised and provided through national portals.

Figure 96: Sophistication of Online Services Provided
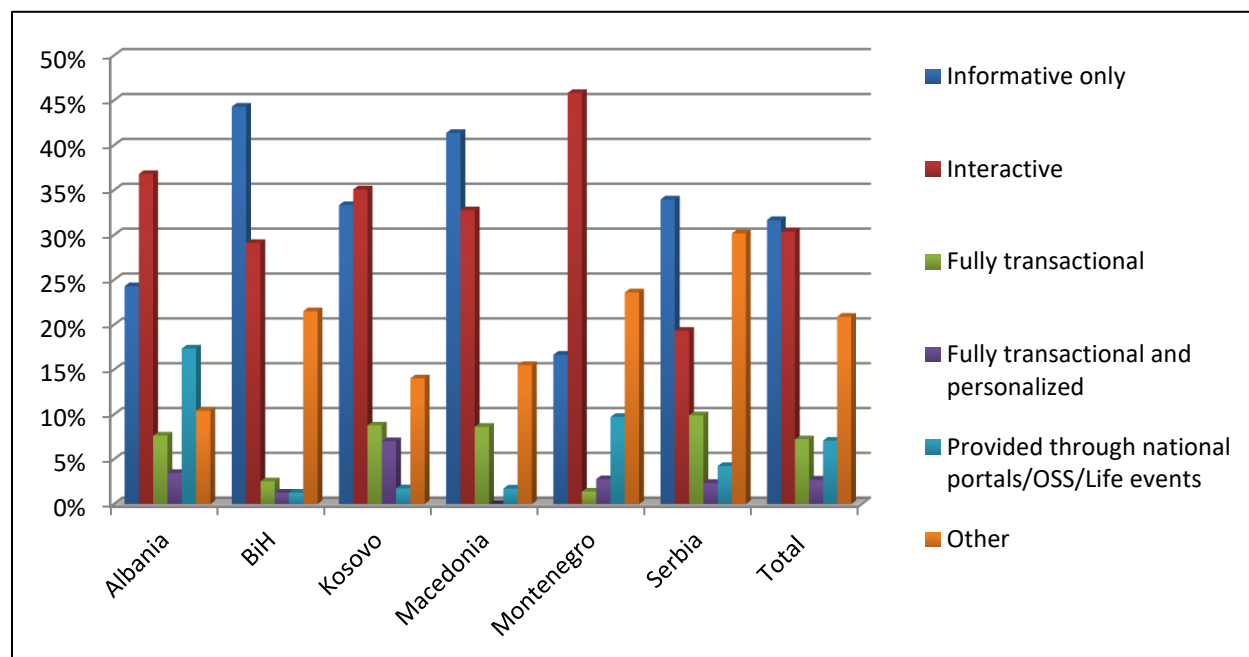
In general, some electronic services in some priority areas, targeting mainly businesses, have been implemented, but the governments should now systematically expand the positive experiences from these selected examples to other areas.

The table below presents the total number of transactional services available on national portals and other sites and channels. This may be indication that the respondents have overestimated the level of sophistication of their services presented in the chart above.

	Albania	BiH	Kosovo*	Macedonia	Montenegro	Serbia
No of available transactional e-services:	535	0	0	200	455	12

Online public service delivery requires a comprehensive reform that includes several complex interventions at policy, legal, institutional and operational levels. With the exception of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which lacks a strategic framework on service delivery, other Western Balkan countries have in place strategic frameworks and a reasonable regulatory environment for digital government projects and electronic service delivery to render electronic service delivery more citizen and business oriented; however, most countries are still struggling in the areas of policy implementation, communication and monitoring.

A number of laws necessary for the establishment of electronic services, such as the law on electronic signatures, the law on electronic documents, the law on electronic legal transactions, etc. have been adopted in most Western Balkan countries. The equivalence of electronic and traditional (paper) submissions and documents is legislated in all the WB countries and they are

currently trying to align their national legislation with eIDAS (EU Regulation No. 910/2014 on Electronic Identity and Trust for Electronic Transaction Services in the European Internal Market), in order to facilitate secure electronic transactions and ensure recognition of all electronic ID and signatures that meet eIDAS standards for all services offered by public administrations. However, the practical application and uptake of electronic identification and signatures has been caught in a vicious circle in some countries. For example, in BiH and Kosovo*, there are still no registered trust service providers on the market, as such commerce does not seem yet to be appealing to the private sector given the relatively low number of services for which citizens and business can use electronic signatures, while at the same time, e-services are not offered because citizens and business do not possess electronic IDs and signatures.

To facilitate the uptake of e-services, public administrations in Albania and Montenegro became front-runners in using electronic signatures and putting into circulation legally valid electronic documents/certificates and accepting electronic documents/ requests/certificates submitted by citizens and businesses.

Despite the adequate policy and legal framework, lack of adequate and systematic institutional coordination creates major obstacles in systematic electronic services implementation. Ad-hoc coordination, unclear distribution of responsibilities and shortage of staff experienced in service reengineering and digital enablers seem to be common in the region. Specifically, the institutional set-up and the clear division of roles among key ministries and other public administration institutions in the area of public service delivery could be improved in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo*, while coordination among responsible institutions could be better in Montenegro and Serbia.

Furthermore, ensuring the availability of digital enablers and basic registers is an expensive process and countries are struggling with inadequate budgets in an attempt to further increase the number of isolated systems connected to the government interoperability platforms and the number of electronic services offered on the government portals.

Progress has been made throughout the region in the establishment and deployment of ICT tools that enable better electronic service delivery, such as the interoperability platform, generic electronic identification, qualified electronic signatures and other trust services and reusable technical building blocks (single sign-on, mobile authentication, payment gateways). For example, all countries have recently been engaged in developing portals as windows to government provided services. Also, single sign-on is available in Albania and Montenegro, while the e-payment gateway is available in Albania, Macedonia and Serbia. However, general uptake of enablers and reusable building blocks is still limited by the substantial existence of silos where, for example, e-IDs are used only for a particular service (22%). This practice is not user-centric, as it obliges users to have separate e-IDs for each service provided; it is also financially unsustainable. In parallel with the efforts of establishing key digital enablers and reusable technical building blocks by governments or commercial providers, awareness needs to be raised among service providers of the importance of digitalising their services, but also of availing themselves of the available central IT facilities (enablers and reused technical blocks) to assist them and standardise the process. Future areas for cooperation should be established with the ISA^2 programme[355] regarding the new European Interoperability Framework (EIF) and reuse of

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[355] The ISA² programme supports the development of digital solutions that enable public administrations, businesses and citizens in Europe to benefit from interoperable cross-border and cross-sector public services. The reuse of ISA² solutions and deliverables is readily available to the Western Balkans, as is the drafting of a National Interoperability Framework based on the European Interoperability Framework (EIF).

available service building blocks, such as the Catalogue of Services (the Core Public Service Vocabulary Application Profile (CPSV-AP)[356] covering all types of public services in order to support life events, as well as other controlled vocabularies, meta data standards for open data, etc. This would contribute to building capacities in Western Balkan countries for reusing and implementing EU building blocks, including mobile identification (STORK[357]), signing and e-payment to improve accessibility and convenience of online public services in the Western Balkans. ReSPA could further facilitate cooperation with the ISA^2 project on the reuse of the developed e-Government solutions, such as EIF and common building blocks, through awareness and capacity building activities. Also, countries with EU membership aspirations should also be aware of the EU-wide once-only future, tested and prototyped through initiatives such as www.toop.eu. The vision is that, through EU-wide interoperability of information systems, the citizens will be much freer to use high quality public services they are accustomed to when travelling abroad.

In general, business users have extensively started using electronic identification/signatures to obtain administrative services, but personal use is still marginal, due to high costs, low convenience and too few services that individual citizens can avail themselves of in this fashion. Therefore, in order to facilitate access to digital services, use of a central mobile phone authenticating/signature building block is recommended as it makes possible use of electronic signatures via a mobile phone; as opposed to the card-based citizen card, installing software and additional hardware (card reader) will no longer be necessary.

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[356] CPSV-AP is a data model developed at the EU level for describing public services and the associated life and business events. It would be extremely useful to test it/use it in the development/management of catalogues or a portal of public services at local (municipal) and national levels, and even the regional level. It would be interesting to explore how the use and application of this model could guarantee a degree of cross-domain and cross-border interoperability between public service catalogues.

[357] Secure idenTity acrOss bordeRs linked - STORK, is an EU-funded project that has been developing a means of using national (Member States' developed) eIDs to access services provided in another country (Member State). The aim is to simplify as much as possible people's access to services by using their existing (national) eIDs regardless of where in the EU they are. The latest version of this pilot, STORK 2.0, is piloting services in multiple Member States covering eLearning & Academic Qualifications, e-Banking, Public Services for Business, and e-Health. It involves 19 Member States across Europe and 58 partners in the public and private sectors. Through a Pan European Proxy Service, or PEPS, STORK allows different national eID systems to talk to each other. Each Member State is responsible for providing their home PEPS to handle requests from its national services when users need to sign in and from a foreign PEPS in another Member State, when one of its nationals wishes to access a foreign service online. STORK does not replace change the national eID, but rather builds interoperability on top of it.

Figure 97: Usage of Available Digital Enablers

Legend:
- Others
- e-Deliery & e-Invoicing
- e-Payment
- Single Sign On
- e-Signature
- Mobile authentication
- Generic e-ID
- Own IT systems and own e-ID
- We don't use/have any digital enabler
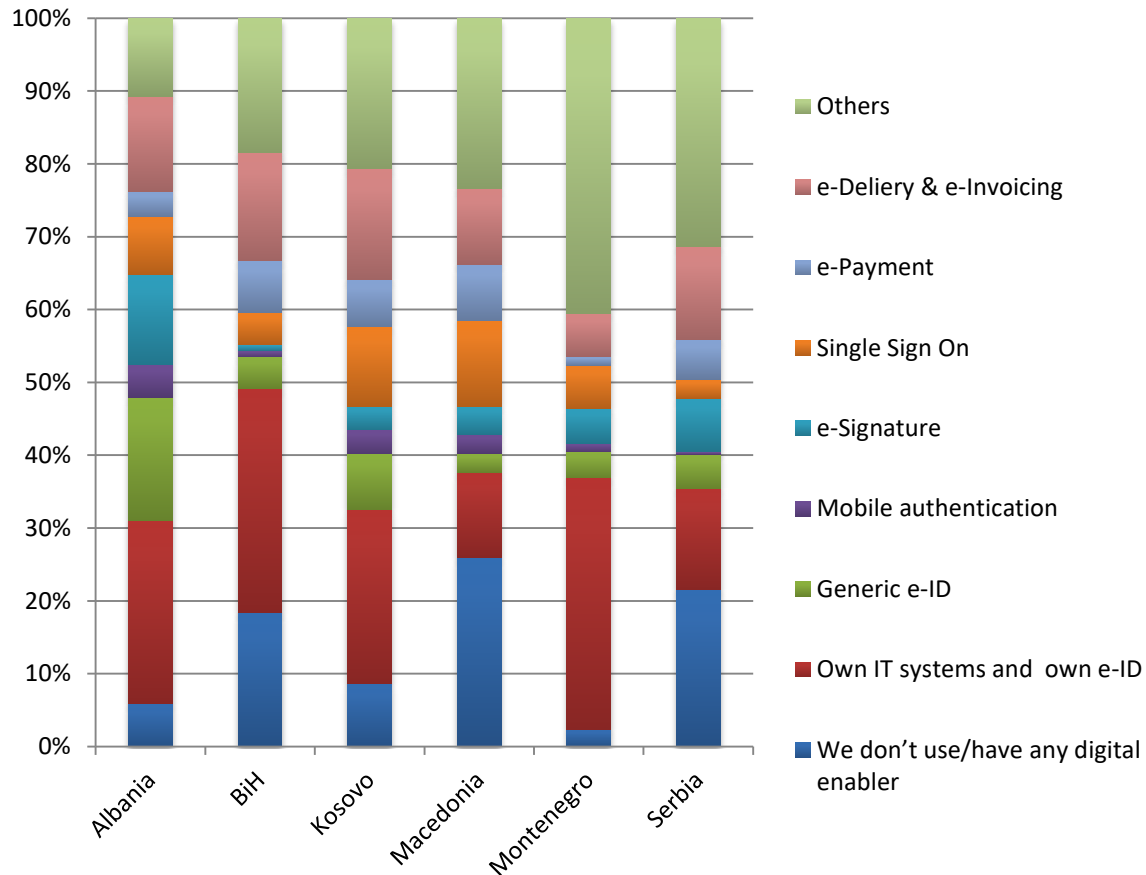
A large majority of respondent organisations are in charge of maintaining a register (e.g. real estate and facilities, population, legal persons, etc.[358]). Those registers are primarily digitised (72%), and there are some good practices of electronic data exchange and sharing of aggregated services (37%).

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[358] Catalogue of Public Registers, Spatial Subdivisions, Residence records, Land Cadastre, Land Records (the Real Estate Cadastre), GIS Maps, Birth, Marriage and Death Registers, Citizenship Books, Residence Records; Register of Owners of Motor Vehicles, Register of Driving Licence Holders, Passport Records, Records of Employed Persons, Records of Unemployed Persons, Civil Servants and Employees, Voter Register, Election Roll, Register of Displaced Persons, Work Permits and Residence Permits Issued to Foreign Nationals, Records of Scholarship Holders, Records of Pensioners, Records of Health Insurance Beneficiaries, Companies, Crafts, Associations, Institutions, Trusts and Foundations, Public Administration, Public Procurement, Budget Classifications, Budget Users, Chart of Accounts, Tax Records, Capital Projects, Pledge Register, Bank Accounts, Customs Records, Records of Incentives, Register of Regulations, Catalogue of Administrative Areas, Strategy Catalogue, Register of Government Decisions at Various Administrative Levels, Long-Term Plans and Programmes, National EU Accession Programmes, statistical registers, statistical classification, statistical research programs, research catalogues, EUROSTAT, KPI Catalogue, process catalogues, Glossary, accession programs, Statistical registers, Statistical classification, Statistical research programs, Research catalogues, EUROSTAT, KPI Catalogue, BNCH Catalogue, Process catalogues, Glossary, , Register of Specific Regulations, etc.

Figure 98: Status of Registers

Legend:
- **Yes, but register is not digitized** — 28%
- **Yes, register is digitized, but data are not electronically shared with other institutions** — 35%
- **Register is digitized and data are electronically shared with other organizations** — 37%
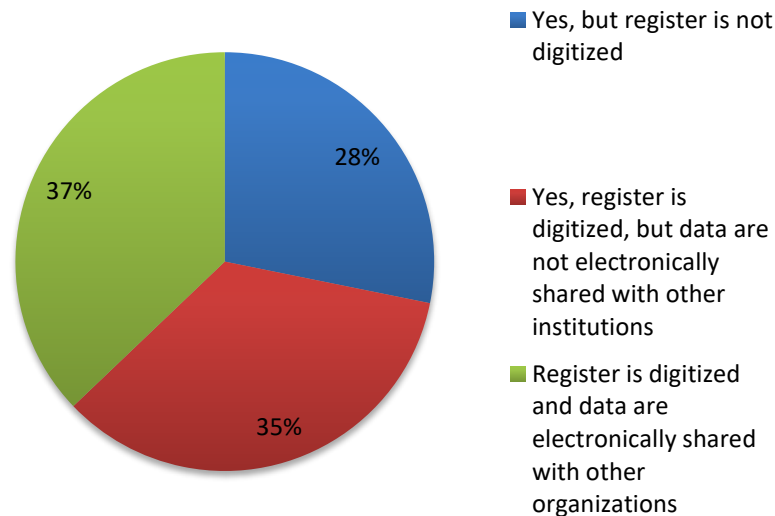
In half of the institutions that have digitally available registers, standard procedures are mostly in place for using those data by other institutions when legally required, but the other half is not electronically sharing or exchanging data with other institutions. In the context of the above plea for strong chain and network governance, this is an important finding jeopardising interoperability and smooth integrated service delivery to the end beneficiary, be it an individual citizen, a representative group or a company.

Interoperability of registers and digital services to simplify procedures for citizens is promoted through the interoperability framework in line with EIF 2.0 in all of the countries, but technical preparedness lacks in that respect, as existing data exchange and sharing is usually not yet part of the government-wide interoperability platforms for automated data exchanges (only 10%), primarily because those platforms have been implemented only recently in most of the Western Balkan countries. These platforms put in place the main prerequisites for increasing the administration's capacity to design more citizen-oriented services. In parallel, with more and more registers and services going online, cyber security, personal data protection and compliance with the highest security standards should be maintained in order to preserve the trust of citizens and businesses.

Capacity building in this regard will therefore be needed. Capacity means several things: in-house capacity to manage information systems and address technological security issues; capacity of the administration staff to use information systems, including its awareness of security issues and knowledge of how to minimise the risks, but also of the digital environment tools and procedures more generally, including how to deal with digital signatures and digitally signed documents. There is also a need to build the public administrations' capacity to follow the rapid developments in the field of technology and fully benefit from digital transformation while at the same time maintaining the trust of citizens and businesses. Regular training needs analyses should also explore whether additional specific skills and tools at the intersection between policy requirements

and operational agreements are required and can/should be addressed at the horizontal and regional levels.

Figure 99: Obtaining Data from Other Public Institutions for Service Provision
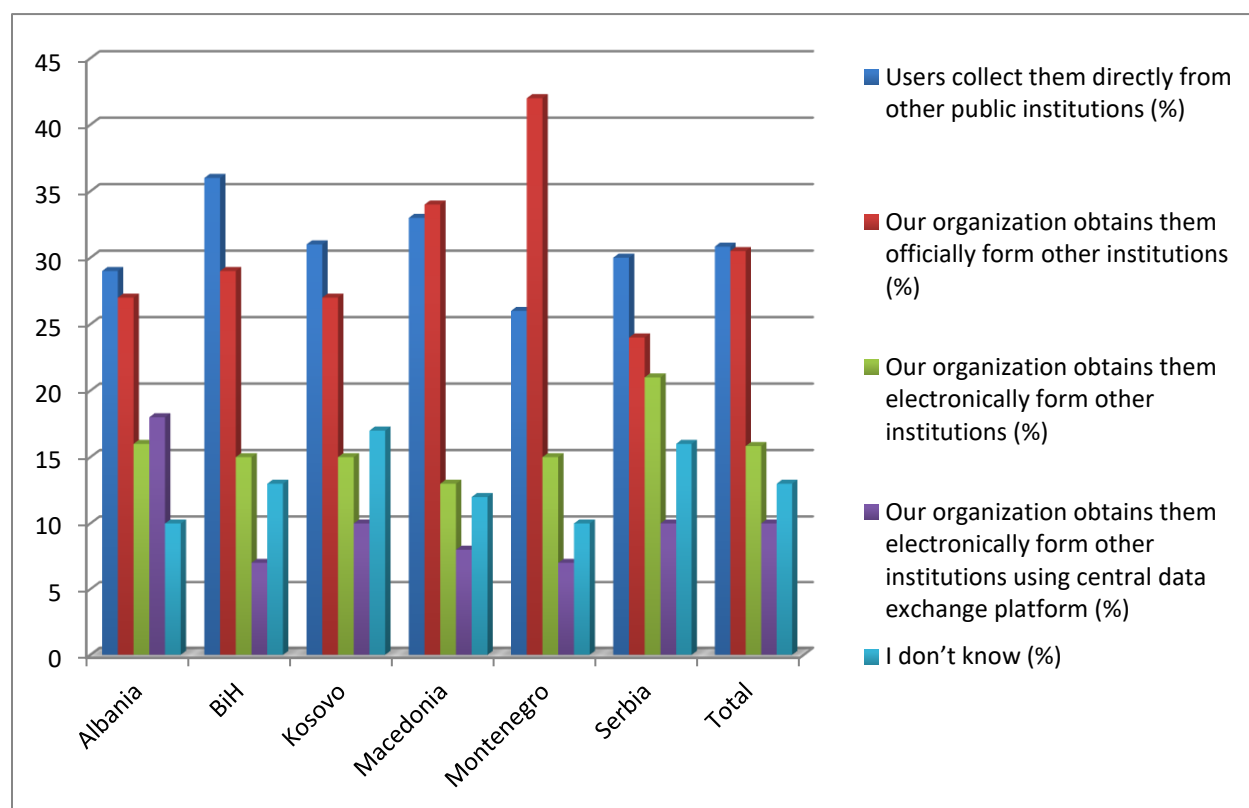
The institutions generally still use citizens and/or businesses as couriers to obtain data (documents, certificates, information) they need from other public institutions to provide their services to citizens and/or businesses, mainly because, until now, it used to be quicker than by obtaining them officially, directly from other public institutions. With IT systems and new interoperability platforms now in place, this practice should cease to exist or at the very least, until full interoperability among all basic registers is achieved, a functionality, such as an e-safe for citizens and business, should be provided for the most frequently requested documents, such as birth certificates, title deeds, residence permits, business registration certificates et al, so that citizens and businesses can easily obtain and submit those e-documents.

GAPAs in all countries lay down the obligation of institutions to internally reuse data that already exist within the public administration, but this has not been operationalised yet. The 'once only' principle, ensuring that public administrations enable citizens and businesses to supply the same information only once to the public administration, is complied with in 33% of the surveyed institutions, with some countries being just slightly better than the others.
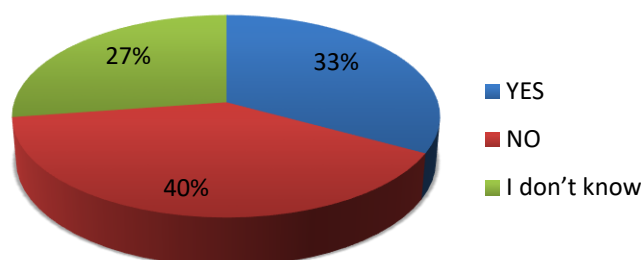
The number of services provided through the government portals is growing, providing convenient access to information and a growing number of interactive and transactional services, facilitated by the availability of basic registers through the interoperability platform, which enables 'once only' policy implementation. When these figures are broken down by government tiers, it transpires that the situation is slightly better at the central levels in the different countries than at the sub-national and local levels, with the exception of BiH, where the situation is better at the entity/cantonal levels. In general, most procedures still require multiple submissions, evidence already existing within the public administration, individual fee payments, thereby creating inefficiencies, burdens and entry points for bribery.

The Table below provides an overview of portals with government services, centrally available enablers and building blocks for digital service design and status of basic registers and data exchange.

Albania			
Portal	**Enablers**	**Building Blocks**	**Registers**
Single sign-on available: Yes Service catalogue available: Yes No of transactional e-services available: 535 No of registered users: 500,000 No of transactions/services rendered per year: 3,600,000 Personalised My Portal with my data and my e-Documents available: Yes	eID available and used: Yes e-Documents circulating: Yes Mobile authentication available: No eSignature available and used: used by business mainly No of registered eSignature providers: 2 1-NAIS (National Agency for information Society) 2-ALEAT shpk No of eSignatures issued: To citizens: 713,700 To public administration, private sector, e-Health: 8,848	Number of information systems interconnected to Government Interoperability Platform: 47 e-Forms available: Yes e-Payment available: Yes e-Invoicing available: N/A e-Delivery available: yes	All basic registers[359] digitised and shared

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[359] For example, real estate and facilities, population, legal persons

BiH			
Portal	**Enablers**	**Building Blocks**	**Registers**
Single sign-on available: No Service catalogue available: yes No of transactional e-services available: 0 No of registered users: 0 No of transactions/services rendered per year: 0 Personalised My Portal with my data and my e-Documents available: No	e-ID available and used: Available-Yes, Used-No e-Documents circulating: No Mobile authentication available: No eSignature available and used: No No of registered e-Signature providers: 1 No of eSignatures issued: circa 300	Number of information systems interconnected to Government Interoperability Platform: circa 20 e-Forms available: Not used e-Payment available: Not used e-Invoicing available: No e-Delivery available: No	Basic registers digitised-and some of them shared
Kosovo*			
Portal	**Enablers**	**Building blocks**	**Registers**
Single sign-on available: No Service catalogue available: Yes No of transactional e-services available: 0 No of registered users: 7 No of transactions/services rendered per year: Personalised My Portal with my data and my e-Documents available: No	e-ID available and used: Available-Yes, Used-No e-Documents circulating: Yes Mobile authentication available: No eSignature available and used: No No of registered e-Signature providers: 0 No of eSignatures issued: 0	Number of information systems interconnected to Government Interoperability Platform: 7 e-Forms available: No e-Payment available: No e-Invoicing available: No e-Delivery available: No	Basic registers digitised and some of them shared
Macedonia			
Portal	**Enablers**	**Building blocks**	**Registers**
Single sign-on available: No (the national portal is under construction) Service catalogue available: Yes No of transactional e-services available: 200 on separate portals (the national portal is under construction) No of registered users: N/A (the national portal is under construction) No of transactions/services rendered per year: 3,000,000 on separate portals (the national portal is under construction) Personalised My Portal with my data and my e-Documents available: No (the national portal is under construction)	eID available and used: No e-Documents circulating: Yes Mobile authentication available: No eSignature available and used: Yes No of registered eSignature providers: 2 No of eSignatures issued: (to be checked with the 2 providers)	Number of information systems interconnected to Government Interoperability Platform: 27 e-Forms available: Yes e-Payment available: Yes e-Invoicing available: No e-Delivery available: Yes	All basic registers digitised and shared: Yes (digitised) and Some (shared)

Montenegro			
Portal	**Enablers**	**Building blocks**	**Registers**
Single sign-on available: Yes Service catalogue available: Yes, but not for all services No of transactional e-services available: 455 No of registered users: 53,515 No of transactions/services rendered per year: 8.369 Personalised My Portal with my data and my e-Documents available: No	e-ID available and used: Yes e-Documents circulating: Yes Mobile authentication available: Yes eSignature available and used: Yes No of registered e-Signature providers: 1 No of eSignatures issued: 7,070	No of information systems interconnected to Government Interoperability Platform: 0 e-Forms available: Yes e-Payment available: No e-Invoicing available: No e-Delivery available: No	The majority of basic registers are digitised
Serbia			
Portal	**Enablers**	**Building blocks**	**Registers**
Single sign-on available: No Service catalogue available: Yes No of transactional e-services available: 12 No of registered users: 760,000 No of transactions/services rendered per year: 710 Personalised Portal with personal data and e-Documents available: Yes	e-ID available and used: Available-Yes, Used-Yes e-Documents circulating: Yes Mobile authentication available: No eSignature available and used: Yes (but less by individuals in comparison to businesses) No of registered e-Signature providers: 6 No of eSignatures issued: unknown	Number of information systems interconnected to Government Interoperability Platform: 20 e-Forms available: Yes e-Payment available: Yes e-Invoicing available: Yes e-Delivery available: Yes	The main registers are digitised Strategic commitments of the Government for the period 2018-2020, reflected in the PARS AP strategic objectives, include the establishment of the central register of citizens and improvement of the existing registers There is still no a central citizen register integrating the information from all the key registers.

Recommendations in the Area of Digital Service Delivery

While priority services have been or are being digitalised, the challenge now is to **expand and scale up these initial good practices across administrations where technical readiness varies and administrative burdens persist**.

The way forward is **to ensure that digitisation of the remaining basic registers is completed in a consistent manner and in accordance with data quality standards and that every redesign of a service complies with the once only principle and relieves businesses and citizens of the burden of having to collect the data and information that already exist in public records**. This should be done by **obligating all service providers to use the interoperability platform to access and reuse available public registers and data electronically and by assisting them in reusing centrally available common building blocks (single sign-on, e-payment gateway, My Portal, etc.) for quick and standardised e-service deployment**. Once redesigned, the online services should also be provided through the governments' portals. More concretely:

➢ The institutional set-up and the clear division of roles among key ministries and other public administration institutions in the area of public service delivery could be improved

in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo*, while coordination among responsible institutions could be better in Montenegro and Serbia.

➢ Public administrations should build up service delivery digital tools not only for the use by government services (most of the people should not need them more than several times a year), but also cooperate with the private sector that can embed and use these tools in their services (e.g. banks, utility operators etc.).

➢ The practical application and uptake of electronic identification and signatures has to be improved.

➢ Public administrations should issue valid e-documents/permits/certificates and in this way facilitate digital transformation, as such documents will simplify the life of the citizens because they can be easily reused by other parts of the administration or cross-border.

➢ Also, use of mobile tools to deliver services more widely (mID, m-signature and m-portal) should be explored and supported (mGovernment).

➢ Registered e-delivery and e-invoicing should be introduced.

➢ ReSPA should facilitate cooperation with the ISA2 project on the reuse of developed e-Government solutions, such as the EIF and common building blocks, through awareness and capacity building activities.

➢ Minimum common digital service standards such as: inclusiveness, accessibility, openness, transparency, security, multi-channel delivery and user friendliness, clear advice and guidelines on accessing public services, as well as those on the rights and obligations of users and the public institutions providing services, should be established, and the capacity of public managers to set up an organisation that manages services that are user-friendly, cost-efficient and constantly improved by taking advantage of continuously developing technologies should be built.

➢ Furthermore, as more and more registers and services go online in the process of digital transformation, there is a need to support capacity-building in the area of digital service delivery, as well as in cyber security and personal data protection in order to preserve the trust of citizens and businesses. Capacity means several things: in-house capacity to manage information systems and address technological security issues; capacity of the administration staff to use information systems, including its awareness of security issues and knowledge of how to minimise the risks, but also of the digital environment tools and procedures more generally, including how to deal with digital signatures and digitally signed documents. There is also a need to build the public administrations' capacity to follow the rapid developments in the field of technology and fully benefit from digital transformation while at the same time maintaining the trust of citizens and businesses. Regular training needs analyses should also explore whether additional specific skills and tools at the intersection between policy requirements and operational agreements are required and can/should be addressed at the horizontal and regional levels.

➢ User testing applied during the piloting of new IT systems should be expanded more systematically and built into overall service management.

➢ Governments need to raise public awareness of the availability and benefits of digital services for service users.

➢ Given the various good practices in different countries, a genuine dialogue, sharing of lessons learned and replication of successes among communities of practitioners from different countries is recommended. In this respect, close communication and cooperation with the WB 6, DG DIGIT, DG CONNECT and DG JRC, with ReSPA's support, should be fostered.

➢ Further benchmarking and bench learning with the stakeholders from the EU and other countries (global perspective) should be continued and intensified with ReSPA's support.

5.3. Quality Management and Service Delivery Management

Managing user satisfaction is indispensable for public organisations, to see if they are doing the right things and if they are doing things right. Developing good administration requires political commitment, vision, strategy, definition of priorities and the right sequencing of actions. These need to be translated into practice, with public services designed, delivered and constantly reviewed based on the needs of the user, rather than for the convenience of the administration. Proper policy development and monitoring mechanisms should be in place for this purpose. It is also essential that the public administration's approach to service delivery is coherent, effective and efficient, as well as that it ensures equal treatment. Strategic policy documents and action plans are not a goal per se; rather, they are prerequisites for providing the citizens with high-quality, easily accessible services.

The public administration has to be more responsive to society's needs and demands. Public sector organisations need to provide more choice, voice and transparency by interacting with citizens/customers at all stages of the policy and service delivery process. In this new setting, the range of actors involved – institutionally or on an *ad hoc* basis – in the design, production, delivery and evaluation of public services has grown and the role of the users has become more and more active. This implies that public sector organisations' evolution from a closed, self-centred service provider to an open networking organisation which the public can trust.

General Status of User Orientation in the Region

All countries without exception have recently, are or will put the topic of user orientation on the (reform) agenda. Some caveats could be placed on the BiH situation where the renewal of the PAR strategy after 2014 took several iterations until the new strategy was approved recently. Also, the Macedonian political situation hindered the smooth approval of the new PAR strategy in 2017, although a law on the use of quality management has been in force since 2013.

Overview of the Major Policy Documents on Improving Service Delivery and Quality Management	
Albania	The Long Term Policy Document on the Provision of Citizen-Centric Administrative Services by Central Institutions[360] constitutes the strategic framework for the delivery of public services in line with the 2015-2020 National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI II),[361] the 2015 – 2020 Crosscutting Public Administration Reform Strategy (CCPARS)[362] and the 2015-2020 Digital Agenda of Albania (DAA).[363]
BiH	The 2015-2018 Reform Agenda explicitly states: "*Public administration reform is one of the key priorities in ensuring fiscal sustainability and the quality of public service delivery to citizens.*"[364] The 2018-2022 PAR Strategy was not yet officially adopted at the time this Study was finalised.
Kosovo*	Citizen orientation, increasing efficiency, transparency and accountability of public action towards citizens and businesses, and elimination of administrative burdens are among the major objectives of the 2015-2020 Strategy on the Modernisation of Public Administration (PAMS).
Macedonia	The new 2018-2022 Public Administration Reform Strategy (PARS)[365]and the 2017-2020 Government Work Programme (GWP)[366] state that the government will work on creating a professional and efficient, accountable and transparent administration that will provide quality services to the citizens and the business sector and protect their rights. The Law on the Quality Management System and Common Assessment Framework[367] for the efficient delivery of services in the public sector was adopted in May 2013. The law lays down the grounds for introducing international and domestic quality management standards (ISO 9001 and CAF).
Montenegro	The 2016–2020 Public Administration Reform Strategy, the Strategy for the Development of Information Society until 2020 and the 2018-2020 Economic Reform Programme put the focus on important issues, such as monitoring of user satisfaction, developing digital service interfaces, creating interoperability between government information systems, and reducing administrative burdens
Serbia	The Public Administration Reform Strategy[368] is the overarching strategic document for the entire public administration sector reform.

This increased level of importance of the topic is confirmed by the organisations on the ground as well. In response to the Online Questionnaire carried out in the course of this Study, 47% of the public sector organisations agreed with the following statement: "*User- oriented public services are an indispensable part of the organisation.*" For 17%, user orientation is a highly valued and systematically applied principle, 22% qualify it as well-known and 14% of them also apply it regularly. The remaining 8% of the institutions are aware of its existence but do not apply it. This picture is very similar in all the countries.

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[360] Government of Albania-Council of Ministers, Decision No. 384, adopted on 25 May 2016.

[361] Government of Albania-Council of Ministers, 2015-2020 National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI II), Decision No. 348, of 11 May 2016.

[362] Government of Albania-Council of Ministers, 2015-2020 Crosscutting Public Administration Reform Strategy, Decision No. 319, of 15 April 2015, http://dap.gov.al/images/DokumentaStrategjik/PAR_Strategy_2015-2020_English.pdf

363 Government of Albania-Council of Ministers, 2015-2020 Cross Cutting Digital Agenda of Albania, Decision No. 284 of 1 April 2015, http://akshi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Digital_Agenda_Strategy_2015_-_2020.pdf

[364] http://europa.ba/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Reform-Agenda-BiH.pdf, p. 6.

[365] http://mioa.gov.mk/sites/default/files/pbl_files/documents/strategies/srja_2018-2022_20022018_mk.pdf

[366] http://vlada.mk/sites/default/files/programa/2017-2020/Programa_Vlada_2017-2020_MKD.pdf

[367] http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/44a789b431e143599914432d25bdf4c8.pdf

[368] The Public Administration Reform Strategy of the Republic of Serbia (PAR Strategy), available in English at: http://www.mduls.gov.rs/english/reforma-javne-uprave.php

Figure 101: Trend over the Last 5 Year
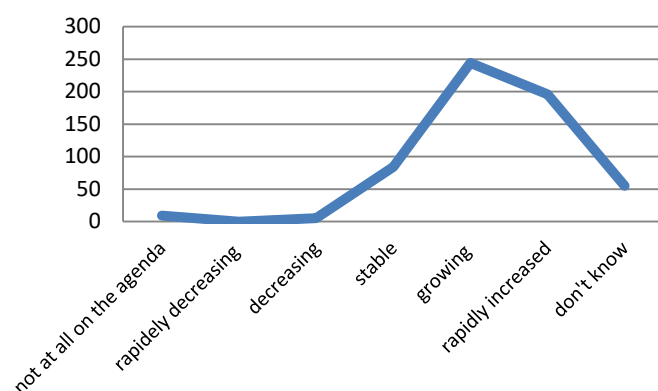
Similarly, the organisations' replies to the question on the trend of user-orientation in their organisation over the past five years paint a generally positive picture. The importance of user-friendliness seems to have "*increased*", to even "*rapidly increased"* in the whole region. A more detailed look at the individual countries still confirms this overall trend, with a slight nuance in case of BiH, where the trend could be best described as "*stable*" to "*slightly growing*", whereas, in most other countries, the trend is generally "*growing*". The Albanian trend can be qualified more as "*rapidly growing*".

The WeBER survey results reflect the same general public perceptions. Less than half of the Western Balkan citizens (48%) generally agree and 34% disagree that their governments have made efforts or launched initiatives to simplify administrative procedures for citizens and businesses in the past two years. However, the differences in perceptions across countries are worth highlighting. Citizens in Kosovo* (57%) and Serbia (56%) show the highest level of agreement with the statement, while the level of agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina is as low as 28%.

Figure 102: Simplification of Administrative Procedures for Citizens and Businesses (%)
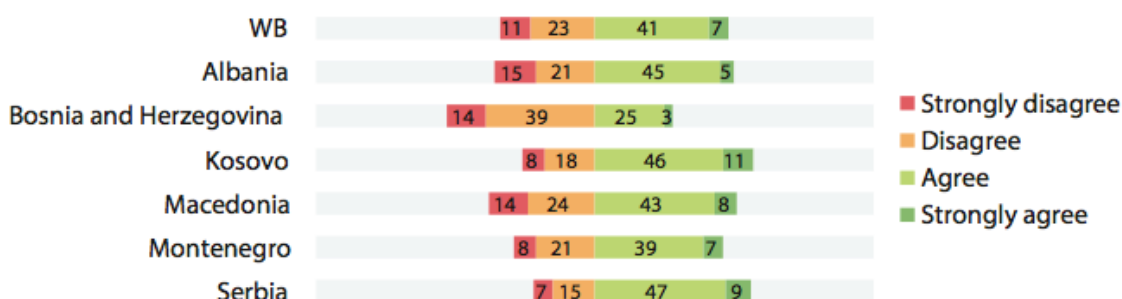
In the past two years, there have been efforts by the government to make administrative procedures simpler for citizens and businesses (%) [369]

Next, citizens who agreed that efforts have been made to simplify administrative procedures were then asked whether these initiatives have actually led to improved service delivery. In general, the majority of respondents across the region share the view that such initiatives have resulted in improved service delivery. At the regional level, out of those who agree on the existence of simplification efforts, more than 8 out of 10 respondents (83%) agree that these initiatives have led to improved service delivery. At the national level, the percentage of pollees subscribing to this view ranges from 71% in Macedonia to 92% in Kosovo*.

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[369] WeBER (2018), Survey Report, p. 3.

Figure 103: Improvement in Service Delivery
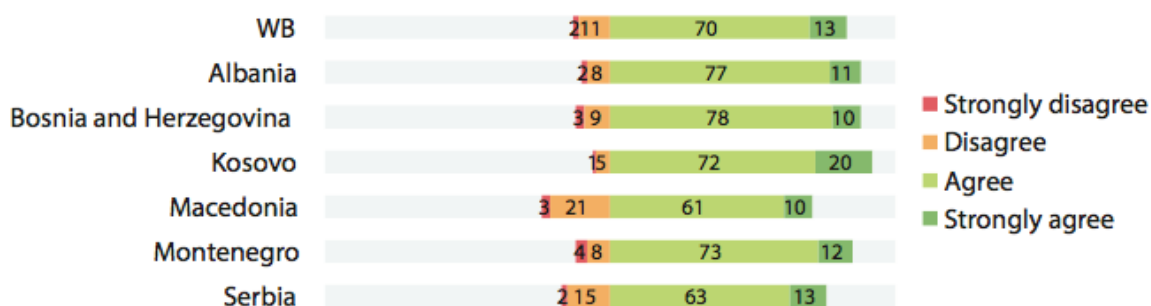
In the past two years, such initiatives by the government have led to improved service delivery (%)[370]

Therefore, user orientation is generally on the agenda in most organisations and in all countries and its importance has been growing in the recent years. This seems to be in line with the strategic and central position all PAR strategies in the region have given user centricity and service delivery in the recent past. All of this resulted in a slight improvement of citizen satisfaction with public services in general, as

Figure 104: Satisfaction with Services in General
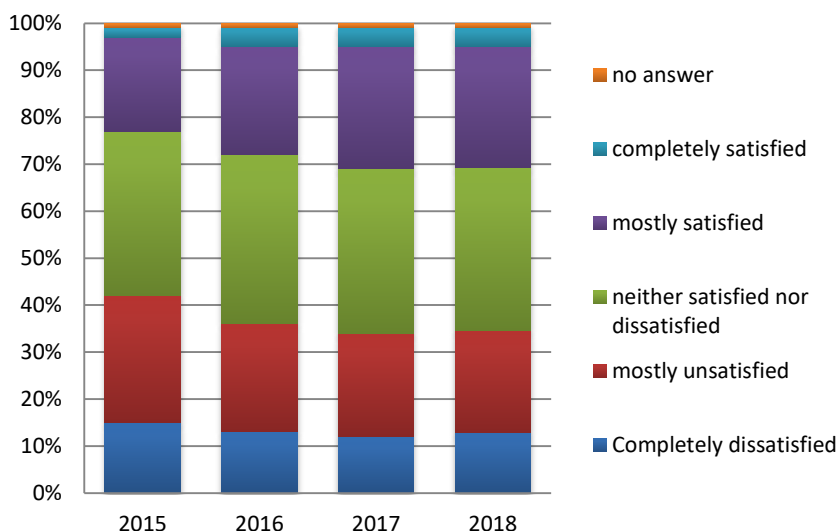
measured by the Regional Cooperation Council's Balkan Barometer in the past four years.[371] Still, the number of (mostly and completely) dissatisfied respondents stood at circa 35% in the recent years.

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[370] WeBER (2018), Survey report, p. 4

[371] Regional Cooperation Council, 2018 *Balkan Barometer* https://www.rcc.int/seeds/results/2/balkan-public-barometer

Figure 105: Satisfaction with Public Services in General in 2018
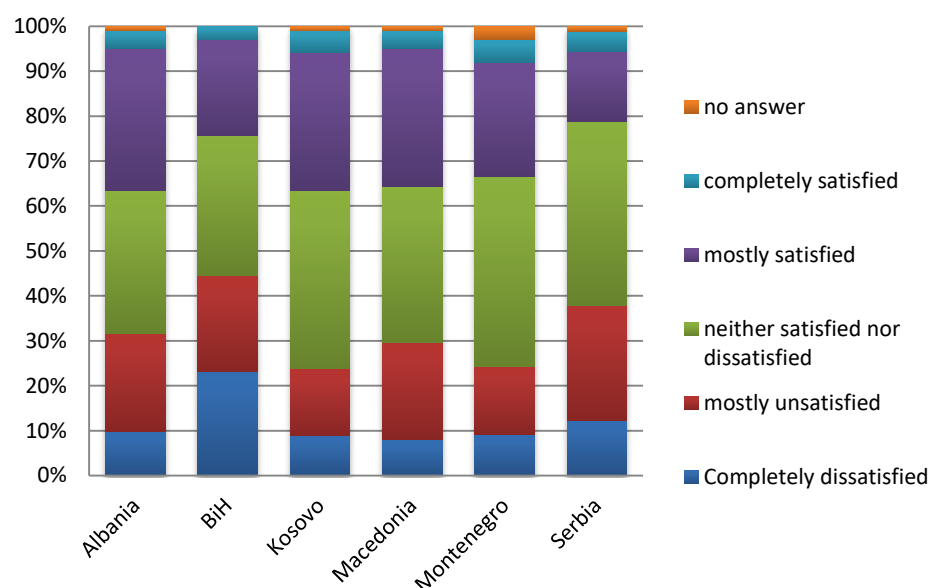
Some country differences can be noticed when one zooms in on the latest survey.

Compared with the regional average, BiH and Serbia are showing some less positive percentages on the levels of "dissatisfaction" and "satisfaction" with public services in general. It needs to be noted that satisfaction levels remain low even in countries that have invested a lot in improving service delivery. This may be indication that governments need to continue to work on the "drivers" of satisfaction/dissatisfaction, i.e. on elements important for users, as well as citizens in general.

On this note, the availability of both perception data and objective/quantitative data is indispensable. SIGMA combines both sources in its assessments. In some cases (e.g. BiH), there is clear alignment between the perception data and the quality of individual services, while, in other cases (e.g. Serbia and Kosovo*), the overall - rather negative - perception is not fully supported by the actual positive trend in the quality of services. This opens space for further reflections on the drivers of satisfaction and expectations of users.

Figure 106 Comparative Overview of SIGMA principle on Service Delivery

	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Kosovo	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Montenegro	Serbia
Perception of service quality						
Perceived quality of public service delivery by citizens	4	0	2	2	2	0
Perceived quality of public service delivery and administrative burdens by businesses	3	1.5	2	3.5	1.5	1.5
Quality of individual services						
Renew personal ID document	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	3
Register a personal vehicle	1.5	3	1.5	3	0	1.5
Declare and pay personal income taxes	4	0	4	2.5	0	3
Start a business	4.5	0	4.5	6	5	4.5
Obtain a commercial construction permit	1	2	2	4	3	3
Declare and pay corporate income taxes	2	1	4	6	4	6
Declare and pay value added taxes	3	0	5	6	2	5

The national policies are analysed in detail in the country profiles in Chapter 3 of this Study. One striking general conclusion is that several strategies (from GAPA and accessibility, to reducing administrative burdens and digital plans) have been developed in all the countries, but that there is a serious implementation gap (including with respect to monitoring and evaluation). This core finding from the analyses in/analysis of the country reports is supported by the Online Questionnaire results: 63% do not know whether and how user orientation is anchored in their country (e.g. policy paper, action plan, strategic documents, standards…): 14% say it is not anchored and only 23% report it is anchored (and they can indicate how). Differences between the tiers of government warrant attention when these figures are broken down at the country level. Whereas awareness of a user-oriented policy is still present (however limited) at the central levels in the different countries, it is dramatically more limited at the sub-national and local levels.

Measuring and Managing User Satisfaction

This overall implementation gap is also translated into the operational use of user-oriented tools and instruments. It should be noted that the use of tools, instruments, and approaches to measure and manage user satisfaction is still fairly limited across the region. Organisations applying such tools and approaches qualified them at the very least as useful and very useful to the extent that they have become common practice in the organisation (complaint management being the most prominent example) or at the very least considered using them again in the future.

Figure 107: Tools and Instruments
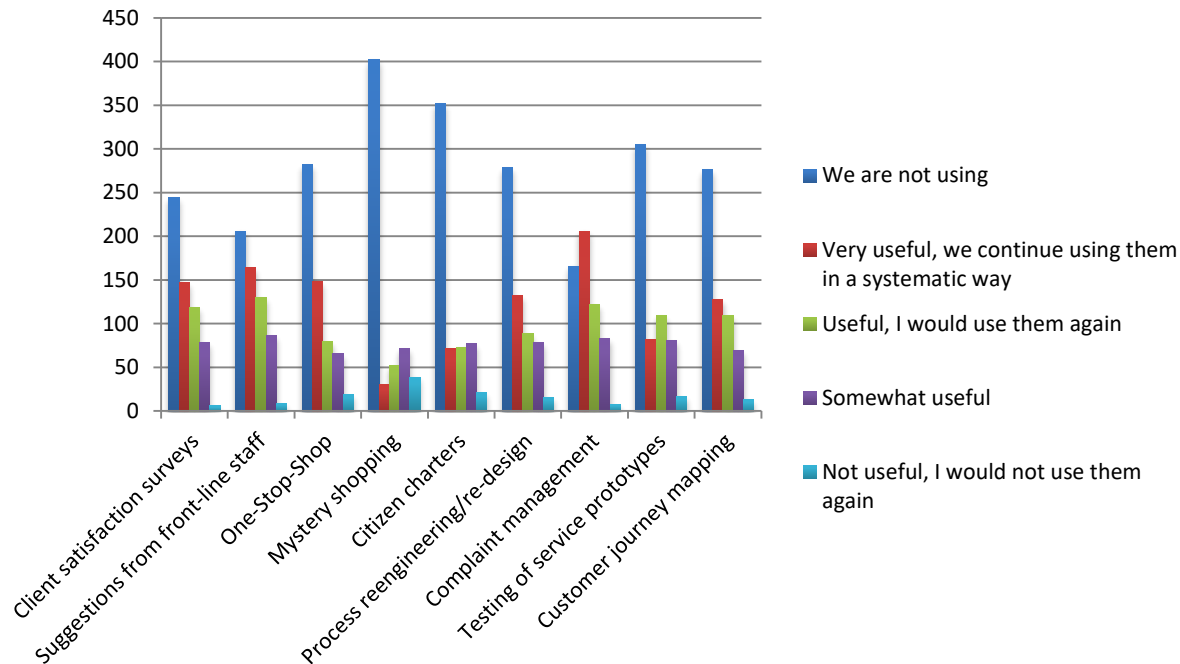
Measuring satisfaction with the service delivered (and the manner in which it was delivered) is a crucial aspect. Overall, 43% of the surveyed organisations said they measured the satisfaction of

Figure 108: User Satisfaction Management
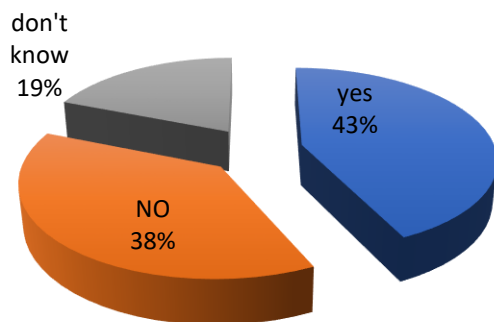
Figure 109 Use of user satisfaction measurement per country
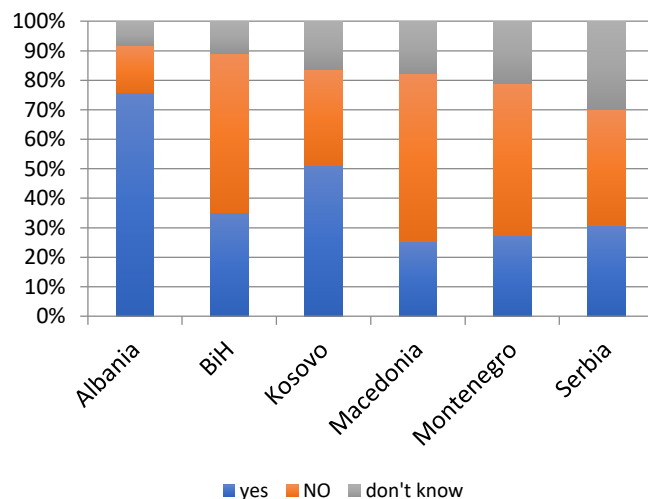
their users on a regular basis. Where overall – slightly less than half the organisations indicate themselves they do measure user satisfaction- this might be quite acceptable. But this overall picture is highly influenced (and biased) by major regional differences. This making the detailed picture per country looking less positive. With the exception of Albania, the practice of systematically measuring user satisfaction does not seem to be widespread in the region yet. In 2017, the first nationwide mystery shopper assessment was conducted by a civil society

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organisation, resulting in awards for the best-performing regional office and institutions in general in Albania. A Citizen Feedback Mechanism (CFM), subject to monitoring by the Delivery Unit at the Prime Minister's Office, was established under the World Bank's auspices to gather citizens' opinions on the quality of service delivery in 2017 and it is applied in various institutions across the country. Macedonia carried out a large scale mystery shopping project within the institutions at the central level and experimented with "e-box"-like devices in institutions in 2014. Neither initiative was continued. The Montenegrin Ministry of Information Society conducted ad hoc citizen satisfaction surveys from time to time in order to establish any changes in user satisfaction with public services. At the local level in Serbia, the MPALSG measures satisfaction of citizens with public services; but not based on a systematic and comprehensive methodology or by applying the same set of indicators for measuring user satisfaction. Through its "Support to PAR in Serbia" programme, GIZ[372] will assist its institutional partner, MPALSG, in the development of a systematic methodology for measuring satisfaction of public service users; this methodology was due to be finalised and applied by the end of 2018.

Only 3 out of 10 citizens in the Western Balkans (31%) agree while 42% disagree that, as users of administrative services, they have the opportunity to provide feedback on the quality of services they receive. At the national level, the percentage of those sharing the view ranges from 15% of citizens in Bosnia and Herzegovina to 35% in Albania, 36% in Macedonia and 38% in Kosovo*. Note that these numbers (albeit a bit more negative) are in line with the ones we collected from the institutions themselves. As a user of administrative services, I have possibilities to give my feedback on the quality of services that I receive[373]

Figure 110 Possibility to give feedback on the quality of services
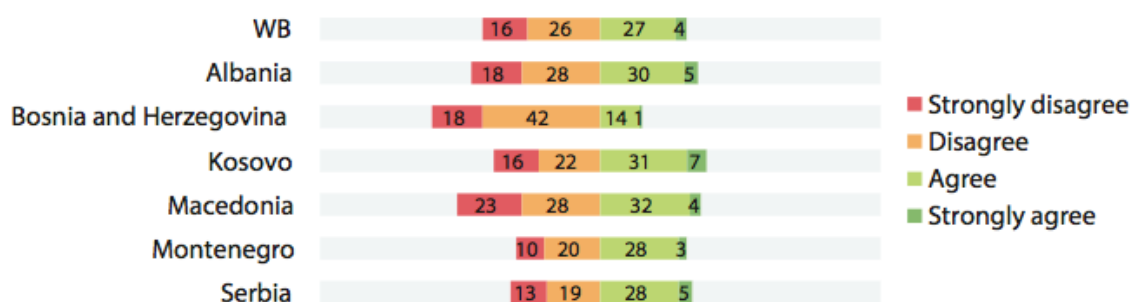
Quality Management Systems

A similar picture can be drawn about the level of using quality assurance tools and techniques. In 2017, ReSPA carried out a study on the status of QM in the region and the next steps to be taken. An online questionnaire was filled by six country contact point members/correspondents, on the one hand, and nearly 500 individual public sector organisations, on the other. Even those that use specific tools and instruments use them in a "limited" way. They are often "*islands of excellence*" (or at least pilots), where the use of a particular tool/instrument was initiated at the organisational level.

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[372] Support to the Public Administration Reform, GIZ. More information available at: https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/61258.html

[373] WeBER (2018), Survey Report, p. 11

	Not used at all	Used by a limited number of institutions	Widespread in the public sector	All institutions are using it
CAF	ME, SR	AL, BA, K*, MK	/	/
ISO	/	AL, BA, ME, SR	K*, MK	/
EFQM	BA, K*, MK, ME, SR	AL	/	/

Figure 111: Use of Quality Management Systems
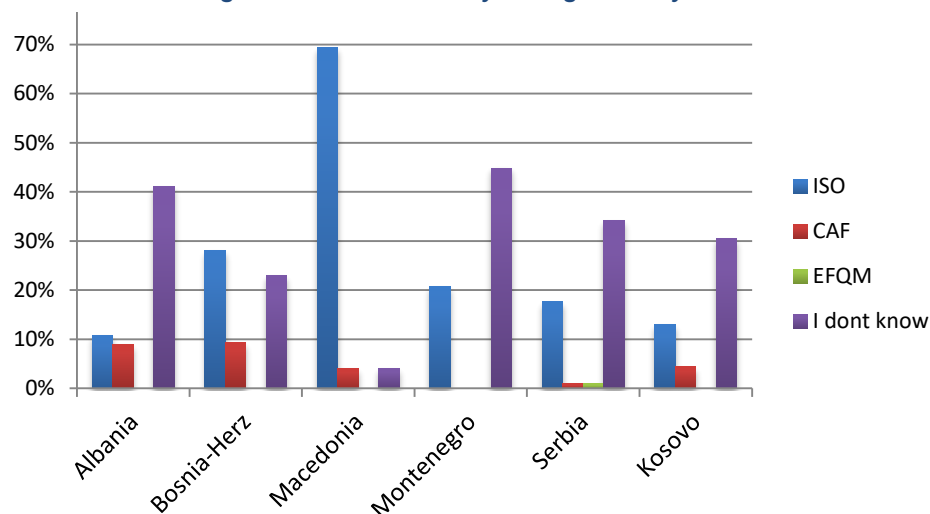
These general findings at the country level provided by the ReSPA contact point members were confirmed by the individual organisations. ISO seems to be the most widespread used QM system in the region. Macedonia scored high in this regard. Use of CAF is, indeed, limited in all countries.

Besides the interesting practices at the organisational level, two examples are worth mentioning here because of their strategic, comprehensive nature. In Macedonia, the Law on Quality Management System and Common Assessment Framework (LQMSCAF)[374] for the efficient delivery of services in the public sector was adopted in May 2013. The law provides for the introduction of international and domestic quality management standards (ISO 9001 and CAF). Many institutions in Macedonia have been implementing the ISO 9001 standard in their work. According to statistics on use of ISO 9001 by public institutions: 51 out of 110 state bodies are certified, five bodies are in the final certification phase, 35 bodies have started the procedure, nine bodies have not started the procedure and ten bodies have no funds in their budget for this. The coordinated and strategic implementation of the CAF model in the Macedonian institutions started in 2011 and 29 institutions[375] have implemented the CAF model to date. MISA has developed the 2018-2022 National Quality Management Plan in the Public Sector.[376] This plan, adopted by the Government in August 2018, aims to learn from the first wave of experiences and to continue the quality management dynamic in the country.

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[374] http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/44a789b431e143599914432d25bdf4c8.pdf

[375] Ministry of Information Society and Administration, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, State Statistical Office, City of Skopje, Ministry of Education and Science, Municipality of Ohrid, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Municipality of Tetovo, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Municipality of Centar, the Government General Secretariat, the Ministry of Economy, the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, the Secretariat for Legislation, the Secretariat for European Affairs, the Municipality of Lipkovo, the Parliament, the Municipality of Gostivar, Agency of Administration, Municipality Gorce Petrov, Municipality Zhelino, Agency for Youth and Sports, Committee on the Protection of the Right of Free Access to Public Information, Jegunovce, Tetovo Public Health Centre, Kumanovo, Struga, Kičevo and the Customs Administration

[376] http://mioa.gov.mk/?q=mk/node/1769

The second example is BiH, where PARCO launched capacity development in the area of quality management in 2014 and 2015, supported by the GIZ Strengthening of Public Institutions Programme. A CAF Resource Centre has been established at the PARCO, CAF coordinators and CAF trainers from the PARCO and CSA are developing, promoting and delivering training in quality management, in particular CAF, to the interested institutions. Scaling up of knowledge, methodologies and products exists at the state level with good prospects of greater collaborative work with the entity authorities. Twelve institutions have implemented the CAF to date and others are planning to follow suit in the near future.

Kosovo* recently initiated a more systematic approach to quality assurance or service modernisation, although some initial efforts had been undertaken in the past by the MPA (the National Quality Management Programme). In cooperation with ReSPA, KIPA in 2018 organised the training of trainers with the aim of introducing CAF in a selected number of pilot institutions. Discussions are under way on developing a wider CAF strategic plan for the coming years, including the establishment of a national CAF centre within the MPA, that will serve as an info and service point for the Kosovo* public sector.

In general, major building blocks for citizen-oriented service delivery reforms have been put in place. Little progress has been made in the use and deployment of tools to enable better service delivery. No common standards exist to establish quality criteria for public services. The use of satisfaction surveys or other tools to monitor service quality is extremely limited. Quality management is being piloted but is otherwise missing, with the exception of more articulate and comprehensive approaches in BiH and Macedonia.

Innovative approaches in quality management should also be considered when deliberating possible methodologies and management systems. The above-mentioned quality management methodologies focus primarily on process (quality) management. The product (quality) management aspect should also be deliberated as a possible complementary quality management system. In its facilitating function, ReSPA should provide strategic, as well as operational support to its Members and Kosovo*.

In terms of short, middle and long-term recommendations, this integrated approach (from understanding needs and redesigning services to measuring satisfaction) to user-orientation in the region should be promoted and implemented. For the public sector, this calls for a strategic and practical approach tackling the following issues:

- ➤ Knowledge of what citizens / users expect in terms of services and their delivery in order to identify the "drivers" of satisfaction and target focused improvements in service delivery,
- ➤ Improvement of the systems and processes to optimise service delivery by involving users,
- ➤ Design of appropriate interfaces and service delivery channels,
- ➤ Use of digital Government in delivering services,
- ➤ Knowledge of the users' satisfaction with services and service delivery by measuring it

In this regard, concrete capacity building measures can be developed with a view to:

a) developing tools and instruments to capture the expectations of users in terms of important elements of service delivery and identify the drivers of satisfaction;
b) strengthening the engagement of users in redesigning service delivery;
c) organising bench-learning networks in the region to compare and improve similar service delivery processes (e.g. starting with the services measured by SIGMA, renewing an ID, starting a business,…);
d) developing tools and instruments to measure user satisfaction;
e) generating and disseminating interesting practices in the area of service delivery and user-orientation; and,
f) raising awareness and advocating user-orientation in the Total Quality Management context

Given the importance of political endorsement of any of above stated ideas, regional high level conferences and round tables focusing on these topics would greatly contribute to setting the organisational culture, as a long term process, in a sustainable manner.

ANNEXES TO THE COMPARATIVE STUDY ON SERVICE DELIVERY IN SIX WESTERN BALKAN COUNTRIES

ANNEX 1: Focus Group Guidelines

The primary objective of the Regional Study was to provide an overview of and insight in public service delivery. The Study was comparative and explorative in nature and brought together **inspiring practices** (approaches, methodologies, instruments...) from the ReSPA **Member Countries** and Kosovo* and **international experiences** in order to learn from them. In addition, it explored the methodological aspect of designing, delivering and improving public services. The Study focused on both the **macro** (country) and the **micro** (organisational) levels.

The OECD/SIGMA 2017 assessments of the *Principles of Public Administration* in the six Western Balkan countries, which include sections on service delivery, have provided ReSPA with the possibility of going **much deeper into practical research**, as well as delivering a more theoretical and assessment-based study.

> *Methodological considerations:*
> - *macro and micro levels*
> - *ReSPA Member Countries and Kosovo* + international examples*
> - *built upon SIGMA, but more practical*

Figure 112: Methodology Applied in the Service Delivery Study
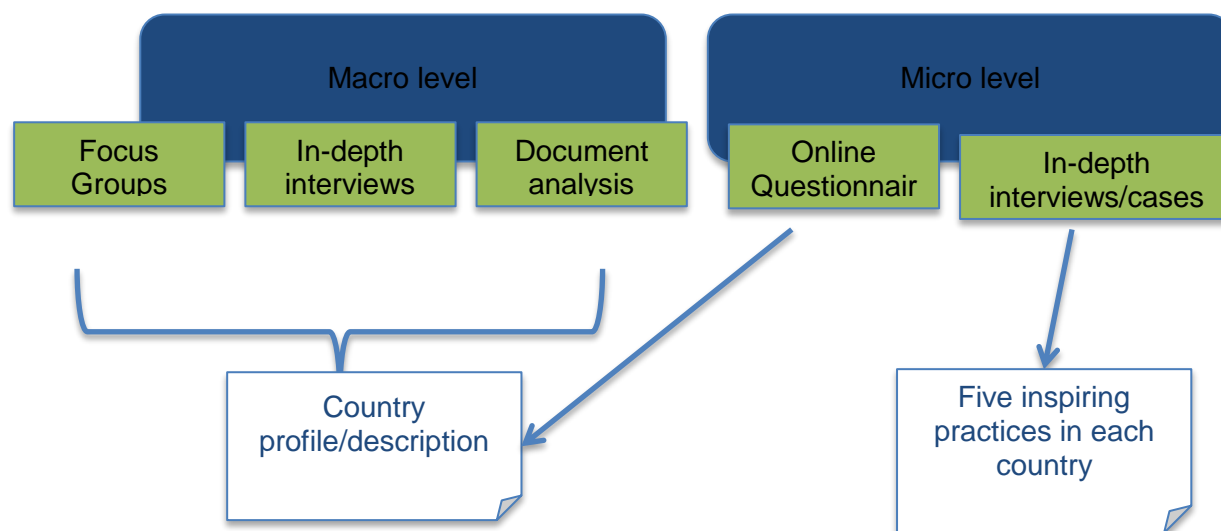
I. Objectives and Topics for the "Macro Level" Focus Groups

As noted, this Study intended to focus on macro level analysis to an extent. This was implemented through structured meetings of Focus Groups organised in each ReSPA participating country.

The objectives of each Focus Group were:

> - to analyse existing policy framework(s);
> - to re-think strategic options taken in service delivery models (e.g. "electronic/mobile" and online only strategies, multiple service delivery models, et al); and,

> ➢ to explore user satisfaction measurement approaches applied and/or promoted (*link with Principle 1 under SIGMA "Service Delivery Component" focusing on citizen-oriented policy development and implementation*).

The above defined objectives were examined at the general country level. However, in order to get a horizontal and complementary overview, the composition of the Focus Groups was broad (more below under Composition and Organisation of Focus Groups). Involving sub-national level representatives was therefore important for the overall analysis (and potentially interesting complementary examples at the sub-national level); however the assessments were limited to the general country level.

The objectives of each Focus Group were achieved through structured discussions on three core topics (identical as the core topics of the Regional Study on Service Delivery):

A. Service Delivery Management and Policy
B. (Self-)Assessment of GAPA implementation
C. Digitalisation and e-Government implementation

Discussions resulted in reports following the pre-defined objectives for each core topic (as defined below). Potential key guiding questions were also suggested to support the debate. However, the explicit questions, national context and vocabulary were freely modified by the Regional Experts (with support of ReSPA National Coordinators). The state of play (informed also by the SIGMA reports) and next steps/future recommendations were tackled with respect to all these topics.

A. Service Delivery Management and Policy

Objective:

Obtain a realistic picture of the state of affairs in the field of service delivery strategies and policies. Do they exist, but even more important how are they implemented, communicated, supported and monitored?

Consider the following elements:

a. Preparation of this policy/strategy. Who took the lead, who coordinated?
b. Implementation
c. Support (how are public sector organisations supported: tools, guidelines)
d. Follow-up and monitoring (how do we know the policy/strategy is successful)

Capture both the positive points and the difficulties encountered and make recommendations for the future.

Potential key guiding questions:

1. Extent to which user-oriented policy for service delivery is in place and applied:
   o *A separate policy exists?*
   o *Policy considered in the framework of the relevant strategies or other documents?*
   o *How is it applied throughout the administration, supported, monitored, evaluated?*
   o *Standards of service delivery are set out for the main public services delivered by the public administration?*
   o *Which administrative actors are involved?*

2. Has a policy for administrative simplification been developed and consistently implemented?
3. Has a policy for cost reduction of administrative services been developed?
4. How is physical access to public services ensured for all individuals and businesses?
5. Are one stop shops/single points of contact covering a wide range of services available to individuals and businesses?
6. How does service provision (including e-services) take into account the needs of special groups of customers (e.g. women, disabled persons, seniors, families with children, and foreigners)?
7. Is service delivery performance centrally monitored?
8. Are mechanisms to share good practices in place?

B. (Self-) Assessment of GAPA Implementation

Objectives:

➢ Obtain a realistic overview of GAPA implemented in practice at the national and, possibly, sub-national levels. Define the main strengths and weaknesses.
➢ Obtain a realistic assessment of the consultation and revision processes between GAPA policy makers and their implementation at the national, and, possibly, sub-national levels (GAPA legal framework conception and implementation).
➢ Obtain an overview of the existence, awareness and implementation of principles of good administrative behaviour in practice. Obtain complementary and horizontal constructive information from different Focus Group members.
➢ Obtain a realistic assessment of the state of play, challenges and successes in addressing vulnerable groups of public service users, including women, when implementing GAPA. Formulate proposals for the further development of accessibility for all. Put stress on accessibility as a two-way responsibility (avoid one-way/single public sector criticism).
➢ In consultation with CSOs and the general public, obtain an assessment of the state of play, challenges and successes in the implementation, review and further improvement of GAPA implementation. Formulate proposals for the further development of the consultation process. Put stress on consultation activities as a two-way communication process (avoid single/bottom-up review assessments).

Potential key guiding questions:

1. An adequate institutional set-up is in place, including political and institutional responsibilities for coordinating and steering delivery of public services.
2. The legal framework on administrative procedures is implemented in practice by all national or sub-national administration bodies.
3. Policy solutions for public service delivery are consistently defined in the legal framework and are applied in practice.
4. Consultations between public service implementers/deliverers and policy makers are in place and reflected in revisions of the legal framework.
5. Extent to which the legal framework on good governance is in place and applied.
6. Key principles of good administrative behaviour are defined in the legislation on administrative procedures: legality, equity, equal treatment, proportionality, lawful exercise of discretion, openness and transparency, impartiality, objectivity and due diligence.
7. Adequacy of the policy framework for vulnerable groups of public service users, including women, has been adopted and systematically implemented.

8. Consultations with civil society are systematically held when taking administrative decisions that will have general impact.
9. Consultations with the general public are in place and implemented when taking administrative decisions that will have general impact.

C. Digitalisation and e-Government Implementation

Objectives:

➢ Obtain a realistic assessment of policies, standards and legal framework on digital government projects and electronic service delivery. Do they exist, how are they implemented, communicated, supported and monitored?
➢ Assess facilitation between central and decentralised/sub-national government levels in the field of digital government projects and electronic service delivery.
➢ Assess the availability and uptake of the centrally developed and managed digital enablers at the central/sub-national/local levels.
➢ Obtain a realistic overview of the availability and interoperability of basic registers.
➢ Obtain an overview of ways of redesigning digital services.

Potential key guiding questions:

1. What e-service delivery policies and legal frameworks are in place (digital by default, once only, e-signature, e-document, e-delivery)? Are they aligned with the general service delivery policy? Are they consistently applied across the administration? If not, why? Are they sufficient? Are they supported by an adequate budget? Are there any priority services identified and pursued for implementation? What are the grounds for their selection? Do you outsource any service delivery? Which? Why? What would be needed to improve overall policy implementation?
2. Is there central coordination of digital government projects? Elaborate more on the structure, tasks and responsibilities. Does it work well and are any improvements needed? Is there any coordination on digital government projects at the municipal level?
3. What is the uptake of legally valid electronic documents in public administration? Is there parallel paper document circulation? What is needed for better uptake of electronic document exchange within the public administration? What is needed for better uptake of electronic document exchange between the public administration and citizens/businesses?
4. Existence of key digital enablers:

    o *generic electronic identification (generic eID, mobile ID)*
    o *generic electronic signatures (including legal recognition and affordability)*
    o *reusable technical building blocks (single sign-on and authentication, customers' mailbox, e-delivery, e-invoice, e-payment: private banking, third party payment gateway, etc.)*
    o *others*

Elaborate which are available and which are used. Variety of electronic identifications and signatures available on the market? What is accepted within the public administration? What has proven the most useful? Also elaborate on any future plans.

5. Availability of basic registers: what basic registers are digitised and available (see Annex 2) for aggregated services? Are there any standard procedures in place for using those data by other institutions when legally required?
6. Interoperability of registers and digital services to simplify procedures for citizens is promoted through the legal framework and technical preparedness: Is there an interoperability framework? Is the 'once only' principle respected? Are institutions obliged to internally reuse data that already exist within the public administration? Do they? Is interoperability across organisational silos ensured? Is central infrastructure for data exchange available, adequate and used?
7. Which channels of interaction with clients are used the most? Are you satisfied with the current digital uptake? Are some online services used more than the others? Why?
8. Is there a single portal for citizens and businesses? A central inventory of public services, "meta-repository", catalogue of services? Online 'life events' for citizens and businesses? How many of the 25 basic online services are available on the single portal (Annex 3)?
9. Existence of common digital service standards: inclusive (common guidelines for government websites, including compliance with WCAG), accessible, open, transparent (can clients check their data?), secure, multi-channel, user friendly, clear advice and guidelines on accessing public services, as well as on the rights and obligations of users and the public institutions providing services.
10. Existence of advanced user engagement online tools: mystery shopper, testing of service prototypes, customer journey maps for life events, online surveys on user experience and needs. Redesign thereof.
11. Policies regarding redesign of digital services: Do you have a team for this? What tools do you use? What works the best?

II.   Composition and Organisation of Focus Groups

The Focus Group participants (in each ReSPA participating country), identified and proposed by Regional Experts in coordination with ReSPA National Coordinators, were individuals at the PAR managerial/coordination/decision making level. They were selected also because of their direct involvement in PAR implementation regarding the three core topics defined above, not just in policy making. Focus Group participants were selected among individuals at the professional rather than the political level.

Therefore, the participants were selected among practitioners engaged in the following areas/jurisdictions of implementation: coordination of GAPA (preparation and implementation); coordination of e-Government projects/initiatives/strategies; GAPA implementers – at the central and local levels; CSOs/NGOs, focusing in particular on accessibility and equality issues; academia – only if directly involved in the implementation of one or more key thematic areas; relevant international organisations – only if involved in the implementation of one or more key thematic areas; and, the business sector.

The Focus Groups were ideally not to have more than 12-15 members, but the ultimate selection of participants depended on the specific circumstances at the national levels and the professional judgments of the Regional Experts (in coordination with the ReSPA National Coordinators).

There was the possibility of grouping the Focus Group members by sectors, to facilitate debate, but not at the expense of undermining the achievement of the objective of obtaining broad, horizontal reviews and assessments. Stress was on avoiding the usual "silo approach". All members were engaged in all the envisaged debates, organised as a concerted attempt to further improve services delivery and redesign.

In order to facilitate discussion, the key topics were sent in advance to the invited Focus Groups members. Key data on GAPA implementation, digitalisation and quality management, intro to selected inspiring practice samples, key services, successes (regional/national knowledge) additionally supported the development of Focus Group dynamics.

III. Scenario(s) for the Organisation and Facilitation of Focus Group Meetings

Focus Group interactions were to provide insights into how key stakeholders think and a deeper understanding of each of the three core topics. Focus Groups are group interviews that provide regional experts with the opportunity to obtain more information and a deeper assessment more economically than individual interviews.

The Focus Groups debates were structured around three core topics. They opened with a short presentation of the Study and Focus Group objectives (presented above).

Regional experts prepared short country profiles they presented during the introduction to initiate debate. The profiles focused on the state of play and implementation of PAR in the three core topics in each country. Such an introduction had manifold objectives: to initiate, stimulate and streamline the debate, as well as ensure the verification of country profile implementation structures in the given research fields.

Each topic was optimally addressed/guided by up to five questions (listed above). Regional Experts brainstormed the list of questions, adjusted/modified and prioritised them by importance, in tandem with the ReSPA National Coordinators. The questions were open-ended to promote Focus Group discussion (Yes/No questions or questions that are too specific can limit discussion and undermine the value of a Focus Group).

From the practical methodological aspect/Focus Group dynamics, the discussions could be organised and facilitated as single group discussions, work in smaller groups or a mix of the two methods. ReSPA National Coordinators and ReSPA staff were engaged as facilitators where work was organised in smaller groups; in such cases, the composition of groups was mixed (to avoid segregation by sector).

Group interaction and non-verbal communication are the primary benefits of Focus Groups. Group interaction among members of the target population during Focus Groups may encourage participants to make connections to various concepts during discussion that need not occur during individual interviews. The horizontal overview and assessment of the core topics of the Study was of immense added value (in comparison with the current traditional silo reviews and assessments). For this purpose, the participation of all experts present was of vital importance. A skilled facilitator can encourage these group interactions to capture the data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the Study subject-matter. Non-verbal communication also provides data that should be captured in Focus Groups.

The assessment of core topics was practically explained and complemented by inspiring practices. Therefore, the Regional Experts prepared short and concise overviews of practices they had identified and presented them during the Focus Group discussions. These practices stimulated discussion, highlighted the hidden successes and verified the assessments and

conclusions. The practices identified for further analysis were verified, adjusted, complemented or replaced during the discussions.

The Table below outlines the draft Focus Group agenda, which was for guidance purposes only. The final agendas were subject to slight modifications to reflect the specific circumstances/environment in each country.

Phase	Organisation of the Participants	Activity	Duration
Introduction	All Focus Group participants, led by the Regional Expert, supported by the ReSPA National Coordinator (stressing broader political support)	▪ Explanation of the Study Objective ▪ Explanation of the Focus Group Objective ▪ Presentation of the summarised Country Profile ▪ Presentation of the Agenda of the Focus Group meeting	30 minutes
Discussion in plenum or in thematic groups	Plenary discussion or discussion in three groups, each comprising 4-5 participants (one facilitator per group) or a mix of the two methods, with the Regional Expert as the main facilitator	▪ In-depth discussion of a specific topic (Service delivery management & policy, GAPA implementation, Digitalisation and e-Government) ▪ 4-5 guiding questions on flipcharts ▪ Discussion points of participants documented on post-it notes, written on flipcharts, mind charts ▪ Presentation of inspiring practices in plenum or to each sub-group as examples to stimulate and guide the debate	120-180 minutes
Coffee break		▪ Main Facilitator and Group Facilitators prepare feedback for plenary session	30 minutes
Reporting back to plenary and verification of results	All Focus Group participants, led by Regional Expert	▪ Brief presentation of key findings from the plenary debate or work of each group ▪ Plenary sessions provide participants with the opportunity to add additional points or aspects ▪ Identified practices re-summarised and commented at plenary sessions. Addition of any new ones (or replacement of initial ones)	60 minutes

The following information was collected from ReSPA's 2016 Feasibility Study on the Establishment of a Regional Centre on Quality Management in ReSPA (by the QPAS group from over 500 institutions):

	Not used at all	Used in a limited number of institutions	Widespread in the public sector	All institutions are using it
CAF	ME, SR	AL, BA, K*, MK	/	/
ISO	/	AL, BA, ME, SR	K*, MK	/
EFQM	BA, K*, MK, ME, SR	AL	/	/
Balanced Scorecard	BA, K*, MK, ME, SR	AL	/	/
Client Relations Management	BA, K*, ME	MK, SR	AL	/
Client satisfaction surveys	/	BA, K*, MK, ME, SR	AL	/
Employee satisfaction surveys	ME, SR	AL, K*, MK, BA	/	/
One Stop Shops	/	BA, K*, MK, ME, SR	AL	/
Mystery shopping	BA, K*, ME	AL, K*, MK, SR	/	/
Process reengineering/redesign	BA, K*	ME, MK, SR	AL	/
Analysis of user needs	SR	AL, BA, K*, ME	MK	/
Services are redesigned based on customer needs	SR	BA, K*, MK, ME	AL	/
E-services are provided	/	BA, MK, ME	AL, K*, SR	/
Processes are regularly monitored and assessed, taking into account user feedback	SR	BA, K*, MK, ME	AL	/
Measurement of customer satisfaction	SR	BA, K*, MK, ME	AL	/
Service delivery standards set for the main public services delivered (service charter)	SR	BA, K*, MK, ME	AL	/

Figure 113: Which Specific QM Tools are used by Your Organisation?
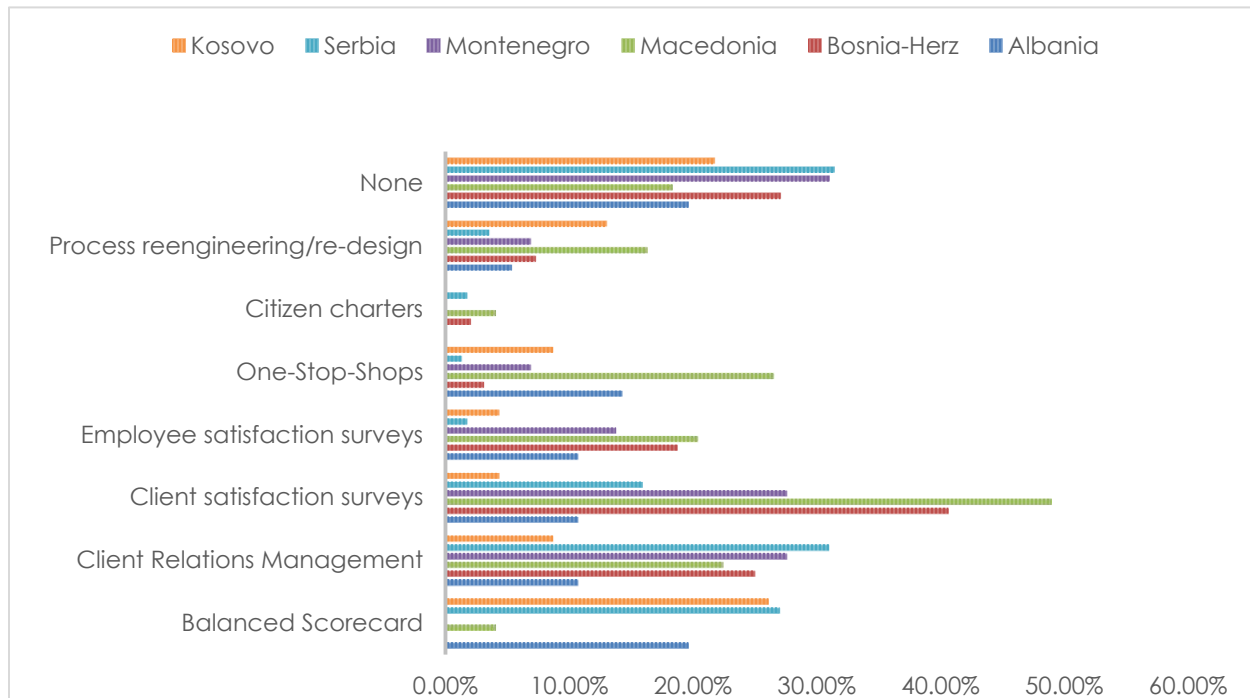
Figure 114: How Do You Perceive the Aspects of Customer Focus in Your Organisation?
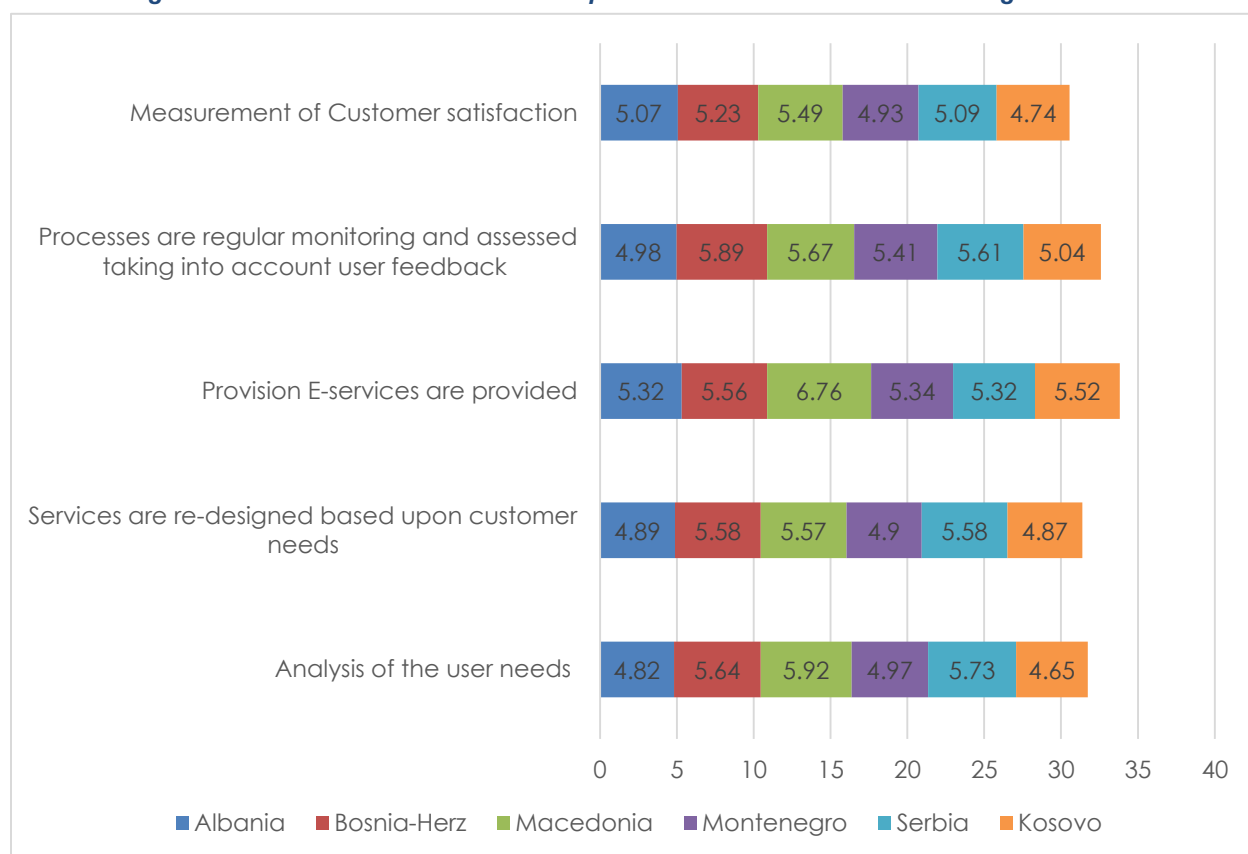
Basic Registers			
Data Context	**No.**	**Data Object**	**Administrative Area**
I. Space and Facilities	1	Spatial subdivisions	Geodetic activities
	2	Address records	Local government and self-government
	3	Land cadastre	Cadastral tasks
	4	Land records (the real estate cadastre)	Land affairs
	5	GIS maps	Geodetic activities
II. Population	6	Register of births, marriages and deaths	Civil status
	7	Citizenship books	Citizenship
	8	Records of residence	Interior
	9	Owners of motor vehicles	Interior
	10	Driving licences	Interior
	11	Passport records	Interior
	12	Records of employed persons	Labour and employment
	13	Records of unemployed persons	Labour and employment
	14	Civil servants and employees	Public administration
	15	List of voters	Electoral system
	16	Displaced persons	Social welfare
	17	Work permits and residence permits for foreigners	Labour and employment
	18	Records of scholarship holders	Education
	19	Records of pensioners	Pension welfare
	20	Records of health insurance beneficiaries	Healthcare

III. Legal Persons	21	Companies	Corporate law
	22	Craft shops	Crafts
	23	Associations	Civic associations
	24	Institutions	Non-profit legal persons
	25	Trusts and foundations	Citizen associations
	26	Public administration	Public administration
	27	Public procurement	Corporate law
IV. Finance	28	Budget classifications	Public finance
	29	Budget users	Public finance
	30	Chart of Accounts	Finance
	31	Tax records	The tax system
	32	Capital projects	Investments
	33	Pledge register	Banking finance
	34	Bank accounts	Banking finance
	35	Customs records	Customs system
	36	Records of incentives	Public finance
V. Regulations, Strategies and Decisions	37	Register of regulations	Legislation
	38	Catalogue of administrative areas	Public administration
	39	Strategy catalogue	Social and political system
	40	Register of government decisions at various administrative levels	Social and political system
	41	Long-term plans and programs	Social and political system
	42	National EU accession programmes	International cooperation
VI. Statistics and Measurement	43	Statistical registers	Statistics
	44	Statistical classification	Statistics
	45	Statistical research programmes	Statistics
	46	Research catalogues EUROSTAT	Statistics
	47	KPI Catalogue	Work monitoring
	48	BNCH Catalogue	Work monitoring
	49	Process catalogues	Work monitoring
VII. Glossaries and Metadata	50	Glossary	Legislation
	51	EUROVOC	Legislation
	52	XML schemes	Information Society
	53	Catalogue of public registers	Legislation
	54	Register of specific regulations	Legislation

EIF 2.0 Basic Services
1 Company registration
2 Procurement
3 Patents and trademarks
4 Consumer protection, labelling, packaging
5 Excerpts from the registers of births and marriages
6 Driving licences
7 Passports and visas
8 Work permits, residence permits
9 Vehicle registration
10 Establishment of schools and colleges

11 Scholarships
12 Online tax
13 Information about social protection services
14 Assessments for unemployed
15 Child benefits
16 Pensions
17 Health Insurance
18 Taxes for businesses
19 VAT refund
20 Information on tax incentives
21 Declaration of excise goods
22 Recognition of qualifications and diplomas
23 Job search
24 Information on customs duties
25 Customs declaration

ANNEX 2: List of Participants in the Focus Group Meetings

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ANNEX 4: Online Questionnaire

Introduction, Purpose and Structure of the Questionnaire

The Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) is an inter-governmental organisation fostering regional cooperation, promoting shared learning and supporting the development of public administration in the Western Balkans. ReSPA Members are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, while Kosovo*[379] is a beneficiary. ReSPA's purpose is to help governments in the region to develop better public administration, public services and overall governance systems for their citizens and businesses, and prepare them for membership in the European Union (EU). Since its inception, ReSPA has contributed to the development of human resources and administrative capacities through training programmes and innovative cooperation mechanisms such as the exchange of good practices, peer reviews and development of know-how.

ReSPA Members and Kosovo* have already introduced significant novelties in the area of service delivery. These developments have impact on the organisational structure, importance and work of the public administration as a whole. In order to assess this situation, and to support its beneficiaries, ReSPA has conducted a Study on Service Delivery.

The prime objective of the Study is to provide an overview of and insight in public service delivery in the Western Balkan countries. The Study is comparative and highlights inspiring practices (approaches, methodologies, instruments) from the ReSPA Members and Kosovo*. This Questionnaire took 15-20 minutes to complete. The answers were provided anonymously.

The Questionnaire comprised the following four blocks:

A) Background Information

B) General Information on Service Delivery

C) User Orientation Status and Maturity

D) Service Delivery and User Oriented Actions

A) BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Q1: Organisation (please provide the name of your organisation, in English if possible) (open)
Q2: Which administration do you represent? (drop down menu with ReSPA members and Kosovo*)
Q3: Level/tier of government:
- o Central
- o Regional (sub-national)
- o Local

Q4: Sector:
- o Justice and law

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[379] * This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

- Customs, Taxes and Finances
- Culture
- Education
- Environment
- Health
- Police and security
- Social services and social security
- Transport, infrastructure, public works, utilities
- Economy, agriculture, fisheries, trade
- Foreign affairs
- Home affairs
- Post and communication
- Public sector management (PA, civil service agency, budget, ICT, etc.)
- Local administration
- Other: (open)

Q5: How is service delivery organised?
- Centrally structured
- Regional/local offices (or similar)
- Other

Q6. Number of employees working in the organisation:
- <10
- 10-50
- 50-100
- 100-500
- 500-1000
- 1000 <
- I don't know

B) GENERAL INFORMATION ON SERVICE DELIVERY

Q7: How many different kinds of services does your institution deliver?
- 1
- 1-5
- 5-10
- 10+
- I don't know

Q8: Out of the total number of employees, how many employees are actually engaged in directly delivering the services mentioned in Question 7? (open)

Q9: Do you have an organisational unit responsible for delivering services?
- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q10: Is staff formally involved in the process of redesigning the services you deliver?
- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q11: What kind of users do you serve? (Multiple answers possible)
- Citizens
- Businesses
- Representative organisations, NGOs, CSOs

o Other public administration authorities
o I don't know

Q12: Is your organisation in charge of maintaining a register (e.g. space and facilities, population, legal persons, etc.)?
o No
o Yes, but the register is not digitised
o Yes, the register is digitised, but the data are not electronically shared with other institutions
o The register is digitised and data are electronically shared with other organisations
o Other:

Q13: Which of the following statements best describes the number of services provided online?
o All of our services are offered online
o Most of our services are offered online
o Half of our services are offered online
o Few of our services are offered online
o Online service delivery is not available
o I don't know

Q14: What is the average level of sophistication of the provided online services?
o Informative only
o Interactive, form and document submission
o Fully transactional
o Fully transactional and personalised
o Provided through national portals/one stop shops/life events
o Other:
o I don't know

Q15: Which centrally available digital enablers do you use to design e-services? (multiple answers possible) **Digital public services should build on shared and reusable solutions based on agreed standards and technical specifications in order to reduce their cost of development and deployment time and increase interoperability - these are called digital enablers.**
o We don't use/have any digital enablers
o Generic electronic identification
o Generic mobile ID
o Generic electronic signatures
o Single sign-on and authentication
o Customers mailbox
o e-Delivery system
o e-Invoice system
o e-Payment system
  o private banking
  o third party payment gateway
o Our own electronic identification
o Our own IT systems for providing online services
o I don't know

Q16: Is the 'once only' principle (public administrations should ensure that citizens and businesses supply the same information only once to a public administration) complied with in the services your organisation provides?

- o Yes
- o No
- o I don't know

Q17: How do you generally obtain data (documents, certificates, information) you need from other public institutions to provide your services to citizens and/or businesses?

Please specify the percentage of each of the following methods:

- o Users collect them directly from other public institutions (%)
- o Our organisation obtains them officially from other institutions (%)
- o Our organisation obtains them electronically from other institutions (%)
- o Our organisation obtains them electronically from other institutions using a central data exchange platform (%)
- o I don't know

Q18: How do your users interact with your organisation to receive information? Please specify the percentage of each of the following methods:

- o Online (%)
- o Phone (%)
- o Personal visit (%)
- o Written letter (%)
- o Other: (open)
- o I don't know

Q19: How do your users interact with your organisation to receive the service you provide? Please specify the percentage of each of the following methods:

- o Online (%)
- o Phone (%)
- o Personal visit (%)
- o Written letter (%)
- o Other (open)
- o I don't know

Q20: How do your users complain about a service you provide(d)? Please specify the percentage of each of the following methods:

- o Online (%)
- o Phone (%)
- o Personal visit (%)
- o Written letter (%)
- o Other (open)
- o I don't know

C) USER ORIENTATION STATUS AND MATURITY

Q21: Is user orientation anchored in your country? (e.g. in a policy paper, action plan, strategic document, standards – please indicate also the timeframe, if possible). By user orientation, we mean a public administration that behaves/or is stimulated to act in a citizen/user centric manner, putting the needs, expectations and the interest of the citizens/users in the first place.

- o YES: please specify the document (open)

- No strategic documents on user orientation have been developed in my country
- I don't know

Q22: How much importance does your organisation attach to user-oriented public services?
- An indispensable part of my organisation
- Highly valued and systematically used
- Well known and regularly used
- Well known but not used systematically
- Rather low in my organisation
- Not recognised as important in my organisation
- I don't know

Q23: Please indicate the trend of user oriented public services in your organisation over the last five years:
- Importance of service delivery has been rapidly increasing
- Importance of service delivery has been growing
- Importance of service delivery is relatively the same as it used to be
- Importance of service delivery has been decreasing
- Importance of service delivery has been rapidly decreasing
- Service delivery has not been on my organisation's agenda at all
- I don't know

Q24: How would you assess the usefulness of the tools (you have used)?

TOOL	We are not using	Very useful, we continue using them in a systematic way	Useful, I would use them again	Somewhat useful	Not useful, I would not use them again
Client Satisfaction Surveys					
Suggestions from Front-Line Staff					
One Stop Shop					
Mystery Shopping					
Citizen Charters					
Process Reengineering/Redesign					
Complaint Management					
Testing of Service Prototypes					
Customer Journey Mapping					

Q25: What are the main obstacles to implementing the existing policies on user centric service delivery in your organisation? (Multiple answers possible**)**
- Inadequate budget
- Lack of political support
- Lack of central coordination
- Lack of adequate inter-institutional coordination
- Lack of trained staff
- Lack of digital enablers (see the full list under Question 3)
- Other:

D) USER ORIENTED SERVICES AND SERVICE DELIVERY ACTIONS

Q26: Does your organisation measure the satisfaction of its users on a regular basis?
- o YES
- o NO
- o I don't know

Q27: (if yes to Q26) Of which kind of users?
- o Citizens
- o Businesses
- o NGOs, CSOs
- o Other public administration authorities

Q28: If yes, what elements are measured (multiple answers possible)
- o Overall satisfaction level
- o Satisfaction with the staff's relationship with users (fair treatment, friendliness, level of staff professionalism and competences…,)
- o Accessibility (e.g. accessibility by public transport, disabled access, opening hours, one stop shops …)
- o Access and quality of information received
- o Cost of services
- o Effectiveness and efficiency (e.g. organisation of work, waiting time, how many times users need to return, etc.)
- o User friendly e-services
- o Users' suggestions on how to improve service delivery
- o Other

Q29: (if yes to Q26) What is the overall level of user satisfaction with your organisation?

(%)

Q30: (if yes to Q26) Has the level of user satisfaction increased over the past years?
- o Yes
- o No
- o Stayed rather stable
- o I don't know

Q31: (if yes to Q27) How are the results of the measurement(s) used?
- o They are collected for reporting, nothing is done with them in terms of follow up
- o Results are analysed in order to improve the service(s)
- o I don't know

Q32: How does your organisation deal with complaints? Select the most suitable statement describing your organisation.
- o We have a formal procedure for receiving and handling complaints (different channels to receive complaints, clear review procedure, clear timeframe, clear responsibilities…). Complaints are diligently reviewed, always replied to and lessons are learnt in terms of service delivery where applicable.
- o We have a formal procedure for receiving and handling complaints, but it is rather pro forma. Complaints are not really taken seriously.
- o We have no formal procedure, but complaints are taken seriously and diligently followed up
- o We have no formal procedure and complaints are not followed up

Q33: Does your organisation analyse the needs and expectations of its users?

- o YES
- o NO

- o I don-t know

Q34: Do you collect and document user requirements to facilitate the development of products and services?
- o YES
- o NO
- o I don't know

Q35: Does your organisation have a policy and procedures in place to initiate and implement service (re) design?
- o YES
- o NO
- o I don't know

Q36: Are users informed when your products or services change?
- o YES – if yes, please specify how? (open)
- o NO
- o I don't know

Q37: Is the service delivery process documented?
- o YES
- o NO
- o I don't know

Q38: When were the services you deliver last redesigned?
- o Over one year ago
- o Within the last year
- o Within the last month
- o Within the last week
- o I don't know

Q39: Who/what defines the service standards in your organisation? (multiple answers possible)
- o Law/legal enactment
- o Senior management in the organisation
- o Users
- o Other(s)
- o I don't know

Q40: Have you – as an organisation – defined and committed to any service delivery standards?
- o YES **-** If yes, which?
- o NO
- o I don't know

Q41: Have you – as an organisation – defined and committed to any e-service delivery standards? Which ones? (Multiple answers possible)
- o Inclusiveness and accessibility - compliance with common guidelines on government websites, WCAG
- o Security – personal data are secure
- o Multi-channel - by various means (web, mobile, kiosks.)
- o Personalisation – tailored to the daily lives of users, youth, families…
- o Usability, user friendliness

- o Provision of clear advice and guidelines on accessing public services, as well as on the rights and obligations of users and the public institutions providing services.
- o No
- o I don't know

Q42: What standard usability features apply to your e-services? (Multiple answers possible)
- o Progress is tracked and you can save the previous versions when filling a service request.
- o Users do not need to fill out a request for a service in one go. They can pick up where they left off.
- o Personal information is saved.
- o There is a privacy statement on the site and the user knows clearly what steps should be taken to return to the previous situation.
- o There are frequently asked questions and/or a helpdesk.
- o We are not using a standard
- o I don't know

Q43: Is an institutional set-up (e.g. internal follow-up/assessment structure and processes) **in place for assessing service delivery processes?**
- o YES
- o NO
- o I don't know

Q44: Do you have any documents and tools for assessing the costs of service delivery?
- o YES **-** If yes, which?
- o NO
- o I don't know

Q45: Do you analyse the financial impact of process redesign (costs of maintenance, redesign, simplification of procedures, elimination of unnecessary documents, etc.)?
- o YES
- o NO
- o I don't know

Q46: How often does front-line/service delivery staff receive specific training related to improved service delivery and user orientation?
- o Never
- o Occasionally, when major changes are introduced
- o Systematically
- o I don't know

Q47: What mechanisms do you have in place to identify the training requirements and needs of your staff directly involved in service delivery?
- o We have no mechanisms in place.
- o The organisation regularly performs training needs analyses and organises trainings based on them
- o Employees are free to identify and attend the necessary training opportunities
- o I don't know

Q48: Do you see a role for ReSPA in this process and what would /could it be?
- o YES **-** If yes, please describe (free text)
- o No
- o I don't know

Q49: Are there other actors (donors, technical assistance, projects) supporting you in improving your service delivery?
- o YES **-** If yes, please describe (free text)
- o NO

       o   I don't know exactly

NB The Questionnaire ended with the following text:

> **Your answers have been saved.**
> **Many thanks for your kind collaboration! The report integrating the results from the Study will be available on ReSPA's website. If you wish to receive the report, please fill in your email address here….**
> open

ANNEX 5: Inspiring Practice Template

Assignment

Besides the macro level (country/general policy level), the Study also focused on the organisational/institutional level. An important aspect in this part was to identify /describe/analyse state-of-the-art inspiring practices in the countries in the region. The inspiring practices demonstrate how a modern public administration interacts with service users. We generally focused on the following questions, and set out ways and tools to address them.

Key questions in service delivery	
Key questions	**Approaches & tools**
1. Do we know what citizens / users expect from our organisation in terms of services and their delivery?	• Direct contact (surveys, panels, and focus groups) • Indirect feedback and representation • Mystery shopping • 'Life events' analysis & customer journey mapping
2. How do we improve our systems and processes, to optimise service delivery?	• Improvement of the regulatory environment • Process re-engineering • Systems thinking and the 'Vanguard Method' • Organisational interoperability • Administrative simplification • Standardisation of services • Customer care standards • Centralised model of service delivery • Improved public service access and delivery quality by using innovative solutions • Complaint Management System (CMS)
3. Are user demands met through 'front office' interface with the administration?	• One stop shops • End-to-end service delivery • Multi-channel service delivery
4. Given all of the above, do we make best use of e-Government in delivering these services through online channels?	• Digital by default • Availability of basic registers • Interoperability • Key enablers (e-ID, e-Signature, reusable technical building blocks, etc.) • Inventory of public services • Online 'life events' for citizens and businesses • Common digital service standards • Advanced user engagement tools • 'Open by default', Government as a Platform (GaaP), and 'clouds of public services'
5. Do we know how satisfied users are with our services and how we deliver them?	• Users' service charters • Satisfaction measurement and management
6. How do we communicate our improvements and new services to our clients/users?	• Direct feedback • Website info • Social media • PR and marketing tools

The participants were asked to propose minimum five inspiring practices along these lines. After receiving all the proposals from the six different countries, the key experts mapped them onto the general picture to ensure good coverage of all the topics and even have some similar practices/topics covered by several countries. In this way, all countries received equal attention and the strengths of each were put into the spotlight. According to the ToR, each country was to propose five inspiring practices, wherefore our Study ultimately outlines 31 inspiring practices illustrating state-of-the-art organisations with specific tools/inspiring practices.

Country experts were asked to use the below template to structure each of the **five selected inspiring practices (initiatives/organisations)**. The descriptions of each inspiring practice were to be around **five pages** long.

1. Content and Background:

  1.1. Organisation (name and short description of tasks)
  1.2. Sector
  1.3. Number of staff
  1.4. Other characteristics typical of the organisation;
  1.5 Project background and purpose (what were the specific situation/barriers/constraints and challenges the project aimed to overcome, change or improve?)
  1.6 Main features of the project. Brief description of the content of the initiative: declared goals/targets, focus (structures, processes, technology, service, etc.) and formal grounds for implementing the project (e.g. law, government programme…)

2. Change Process/Dynamics

  2.1. Project timeframe and organisation (available resources, responsibilities…)
  2.2. Main actors and main obstacles/implementation challenges

3. Reform Results/Outcome

  3.1. What are the results of the project in terms of inputs/savings, outputs and outcomes? Did the reform/initiative deliver the envisaged results?
  3.2. Is there any proven and tangible evidence of the results the project achieved?
  3.3. Is there a 'visible' output of the project?
  3.4: Has the developed/redesigned service genuinely simplified delivery to its users (If yes, how)? Is it easy to understand and use? Has it reduced the "hassle factor" for the users of services? Are the key features, advantages and messages of the service clear to the users?
  3.5: Is the developed/redesigned service visually attractive enough to the users? Was a design specialist included in the production/redesign of the service? Is it visually attractive enough to encourage its use compared with the previous practice/process?
  3.6 Have you promoted the service via social networks/media? Which? Do you collect and monitor feedback? Have you tested the service or promoted it among users, peer-to-peer groups or their networks? Have you envisaged any user-motivation activities (prizes, awards…)?
  3.7 Have you developed the service(s) in immediate response to the users' requests? Was the service designed taking into account foreseeable events in the users' timing (life events, yearly cycles…)?
  3.8. Have the project activities continued? How do you assess the sustainability of the project?

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

  4.1. What lessons can others learn from this project?
  4.2. What are the "content specific" factors (project itself, but also context) that influenced the results (positive or negative)?
  4.3. Are there opportunities for transferability? What are the prerequisites for replication in another context?

ANNEX 6: Overview of Inspiring Practices by Country

Inspiring Practices – Albania

1. Integrated Service Centres (ISCs) Managed by ADISA - the Agency for the Integrated Delivery of Services
2. ADISA Lab: Bringing Innovative Solutions for Public Services
3. Implementation of the Digital SEAL
4. Use of Electronic Certificates to Declare Imports and Exports in a Single Administrative Document
5. Creation of the Civil Status Register as the Backbone of Service Delivery

Inspiring Practices – Bosnia and Herzegovina

1. Introduction of Quality Management at State and Entity Levels
2. Construction Permit Centre in the Banja Luka City Administration
3. Business Registration at the RS Agency for Intermediary, IT and Financial Services
4. Digital Learning Courses in the Civil Service Agency
5. e-Procurement - Public Procurement Agency

Inspiring Practices – Kosovo*

1. Interoperability Platform
2. e-Kiosk - Self-Service Automated Machine
3. Digital Platform for Public Participation – Pristina Municipality
4. EDI – the Fast and Easy Way to Declare Taxes
5. NGO Electronic System

Inspiring Practices– Macedonia

1. National Interoperability Framework and Platform
2. e-Cadastre - Electronic System of the Real Estate Cadastre Agency
3. Electronic Construction Permit Issuance System
4. e-Procurement - Electronic System for Public Procurement
5. National e-Health System My Appointment
6. e-Parliament

Inspiring Practices - Montenegro

1. Methodology for Monitoring and Evaluating GAPA Implementation
2. "No Barriers! So Business Doesn't Wait" Ministry of Finance
3. Social Card – Integrated Social Welfare Information System
4. eDMS in the Ministry of Public Administration
5. My Administration Portal –Institute Alternativa

Inspiring Practices – Serbia

1. e-GAPA - Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Governments
2. Central Register of Integrated Procedures and the e-Construction Permit System
3. Automation of Life Events - Delivery Unit

4. Personal Assistance Service
5. Accessibility Audit Association, Interactive Accessibility Map

ANNEX 7: Inspiring Public Service Delivery Practices in the Western Balkans

Introduction

1. Growing Importance of Public Service Delivery

Governments have to be more responsive to society's needs and demands. Public sector organisations are being reformed in order to provide better, faster and more services. However, quality, quantity and speed are not the only new competences that society requires from its government. Since the pace of societal change is accelerating, government should equally be able to respond to changing demands by offering new solutions. Secondly, governments reform with the purpose of re-establishing trust in government. Governments need to provide more choice, democracy and transparency by interacting with citizens/customers at all stages of the policy and service delivery process.

Traditionally, the political leaders determine what services are to be provided, on what terms and to whom; and bureaucrats and professionals subsequently organise and deliver the services. The role of the citizens is largely passive. In the new setting however, the range of actors involved – institutionally or on an *ad hoc* basis – in the production, delivery and evaluation of public services has grown and the citizen has been acquiring an increasingly active role. This changing role of citizens/customers of public services has an impact on the policy and management cycle as a whole. Traditionally, the policy and management cycle is dominated and controlled by politicians and administrators. Now, citizens/customers are increasingly involved in this policy and management cycle at different stages (design, decision, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation).

However, complex needs in an increasingly heterogeneous society, the demand for increased transparency, changing perceptions of the legitimacy of governments, and the need to get citizens involved resulted in an opening up of the 'black box' to citizens. Public sector organisations are increasingly turning into externally oriented and demand driven organisations, developing new types of interactions and relationships with a variety of stakeholders for different sets of tasks.

Putting citizens at the heart of public institutions provides a twofold benefit: it makes public administrations more efficient and increases citizens' satisfaction and trust in government. Citizen-centric service delivery implies that policy makers better understand the needs of and key drivers of satisfaction for citizens, and that they are in a position to "identify sub-groups of users and needs or gaps in accessibility" (OECD 2013). This, in turn, can enable public sector entities to adopt better policies and to provide more responsive services based on citizens' perspectives and empirical evidence. At the same time, tensions may arise when trying to shape service delivery processes in an inclusive way, in a manner primarily directed at problem-solving, and through techniques that foster greater agility and adaptability: politics can influence the willingness of governments to use citizen-focused techniques. Agency staff and administrators must be cognizant of the role that power dynamics can play at any given time. Despite that, proactive learning and the collection of user feedback can support entities in successfully dealing with the challenges of complexity and evolving behaviors. Measuring citizen satisfaction and preferences on a regular basis can help public managers monitor public sector performance over time, continuously improve service delivery, and measure the impact of reforms and service-improvement activities on end users, ultimately allowing for a more citizen-centric allocation of

time and resources that can result in a higher likelihood of citizens being satisfied with policy outcomes. Emerging literature suggests that working toward a more citizen-centric system allows public administrations to increase their efficiency, thanks notably to early or immediate feedback mechanisms for taxpayer-funded services (World Bank 2015), and "flatter, agile, streamlined and tech-enabled" practices" (World Economic Forum 2012). In the reverse case, governments run the risk of seeing resources being diverted or misallocated, thereby diminishing the quality of public service delivery and undermining trust in public institutions.

The service delivery and citizen-centred approach became quite pivotal over the past decades. Within the context of "Europe 2020" the actions are guided by the following vision: "*By 2020, public administrations and public institutions in the European Union should be open, efficient and inclusive, providing borderless, personalised, user-friendly, end-to-end digital public services to all citizens and businesses in the EU. Innovative approaches are used to design and deliver better services in line with the needs and demands of citizens and businesses. Public administrations use the opportunities offered by the new digital environment to facilitate their interactions with stakeholders and with each other.*" This vision for the EU consequently also got its effect in the enlargement policy, with clear focus on eGovernment as one of the six flagship initiatives of the 2017 Western Balkan Strategy. Citizen-centric service delivery became a pivotal element and (one of) the main objectives. All Western Balkan countries have awarded this topic a prominent role and place in their PAR strategies.

2. Purpose of the Regional Study on Service Delivery

ReSPA members and Kosovo*[380] are facing significant novelties, demands and expectations in the area of service delivery. These developments have significant impact on organisational structures, dynamics, importance and work of the public administration on the whole.

In order to holistically assess the situation, gain a deeper understanding of the operational level and to support its beneficiaries in defining joint (as well as individual) future strategic actions, ReSPA has commissioned and supported the development and publication of the Study on Service Delivery.

The prime objective on the "macro" (country) level of the Study on Service Delivery is to provide an operational overview of and practitioners' insights on public service delivery in the Western Balkan region. But it also aims to go further and formulate both strategic and operational short-, mid- and long-term recommendations and a joint integrated vision of public administration development on the macro level. The additional value added of such a macro level analysis and vision is that it is not only inter-sectorial, but also supra-sectorial as it is co-assessed, co-formulated and co-shared by broad societal dialogue. The same methodology and structure is used to describe each of the countries in the Western Balkan region (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia,[381] Kosovo*, Montenegro and Serbia), wherefore all countries receive equal attention and the strengths of each are put into the spotlight.

Secondly, the Study on Service Delivery attempts to provide in-depth understanding of the operational level of service delivery (actual implementation of developed services) on the organisational or "micro" level. It attempts to understand the Western Balkan countries' practices

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[380] *This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and ICJ Advisory Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

[381] Macedonia is ReSPA Member as Macedonia

in service design and change procedures, measurement of user satisfaction and citizens/user oriented approaches, quality measurement procedures, management of digital enablers, accessibility and other operationally interesting topics.

The third (and last) objective of the Regional Study on Service Delivery is to provide a regional comparative overview and conclusions, strategic orientation and possible future vision(s) in service delivery and perhaps even in the public administration reform area in the Western Balkan region. The last part of the Regional Study provides conclusions based on all analytical and researched material and data providing a condensed view on approaching service delivery reforms. It builds on the past, present and future lessons learned from the country case studies, Online Questionnaire data, and domestic and international best practices (see below).

Conclusions and recommendations have been drawn for all the countries – per thematic area and in the short-, mid- and long-term perspectives. ReSPA, its members and Study end users are thus also provided with a set of success and failure factors to take into consideration during service delivery reforms. Challenges, such as budgeting and HR development, have also been raised. The authors of the Regional Study on Service Delivery hope to spark discussions on what might be the next steps in terms of improving service delivery models with a view to moving forward (at the country and regional levels).

This publication presents the collected inspiring practices in the six countries. It complements the information and analysis in the Study.

3. Overview of the Cases by Country

Inspiring Practices – Albania

  ➤ Integrated Service Centres (ISCs) Managed by ADISA - the Agency for the Integrated Delivery of Services
  ➤ ADISA Lab: Bringing Innovative Solutions for Public Services
  ➤ Implementation of the Digital SEAL
  ➤ Use of Electronic Certificates to Declare Imports and Exports in a Single Administrative Document
  ➤ Creation of the Civil Status Register as the Backbone of Service Delivery

Inspiring Practices – Bosnia and Herzegovina

  ➤ Introduction of Quality Management at State and Entity Levels
  ➤ Construction Permit Centre in the Banja Luka City Administration
  ➤ Business Registration at the RS Agency for Intermediary, IT and Financial Services
  ➤ Digital Learning Courses in the Civil Service Agency
  ➤ e-Procurement - Public Procurement Agency

Inspiring Practices – Kosovo*

  ➤ Interoperability Platform
  ➤ e-Kiosk - Self-Service Automated Machine
  ➤ Digital Platform for Public Participation – Pristina Municipality
  ➤ EDI – the Fast and Easy Way to Declare Taxes
  ➤ NGO Electronic System

Inspiring Practices– Macedonia

- ➢ National Interoperability Framework and Platform
- ➢ e-Cadastre - Electronic System of the Real Estate Cadastre Agency
- ➢ Electronic Construction Permit Issuance System
- ➢ e-Procurement - Electronic System for Public Procurement
- ➢ National e-Health System My Appointment
- ➢ e-Parliament

Inspiring Practices - Montenegro

- ➢ Methodology for Monitoring and Evaluating GAPA Implementation
- ➢ "No Barriers! So Business Doesn't Wait" Ministry of Finance
- ➢ Social Card – Integrated Social Welfare Information System
- ➢ eDMS in the Ministry of Public Administration
- ➢ My Administration Portal –Institute Alternativa

Inspiring Practices – Serbia

- ➢ e-GAPA - Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Governments
- ➢ Central Register of Integrated Procedures and the e-Construction Permit System
- ➢ Automation of Life Events - Delivery Unit
- ➢ Personal Assistance Service
- ➢ Accessibility Audit Association, Interactive Accessibility Map

4. Structure of the Report

Public services can be understood as all interactions between government and citizens, businesses and other service users,[382] whether directly or by proxy through an intermediary. In other words, they encompass not just the well-recognised services provided by the state, such as health, education, police, fire service, welfare, social services, etc. They also include every instance in which citizens, businesses and others come into contact with the administration and some form of exchange of information or finance takes place: registering, licensing, applying, paying, borrowing, making an enquiry, etc. Public 'services' are mostly intangible, but they can also involve construction works or the supply of equipment or items.

The motivation for improving service delivery can be driven by demands from citizens and businesses for higher quality or greater accessibility, or an internal search for more cost-effective ways of working and better organisation in trying to 'do better with less' in the current financial climate. Globalisation, the digital society, 24/7 media and social networks have opened the eyes of citizens and businesses to what is possible. Learning from their experiences with the commercial sector, they want public services that are better, faster, cheaper, and in many cases, they want more from their public administrations. ICT has now assumed a transformative role in public service design and delivery. The rise of the 'digital society' has heightened expectations from e-service delivery among citizens and businesses. Meeting these expectations calls for

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[382] We use the term 'citizen-user' throughout, to bring together the broader concept of a 'citizen' (who has the rights and duties of a member of society) with the narrower notion of a 'user' (who has the rights and expectations of a customer or consumer of a service). Similarly, we also refer to business-user, as the other main beneficiary of public services. Public and non-profit bodies are also service users and covered by 'others'.

addressing a number of key questions. An entire Chapter (including illustrative cases) addresses these key questions and presents different approaches and tools providing answers to them.

Key questions in service delivery	
Key questions	Approaches and Tools
1. Do we know what citizens / users expect from our organisation in terms of services and their delivery? What can be improved?	• Direct contact (surveys, panels, and focus groups) • Indirect feedback and representation • Mystery shopping • 'Life events' analysis and customer journey mapping
2. How do we improve our systems and processes, to optimise service delivery?	• Process re-engineering • Systems thinking and the 'Vanguard Method' • Organisational interoperability • Administrative simplification
3. 3. Are user demands met through the 'front office' interface with the administration?	• One stop shops • End-to-end service delivery • Multi-channel service delivery
4. Given all of the above, do we make best use of eGovernment in delivering these services through online channels?	• Interoperability • Online 'life events' for citizens and businesses • Key enablers (eID, single sign-on, etc.) • 'Once only' registration • 'Digital by default' • 'Open by default', Government as a Platform (GaaP), and 'clouds of public services'
5. Do we know how satisfied users are with our services and how we deliver them?	• Users' service charters • Satisfaction measurement and management
6 How can administration better manage their whole service portfolio?	• Public service portfolio management

Several of the mentioned instruments/tools/approaches are also documented in this Study by the organisations from the Western Balkan region. Based on the table, the above inspiring practices cases will be presented in six clusters.

Figure 115: Cluster of Tools/Approaches and Service Delivery Solutions
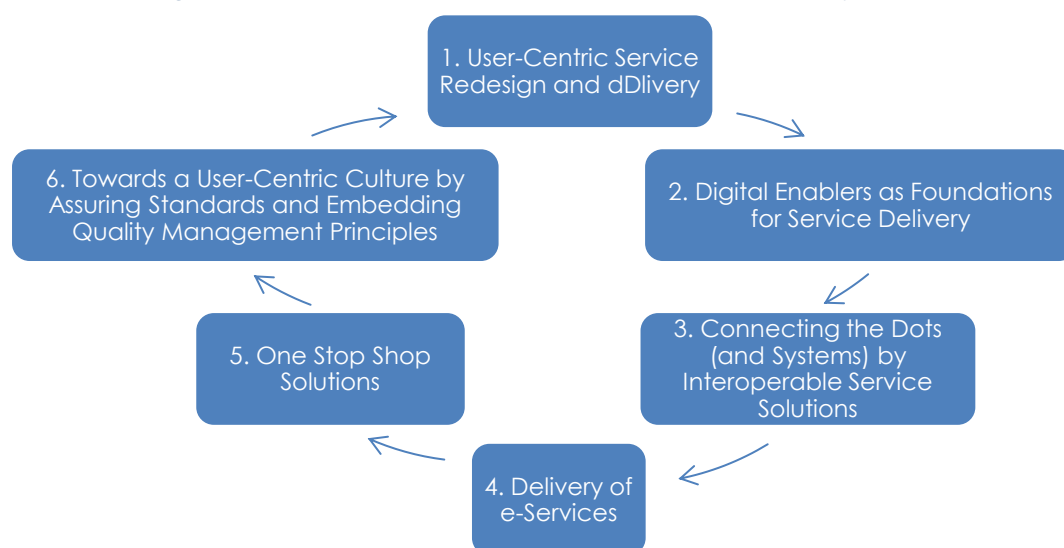
PART 1: User-Centric Service Redesign and Delivery

When designing and delivering services, public administrations should rely not only on their own expertise and insights. Public service users should be involved in expressing their needs and expectations. Various ways and means can be used to capture them - the choice depends on the situation faced by the service provider. Consultation should be viewed as a continuum that starts with identifying initial needs and expectations, and later monitors and evaluates satisfaction that these preferences are being met during delivery or have evolved. Taking account of user needs is crucial in designing or improving the services or the way in which they are delivered.

This part presents the following inspiring practices:

- ➢ National e-Health System My Appointment (MACEDONIA)
- ➢ ADISA Lab: Bringing Innovative Solutions for Public Services (ALBANIA)
- ➢ Personal Assistance Service (SERBIA)
- ➢ Digital Platform for Public Participation – Pristina Municipality (KOSOVO*)
- ➢ Digital Learning Courses in the Civil Service Agency (BiH)
- ➢ "No Barriers! So Business Doesn't Wait" Ministry of Finance (MONTENEGRO)

National e-Health System My Appointment (MACEDONIA)

Figure 116: National e-Health System

1. Content and Background

The main purpose of the project was to eliminate the non-transparency of the health system and the huge (over 18 months long) waiting lists for certain examinations. The project started in late 2011, as a central booking system for several examinations (MRI and CT scans, X-rays, mammography), for which the patients on average waited 12-15 months, and where there were a lot of duplicate patients on the waiting lists for the same examinations in multiple institutions, or patients who did not really need them. With this centralised booking system, all incorrect or duplicate data in the capital's three largest medical centres were eliminated. After one month of use, the waiting times were reduced from 77 weeks (18 months) to one week. My Appointment (*Moj termin*) was born from a desire to directly improve public health in Macedonia through the implementation of a cloud-based, fully integrated healthcare system.

The system underwent continuous agile and rapid development, and it became the obligatory government solution for visiting or requiring health services. The benefits very soon exceeded all expectations. Actually, the number of examinations multiplied without investment in beds, doctors,

or equipment. The main goal was to provide fast health services to all citizens, and to upgrade the Electronic Health Record into a dynamic, personalised, understandable and holistic record.

2. Change Process/Dynamics

The initiative was launched in late 2011, with initial deployment in April 2012 and integration of vendors and institutions (via web services) by August 2013. All the business processes were developed by the Ministry of Health project unit (that later became part of the Directorate for e-Health Services) and an outsourced software development company. The design of each new process was informed by consultations with medics and hospital managers.

The main actors were the physicians and the patients themselves, along with the Ministry of Health team (that later became part of the Directorate for e-Health Services) and the outsourced software vendor. The biggest obstacle was to change the patients' habit of arriving at the doctor's offices early in the morning (8 am), and to start coming on time for their scheduled appointments. An even greater challenge was to convince the doctors to allocate more appointment slots, the more slots -> the lesser the nervousness in front of their offices. Another challenge was to encourage both patients and doctors to respect each other and each other's time, as well to decrease the no-show habit of patients and doctors and continuously increase the quality of referrals.

3. Reform Results/Outcome

Extremely positive results were achieved in several areas:

- ➢ High accessibility and transparency of the health system;
    - o No more unreachable or "protected" doctors and diagnostics;
    - o No more cherry-picking of "easy" patients for a particular group of doctors;
    - o Maximum waiting time is one month;
    - o Reachable doctors even in rural areas.
- ➢ Improved healthcare
    - o Average time patients spend in hospital reduced;
    - o No more crowds in front of the doctor's offices at 8 am;
    - o Quality of examinations of patients improved;
    - o Greater number of total health interventions and patients with the same budget and without investing in beds, doctors or equipment.
- ➢ There will never be enough money in healthcare
    - o Saving money and time in every possible way and situation is the topmost priority;
    - o A lot of patients were losing time and money going to see a doctor in another city, now they can see a doctor in the same city or even better, the doctor can pay them a house call;
    - o Lower prices of medications by use of the maximum price methodology has resulted in drastic savings in the Health Insurance Fund budget;
    - o Opportunity to include many other medications on the Health Insurance Fund list of medications covered fully or partially by the state budget.

International acknowledgements:

The Health Consumer Powerhouse (HCF) has been publishing the only comparative rankings in Europe based on a consistent methodology for 20 years now. Its 2014-2016 reports indicate Macedonia's progress in the course of the adoption and usage of My Appointment. In 2014, Macedonia was qualified as the "Rocket of the Year", having soared 11 places on HCF's Euro Consumer Health Index, mainly because of the e-Health system, which is continuously improving.

The World Health Organization has published a special report on the progress of Macedonia based on My Appointment.[383]

Sorsix (the outsourced company that developed the system) won the IT Europa Award for Government/Utilities Solution of the Year for My Appointment in 2017.

Greater number of appointments per day and shorter waiting times

Figure 117: Appointments Per Day VS Median Waiting Time for Care in Macedonia, 2014-2016
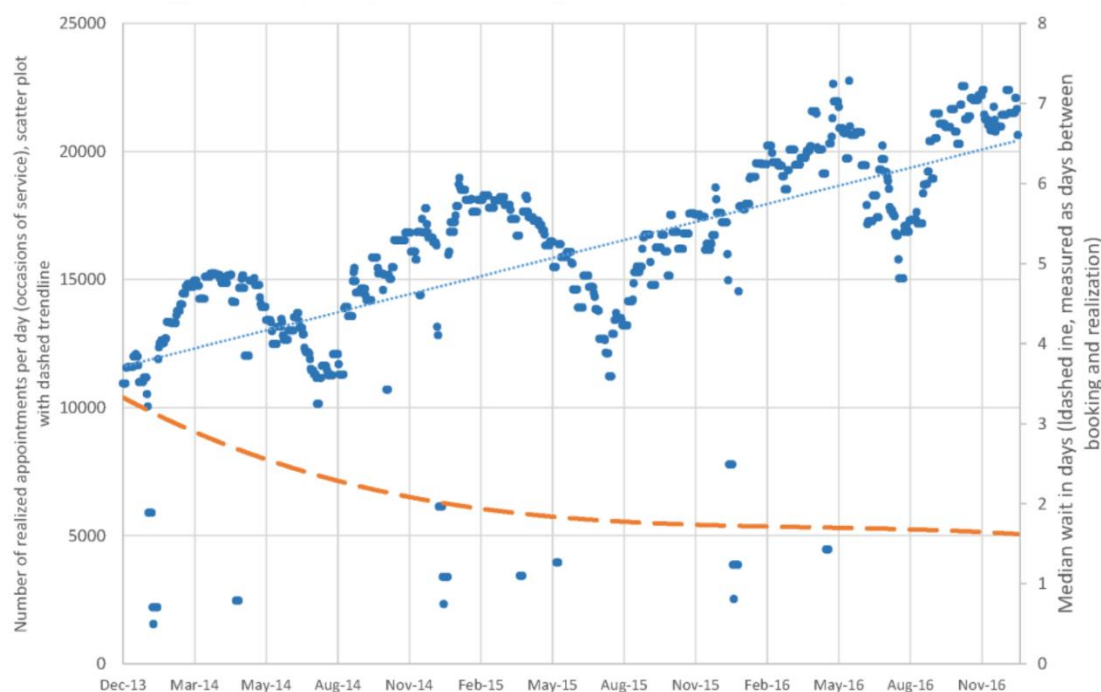
> ➤ Lower prices of medication by use of the analytics of consumption and the centralised procurement module. Annual savings of around €13-15 million.
> ➤ After the Skopje Floods in 2016, the Report and BI module of the system was used to find all persons with disabilities, patients with chronic diseases and patients on insulin therapy in the most critical areas, and to deliver the necessary therapies to their homes. All the

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383 http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/302331/From-Innovation-to-Implementation- eHealth-Report-EU.pdf?ua=1

> needed medications, insulin and medical devices were packed and delivered to the patient's homes. The Red Cross helped with the packaging and the Army delivered those packages to the flooded houses.

➢ The planning of all new employment, procurement of new equipment, rural or visiting doctors is based on the data in the system and all the patients' health requirements.

The patients can easily access and see all free appointment slots for any health service in the territory of Macedonia (including private institutions) (https://mojtermin.mk/map). The concept of doctor's visits and the patient workflow was completely changed, and My Appointment has become the fastest growing brand in Macedonia. SMS reminders of the scheduled appointments were a game changer in cutting the number of no-show cases. Epidemiology Visualizer is used by the decision makers (ministers and their teams) for exploratory analysis of the healthcare system. Now that they can filter all data with just a few clicks, officials can quickly identify and respond to problem points and see the system's performance in real time. A demo of a part of this system is available at http://epiviz.sorsix.com/.

GUI designers customised the user interface to maximally reflect the daily work of doctors, as well as to be more intuitive, in order to achieve the best results with minimum user training.

The patients responded very well to several animated advertisements raising awareness of the benefits of regularly using the system. Targeted advertisements on the introduction of new functionalities have been posted on Facebook as well (e.g. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=quHqvsUCcnM). Some local and foreign media also reported on My Appointment.

All the functionalities were developed in response to the identified problems or complications in the current health system. The Health Insurance Law was amended to accommodate many of those functionalities and its new articles will boost the implementation and effects of the system.

The national centralised e-Health system must be active and sustainable, because just a five-minute breakdown can cause total chaos in the health sector. The Directorate of e-Health Services team is continuously developing new functionalities or optimising the old ones in order to increase patient and doctor satisfaction.

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

Many countries are having problems with project implementation due to inadequate technical implementation and lack of support. The success of this system is a result of strong leadership, the dedicated e-Health Directorate, but also of the quality of the solution developed by the software company. The system, however, had some teething troubles during early implementation, but they were rapidly resolved and doctors had no excuses such as 'the system doesn't work, I can't use it'. Perception, rather than the actual situation, is very important in the medical community and it is always an obstacle in any systemic reform. Attempts to create distributed offline solutions were one of the major stumbling blocks in the previous projects. Design of a distributed instead of a centralised system rapidly bogs down implementation and wastes significant amounts of time and resources. A centralised system and adequate backups

to keep hospitals and clinics online means that implementation can be pushed through location by location and the 'network effect' rapidly improves the performance of doctors and the system. Cloud, interoperability and dedication are the main success factors of nation-scale systems.

Dedication and coordination of the teams is the key to results. My Appointment was the result of the strong bond between the Ministry team, the hospital teams and the teams of the third party software companies (more than 100 integrated companies).

The system is successfully implemented in five countries (Macedonia, Serbia, India, Ireland and Australia) with different health policies and health systems, which constitutes strong proof that the system can be easily adjusted and tailored to all custom needs and usage. The ability to define the needs or the problem that one country or health institution has is prerequisite.

ADISA Lab: Bringing Innovative Solutions for Public Services (ALBANIA)

1. Content and Background

Within the Agency for the Delivery of Integrated Services Albania (ADISA), the ADISALab comprises a group of staff committed to innovation, inspired by people and excited by creativity. ADISALab tackles problems from the outside in, building useable solutions, focusing on user-centred design and facilitating a collaborative approach to the work of the public administration.

Persons with disabilities account for 6.2% of Albania's population; 22% of the country's population suffer from physical limitations (including those with identified disabilities, temporary impairments and the elderly). They now experience everyday constraints in accessing public services (including ADISA) as the existing service delivery channels have not been designed with the needs of persons with disabilities in mind. The purpose of this project was to make ADISA services accessible for all, including people with disabilities.

Statement by ADISA Executive Director Mr. Lorin Ymeri
"To be prepared for the challenges ahead, ADISA in 2017 created ADISALab, an innovation lab within ADISA. This is a group of ADISA employees committed to innovation, who dedicate part of their time to creating innovative solutions for challenges in public service delivery. Through a citizen-centric design, they manage to tackle problems from the outside in and build useable solutions, making ADISA stronger as a whole. Relatively little time and personal resources are thus spent on identifying tangible solutions, making it an ideal approach for other projects to follow. We are convinced that, in the medium and long term, ADISALab will be instrumental in understanding and responding to the needs of service beneficiaries with its practical and innovative solutions to be implemented by ADISA and other institutions delivering public services."

ADISALab used the innovation method described in Stanford University's Design Thinking Process and involving five stages: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, Test, and included an additional step: Implementation Plan.

The solution proposed by ADISALab recommends to work on the following:

1. Training staff
    a. Training front office staff in ethics, communication and user needs and tools
    b. Training security on keeping buildings accessible and working with the target group

2. Improving space
    a. Accessing the building - dedicated parking spaces, outside signage, ramps and elevators, floor markers
    b. Using the services - entrance video in sign language, accessible counters, adapted waiting spaces, accessible washroom

3. Working with users
    a. Communication at the Integrated Service Centres - easy to read info cards, audio documents, accessible queue management
    b. Reaching the target groups - information leaflets distributed to NGOs and Integrated Service Centres, NGO communication with members (newsletter), social media campaign

2. Change Process/Dynamics

A two-week workshop was organised for ADISALab staff, during which they were expected to work exclusively on the project. During the two-week workshop, ADISALab defined the goals, created the user journey maps, interviewed the target group (30 persons), analysed and refined the problem, brainstormed potential solutions, built and evaluated prototypes, determined the solutions and, finally, designed an implementation plan. This was done partly in small groups, partly involving all of ADISALab, with the assistance of an international consultant on the methodology.

The main actors were the members of ADISALab, which are all valued staff of ADISA. It became evident during the workshop that dedication of two weeks of staff time to ADISALab was difficult in ADISA's work culture. The entire team was present in the Lab during the two-week session only on rare occasions. ADISALab is challenged to find a method of time management that will be more suitable to its and ADISA's needs, so that this situation will be less challenging when tackling other problems.

3. Reform Results/Outcome

The project has been implemented since 2017 and will have impact at four different levels:

1. Reducing costs for ADISA and the public;
2. Contributing to ADISA's goals to public benefit;
3. Improving Albania's standing with the international community; and,
4. Helping the government fulfil its mandate.

Once fully implemented, the results will be measured through interviews with user groups and NGOs working in the sector, as well as through time and cost savings within ADISA.

ADISA offices will be equipped with dedicated parking spaces, outside signage, ramps and elevators and floor markers, entrance videos in sign language, accessible counters, adapted waiting spaces and accessible washrooms. There will also be easy to read info cards, audio documents, accessible queue management, information leaflets distributed to NGOs and Integrated Service Centres, NGO communication with members (via newsletters) and a social media campaign.

The project applies a user-centric approach, which will clearly make ADISA services more accessible to disabled persons. Additionally, it will benefit other population groups, such as the elderly, seeing impaired or illiterate persons.

ADISALab is comprised of staff with different backgrounds, including in design, architecture and IT, ensuring that visual attractiveness is included in the ADISALab approach from the very beginning to the implementation plan of a project.

The implementation plan provides for a social media campaign. Users were involved in various stages of the project, including interviews with the target group (30 persons), and a presentation to and evaluation of prototypes and identified solutions by the target group and an NGO working in the field (see: https://www.facebook.com/Adisa.Lab.Al/).

The single elements of the solution are all based on user needs articulated in interviews and with NGOs active in the sector. Foreseeable events have been taken into account insofar as, for certain solutions (i.e. easy to read documents), ADISA will primarily focus on the most used services, leaving rarely used services for a later date.

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

Setting up an innovation lab in public service delivery has enabled ADISA to take an innovative approach by using a user-centred design. Relatively little time and personal resources were thus spent on identifying tangible solutions, making it an ideal approach to be followed in other projects.

The establishment of an innovation lab, which could focus on the project and go through all the necessary steps during a two-week period, facilitated the achievement of the project results. Another positive factor was that, in addition to the user interviews and talks with NGO representatives, ADISALab was able to include the opinion of an ADISA employee who is also a member of the target group.

Generally speaking, most of the components of the solutions may be replicable in other contexts. However, the main element of the project was the user-centric approach that enabled ADISALab to produce targeted responses. It is therefore recommended to take the user-centric approach and design the project based on the users' needs in order to replicate not only the solution, but the target orientation as well.

Personal Assistance Service (SERBIA)

1. Content and Background

The Centre for Independent Living of Persons with Disabilities Serbia (CILS)[384] was established in Belgrade in 1996 on the *cross-disability principle*. Today, besides its headquarters in Belgrade, CILS has ten branch offices in other Serbian towns,[385] working within the social policy sector on promoting the philosophy of independent living of persons with disabilities and creating conditions for its implementation in Serbia. The latter, inter alia, entails efficient delivery of public services to persons with disabilities and accessibility of services for all. The CILS' key areas of focus include:

- ➤ Advocating the enjoyment of basic civil and human rights of persons with disabilities;
- ➤ Promoting the social approach to disability in all walks of life;
- ➤ Reaffirming the abilities of persons with disabilities, the development of their potentials and personality;
- ➤ Testing and promoting new services supporting persons with disabilities - personal assistance service;
- ➤ Raising awareness of the need to create a disability-accessible environment, including housing and transportation;
- ➤ Reducing double discrimination and promoting the rights of women with disabilities.[386]

CILS was the first organisation focusing on the rights of persons with disabilities that recognised the need for introducing and addressing the concept of independent living of such persons. A survey of persons with disabilities conducted by CILS showed that 62.3% of the respondents needed the assistance of another person to perform everyday activities. The survey showed that the respondents needed the most assistance in: movement and transportation, shopping, household chores, social interactions, personal hygiene, education, professional tasks, and feeding. CILS therefore initiated a project focusing on the development of the personal assistance service, a model well-developed and applied in many European countries.

The idea and the first information on the concept of independent living and personal assistance (PA) services was introduced in Serbia in 1996, when CILS was established. CILS started to work on the practical organisation of PA services in 2000, when it organised the first experimental PA service for 14 users in Belgrade, with the support of Oxfam UK. A small case study followed this pilot, with key results and recommendations published and presented to the public.

These positive results led the Republic of Ireland to support the four-year Service of Personal Assistance Project (SPAS) in Serbia in 2003, to assist persons with disabilities in their everyday lives, including access to public services.

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[384] www.cilsrbija.org

[385] CILS has offices in: Belgrade, Smederevo, Jagodina, Niš, Leskovac, Sombor, Bor, Kragujevac, Čačak and Trstenik.

[386] http://www.cilsrbija.org/eng/static.php?id=onama

This coincided with the adoption of the Poverty Reduction Strategy in Serbia (2003), which recognised the need to include new ways of supporting persons with disabilities. The adoption of the following strategic and legal documents facilitated SPAS' successful implementation: the 2005 National Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities (succeeded by the Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities until 2020[387]), the 2006 Law on the Prevention of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (amended in 2016[388]), the 2009 Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities (amended in 2013[389]), and the 2011 Law on Social Protection.[390]

The Law on Social Protection includes a provision under which independent living services, including personal assistance services, shall denote social services that are to be provided by the state at the local level.[391] The Project was co-funded by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy pursuant to this provision. Along with the service, CILS organised a participative research aimed at producing a cost-benefit analysis of the service and documenting changes in the quality of life of persons with disabilities using the service.

2. Change Process/Dynamics

The initial stage of the project was implemented in the 2003-2005 period in five local self-governments in Serbia: Belgrade, Sombor, Smederevo, Jagodina and Leskovac.

Since 2003, when the project was initiated, CILS has managed to keep the PA service alive through various projects funded by donor agencies, government sources and the National Employment Service. In cooperation with the Living Upright Centre and the Novi Sad Association of Students with Disabilities, CILS in 2008 launched a personal assistance service for 10 users; the number of its beneficiaries has been increasing every year.

CILS has been supporting around 50 persons with disabilities every year since 2011, through the employment of 50 personal assistants. This endeavour has been pursued in cooperation with the National Employment Service, as the personal assistants are recruited amongst job seekers registered with the Service. In 2016/2017 and 2017/2018, the personal assistance service was funded from the budget of the City of Belgrade, more specifically, through the Secretariat for Social Protection.

The total number of users of the service is 70, who are assisted by 73 hired and trained personal assistants.

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[387] Available at: http://www.gs.gov.rs/english/strategije-vs.html

[388] Law on the Prevention of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (Official Gazette of the RS Nos. 33/2006 and 13/2016)

[389] Law on Professional Discrimination and Employment of Persons with Disabilities (Official Gazette of the RS Nos. 36/2009 and 32/2013)

[390] Law on Social Protection (Official Gazette of the RS No. 24/2011)

[391] European Network on Independent Living, Personal Assistance Table 2013 – Serbia (http://enil.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/PA-SERBIA.pdf)

Challenges

Throughout this period, CILS faced many challenges to the implementation of the project:

➢ Underdeveloped social policy and legal framework, resulting in the low capacity of the social system to absorb and implement CILS' results and requirements. To illustrate, the new Law on Social Protection took eight years to be adopted, which greatly undermined the efficient implementation of activities related to PA services;

➢ Transfer of the social system's funding to local self-governments in line with the 2011 Law on Social Protection, which required additional lobbying with the local authorities to recognise PA services, although they have been acknowledged by the central government;

➢ Misuse/abuse of independent living and personal assistance by state institutions and local self-governments.

3. Reform Results/Outcome

The outcomes of the SPAS project are:

1. Introduction of a new social service in Serbia;

2. Establishment and management of the user-oriented and user-controlled service of personal assistants in Serbia, for 70 persons with disabilities in the five local self-governments as a crucial aspect of independent living;

3. Employment and training of 73 job-seekers as personal assistants, contributing to the reduction of unemployment in Serbia;

4. Higher quality of living of persons with disabilities, the users of personal assistance, also corroborated by the cost-benefit analysis performed within the participative research;

5. Increased visibility of persons with disabilities in local communities and creation of preconditions for their social inclusion, including changing people's attitudes towards this group of the population and deepening their understanding of its potentials;

6. Advancement of the basic skills of persons with disabilities necessary for their independent living and civic participation;

7. Successful lobbying, advocacy and promotional activities resulted in successful fundraising, in addition to the financial resources provided by the Government;

8. Impact on poverty reduction has been twofold: improved quality of living of the users and of the financial standing and living conditions of their personal assistants;[392]

9. The aforementioned cost-benefit analysis of the personal assistance service showed that the model of personal assistance in Serbia was highly cost-effective.[393]

Local self-governments recognised the importance of the personal assistance service for the independent living of persons with disabilities and allocated funds for it.

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[392] Report on the SPAS project outcomes available at http://www.cilsrbija.org/ser/static.php?id=spas

[393] http://www.cilsrbija.org/ebib/SPAS-Cena%20samostalnosti.pdf, p. 5

An important value of the project was its huge spill-over effect, as other state and local authorities, as well as civil society actors, started acknowledging the personal assistance service and initiating a set of projects supporting the independent living of this group of the population.

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

Although the project has survived over 15 years thanks to modest donor support, its sustainability remains questionable. CILS initially envisaged that the personal assistants' wages be paid from project (donor) funds and co-funded by persons with disabilities (20%), and that their taxes and contributions be covered from the state budget. The SPAS implementation reports show that funding from the state budget had been problematic for a long time and that sustainable funding of the project needs to be ensured.

Also, the support of the central and local authorities, and their understanding of the independent living concept, was crucial for the success of the project.

Digital Platform for Public Participation - Pristina Municipality (KOSOVO*)

1. Content and Background

The Digital Platform for Public Participation enables citizens to communicate in an interactive and transparent manner with their municipal officials. The former can use it to make proposals and share their ideas or recommendations with the district or municipality they live in. Communication between the citizens and the Municipality of Pristina is provided via the municipal website, a mobile application, as well as its accounts on social networks (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and Google).

The Digital Platform for Public Participation is a viable and practical tool facilitating communication between municipal authorities and residents and public participation.

This is an important element of good governance and democracy in general that compels local governments to engage citizens in institutional decision-making.

The Pristina Municipality is involved in this new digital trend in the world that aims to strengthen the role of citizens in decision-making, active participation and budgetary planning, and advance the transparency of the Pristina local government.

To achieve this goal, the Municipality of Pristina needed new digital tools to understand the reality and the citizens' expectations. This has been achieved by the full digitalisation of the platform for public participation.

The Digital Platform for Public Participation system is multilingual (Albanian, Serbian and English), and drastically shortens the response time compared with the old physical process. Municipal officials now respond within 24 hours at most, while, under the old physical system, they usually responded within 30 days (as required by law).

2. Change Process/Dynamics

Pristina's residents had for years faced the problem of waiting long for the municipal officials to reply to their requests, new project ideas or specific proposals. Under the law, all citizen requests have to be answered within 30 days.

Long response times often lead to corruption, inadequate staff behaviour, false statements that the requested document is not in this Directorate but in another, harassment of citizens, etc. Under the old system, transparency was not at the desired level, the officials avoided contacts with and responding to the members of the public, concrete requests were not reviewed in accordance with the priorities, and proposals were not taken into account in budget planning. In other words, the citizens and their concrete suggestions on how their lives can be improved were, for the most part, disregarded.

These problems prompted the Municipality of Pristina to take concrete steps to digitalise its services. The Digital Public Participation Platform embodies the idea of a genuine digital communication service, of what Pristina residents and all others deserve.

The workflow is clearly defined. The (platform) system incorporates other systems used in the municipality (address system, territorial division into local communities or neighbourhoods etc.). It is in compliance with the current legislation, particularly the Law on Personal Data Protection.

An annual statistical analysis of requests and project ideas submitted by citizens in 2015 and until September 2016 was also carried out. The analysis included:

  ➢ Types of applications submitted;
  ➢ Determination of the neighbourhood by the applicant;
  ➢ Time (month) when the citizens submit the greatest numbers of requests;
  ➢ Checking addresses under the news address system via the applications; and
  ➢ Age of citizens filing requests and ideas.

The age of Kosovo* and Pristina residents was also taken into consideration, in order to conclude which age categories were capable of using new technological achievements (research conducted by USAID and UNDP was used).

Financial costs, budgeting opportunities, maintenance and hosting - all those issues were reviewed - and the Municipality finally decided to implement the Digital Platform.

3. Reform Results/Outcome

Given that this service was an absolute novelty in service delivery to citizens and receipt of proposals from citizens and local communities in digital form, reality exceeded the expectations of the Municipality of Pristina:

  ➢ 52 municipal officers were trained in all 13 Directorates of the Municipality;
  ➢ 33 heads of Local Communities were trained in using the Digital Platform;
  ➢ Proposals, complaints and requests submitted for the first time are sent from the field

digitally;

➤ 24/7 service;
➤ Service free of corruption and harassment of the citizens, prompt responses by officials, direct communication with officials.

The possibility of expanding the Digital Platform to public enterprises of the Municipality of Pristina:

➤ Shorter procedure for solving the identified problems;
➤ Enables municipal officials to work without pressure;
➤ A much more pronounced role of citizens in decision-making regarding their neighbourhoods.

Number of requests per directorate	
Directorate	Number of Requests
Public services, protection and rescue	135
Capital investments and contract management	90
Inspection	37
Education	20
Culture	13
Urbanism	7
Administration	7
Health and social welfare	3
TOTAL	**312**

Digital Platform's impact:

➤ Over 300 requests have so far been posted on the Digital Platform for Public Participation;
➤ The table below illustrates the breakdown of the requests (by Directorate) and, simultaneously, the citizens' interest in specific services;
➤ 70% of the requests were upheld by municipal officials;
➤ The vast majority of the projects proposed by the citizens were addressed to the Directorate of Public Services and the Capital Investments Directorate.
➤ The project - "Inclusion of the New Arberia C3 and C2 Neighbourhood of in the City Heating Network", received the most votes (71);

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

The Digital Platform has low maintenance costs and zero costs for the citizens, and has proven extremely effective. It offers fast services - projects, proposals, photos, alerts to problems or irregularities, etc. are fully uploaded in just 4-5 minutes.

The Digital Platform is a fully digitalised and very attractive service for citizens, it offers a one-to-one relationship. Citizens communicate with the Municipality via their PCs or mobile phones. The Platform increases the effectiveness of work and the performance of the Municipality and the quality of life (service) of citizens

Some links related to the project:

➤ Illustrative video on how to use the digital platform

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqKV91PlPMA
- ➢ Digital Platform in the social media
  https://www.facebook.com/platformadigjitaleprishtine/
  https://twitter.com/DPPrishtina
  https://www.instagram.com/platformadigjitalepr/

Digital Learning Courses in the Civil Service Agency (BiH)

1. Content and Background

The objective of introducing the e-learning model is to support public administration reform in BiH concerning the building of a professional and efficient civil service by increasing the use of information technologies in the process of training civil servants and establishing a more modern and more transparent system for managing this process.

One of the strategic objectives of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Civil Service Agency BiH (BiH CSA) was to establish an efficient and cost effective system of training civil servants by applying ICT. Use of e-learning in the development, promotion and dissemination of best educational practices in the public administration, new programmes and courses for the training of civil servants, and to improve the efficiency of cooperation between civil servants and building and exchange of experience based on a specially customised system for the provision of information, has been planned and implemented since 2012.

The realisation of e-learning courses stems from the reform objective set by the Revised Action Plan 1 for the implementation of Public Administration Reform Strategy, concerning the area of Human Resource Management – HRM 7.2. Improve preparation, coordination and implementation of training and development plans of common interest to all civil service structures (training concerning EUI, ReSPA, et al).

The development of the system will result in a technological platform for the rapid dissemination of knowledge required/foreseen by the set reform objectives. From a general point of view, e-learning beneficiaries comprise all persons employed in civil service bodies and institutions at the BiH level.

Before any deployment of e-learning activities, an e-learning Readiness Check was conducted in the BiH CSA, to assess the overall readiness and state of play pertaining to e-learning aspects, such as: what is the state of e-learning, what is the overall e-learning competence in the organisation, are there trainers in online tutoring, is the IT department involved in the e-learning initiative, does the management support e-learning, etc. The BiH CSA conducted a self-evaluation, concluding that the preconditions were in place and that chances of success were high.

Due to budgetary constraints, the BiH CSA needed a strategic partner and started cooperating on the development and implementation of e-learning courses with GIZ (*Deutsche Gesellschaft*

für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) and its Strengthening of Public Institutions Programme in 2012.

2. Change Process/Dynamics

The BiH CSA has a long tradition of assessing the level of satisfaction of BiH level civil servants with the quality of the offered training sessions. The 2012-2013 analysis showed the need to have a more flexible, user-friendly and if possible, digital approach to training sessions. Hence, the BiH CSA decided to introduce distance learning and e-learning to support and supplement the existing traditional method of training – training in the classroom, in order to make knowledge and skills more available through e-learning programmes to the civil servants working across the country and to improve the quality of their work, to the benefit of the citizens and the economy.

In pursuit of this objective, the BiH CSA developed the terms of reference, where a holistic approach to modern training offers was integrated, with directions on the overall sustainability of the trainings, as well as the possibility to upgrade the training offer in case the need arises later on.

The idea and the rough concept were developed, and support to the complete solution of the digital learning programme came from the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany within the GIZ-run Strengthening of Public Institutions Programme in BiH.

In 2013, the BiH CSA and GIZ completed the contents of the first modules and, after the testing phase, the new courses were ready to be offered in early 2014, as integral parts of the overall training offer by the BiH CSA.

3. Reform Results/Outcome

The BiH Civil Service Agency has been successfully introducing new types of training of civil servants since 2014: webinar (real-time distance learning via the Internet), e-learning (distance learning via the Internet with the help of lecturers), e-learning on demand (distance learning via the Internet where the trainees dictate their own pace of learning), as well as in-class learning for specific topics that are processed digitally. Six self-paced training courses on the following subjects have so far been developed and regularly used: mobbing, introduction to quality management, introduction to strategic planning, introduction to e-governance, environmental management and employment of civil servants. Blended courses are arranged in a way allowing the public servants to master them at their own pace, without impinging on their daily obligations.

The BiH Civil Service Agency has delivered over 40 webinars, covering different topics, such as trainings in communications, soft skills, protection of intellectual property, writing of official documents and language of the public administration, webinars in English, etc. A total of 1,317 civil servants have participated in the webinars since the first one was organised in May 2014.

One additional digital enabler – the training management system (TMS) – was launched in 2014. There are currently 3,142 registered users and 657 trainings have been organised using this tool. The complete process of organising training is conducted through the TMS, except, of course,

the implementation of the training itself. This ensures full automation and transparency of the entire training implementation process.

The Moodle LMS is the platform for all the courses. Since the first round of e-learning modules, 571 people have taken part in this kind of training on offer. Moodle is installed on BiH CSA's internal server. Thus, the preliminaries of Moodle – hardware, operating system, database, additional applications, network connectivity, etc. – and the maintenance of these components are provided internally. This includes access to the system by in-house staff (trainers, Moodle specialists) and regular backups of the whole system.

In general, the e-learning environment of the BiH CSA consists of four major components:

- ➢ A training management system (TMS) to administrate participants and participants' logins and to provide the course catalogue of both e-learning courses and traditional classroom training;
- ➢ A learning management system (LMS) to deliver e-learning content and to provide communication and collaborative learning facilities;
- ➢ A virtual classroom (VC) to deliver webinars; and
- ➢ Authoring tools to produce e-learning content.

All tools are used in order to create a user-friendly training environment for public servants, and with the aim of progressively including more e-learning courses, whilst simultaneously offering in-class trainings as well.

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

Thanks to the digital training programme, the trainees only need to have access to a computer with an Internet connection to register and engage in the electronic training process. Plans are to make this programme available for use in the future to all other institutions that need to provide their own trainings, not only the BiH Civil Service Agency.

All courses have been developed for use by public servants, but lately there has been huge interest in the online strategic planning course. Police officers, participating in the project LTE2 (Modern HRM and Strategic Planning, IPA 2012 Twinning Project, "Strengthening Law Enforcement"), have been provided with access to this course. Similar activities might be undertaken together with other institutions and bodies, since the topics are of interest to these target groups as well.

As far as the entity CSAs are concerned, the Civil Service Agency of the Federation of BiH (FBiH CSA) has been offering the following e-learning modules:

- ➢ Business Communication;
- ➢ Local Administration from A to Z;
- ➢ Office Management; and,
- ➢ General Administrative Procedure.[394]

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[394] The development of the e-learning system was supported within UNDP's Municipal Training System project.

Like BiH CSA, the FBiH CSA aims to develop new e-learning programmes for public servants to address the technical, spatial and organisational obstacles and to offer user-friendly trainings, hand in hand with the new developments in the EU. Additionally, the Agency has regularly been conducting client satisfaction surveys in order to assess and double-check the quality of the offered training sessions. The FBiH CSA has engaged all its resources in the development of the new types of training.

Training courses offered at the state level that are also relevant at the entity level, such as the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) e-learning module (to be completed by the autumn of 2018), can be transferred to the entity level, and vice versa.

As for the Republic of Srpska Civil Service Agency, the e-learning modules are yet to be developed in the coming period. All CSAs are strongly encouraged to share their existing e-learning modules and roll out their positive practices, by using synergies and replicating the existing products.

"No Barriers! So Business Doesn't Wait" Ministry of Finance (MONTENEGRO)

1. Content and Background

The project "Cutting Red Tape – Public Administration Tailored to the Needs of Citizens and Businesses" was implemented by the United National Development Programme (UNDP) in Montenegro, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Montenegro. [395]

The idea for the project was designed in collaboration with the South East European Association of Public Communicators (SEECOM), with the financial support of the UK Embassy to Montenegro, and modelled against the British "Red Tape Challenge". The project identified all the administrative obstacles businesses face in their operations.

The campaign "No Barriers! So Business Doesn't Wait" ("*Bez barijera*") was launched within the framework of the project, aiming to improve administrative simplification by ensuring broader and proactive engagement of the users of public services, primarily businesses.

The purpose of the project was to initiate public dialogue providing the business community with the opportunity to:

➢ Indicate areas of overregulation, unreasonably cumbersome and time-consuming procedures in the state and local administrations, where businesses sustain unnecessary costs and waste precious time, and

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[395] The website of the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Montenegro, www.mf.gov.me

- ➤ Propose ways of improving the quality, efficiency and availability of public services and creating a better and more conducive business environment.[396]

The project aimed at launching public dialogue and identifying the barriers to daily business operations at the local level. Therefore, several channels of communication with the business community were established, where care was taken to balance both the online and offline forms of communication to enable wide user participation. They included:

- ➤ Traditional media (print, electronic, and online);

- ➤ Social networks – Facebook and Twitter; and

- ➤ An online platform www.bezbarijera.me, developed as the most efficient tool for direct communication with business representatives and other interested members of the public.

The initiative envisaged the preparation of regular reports on business barriers identified by the users of services/businesses through the campaign. The last report, on business barriers identified in the April 2016 – March 2017 period, was prepared and published in March 2017.

2. Change Process/Dynamics

The portal www.bezbarijera.me offers public service users, primarily businesses, the possibility of reporting any problems they face in their contacts with the public administration. The form on the portal's webpage has simple, user-friendly interface, providing space for the following entries:

- ➤ *Name* – where the users were asked to enter a name of his or her own choosing, which could not be used for their personal identification (a nickname, initials, etc.), in order to report a barrier, since the reports were to be anonymous and no registration was needed in order to use the www.bezbarijera.me platform;
- ➤ *Message* – where the users were to describe the problem they were facing and/or propose a solution;
- ➤ *Email address* – via which the portal administrators provided feedback to the users;
- ➤ *Financial impediments to launching and developing business;*
- ➤ *Sex* of the user.

3. Reform Results/Outcome

A total of 228 reports were filed from the moment the online platform was launched, in November 2015, to March 2017.[397] The campaign was partly successful due to insufficient user engagement and inputs to the simplification process. However, the added value of the project is the information on business barriers in terms of overregulation and administrative procedures, and concrete

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[396] UNDP in Montenegro, Report on Business Barriers Identified through the Campaign "No Barriers! So Business Doesn't Wait", March 2017, https://www.bezbarijera.me/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/2017-No-Barriers-Report.pdf
[397] *Ibid.*

recommendations for their improvement, collected within the Report on the "No Barriers" campaign.

Compared with the 124 barriers reported until the end of March 2016, a total of 104 barriers were reported between April 2016 and March 2017 (25 by women and 79 by men), which largely fell under the following eight broad categories:

1. Financial constraints to launching and developing business (15: 9 by men and 6 by women)
   More specifically, this type of barrier mostly refers to the following constraints: excessive high VAT rates, inadequate bank policies, collecting receivables, high operating costs, and fee rates payable by legal entities being several times higher than the ones for individuals.
2. Cumbersome and unclear procedures (10: 6 by men and 4 by women)
   Some of the mentioned general problems businesses in the country face in this regard stem from VAT rates – excessive VAT rates, the impossibility of leaving the VAT system even when the annual turnover falls under the set threshold, which particularly impinges on small businesses, but also problems in collecting the documentation needed for engaging in social services, and insufficiently clear secondary legislation.
3. Inadequate inspection oversight (6: 5 by men and 1 by a woman)
   These refer to the limited number of preventive actions when irregularities in operation are identified, and the lack of skills of inspectors.
4. Inadequate regulations (10: 6 by men and 4 by women)
   These were numerous, stressing the need to develop new rulebooks and amend a number of laws and by-laws.
5. Inefficient administration (18)
   Given that 18 reports fall under this heading, these issues, directly related to public service delivery in Montenegro, are certainly some of the most relevant barriers as perceived by business users in the country.

   The identified problems include:
   - *The time the administration needs to address a problem;*
   - *Lack of inter-institutional cooperation;*
   - *Lack of professional staff in the public administration, in terms of their lack of knowledge and information, as well as of a standardised approach;*
   - *Lack of transparency, in particular of the local administration;*
   - *Administrative inefficiency in consultations with businesses;*
   - *Lack of accountability and impunity of civil servants and public officials.*

6. Limitations to business operation (23: 22 by men and 1 by a woman)
   These include, inter alia, poor infrastructure and power supply and consumption.
7. Shadow economy (10: 7 by men and 3 by women)
   The major problem, reflecting on many different areas, is the unfair competition created by the existence of the illegal market in certain business areas.

8. High fee rates (12: 11 by men and 1 by a woman).[398]

4. Lessons Learned and Key Policy Recommendations

As the above figures indicate, only a moderate number of users (businesses) of the website reported their problems and the constraints they faced. Therefore, notwithstanding the overall usefulness of the initiative, its benefits did not have a major echo in the public.

In addition, the sustainability of the bezbarijera.me platform had not been secured and its active use stopped after the project was completed.

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[398] *Ibid.*

PART 2: Digital Enablers as Foundations for Service Delivery

The call for the public administration to go digital is becoming louder and louder. What is important is that digital transformation is not conducted for its own sake, but to improve services and delivery. The European Commission's eGovernment benchmarking study identifies five key enablers: electronic identification, single sign-on, electronic documents, authentic sources (base registries) and electronic safes. In the first stage (transaction stage), the public administration has scope for significant administrative burden reduction (ABR), as it allows businesses and citizens to interact with public authorities at a time and place of their convenience, 24/7. The benefits are much greater if accessibility is matched by simplification. In the next (integration) stage, it is all about linking data across different public administration systems, so interoperability is essential. The development and application of the key enablers of eGovernment (electronic identity, common base registries, single sign-on, etc.) are an advantage, but not a precondition. At this most advanced stage (full interaction), the key enablers should be in place, and the public administration moving towards or achieving full interoperability (semantic, technical, legal and organisational).

This part presents the following inspiring practices:

➢ Implementation of the Digital SEAL (ALBANIA)
➢ Business Registration at the RS Agency for Intermediary, IT and Financial Services (BiH)
➢ e-Cadastre - Electronic System of the Real Estate Cadastre Agency (MACEDONIA)
➢ Central Register of Integrated Procedures and the e-Construction Permit System (SERBIA)
➢ eDMS in the Ministry of Public Administration (MONTENEGRO)

Implementation of the Digital SEAL (ALBANIA)

1. Content and Background

The National Agency for Information Society (NAIS) has been implementing the digital seal on the e-Albania government portal. As of January 2018, 29 documents bearing the digital seal have been available to citizens and businesses. They include civil status certificates, pension certificates, business certificates and extracts, health cards, property certificates, etc. Circa 300,000 digitally signed documents were generated in less than four months, reducing drastically the queues at the institutions' counters, saving citizens thousands of hours, as well as money, since some of the documents are offered free of charge via the portal. On the other hand, the Albanian government has thoroughly facilitated the lives of citizens and businesses by placing the burden of securing the digitally sealed documents on the Albanian public administration. So, when a citizen goes to a state counter or a notary, the latter is responsible for providing the required digitally sealed documents through e-Albania. Meanwhile, citizens and businesses that need to deliver these documents to private institutions can download them directly from the portal, and they come equipped with a digital seal and full legal validity.

Queues, documents required from several offices, time lost, opportunities for corruption - all these problems had been encountered earlier, when Albanian citizens had to turn to the public administration to obtain its services. Now, technological innovations that have become part of the governmental portal services enable them to extract a variety of documents online, from any Internet access point.

2. Change Process/Dynamics

The relevant laws and by-laws adopted pursuant to Council of Ministers Decision No. 495/2017 on the adoption of rules to benefit from electronic public services cleared the way for the digital seal legitimation, giving legal validity to the administrative documents generated through the e-Albania portal.

Based on the aforementioned Decision, the submission and obtainment of data is carried out in full compliance with the legislation regulating electronic identification and trusted services, while the sealing of electronic administrative documents generated by electronic transmission guarantees the authenticity of the document in its electronic format. The application for and obtainment of documents containing the digital seal is performed by electronic identification on the e-Albania portal.

Statement by NAIS General Director Mrs. Mirlinda Karçanaj

"Building e-Albania, one of the most advanced portals in the Balkan region, has involved continuous experimentation and learning from our mistakes. Albania perceives the full digitalisation of the basic services as the next natural step in the evolution of e-Government. This means that things can be done for citizens automatically and, in that sense, invisibly.

In order to remain an innovative, effective and successful country that leads by example, we need to continue pursuing our vision of becoming a safe e-Government with automatic e-services available 24/7.

Our ambition is to further increase the number of electronic services offered on the portal, the number of e-services offered only online via the portal, as well to connect more systems to the Government Interoperability Platform. We plan to expand the number of digitally sealed and electronically signed documents available on the e-Albania portal. We are now working taking steps towards paperless customs, digitalising services related to intellectual property, etc.

We will soon be implementing two major projects that will have great impact on foreigners. The e-Residence project will enable foreign investors and businesses to remotely launch and run their businesses in Albania. The e-Visa project will enable foreigners to receive their Albanian visas electronically (at the moment, they can apply for their visas via the e-Albania portal).

We tackled different impediments and barriers. A sort of scepticism accompanied us during the first months, because people were tired of promises, of publicly promoted projects that never materialised. Representatives of institutions often voiced their doubts that the project would collapse in a few years, just like many others. But with the Prime Minister's continuous support, we persevered and advanced to the stage of implementation of our major project. We wanted it to work; we wholeheartedly wanted the promise to eventually become a reality. It was an obligation we had to businesses and citizens, who were already tired of constantly queueing up for so many years.

The next step was to build public trust. We provided continuous assistance and orientation through TV spots, field campaigns, and media outreach promoting electronic services and targeting a wide range of individuals. People put their faith in us, put their trust in the state, and now they constantly use the online one stop counter that the Albanian state has created for them. Today, we have considerably reduced the level of corruption; we have done away with bureaucracy and we have provided substantial facilities to citizens, businesses and administration employees."

The generated document is provided with a digital seal that is attached to it immediately after its generation, in PDF format, before it is retrieved by the applicant. Only the institution issuing the document has the digital seal and access to it.

However, the Albanian government has thoroughly facilitated the lives of citizens and businesses by placing the burden of securing the digitally sealed documents on the Albanian public administration. So, when a citizen goes to a state counter or a notary, the latter is responsible for providing the required digitally sealed documents through e-Albania. Meanwhile, citizens and businesses that need to deliver these documents to private institutions can download them directly from the portal, and they come equipped with a digital seal and full legal validity.

In practical terms, the procedures are simpler and the transactions are performed online via a computer, tablet or smartphone, always through the e-Albania government portal, allowing real-time downloading of the legal documents equipped with the digital seal and having the same legal value as the physical documents. Receipt of the electronic document requires the identification of the applicant by identity card/passport data and the retrieval of the sealed document is effected through the integration of the relevant systems with a variety of new technologies guaranteeing a secure transaction by both parties. Likewise, the electronic document equipped with a digital seal can be used by citizens as an accompanying document to receive other online or offline services. Simply put, the ordinary itinerary from office to office for a certificate, attestation etc., has come to an end.

This also applies to a business that requires, for example, a cash flow certificate for the past three years from the General Directorate of Taxation: downloading the digitally sealed document online avoids time loss and other bureaucratic actions further adding to business costs. This is just one of the few services offered with a digital seal to facilitate this category.

Thus, the digital seal facilitates administrative self-service without the need of anyone, only a computer, tablet, mobile phone or digital counter.

The following seven institutions offer 29 digital seal services:

- ➢ General Directorate of Civil Status (DPGJC) - 5 services with digital seal
- ➢ General Directorate of Taxation (DPT) - 7 digital seal services
- ➢ Mandatory Health Insurance Fund (FSDKSH) - 1 digital seal service
- ➢ General Directorate of Road Transport Services (DPSHTRR) - 3 services with digital seal
- ➢ National Business Centre (QKB) - 3 services with digital seal
- ➢ Social Insurance Institute (ISSH) - 1 digital seal service
- ➢ Immovable Property Registration Office (ZRPP) - 9 digital seal services

	List of Services with the Digital Seal	
No.	**Electronic**	**Institution**
1	Retirement Certificates	Social Insurance Institute (ISSH)
2	Health Cards	Mandatory Health Insurance Fund (FSDKSH)
3	Provision of consolidated information on any immovable property	Immovable Property Registration Office (ZRPP)
4	Official property information for individuals and institutions	Immovable Property Registration Office (ZRPP)
5	Insight in title sheets	Immovable Property Registration Office (ZRPP)
6	Copies of title sheets	Immovable Property Registration Office (ZRPP)
7	Copies of cadastral map excerpts	Immovable Property Registration Office (ZRPP)
8	Title deed	Immovable Property Registration Office (ZRPP)
9	Issuance of certificates (negative/positive)	Immovable Property Registration Office (ZRPP)
10	Online verification of title deeds and other immovable property data	Immovable Property Registration Office (ZRPP)
11	Certified copies of the technical-legal documents on which entry in the Immovable Property Register is based	Immovable Property Registration Office (ZRPP)
12	Family Certificates	General Directorate of Civil Status (DPGJC)
13	Personal Certificates	General Directorate of Civil Status (DPGJC)
14	Death Certificates	General Directorate of Civil Status (DPGJC)
15	Marriage Certificates	General Directorate of Civil Status (DPGJC)
16	Birth Certificates	General Directorate of Civil Status (DPGJC)
17	Confirmation of the active condition of the vehicle	General Directorate of Road Transport Services (DPSHTRR)
18	Authorisation for the reinstatement of the driving licence	General Directorate of Road Transport Services (DPSHTRR)
19	Driving Licences	General Directorate of Road Transport Services (DPSHTRR)
22	Proof of payment of contributions by entities	General Directorate of Taxation (DPT)
23	Proof of tax liability	General Directorate of Taxation (DPT)
24	Proof of payment of contributions for individuals	General Directorate of Taxation (DPT)
25	Investor Registration Certificates	General Directorate of Taxation (DPT)
26	Proof of payment of obligations	General Directorate of Taxation (DPT)
27	Status verification (active, passive, including date)	General Directorate of Taxation (DPT)
28	Cash flow statements for the past three years	General Directorate of Taxation (DPT)
27	Simple extracts	National Business Centre (QKB)
28	Historical extracts	National Business Centre (QKB)
29	Registration certificates	National Business Centre (QKB)

3. Reform Results/Outcome

Applications for all services of institutions providing digital seal services have increased by 30% since October 2017.

As of October 2017, the General Directorate of Taxation has been providing nine online only services on the e-Albania portal, eliminating the maximum number of fees, red tape and queueing of citizens/businesses at counters and thus reducing the level of corruption. In just four months, the number of tax certificates generated by the e-Albania portal increased six times. The 34,599 tax certifications generated by the e-Albania portal in these four months saved businesses 33,650 hours of waiting in queues (calculated on the basis of the average 15-minute waiting time for a certificate) and helped them avoid other bureaucratic actions incurring them additional costs.

There has been a 50% increase in the digital seal generation of documents re the three vehicle-related services provided by the General Directorate of Road Transport Services.

Retirement certificates and health cards are also generated in real time via the portal. Citizens can both apply for and renew their health cards in this fashion. The e-Albania portal statistics show a 71% increase in health card generation and a 64% increase in pension certificate generation in the October 2017 - January 2018 period.

The 'e-Properties' category is also present on the portal and offers nine kinds of digital stamp certificates. They have also registered an increase in generation, of 40% in the October 2017 - January 2018 period.

The implementation of the three National Business Centre services (Registration Certificate, Simple Extract and Historical Extract) is also the most illustrative example of the impact of electronic services with the digital seal on citizens and businesses. National Business Centre data show a drop in the number of physically requested documents, such as certificates of registration or business extracts, since the launch of these online services with a digital seal on the portal in December 2017 and indicate a 5.2-fold increase in digital signatures generated by the National Business Centre on the e-Albania portal.

Online accessibility of civil status certificates has also cut the waiting times and costs for citizens. A certificate received at the counter costs ALL 50 (€0.38), whereas the one obtained online is free of charge. The number of family and personal certificates issued physically at Civil Status counters fell from 365,000 in September 2017 to approximately 100,000 in December 2017, saving the citizens around ALL 30,000,000 (€225,000) in those four months.

The number of services provided through the government portal e-Albania has also grown substantially, facilitated by use of an interoperability platform, a compulsory interface for data exchange by government bodies. All basic registries are integrated and the implementation of the "once only" policy is supported by central review processes carried out by the NAIS.

Over 286,000 documents with a digital seal were downloaded over a period of four months (September 2017 - December 2017). Albanian citizens and businesses are aware of this new development and have abandoned physical procedures for online processing.

The impact is directly noticeable in the significant reduction of queues at the physical counters of public institutions, which are printing fewer and fewer hardcopy documents.

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

The endeavour faced various barriers and impediments. It was accompanied by a sort of scepticism during the first few months, because people were tired of promises, of publicly promoted projects that never materialised. Representatives of institutions often voiced their doubts that the project would collapse in a few years, just like many others. But with the Prime Minister's continuous support, we persevered and implemented the project.

The next step was to build public trust. Continuous assistance and orientation were provided through TV spots, field campaigns, and media outreach promoting electronic services and targeting a wide range of individuals. People put their faith and their trust in the state, and now they constantly use the online one stop counter that the Albanian state has created for them. The level of corruption has been considerably reduced, bureaucracy has been done away with and citizens, businesses and administration staff are provided with substantial facilities.

Business Registration at the Republic of Srpska Agency for Intermediary, IT and Financial Services (BiH)

1. Content and Background

The Agency for Intermediary, IT and Financial Services (APIF) of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Republic of Srpska (RS) was established under a 2000 decision of the RS Government, as the legal successor of the former Payment Operations Service (*Služba za platni promet*).[399] As defined in the 2018-2020 Business Development Strategy[400], the APIF is to provide one stop shop business registration services and eventually become a once only system.

The APIF has been continuously TUV Nord certified,[401] client satisfaction surveys are conducted on a regular basis, with improvements made based on client feedback. The website is completely populated with relevant information pertaining to APIF's mandate but also offers a set of other data that might be of interest to website visitors. There is a clear tendency of the APIF to provide easy access and where possible, e-services, such as the *e-Informator*, an online bulletin providing updates of the business register, to facilitate identification and checking of potential business partners.

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[399] https://www.apif.net/index.php/bs/o-nama.html

[400] http://www.rars-msp.org/lat/document/d62

[401] Last certification in August 2018.

APIF has signed Memoranda of Understanding with similar agencies in Serbia and Macedonia, and one of its objectives is to expand cooperation in the region, which will facilitate gaining a more comprehensive picture of business registration and better control.[402] The quality management approach of the ISO 9001 standard is visible in almost every statement and article published on the website, with APIF committed to continuous improvements of its services, e-services, one stop shops, high quality standards, international and regional cooperation and client orientation.

As presented on the website, the APIF is the leading agency on the RS market in financial mediation service delivery. Currently, the APIF extends the following services: registration services, control of financial reports by all forms of businesses, registration of foreign currency savings, registration of agricultural households, etc. APIF operates a total of 11 branch offices in Republic of Srpska, offering services in a uniform fashion.

This Agency has been developing and maintaining the following registers:

- ➢ Register of Accounts: https://www.apif.net/index.php/en/registries/unified-register-of-accounts.html
- ➢ Register of Old Foreign Currency Savings: https://www.apif.net/index.php/en/registries/unified-register-of-accounts.html
- ➢ Register of Agricultural Holdings: https://www.apif.net/index.php/en/registries/register-of-agricultural-holdings.html
- ➢ Register of Financial Statements: https://www.apif.net/index.php/en/registries/register-of-financial-statements.html
- ➢ Register of Public Enterprises: https://www.apif.net/index.php/en/registries/register-of-agricultural-holdings.html
- ➢ Register of Businesses: https://www.apif.net/index.php/en/registries/register-of-public-enterprises.html

In response to the results of a Regulatory Impact Assessment regarding the registration of businesses, the Republic of Srpska Government in 2013 decided to implement a regulatory guillotine, involving the adoption of a set of new laws and by-laws, presented in the section below, and to introduce a one stop shop for business registration in the APIF.

2. Change Process/Dynamics

The Republic of Srpska Government has established a body with a broad mandate mainly covering experience exchange, baseline surveys and assessment of possible options for simplifying business registration and creation of a user-friendly and attractive environment for investments in the RS. This step was followed by the adoption of 13 laws and even more by-laws[403], and the development of software and hardware for the system. In April 2013, the National

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[402] https://www.apif.net/index.php/bs/229-kontinuirano-poboljsavanje-postojecih-i-uvodenje-novih-usluga.html

[403] Company Law, Law on the Registration of Business Entities, Law on APIF, Law on the Classification of Activities and the Register of Business Entities by Activity, Law on Court Fees, Law on Administrative Fees, Law on Craft and Entrepreneurial Activities, Law on Tax Procedure, Law on Electronic Signatures, Law on Trade, Law on the Catering Industry, Law on Tourism, Law on Foreign Investments, entity Law on Misdemeanours, Decree on Notary Fees and

Assembly upheld a report on business registration reform, and, in June 2013, amendments to the legal framework were initiated to facilitate business registration and the overall business environment. Business registration costs were analysed, showing that the greatest share (80%) of business registration costs were incurred in dealings with notaries and courts. Therefore, the aim was to introduce cost reduction and to minimise the processes to an optimal number, and, by doing so, to attract potential investments in Republic of Srpska more efficiently. The plan was to reduce the time for business registration from 23 to 3 days, the duration of procedures from 11 to 5 days, and the initial business registration costs from 2,000 to 350 Convertible Marks (KM).[404]

As per the process/dynamics of establishing the APIF one stop shop, it maybe concluded that the following aspects ultimately facilitated successful implementation: government commitment and legal preconditions were in place, a professional body was established, regional exchange took place, professional conferences were organised in order to raise awareness of the functionalities of the one stop shop and specific front office training was conducted.

3. Reform Results/Outcome

The mentioned efforts have resulted in the establishment of a register of businesses, which was mainly facilitated by the adoption of the RS Law on the Registration of Businesses (Official Gazette of Republic of Srpska No. 67/13). Under this Law, the process of one stop shop business registration shall be performed by the APIF at 11 locations: Banja Luka, Prijedor, Gradiška, Modriča, Doboj, Bijeljina, Zvornik, Foča, Trebinje, Sokolac and East Sarajevo.[405]

As of 1 December 2013, the APIF has been providing the planned services and communicated them to the public. The added value of the overall process is the acceptance of the registration licences by the relevant courts, RS Tax Administration; furthermore, the licence can be used for business classification. As noted by the APIF, the one stop shop is fully functional and meets the set objectives regarding the optimisation of the business environment.[406]

In general terms, the registration of businesses was revamped, resulting in the following:

- ➢ Reduction of the time needed from 23 to 3 days;
- ➢ Reduction of the duration of procedures from 11 to 5 days;
- ➢ Reduction of costs for starting a business. For simple legal entity forms, such as a limited liability company established by a single person, the minimal capital needed stands at 1,150-1,500 KM, whereas the current costs were reduced to 200 KM; and,
- ➢ A single IT system for registering businesses (interlinking the APIF, commercial courts and the Tax Administration);
- ➢ A single register of legal entities was established (prior to this, there were three registers, those of the RS Tax Administration, RS Statistical Office and the Court Register);

Rewards, Rulebook on the Content and Form of the Application for Registration of Entrepreneurs, Decree on APIF Service Fees.

[404] http://www.capital.ba/reforma-u-oblasti-registracije-poslovanja-u-srpskoj/

[405] https://www.apif.net/index.php/bs/17-bosanski/registri.html

[406] https://www.apif.net/index.php/bs/207-apif-jednosalterski-sistem-lat.html

- ➤ A public portal http://bizreg.esrpska.com/ was established, allowing tracking of data on businesses, filing of requests, etc.;
- ➤ In addition to commercial companies, craft businesses can also be registered by applying in the local self-government units, resulting both in simplified registration and data collection and tracking in all municipalities;
- ➤ Furthermore, the overall number of participants in the process has been reduced, leading to internal process optimisation;
- ➤ The one stop shop system registered a total of 3,772 businesses from December 2013, when it opened, to the end of March 2018.

The overall objective of making Republic of Srpska a more business friendly environment and attracting investments has been achieved in this area.

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

The APIF was mentioned as the first step towards e-business registration already in 2013.[407] There was also the need to establish an e-signature certification body that would issue digital certificates to businesses. Plans are to launch the once only approach, in April 2019, following stage 2.0, involving the mentioned e-registration of companies; identification structure is one of the preconditions. This project was initiated by the RS Prime Minister and communicated to the British Embassy, wherefore it may be partly financed from donor funds (digitisation of court archives and additional software and hardware).

The RS Government has issued a decision on the establishment of a body for issuing qualified user certificates by the RS Information Society Agency (AIDRS) and will fund this project independently from donor resources, as well as all other activities pertaining to the system and adjustment of the institutions.

APIF may wish to take the following recommendations into consideration to further improve the business environment and make it friendlier:
- ➤ Continuously invest in building the capacities of the front and back offices;
- ➤ Regularly issue press releases and organise press conferences, informing the public of the latest developments;
- ➤ Improve the visual attractiveness of the one stop shop. For instance, it can offer a (symbolic) public award to students or gifted young people who design the best new logo and 3D model of the one stop shop.
- ➤ Upgrade the English version of the website. There are major possibilities of attracting foreign investors, but the information available in English is rather scarce.
- ➤ Upgrade communication of the related RS Government projects and share them with the rest of BiH where possible. By doing so, the rest of BiH will become more interoperable and investments across BiH territory may increase.

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[407] https://apissrbac.wordpress.com/2013/10/08/jednosalterski-sistem-registracije-poslovnih-subjekata-u-2014-godini/

One striking conclusion is that there is clear commitment on the part of the Republic of Srpska Government to systematically work on eGovernment. The one stop shop in APIF is a step towards establishing client-oriented public service delivery.

The APIF and the overall institutional approach of an institution at the entity level can be trend-setting also for the FBiH. The current eGovernment Supervisory Team and the future Service Delivery Supervisory Team could scale up the approach in the FBiH.

As for the future, the following is planned:

- ➢ Digitisation of the court database – under way;
- ➢ Enforcement of the Law on e-Signatures and the Law on e-Documents;
- ➢ Online registration – under construction;
- ➢ Upgrade and use of the business registers (e.g. use of the registers of blocked accounts with a view to prompt initiation of the liquidation process)

e-Cadastre - Electronic System of the Real Estate Cadastre Agency (MACEDONIA)

1. Content and Background

The Real Estate Cadastre Agency (900+ staff) is the Government agency charged with establishing and maintaining the Real Estate Cadastre, managing the geodetic-cadastre information system, establishing and maintaining the Construction Land Register, establishing and managing the Register of Prices and Leases, as well as with establishing, maintaining and providing public access to the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI).

The Law on Real Estate Cadastre, adopted in 2008, simplified the procedures for registering property in Macedonia and paved the way for establishing a modern electronic cadastre. The e-Cadastre system was designed as a comprehensive national system that will gather and process the data on all real estate, infrastructure facilities, and maintain a Register of Leases and Prices in the country.

The e-Cadastre system has one central database in which the real estate cadastre data are entered. These data include, notably data on the property owners, plots, buildings/flats, as well as data on mortgages and conditional and temporary property registrations. Both graphic and alphanumeric data on the plots and buildings/flats, as well as ownership data and mortgages and encumbrances, are integrated. The system tracks the entire process for all applications related to real estate, starting at the front desk, where the "case file" is created in the system, the documents are scanned, and the entire workflow up to processing/registration is completed by the Agency.

The e-front desk, part of the e-Cadastre system, is a dedicated application for the "professional" users enabling them direct access both to submit cases for registration in the Cadastre and obtain property certificates, copies of the cadastral map, as well as other documents needed in the process of registration. Professional users denote notaries, private surveying companies,

municipalities, enforcement agents, ministries, banks, as well as other legal entities entitled to generate and issue documents to be registered in the Cadastre. Notaries must use the e-front desk when registering real estate sales contracts, mortgages and leases. This means that citizens and companies do not need to go to the Cadastre office to start that process. Notaries are entitled to obtain all the necessary documents electronically from the Cadastre and submit, for registration in the Cadastre, the legally valid documents on property-related transactions initiated by citizens or companies they have created. Private surveyors must also use the e-front desk to obtain digital excerpts from the central database when preparing digital surveying reports. After performing a field survey, a surveyor prepares a digital surveying report in PDF and XML/GML formats and submits it via the e-front desk to the central repository to update the digital cadastral map. Municipalities must also use the e-front desk to apply for pre-registration of a future building based on the issued construction permit and project documentation. All other legal entities (ministries, courts, enforcement agents, assessors, etc.) that create legal acts to be registered in the Real Estate Cadastre are obliged to use the e-front desk.

The database of the system is Oracle + ArcSDE for the spatial data and the application is Java based. Geoserver and Geowebcache are used for the GIS infrastructure. All users must have a digital signature issued by an authorised issuer of digital certificates in Macedonia in order to access the system and sign electronic documents delivered to the Cadastre. The authorised company's timestamp is also used in the process of digital signing of the documents.

2. Change Process/Dynamics

The entire project was financed from the Agency's annual budget as an investment programme for institutional development. Two years were needed to develop the entire e-Cadastre system and another two years to roll it out in all the local offices and train all the employees.

The main project stakeholders were the Real Estate Cadastre Agency (all staff) and all the actors connected to the e-Cadastre system. It took some time for the users to start trusting digitally signed documents in official correspondence in lieu of paper documents, signed by hand.

3. Reform Results/Outcome

Thanks to this project, Macedonia now has a real estate cadastre covering the entire territory of the country. The e-Cadastre is operational in all the Agency departments. Through it, the Agency is interconnected with all notaries, municipalities, geodetic companies and other users. Round the clock online access and transparency of the cadastre data are in place and all deeds and other property encumbrances have been transferred from the courts to the Cadastre. The number of registered transactions and deeds has tripled; the efficiency in closing cases has increased; the alphanumeric and graphic data were incorporated through digitisation and harmonisation of the data and cadastre plans in one centralised database set on state-of-the-art hardware infrastructure. The distribution system enables electronic issuance of property certificates, copies of cadastre plans and other data from the Cadastre. These products can be ordered from every home via the Internet. Furthermore, the established Register of Prices and Leases increased the transparency of the property market; a new helpdesk was established for internal and external

users; the government NSDI geo-portal was established; and last, but not the least, many studies were developed that facilitated these important processes in the country. The Agency facilitated the establishment of the geodetic practice, as well as education reform, notably in geodesy, taught at the Faculty of Civil Engineering. Satisfaction with the cadastre services among ordinary citizens and professional users has improved.

Herewith some data related to the e-Cadastre system:
- ➢ 800 e-front desk professional users;
- ➢ 4.9 million visits to the web portal (from 2009 to June 2015);
- ➢ Tenfold increase in the number of visitors;
- ➢ 94% increase in the number of transactions;
- ➢ 188% increase in the number of registered mortgages.

The comprehensive system led to significant improvements of the processes and services and cut the time professional users, as well as public users (citizens and companies) need to complete registration and access cadastral data. The most frequently used services include:
- ➢ Insight in the application status, online, free of charge for all applicants with active cases;
- ➢ Issuance of property certificates, copies of the cadastral map and other digital documents from every location for all the registered properties throughout Macedonia. Property certificates used to be issued only in hard copy at the local department and only for properties located in the region within the jurisdiction of that department;
- ➢ The e-front desk is used for the electronic submission of cases (applications) by professional users (notaries, private surveyors, municipalities, enforcement agents, assessors, ministries, etc.)

All the above mentioned services have led to significant improvements of the services delivered by the Real Estate Cadastre Agency to citizens, companies and the economy in general. The time for issuance of documents has been significantly decreased, whereas access points (locations) where these documents can be obtained increased multiple times. Instead of 30 local front offices, all the notaries, municipalities, private surveying companies (800+ locations) are today entitled to issue official documents from the Cadastre on behalf of citizens or companies seeking such services. Moreover, citizens and companies can obtain digital or paper documents by themselves, in a few minutes, from the One Stop Shop Portal. The payment for the services and products is embedded inside the e-front desk application via the online payment portal. Each applicant can track the application via the free online application status check service.

The portal has a minimalistic design with easy accessible and intuitive functionalities. The application has a workflow that leads the user step by step to its final service or product. Based on the e-Cadastre system, a distribution portal for public use was developed, as was a mobile application e-Kat, that enables free of charge access to the cadastral data, cadastral maps, topographic maps, and other WMS services for the data the Real Estate Cadastre Agency is in charge of. Macedonia ranked 10th on the World Bank's Doing Business 2017 report. The reforms under the registering property indicator were recognised by the Doing Business team, which has verified the progress in its annual reports.

The service was promoted through a campaign on the public broadcaster. In the development phase, it was continuously tested by the professional users. User-motivation activities for professional users were not envisaged as the e-front office is mandatory for professional users.

The process of developing the e-front desk was accompanied by continuous communication with the end users, especially the professional users (notaries, private surveyors, municipalities, enforcement agents, etc.). Each stage of the project was evaluated by the professional users (meetings were organised on a quarterly basis), who discussed and jointly agreed on the functionalities of the system. Those improvements, informed by user feedback, resulted in amendments to the Cadastre Law.

The e-Cadastre project is continuously being developed and upgraded to meet the latest requirements of businesses and those posed by legal changes. The number of the applications received electronically and products delivered electronically is constantly growing. The following graph shows the percentage ratio between applications delivered on paper vs applications delivered electronically (digitally).

Figure 118: Ratio between Applications Delivered on Paper VS Applications Delivered Electronically (Digitally)
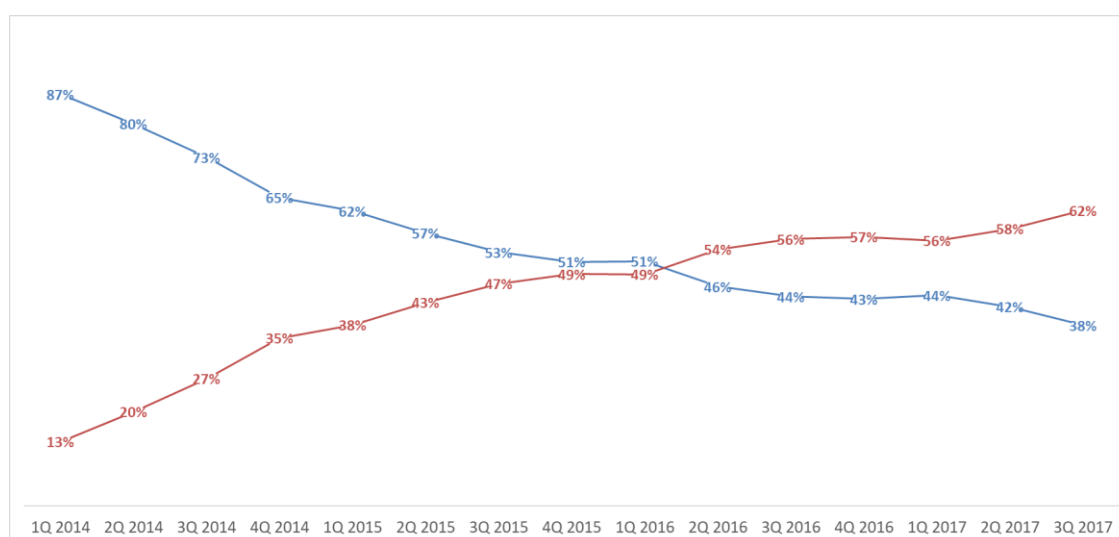
Sixty-two percent of all applications in Q3 2017 were submitted electronically by the professional users and, at the same time, only 38% of all applications were submitted on paper at the front desks of the local cadastral offices; the latter percentage has been steadily falling over the past few years. The goal is to achieve full digital/electronic communication with the clients in the following years. This means that the queues in the front desk offices that had existed in past will be significantly and continuously decreasing to the point where there will be no queues because the citizens' physical presence at the front desk will no longer be necessary.

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

There is a need for a systematic, step by step approach to the process of developing and implementing a large scale complex IT system such as this one. Continuous communication with

the users is necessary in order to satisfy the needs and problems in the "real world" (situations based on everyday practice).

Positive factors:

- ➢ Strong support from the Government and other sister organisations in developed EU countries with state-of-the-art cadastral systems;
- ➢ Strong will to implement the core business system;
- ➢ Clear vision of the development of the Real Estate Cadastre Agency accompanied by the will to implement structural reforms in the field;
- ➢ Clear development strategy, with defined projects, timeframe, budget and goals;
- ➢ Qualified and motivated personnel inside the organisation.

Negative factors:

- ➢ Resistance of the end users (internal and external) to changes in procedures, replacement of traditional paper-based correspondence by electronic communication

The Macedonian system is easy to replicate in any context. It is a good model for the implementation of a complex IT system, data preparation and respective legal changes. However, those replicating the system need to take into consideration the local context, legislation and processes.

Central Register of Integrated Procedures and the e-Construction Permit System (SERBIA)

1. Content and Background

The Serbian Business Registers Agency (SBRA) was established under the Business Registers Agency Law[408] and with the support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the World Bank, Microsoft – Serbia and Montenegro, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The establishment of the SBRA itself brought Serbian citizens and businesses multiple benefits and reaffirmed the following crucial principles of public administration functioning:

- ➢ Administrative barriers encountered by citizens were eliminated by setting up a single registration authority in charge of managing a nationwide, centralised database, thereby affirming the principle of rationalisation of state administration ("all registers in a single location");
- ➢ The legal system of the Republic of Serbia introduced the principle of "five-day silence of the administration", thereby affirming the principle of efficiency of public administration;
- ➢ SBRA is not funded from the budget of the Republic of Serbia, but from fees paid in exchange for the services provided, thus affirming the principle of self-financing of public bodies;

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[408] The Law on the Business Registers Agency (Official Gazette of the RS Nos. 55/2004, 111/2009 and 99/2011)

> ➤ The rates of the fees charged for these services affirm the principle of affordability of public services

SBRA's work is today performed by 407 employed or engaged staff.

SBRA recognised the need for a central register of integrated procedures in order to increase its efficiency in providing services to citizens and businesses related to construction, extension or reconstruction of facilities. The Central Register of Integrated Procedures, developed within the project "Development of the System for Electronic Issuance of Construction Permits in the Region of South-East Europe",[409] became operational on 1 January 2016.

The Central Register of Integrated Procedures is the first centralised, public electronic database, with integrated data on the progress of each individual case, the documents filed with and obtained from the competent authorities in the procedure of applying for permits for the construction, extension and reconstruction of facilities, including decisions and other enactments of the authorities generated in the procedure.

The need for the development of the integrated procedures was triggered by many factors. Global reports indicated Serbia had major problems in issuing construction permits. To illustrate, the World Bank Doing Business 2015 report (with 2014 data) ranked Serbia at an alarming 186th place of 189 world economies on the indicators related to issuing construction permits.[410] Similarly, Serbia ranked 101st out of 148 world economies in the World Economic Forum's 2014-2015 Global Competitiveness Report. The reasons for the dismal situation in the field mainly arose from unregulated property-legal relations, fragmented competences, lack of planning documents and/or poor quality of the existing planning documents, the para-fiscal character of the land development fees, slow public administration at both the central level, and, in particular, at the local level, inefficient, complex and non-transparent procedures, high costs and corruption.[411]

The registers maintained by SBRA are publicly available official records in the meaning of the General Administrative Procedures Act.[412] The Rulebook on the Implementation of the Integrated Procedures[413] represents the basis for its functioning. Integrated Procedure

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[409] The project was implemented within the GIZ – Open Regional Fund for South-East Europe Modernisation of Municipal Services programme, funded by the Governments of Germany and Switzerland. The National Alliance for Local Economic Development (NALED) was the implementing partner; other partners on the project included the Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure of the Republic of Serbia and the Macedonian Association of Local Government Units (ZELS), etc.

[410] World Bank, Doing Business 2015

[411] Report on the Monitoring of Effects of the Construction Permit Issuance System, 2017

[412] Articles 9 and 103 of the General Administrative Procedures Act (Official Gazette of the RS No. 18/16)

[413] Article 40 of the Rulebook on the Implementation of the Integrated Procedures

2. Change Process/Dynamics

The integrated procedures were introduced by the Law Amending the Law on Planning and Construction[414] that came into effect on 1 March 2015. As of 1 January 2016, all applications in the integrated procedures can be filed in electronic format only through SBRA's Central Information System. For all information pertaining to the implementation of integrated procedures, please visit the website www.gradjevinskedozvole.rs, developed by NALED, with the support of the Serbian Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure and USAID.

The unique feature of this system is that the whole process is conducted electronically and that the documents are originally generated in electronic format.

All questions regarding the central electronic system for issuing construction permits can be e-mailed to: info@gradjevinskedozvole.rs and CEOP-APR@apr.gov.rs.

The major challenges faced in the implementation of the system included the gaps identified in the legal framework, which needed to be overcome, lack of human resources in the local self-governments to efficiently process the documentation electronically, insufficiently functional software, users' insufficient awareness of the system's functions and regulations, and insufficient technical equipment.

3. Reform Results/Outcome

The central e-construction permit system is another successful example of a business-oriented one stop shop, which has enabled electronic exchange of data in different registers and thus significantly reduced issuing times and in-person visits, without jeopardising the quality of the process. The e-construction permit system contributed to the improvement of Serbia's ranking on WB's Doing Business report in the relevant category. In 2012, it took approximately 8 months to get a construction permit in Serbia. According to the WB Doing Business 2018 report,[415] it now takes about 110 days to obtain a construction permit, compared with 156 days according to the WB Doing Business 2017 report, *which is an improvement of 46 days in one year alone.*[416] The graph below shows how many days (both calendar and workdays) it took the authorities vested with public powers to issue a construction permit in the first halves of 2016 and 2017:

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[414] Law on Planning and Construction (Official Gazette of the RS No. 132/2014)

[415] http://www.doingbusiness.org/data/exploreeconomies/serbia#dealing-withconstruction-permits

[416] http://www.bep.rs/images/gallery/2016_10_28/doing-business-2017-serbias-results-todate.pdf

Figure 119: Number of Days Needed for Obtaining a Construction Permit
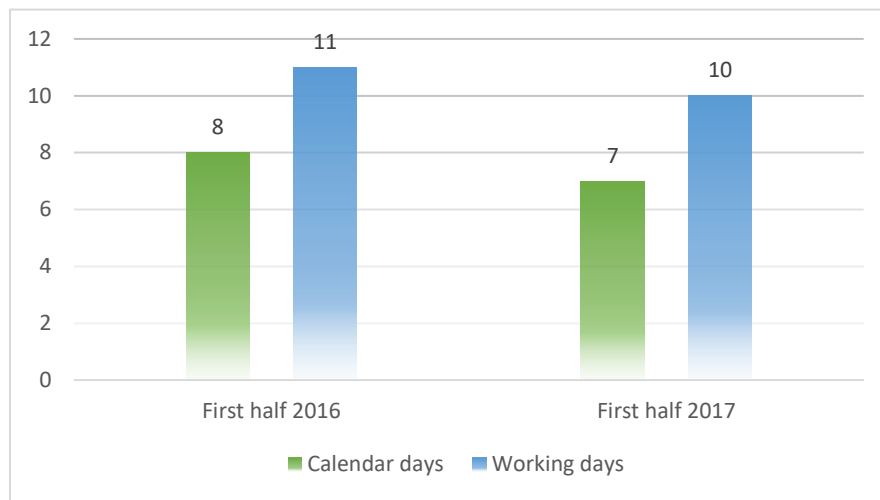
Based on the 2016 impact assessment of the e-construction permit system reform, the reform had major impact on the relevant state institutions and authorities vested with public powers, as well as investors in Serbia.[417] The ratio between the submitted and processed applications in 2014 and 2015 is presented in the following graph:

Figure 120: Number of Applications
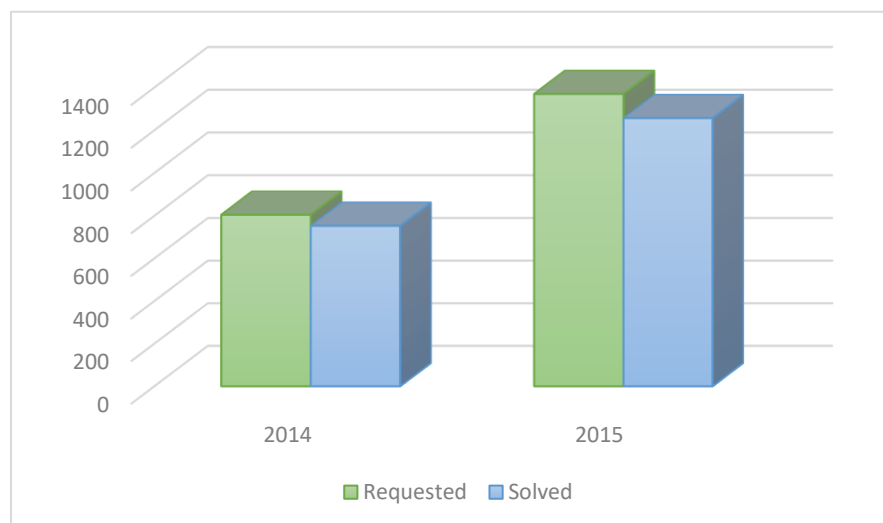
Effects on Local Self-Governments

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[417] Impact Assessment of the Reform of the System for Issuing Construction Permits. USAID Business Environment Project (BEP), October 2016, available in Serbian at: http://www.bep.rs/baza_znanja/documents/construction-permits/Analiza%20efekata%20reforme%20izdavanja%20dozvola%20za%20izgradnju%20031116%20FINAL.pdf

Based on a survey conducted in fourteen local self-governments, the integrated procedures had positive effects on local self-governments. These positive effects, analysed in the 2016 comprehensive impact assessment of the reform of the construction permits system,[418] include:

- ➢ Submission of documents in electronic form, and less overload of paper-based documentation;
- ➢ Elimination of corruption of any sort;
- ➢ Easier communication with authorities vested with public powers; ability to send information to more than one authority vested with public powers at the same time;
- ➢ Monitoring of each individual case by the authority vested with public powers that is processing the case, from the beginning of the process to the construction of the facility;
- ➢ More efficient monitoring and compliance with deadlines;
- ➢ Easier communication with investors and constructors.

The local self-governments stressed the following positive effects of the integrated procedures as those of crucial importance for their work:

- ➢ More efficient issuance of permits;
- ➢ Simpler technical procedures, and better organisation within the administration;
- ➢ One stop shop for applicants;
- ➢ Improved communication with authorities vested with public powers;
- ➢ Significantly improved efficiency of work of authorities vested with public powers.[419]

Effects on Investors

Positive effects on the surveyed investors in Serbia are:

- ➢ Easier communication with state institutions and authorities vested with public powers;
- ➢ Less time needed for implementing the procedure;
- ➢ Increased transparency of the work of authorities vested with public powers;
- ➢ Increased efficiency for completing the procedure;
- ➢ Lower costs of procedure due to the fully digitalised process – all documents are submitted electronically.[420]

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

The implementation of the system showed that some steps in the process should be revised or reconsidered, in order to achieve even greater efficiency of the system. This mainly refers to human capacity, i.e. capacity building of employees in state institutions and local self-governments, who are directly in charge of implementing the system and applying the electronic procedures. In terms of human resources, the implementation of the system to date has shown

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[418] *Ibid.* p. 18

[419] *Ibid*, p. 18

[420] Report on the Monitoring of Effects of the Construction Permit Issuance System, 2017

that there is also lack of staff equipped with the necessary IT skills and knowledge. In addition, implementation showed that the initially developed software needed to be upgraded to fully meet the needs of the system's users and reduce the time needed both for submitting and processing applications.[421]

eDMS in the Ministry of Public Administration (MONTENEGRO)

1. Content and Background

The Ministry of Public Administration (MPA)[422] was recently created and took over the competences of two ministries. It has, on the one hand, assumed the competences of the erstwhile Ministry of Information Society, covering digital government policy and implementation and the use of modern information technologies in the public administration. On the other hand, it has taken over jurisdiction related to public policy making and implementation regarding local self-governments, public administration reform and administrative simplification, which had been within the remit of the Ministry of Interior (MoI).

The MPA's four main areas of work are organised within four directorates:

1. Directorate for Public Administration
2. Directorate for Local Self-Governments
3. *Directorate for e-Government and Cyber Security*
4. Directorate for International Assistance

The MPA Directorate for e-Government and Cyber Security took over the mandate of the former Ministry of Information Society. The Directorate is therefore now in charge of the implementation and coordination of the electronic document management system (eDMS), developed and launched by the erstwhile Ministry of Information Society. The Directorate continued investing crucial efforts in improving service delivery and digitalising public administration, in line with the Government's overall reform priorities.

Office management is the basis for all business processes related to recording and exchanging documents, and electronic document management is a result of modernisation and digitalisation of the public administration aimed at exchanging and archiving the data and documents in electronic form. As such, it is of crucial importance for a faster and more efficient public administration, and thus, public service delivery to citizens and businesses. The Government of Montenegro recognised the importance of electronic data and documents exchange and introduced the eDMS in 2011.

The obligation of using eDMS stems from the General Administrative Procedures Act (GAPA), and the Law on Electronic Government[423], as well as from the 2016-2020 Public Administration

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[421] *Ibid.*

[422] The website of the Ministry of Public Administration of the Republic of Montenegro: www.mju.gov.me

[423] Law on Electronic Government (Official Journal of the Republic of Montenegro No.. 32/14)

Reform Strategy.[424] In addition to the PAR Strategy, the importance of introducing electronic management and electronic exchange of documents in the public administration is recognised by the Strategy on Information Society until 2020.[425] The action plans for the implementation of these strategies envisage the completion of activities related to the eDMS system.

However, to ensure the further smooth functioning of the eDMS, it was necessary to strengthen the normative framework regulating the service delivery area, based on the harmonisation of the relevant legislation with the GAPA. The legislation that needs to be in place for the eDMS to function includes:[426]

> ➢ the Law on Electronic Identification and Electronic Signatures[427] adopted in 2017;
> ➢ Guidelines on Office Management by the Public Administration[428] adopted in 2017;
> ➢ Decree Amending the Decree on Office Management by the Public Administration, adopted in 2018.

2. Change Process/Dynamics

The eDMS was implemented for the first time in the Government of Montenegro in 2011. The coordinator in the MPA, in charge of horizontal coordination of eDMS implementation, communicates on a regular basis with the focal points in charge of monitoring the use of the system by the other ministries. The project has been organised in two phases:

> ➢ Phase 1 - Implementation of the system by all Montenegrin ministries and the Government Secretariat, by 2018;
> ➢ Phase 2 - completion of eDMS implementation once the system is introduced in and implemented by all other public administration institutions.[429]

There were 331,933 cases and 557,439 documents exchanged through the eDMS in the 2011-2017 period.[430] By the end of 2017, 15 out of 18 Montenegrin ministries were using the system, and another two ministries started using the system in early 2018.[431]

In order to ensure the efficient implementation of the system, the MPA continued implementing the trainings for relevant representatives of other ministries using the system. In 2017, train the

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[424] 2016-2020 Public Administration Reform Strategy

[425] Strategy for the Development of Information Society until 2020., Government of Montenegro, 2016

[426] Institute Alternativa's report, available in Montenegrin at: http://media.institut-alternativa.org/2017/09/Izvjestaj-o-implementaciji-Akcionog-plana-za-sprovodjenje-Strategije-reforme-javne-uprave.pdf

[427] Law on Electronic Identification and Electronic Signatures (Official Journal of the Republic of Montenegro No 31/2017)

[428] Available in Montenegrin at: http://www.mju.gov.me/biblioteka/uputstva

[429] As Ms Marija Tomović, Directorate for Public Administration, the Ministry of Public Administration of the Republic of Montenegro, said in an interview to ReSPA Regional Expert for Serbia and Montenegro, Ms Jelena Miletić in Podgorica, on 1 March 2018.

[430] The Report on the Level of Implementation of the Electronic Document Management System (eDMS), Ministry of Public Administration, Directorate for e-Government and Cyber Security, March 2018, p. 4.

[431] *Ibid.*

trainers (ToT) trainings were organised for and delivered to 211 representatives of ministries in charge of monitoring the implementation of the eDMS in their ministries. The precise number of trainees per each ministries is presented below[432]:

Figure 121: Trainees per Ministry
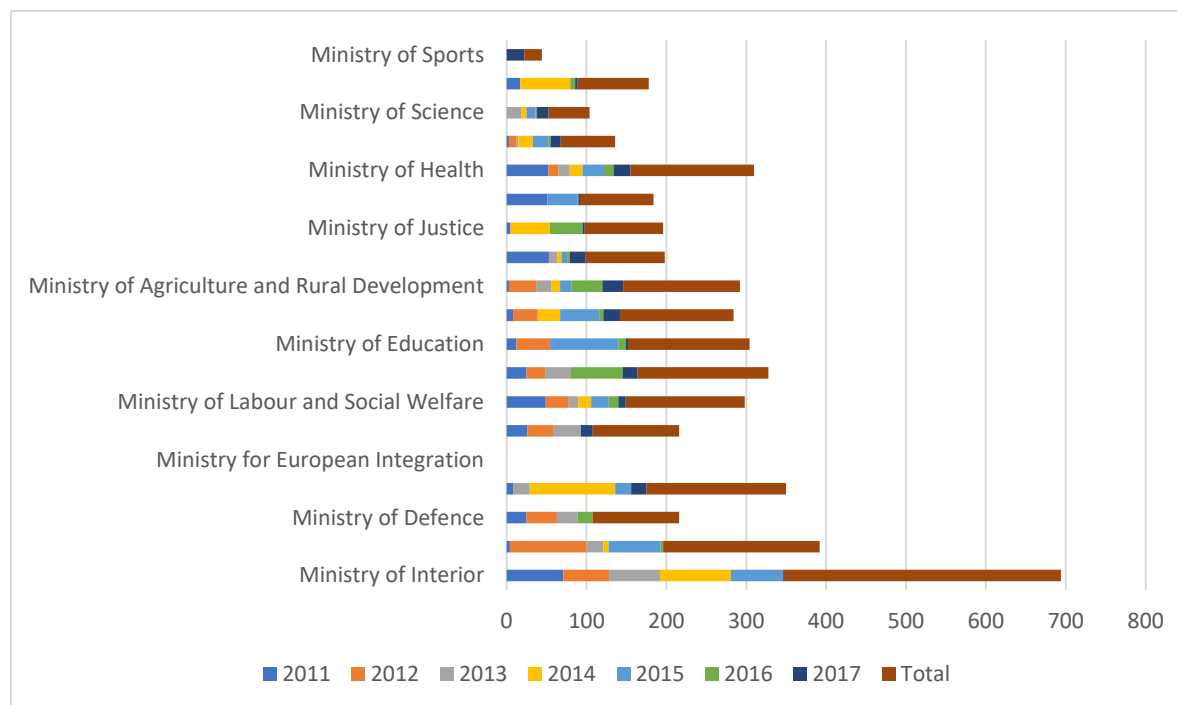
Besides the two basic functionalities – complete office management process and case processing, eDMS also has the following functionalities:

1. The link with the e-mail of the user (sending and receiving a document through electronic address);
2. Search for documents and cases under different criteria;
3. Imaging – digitalisation (scanning paper documents, authorisation and research);
4. Links with other systems of e-Government and other IT solutions, e.g. integration with the e-Government sessions system.

The process involves the following steps:

Step 1: Authorisation of the user and rights to access the system: since the rights to access eDMS are ensured through integration with the system of domain user accounts on the network of a public administration authority, a security framework is created to ensure that no-one, other than the Ministry of Public Administration, can access the system from the network;

Step 2: Delegation of rights to access the cases and documents, according to following principles:

➤ All employees can see/update their own documents (if signed by them);

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[432] *Ibid.* p. 28

- ➢ Supervisors can see/update their own documents, and documents of their subordinates (in line with the hierarchy);
- ➢ Heads of organisational units can see all the documents of the organisational unit they manage;
- ➢ The Registry can see all the documents.

Step 3: Electronic signing of documents, where verification is performed by a digital certificate, which is given to each user of the system and which represents the user's digital identity. The use of electronic signatures in public administration is regulated by the Government Rules of Procedure, which introduce the obligation of putting an electronic signature on all the submitted materials and reports. *In eDMS, electronic signing of documents is performed through the Digital Signature module.*

3. Reform Results/Outcome

The number of cases processed and documents exchanged during the 2011-2017 period (as shown in the graph above) testifies to the full sustainability of the software solution applied by the Government.

The benefits for the public administration in Montenegro from using the system include:

- ➢ Reduction of space needed for filing and archiving paper-based documents;
- ➢ Faster and easier access to information;
- ➢ Better quality of evidence, monitoring and control of assumed obligations;
- ➢ Unification of the business processes, as well as of the structure and form of documents.

Financial savings

Significant financial savings have been made since the introduction of the eDMS, notably, with respect to:

- ➢ Operational costs;
- ➢ Creation of paper-based documentation – paper, toners, other office material;
- ➢ More efficient use of ministry staff's working hours since they need less time for research, filing and archiving paper-based documents;
- ➢ Sending paper-based documents to long-distance locations (e.g. postal costs or cost of fuel, etc.)[433]

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

Due to the fact that the system was developed in 2011, its functionalities need to be updated and/or upgraded to ensure it keeps up with the rapidly evolving IT environment. This is one of the major challenges faced by the MPA in the coming period. The MPA recognised this as an issue,

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[433] The Report on the Level of Implementation of the Electronic Document Management System (eDMS), Ministry of Public Administration, Directorate for e-Government and Cyber Security, March 2018, p. 6.

particularly due to multiple complaints by the system users (the ministries) and/or constructive suggestions related to the system's functioning.[434]

Electronic office management is expected to advance further now that the Decree Amending the Decree on Office Management and the relevant Guidelines have been adopted.

PART 3: Connecting the Dots (and Systems) by Interoperable Service Solutions

Different parts of the public administration are often responsible for different elements of a public service, whether in the same country or across borders. In the context of eGovernment, interoperability is the ability of systems to interact towards mutually beneficial goals, involving the sharing of information and knowledge between these organisations, through the business processes they support, by means of the exchange of data between their respective ICT systems. It allows administrative units to work together - within or across organisational boundaries – to exchange, interpret, use and re-use information. Interoperability is relevant to every policy field where data is shared, whether health, trade, tax, justice, etc.

This part presents the following inspiring practices:

- ➢ Interoperability Platform (KOSOVO*)
- ➢ e-Procurement - Public Procurement Agency (BiH)
- ➢ Creation of the Civil Status Register as the Backbone of Service Delivery (ALBANIA)
- ➢ e-Procurement - Electronic System for Public Procurement (MACEDONIA)

Interoperability Platform (KOSOVO*)

1. Content and Background

The modernisation of public administration and the improvement of public administration services by increasing speed, accuracy, transparency and efficiency require the development of electronic systems.

A large number of such systems have been developed in Kosovo* institutions that have successfully improved their service delivery and performance. These systems have so far functioned in isolation from each other and the information they possess is not comprehensive, used by all systems in real time, or automated. Various institutions have made efforts to interlink some of these systems through so-called web services. Such interconnection (interoperability) is costly, unautomated and unsafe. Therefore, as in all countries applying e-governance as a method for carrying out administrative tasks, it was necessary to create an interoperability platform enabling the integration of information technology systems in order to merge all the

separate system components into a whole, ensuring full functionality of data exchange systems of Kosovo* institutions.

Statement by AIS General Director Mr. Kujtim Gashi
Statement by AIS General Director Mr. Kujtim Gashi "Provision of better services to citizens is among the Kosovo* Government's top priorities and it is being achieved by the digitalisation of administrative services. The modernisation of public administration through the development of electronic systems enables the improvement of public administration services, increasing their speed, accuracy, transparency and efficiency. The large number of electronic systems has boosted the public administration's delivery of services and performance of its tasks. The systems have so far functioned in isolation from each other despite efforts to interconnect some of them through so-called web services and allow them to communicate with each other. Such communication is costly and unsafe. Developing the Government Gateway (Interoperability Platform) is the need of the hour. The Platform enables the integration of information technology systems, the merging of all the separate system components into a whole by providing full functionality of system data exchange at the institutions. This Platform is prerequisite for improving the quality and digitalisation of public administration services extended to citizens, businesses, NGOs and the country's own institutions." The Platform enables secure and automatic communication between the electronic systems, key registers and authenticity of information and data. At the moment, the Civil Status Register enables you to obtain basic civil status information from almost all other systems that have developed the relevant electronic communication and information mechanisms. The same is true of the Business Register, the Residence Register, the NGO Register and we are developing both the Property Register and the Customs Register. Most electronic systems are to be interconnected by 2020.

2. Change Process/Dynamics

The Government Gateway project is a complex one aiming to create a common platform for electronic services and involving the coordination, engagement and cooperation of many institutional actors in possession of information and non-institutional systems (economic operators that maintain or develop systems).

The scope or the initial steps of the project can be summarised as follows:

➢ The period involving the analysis of the overall development of electronic systems in Kosovo*, various aspects of administrative processes and infrastructural capacities in the field of e-Government in the country;
➢ The period involving the development of a common platform to interlink the government systems through secure centralised infrastructure called the Government Gateway; and,
➢ The implementation period involving the integration of the numerous electronic services in the Interoperability Platform, starting with the key registers of strategic relevance to the Kosovo* Government.

The main aim of this project is to create the opportunity to provide services to citizens, businesses and the administration in the long run, using the e-Kosovo portal that will enable the delivery of

electronic services to citizens, officials, business representatives and other parties, through the portal, mobile platforms and other channels with state institutions.

This system or platform is foreseen in the national strategic documents, such as the Public Administration Modernisation Strategy, the e-Government Strategy, the Interoperability Framework and other government documents.

The project has been designated a sizable budget, albeit insufficient, and staff of the Agency for Information Society (AIS) and other professional staff of other institutions depending on project needs. The project is implemented by the Microsoft Corporation.

The main actors include AIS staff and individuals managing the projects that will join the Integration Platform, starting with the staff of the main national registers, such as the Civil Register, Residence Register, Properties Register, Business Register, NGO Register, etc. and, of course, Microsoft.

Coordination of activities in the integration process and lack of legal infrastructure in the field of electronic signature and authentication are the major challenges at the moment. Challenges also include limited budget funds dedicated to e-governance and limited staff capacity. Raising awareness among the relevant stakeholders of the necessity to implement the project in every segment of the administration will also pose a challenge.

3. Reform Results/Outcome

The project is still in the development stage and has not yet yielded any positive results in terms of service delivery, but it has strong impact in terms of system development, and internal communication (back end system) has created the conditions for the coordination and preparation of communication infrastructure, whether legislative or technical.

The project is on the right path to resolve key public infrastructure issues by introducing electronic IDs that citizens will be able to use for authentication and accessing electronic services.

The project has so far been integrated into the Integration Platform and enables the communication of many electronic services (backend systems).

The Platform provides extremely secure and automatic communication between the electronic systems, key registers, and authenticity of information and data. At the moment, basic civil status information in almost all other systems, which have developed the relevant electronic communication and information mechanisms, can be obtained from the Civil Register; the same applies to the Business Register, the Residence Register and the NGO Register; the development of both the Property Register and the Customs Register is under way.

As per end user participation and visualisation, the support platform of this project is in the bidding phase and a portal of services called "e-Kosovo" will soon be implemented and enable the display of these integrated services and use by citizens and businesses.

The AIS is also raising the awareness of officials and institutions of platform companions/integrators, communication security and economic benefits in terms of budget savings, and especially of greater transparency and accountability.

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

Projects like this one have already been developed in many countries and tailored to the features of each country. In our view, without it, there can be no integrated electronic services or development of good administration and governance.

This project is unique inasmuch as it provides the opportunity to create conditions for automating the communication of electronic systems in synchronous and asynchronous form, for incorporating the digital signature and auditing all data transfers in real time through the generation of tailored reports.

In our view, a project of this kind is instrumental in any context for the development of a modern administration and for providing timely quality services to citizens, businesses and administration itself.

e-Procurement - Public Procurement Agency (BiH)

1. Content and Background

Every year, over 250,000 public authorities in the EU spend around 14% of GDP on the purchase of services, works and supplies. In many sectors, such as energy, transport, waste management, social protection and the provision of health or education services, public authorities are the principal buyers. Public procurement refers to the process by which public authorities, such as government departments or local authorities, purchase work, goods or services from companies. Examples include the building of a state school, purchasing furniture for a public prosecutor's office and contracting cleaning services for a public university.[435]

E-procurement is set as one of priorities in the 2017 EU Public Procurement Strategy,[436] together with boosting the digital transformation of procurement. Enormous savings, reduction of corruption, which is still one of the major problems in BiH, existence and accessibility of e-services in BiH public procurement have very often been on the agenda of the European Commission and donors in BiH. The EU accession requirements included those regarding the Public Procurement Agency from the very beginning; one of them, set in 2004, involves the development and implementation of a fully functional e-procurement system.

Aware of the pressing need to develop new services, the BiH Public Procurement Agency (PPA) had to overcome several obstacles. The very first regarded the mindset of old practitioners and traditions, in the habit of publishing public procurement notices only in the Official Journal of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the form of plain text documents. So, the Agency started exploring ways of systematically addressing different aspects of the BiH Law on Public Procurement (which is applicable in the entire country); study tours were organised to the EU, but also to the

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[435] https://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/public-procurement_en

[436] http://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/public-procurement/strategy_en

neighbouring countries to find solid support for the enforcement of the law in form of appropriate IT/e-solutions. The Agency management extended major support to the process of identifying the right approach to this issue and found a partner in the GIZ Strengthening of Public Institutions Programme, as of 2010.

2. Change Process/Dynamics

The PPA started several projects to ensure user-friendly, effective, low-cost and transparent public procurement. The aim was to introduce a fully functional and transparent system, in order to meet the EU requirements of a neutral and transparent public procurement system and hence minimise room for corruption.

The very first system developed and introduced to the public procurement community was the one that collected information on the awarded contracts (WisPPA), since not all procurement procedures ended with award notices, wherefore the PPA wanted to have more information on public spending.

Shortly after the WisPPA was up and running, the PPA introduced the first system for publishing procurement notices by the contracting authorities (GoProcure), with advanced search options for economic operators. Finally, the PPA developed the online register of contracting authorities and economic operators to serve as the primary register of all those involved in public procurement procedures in BiH.

When the time came to start thinking about further improvements of the public procurement system (e-Tendering, e-Auctions, Questions and Answers, etc.), the need arose to merge those systems into a single portal, which was launched in November 2014. That is the system the PPA currently uses and it will be the long-term foundation for all the planned improvements.

3. Reform Results/Outcome

Following the establishment of the national e-Procurement portal, the PPA implemented several successful projects to boost the effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of public procurement procedures. They include:

- ➢ Development of the knowledge base of procurement-related rulings by the complaints review board called the Procurement Review Body (PRB) and the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- ➢ Enabling the electronic publication of tender documentation in procurement procedures via the portal;
- ➢ Introduction of the electronic communication module where bidders can ask questions and receive answers clarifying issues regarding ongoing procurement procedures; and, finally,
- ➢ Launch of the e-Auction module providing for the extension of the bidding and allowing bidders to offer lower prices or better terms than they had initially in their bids.

Herewith a chronological overview of BiH PPA's success story and results:

- ➤ First PP notices published in the Official Journal of BiH in PDF and HTML - 15 January 2005;
- ➤ PPA became operational, e-Notices available in PDF - 1 January 2006;
- ➤ WisPPA system online with reports on awarded contracts – 1 October 2010;
- ➤ Publication of e-Notices active - 1 September 2011;
- ➤ Go-Procure System online - 27 November 2014;
- ➤ PRB and Court decisions online - 26 January 2015;
- ➤ Tender Dossier available online – 1 July 2015;
- ➤ e-Auction online – 14 September 2016.

The 2017 statistics on user engagement and feedback[437] illustrate well the broad scope and use of the Public Procurement Portal:

Visits to the Public Procurement Portal

- ➤ 159,972 users
- ➤ 1,106,018 user sessions
- ➤ 4,017,716 pages viewed
- ➤ Average visit duration: 5 minutes 11 seconds

Users

- ➤ 2,430 contracting authorities
- ➤ 7,820 domestic companies
- ➤ 1,359 foreign companies
- ➤ 14,960 operators

Publications

- ➤ 38,608 published notices

  - o Preliminary Information Notice - 13
  - o Qualification System Notice - 0
  - o Procurement Notice - 21,179
  - o Termination Notice - 2,218
  - o Award Notice - 8,212
  - o Ex Ante Notice - 85
  - o Annual Award Notice - 1,985
  - o Correction Notice - 2,488
  - o Annual Contract Award Notice - 1,985
  - o Ex - Ante Notice for Non Priority Services - 1,584
  - o 718 Decisions of the PRB and the Court of BiH

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[437] https://www.ejn.gov.ba/

Tender Documentation

- ➤ 17,809 tender documentation
- ➤ Tender documentation for 84.09% of the procedures published on the Public Procurement Portal

Auctions

- ➤ 5,686 procedures with e-auction planned
- ➤ 26.85% of the procedures with the planned e-auction
- ➤ 2,713 auctions held

Technical Support

- ➤ 2,009 answered phone calls
- ➤ 7,150 answered e-mails

This technical support and close contacts with the users of the e-procurement system resulted in continuous improvements of the system, but they have also served as a bridge for building the users' trust in the PPA. The PPA is proactively sharing the status of improvements on its website (www.ejn.gov.ba).

It is worth mentioning that tender dossiers published through the system are always free of charge, as are all other e-Procurement portal services, wherefore economic operators can easily download and use them. As of early 2008, all contracting authorities must publish their tender documentation together with their procurement notices on the e-Procurement portal.

As noted at the conference "Reform of the Systems of Public Procurement in BiH"[438] in late June 2018, the introduction of e-Auction resulted in reducing the initial public procurement costs in 2017 by 9.3 million KM (circa 4.68 million EUR).

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

The BiH Public Procurement Agency has been understaffed since it was established. The PPA is now struggling with serious brain drain, especially in the IT sector, like many other institutions in BIH. But, the PPA found a trustworthy partner for developing and implementing the mentioned e-procure systems, portals and mobile applications – the GIZ Strengthening of Public Institutions Programme. Hence, the lesson learned is that proactive, professional and results-driven public servants of the BiH PPA have not given up on the development and further improvements of those systems, but found a way to use donor resources in a meaningful way.

With regards to major developments and plans for the future, PPA has several ongoing and planned projects. Strategic projects will lead to the development of the so-called "end-to-end" fully paperless and transactional e-Procurement portal. Work is under way on developing the e-Bidding, e-Evaluation and e-Contracting functionalities, which will enable bidders to submit their

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[438] https://www.javnenabavke.gov.ba/index.php?id=03vij&vij=211&jezik=bs

offers via the Portal. The PPA is also about to start with the development of the open data module of the system, which will, as the name says, open all the data in the system in a machine-readable format. Researchers, civil society organisations and individuals will be able to benefit from those data when building digital services and mobile apps, especially in the following two fields - fight against corruption and personalisation of procurement notices.

The design of the BiH PPA website is in accordance with the general rules for state level institutions, yet there are hardly any English language texts on it. PPA's inability to engage a full-time translator to work on the website is understandable given the lack of financial resources, but it may wish to consider engaging its public – students – who could translate PPA's major projects/outcomes/news and populate the English website with the relevant PDF documents, such as the EU Directive on Public Procurement. This will improve the e-procurement portal's visibility.

Furthermore, the accessibility of the website information for the visually impaired could be significantly improved.

The BiH PPA has good outreach to civil society, anticorruption networks, such as Transparency International, and other stakeholders in BiH, which has been welcomed also by international stakeholders in BiH.

Creation of the Civil Status Register as the Backbone of Service Delivery (ALBANIA)

1. Content and Background

The Civil Status Register is one of the largest providers of administrative services. It issues birth, marriage and death certificates, and can also register marriages (four million transactions a year in all). The Civil Status Register has 350 regular offices and 37 archive offices, and the emphasis is still strongly on physical service delivery.

Certain services can only be applied for at the local office nearest the applicant's place of residence, as the civil servants' physical interaction with the applicants is considered an additional security measure.

Digital means have therefore not been introduced because of this physical security measure, whereas high-security electronic identification capabilities are built into the ID cards issued by the Civil Status Register. Additionally, duplicate institutional contacts are sometimes required. For example, when obtaining their IDs, citizens must first go to a Register counter, where their personal data are verified against their birth certificates. The applicants are then accompanied to a counter of ALEAT (the company that produces personal IDs) to complete the additional application procedures (fingerprinting, facial recognition), etc.

2. Change Process/Dynamics

The right to free movement, one of the fundamental rights in democratic states, brought about huge demographic changes in Albania, changes that are now reflected in both internal and external migration.

The Civil Status Service (CSS) has made constant efforts to keep track of these demographic changes with maximal accuracy and correctness. However, lack of a proper legal basis and inappropriate administrative organisation have also led to the failure of properly registering all events or phenomena pertaining to the citizens' civil status data and, sometimes, to their distortion, leaving room for abuse both by staff and various forgers.

In the course of implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) and based on the major requirements at the time, it was judged that it was high time for a qualitative change in the CSS through the establishment of a contemporary service, in line with international norms and standards in general, and European standards in particular, which are indispensable for this service to perform its duties to the Albanian Government and Albanian citizens

The Civil Status Register is a project envisaging the creation of a central database containing the civil status data of all Albanian citizens. The information is stored in a safe place. All the births, marriages and deaths are registered electronically. Each citizen has a unique ID number in the database. The citizens are issued ID cards and passports upon online consultation of the main central database (National Civil Status Register - NCSR). The election lists are generated by retrieving the data online from the central database, filtering the citizens by age and other criteria according the law.

3. Reform Results/Outcome

As of December 2017, Albanian citizens are completely exempted from the obligation to obtain and submit civil status certificates to public institutions, wherefore they are entitled to reject any such requests by public institutions. The certification burden is placed on administration staff who themselves retrieve any documents they need via the e-Albania portal, thus completely freeing the citizens of this process. Citizens can obtain the following documents via the e-Albania portal: a) family certificates, b) personal certificates, c) death certificates, d) marriage certificates, and e) birth certificates.

The impact is directly noticeable in the significant reduction of queues at the physical counters in public institutions, which are printing fewer and fewer hardcopy documents.

This project has achieved the following major results:

> ➢ Availability of standardised civil status certificates in all CSS offices.
> ➢ Most of the processes carried out by the CSS are classical, standard and simple. They, notably, include: the registration of births, marriages and deaths, issuance of certificates, archiving the vital records at the end of the year, etc.

- The form and content of the documentation are simple and effective. The templates of the civil status (birth, marriage, death) certificates and registers, etc. have remained unchanged for years.
- The essential legislative provisions are new and in conformity with international standards, and binding on the citizens.
- Citizen data registered in the civil status registers are detailed; extremely useful historical data can be retrieved from them.
- The effective system for archiving civil status documentation facilitates the collection of the citizens' historical data.
- As per geographic distribution, CSS has offices across the country, with a view to bringing the service closer to the citizens.
- Online issuance of civil status certificates has led to major savings in time and money for the citizens. A certificate obtained at a counter costs ALL 50 (€0.38), while the one obtained online is free of charge. The number of family and personal certificates printed at the CSS counters fell from 365,000 in September 2017 to approximately 100,000 in December 2017. Translated into costs, the citizens saved around ALL 30,000,000 (€225,000) in just four months.

In addition to the services the NCSR has been offering the citizens directly, services involving the use of NCSR data are now also offered online, via e-Albania.

NCSR has genuinely simplified the process for the users. The civil status officers are more confident in offering services to the citizens in real time, and even the other government institutions use NCSR data they need in their work.

The NCSR's cluster architecture design offers stability and continuous service. Furthermore, the system is equipped with a Disaster Recovery System to ensure the availability of the service.

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

In light of the very good time and money benefits the CSS provides citizens, the state should consider digitalising all possible public services.

Accurate data entry, good software design and good network architecture are the main factors contributing to success.

As per transferability, the process of training the users is prerequisite for replication in another context.

e-Procurement - Electronic System for Public Procurement (MACEDONIA)

1. Content and Background

The Public Procurement Bureau (PPB), established as a state administration body within the Ministry of Finance, is the central authority responsible for coordinating and monitoring the public procurement system in Macedonia. The PPB's main objectives include the establishment of a coherent legal framework in line with EU public procurement legislation and of a framework for the uniform application of public procurement regulations and development of the Macedonian contracting authorities' capacity to implement procurement procedures.

The Government decided to move towards 100% electronic procurement and enforce the bidding process in all procurements. The previous procurement system software had not been designed to handle the large load and volume of procurements with large numbers of concurrent users. The participants found the procurement process complex, and there was a need to introduce a new simplified process and a new dashboard solution for the daily activities. The aim was to design a system enabling easier modelling and configuration of procurement processes. Lost or delayed e-mail notifications due to the high volume of notifications called for the introduction of an application mailbox for each user of the system. There was also a need to introduce online payment for newly subscribed users. Analytic tools and an advanced BI solution for data warehousing and statistical reports, transparent historical and statistical data on public procurements were needed to improve and speed up the procurement process. There was also a need to design and implement fault tolerant architecture and infrastructure with aggressive recovery time (DR site).

The Electronic Public Procurement System (EPPS) is a centralised e-service platform and web application, available on the Internet (https://e-nabavki.gov.mk) and enabling a 100% electronic public procurement process in Macedonia. It has led to greater efficiency and economy in the area of public procurement. EPPS is used on the national scale, by all public institutions in the procurement process (contracting authorities), domestic and foreign economic operators, and other stakeholders indirectly involved in public procurement (NGOs, journalists and the general public). EPPS is managed by the PPB. EPPS is the only system for public procurement in Macedonia and its use is mandatory for all public institutions in the public procurement process. The system provides complete process automation, transparent electronic registration and communication of all stakeholders in the field of public procurement, and implementation, monitoring and supervision of all procedures and rules stated in the Public Procurement Law and other regulations, thus delivering efficient e-services to the contracting authorities and economic operators alike. The overall implementation of this complex solution improved the process of public procurement and introduced a tool for measuring the performance of public service delivery. The implemented e-Procurement workflow engine orchestrates all procurement proceedings and provides enough information to determine the current state of each case, as well as its state at any point in the past. Every activity in the system is noted in the history activity log. The entities included in the data model provide the implementation with a complex configuration

engine. The procurement workflow engine orchestrates the activities concerning the realisation of requests and presents them to the external users.

2. Change Process/Dynamics

The EPPS was implemented in 2014 by an external software vendor in less than 12 months and has been continuously upgraded and improved ever since. During the first years of design and implementation, the focus was on improving the legal framework and strengthening PPB's institutional capacity. PPB now provides full support to the contracting authorities and economic operators (via it contact centre, website and network of certified trainers). There is mandatory certification and recertification of procurement officers and trainers, and quality control mechanisms are in place. The main objective now is to ensure the smooth and proper enforcement of the regulations in practice, through EPPS. EPPS enables electronic trading between the contracting authorities (purchasers) in Macedonia and the domestic and foreign economic operators (suppliers). EPPS eliminates paperwork and improves the efficiency and effectiveness of implementing public procurement procedures.

Figure 122: Main Features of the e-Procurement
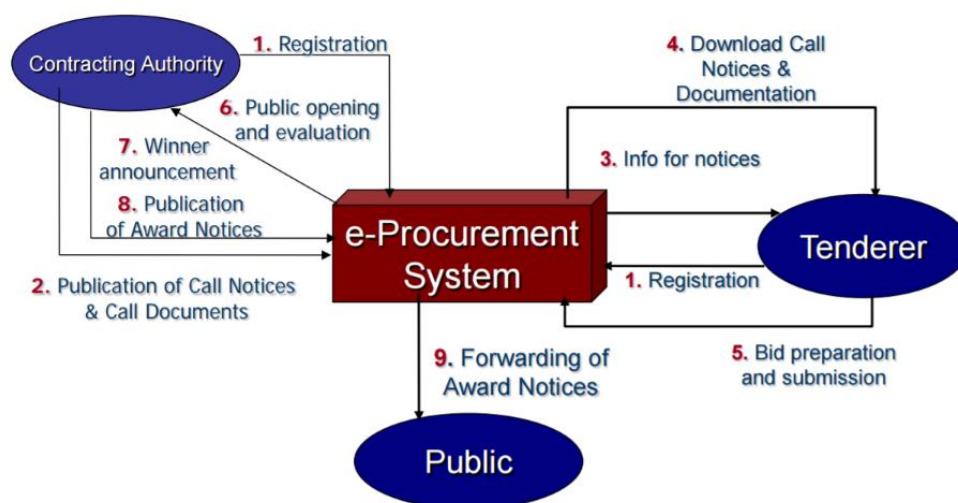
List of main services and features:

- ➢ Web-based - simple and user-friendly system;
- ➢ Central Software-as-a-Service - online e-Procurement platform for all public institutions in Macedonia;
- ➢ 100% electronic public procurement procedure for all types of procurement (open calls, restricted, simplified);
- ➢ Enables 100% electronic communication between contracting authorities and domestic and foreign economic operators;
- ➢ Eliminates paperwork thus ensuring efficiency and cost effectiveness of the contract award procedures;
- ➢ Publication of all notices (CN, CAN, cancelation notice, technical dialogue, negative reference);
- ➢ Mandatory publication of tender documentation when conducting e-procurement

- ➤ Enables subscriptions for information on newly published contract notices;
- ➤ Free download of active tender documentation (only registered economic operators)
- ➤ Free tender documentation preview;
- ➤ Posting of questions and answers;
- ➤ Online submission of tenders/requests to participate (financial and technical offers must be digitally signed);
- ➤ Public opening and evaluation of tenders;
- ➤ Selection of the most favourable tenderer, announcement of winner and notification of all tenderers;
- ➤ Electronic Auctions – lowest price or MEAT;
- ➤ Generation of different statistical reports;
- ➤ Maintenance of electronic tender dossiers;
- ➤ Extensive use of digital signatures;
- ➤ Online payment;
- ➤ Announcements by international institutions.

The main challenge of the system was to design and implement a high performance, high availability platform enabling high-volume real-time electronic procurement processes and having an architecture allowing easy introduction of new functionalities and continuous upgrades and improvements.

3. Reform Results/Outcome

The benefits of the project can be summarised as follows*:
- ➤ For public institutions - increased transparency and efficiency - significant money savings, time savings when processing and evaluating bids, more efficient and standardised work procedures, expanded supplier base;
- ➤ For the private sector - increased competition and new business opportunities to become government suppliers, potential for corruption slashed, increased confidence in the public procurement process, bidding costs slashed, SMEs' facilitated access to the public procurement market;
- ➤ For society – transparency, accountability and trust in public money spending, public money savings.

The introduction of the e- procurement process contributed to:
- ➤ Increased efficiency in the public sector;
- ➤ Time and cost savings in the contract award procedures and improved management and implementation of awarded contracts;
- ➤ Increased transparency and fair competition in procedures;
- ➤ Better monitoring and review of contracts and hence greater compliance with rules and policies to minimise corruption and abuse;
- ➤ Strengthening of competition by improving access to the public sector market;
- ➤ Better and faster communication between contracting authorities;
- ➤ Uniformity and standardisation of the steps.

Latest processed (2016) statistics:

➢ No. of users: 1,433 contracting authorities, 16,286 users, 6,902/12,702 economic operators;
➢ Posted: 18,444 announcements and 30,168 contract notices worth circa €956,000,000;
➢ 18,433 tender documentation submitted;
➢ 39,000 auctions, 149 auctions a day on average, peak of 1000+ auctions a day;
➢ 28,956 final price bids, 100 final price bids a day;
➢ 10% more visitors compared to 2015;
➢ The value of public procurements stood at 30% of the government budget;
➢ 100% electronic tools for public procurement by 2018;
➢ Savings generated in the procurement process – circa 36% or, approximately €98,000,000.

The system simplified administrative procedures and reduced public procurement paperwork, both for buyers and suppliers. The transparency of the procurement processes has increased thanks to simplified access to procurement data and their reuse.

The design is easy to use and understandable, hence a lower number of user errors. New functionalities are introduced daily and visual changes are made to meet the users' requirements.

The system is integrated with a portal that publishes the latest news and organises system events. The use of the system is mandatory, wherefore there was no need for special promotional or user-motivation activities.

There are weekly trainings in using the system and in the latest legislative changes in the area of public procurement. New guidelines and documents with technical instructions are continuously prepared every day to facilitate use.

Various functionalities are being developed and new modules implemented in order to improve the system and increase overall user satisfaction.

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

The EPPS is a truly complex solution that involves a complex process and a large number of participants and different privileges in the process supported by integration with many systems: the Central Register System, the National Bank, the PPB web portal, the system of public enterprises, and the Official Gazette.

A number of internal and external factors must be taken into account for daily operation management and maintenance of the system.

The implemented system is highly modular and configurable and has already been used in other areas of procurement. The system is easy to replicate in any other context. However, the replication of the system has to take into consideration the local context, legislation and processes.

PART 4: Delivery of e-Services

Increasingly, public administrations are using the Internet to bring services to citizens and businesses. This evolved quickly from the passive (one-way access to basic public information) to the interactive (two-way engagement, allowing sophisticated transactions to take place). The most basic level of eGovernment is the provision of useful *information* to citizens and business users on public services online. This evolved into more sophisticated *communication*, whereby the administration moves beyond setting out basic information (such as working hours of public facilities, citizens' rights and entitlements to services, etc.), and opens a dialogue with service users, allowing information sources to be interrogated (such as real-time availability of public transport), ask questions, submit comments and complaints, etc. Opening communication channels leads logically to *transactions*: enabling citizens, businesses and public authorities to access and use public services online, for example in submitting applications, registering births or business start-ups, making payments or purchasing certificates. An administration's first step in defining a multi-channel strategy consists of determining its objectives: why does it want to offer a variety of channels? Only if it has a clear vision can it make properly motivated choices, in terms of which channels it should implement and how it can redesign its services to reap the optimal benefit.

This part presents the following inspiring practices:

- ➢ e-Kiosk - Self-Service Automated Machine (KOSOVO*)
- ➢ Automation of Life Events - Delivery Unit (SERBIA)
- ➢ Electronic Construction Permit Issuance System (MACEDONIA)
- ➢ Use of Electronic Certificates to Declare Imports and Exports in a Single Administrative Document (ALBANIA)
- ➢ EDI – the Fast and Easy Way to Declare Taxes (Kosovo*)
- ➢ e-Parliament (MACEDONIA) 393

e-Kiosk - Self-Service Automated Machine (KOSOVO*)

1. Content and Background

The Pristina Municipality, with a total population of 198,972 according to the latest Census, is one of the first municipalities in the Western Balkans and more broadly that has facilitated the automatic retrieval of digital documents from the Civil Register (since 2015).

Pristina residents had for years faced long queues in which they waited to obtain a document from the Civil Register. They were often unable to obtain the documents they needed in one go.

Long waiting times often led to corruption, inadequate behaviour of both the staff and the citizens, frayed nerves in both camps and even sexual harassment (in the Municipality of Pristina).

The idea to have a genuine digital service derived from the service offered at ATMs of commercial banks and the desire to provide public services to citizens in a similar fashion.

The workflow process was clearly defined and the equipment needed for this process was subject to approval by the Civil Register Agency of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Personal Data Protection Agency.

The Personal Data Protection Agency needed to be reassured that this system did not compromise the personal data of citizens in any way. The only difference lies in the fact that citizens can obtain their civil status documents from the e-Kiosk and their money from the ATMs.

Six types of documents can be issued by the self-service automatic electronic system.

1. Birth extract;
2. Birth certificate;
3. Marital status certificate;
4. Citizenship certificate;
5. Children's certificate; and
6. Residence certificate.

These documents account for 85% of the general applications for documents made by Pristina's residents. The system is almost the same as an ATM. There is no need for human resources, all the users need to do is scan their ID document (identification card or passport), pay the fee – and they will have the document they need in just 45 seconds.

2. Change Process/Dynamics

The whole process is totally digitalised and available 24/7. The citizens are identified by their personal identification numbers on their (ordinary or biometric) IDs or passports. The interface is fully adaptable and the touchscreen enables simple communication. The e-Kiosk system has returned its investments in only 8 months. A web service designed for the verification of the personal identification numbers and communication with the main database of the Civil Registration Agency has been developed in DotNet programming language, but it can be integrated into any platform without any problems.

The Civil Register's automatic digital system is a multilingual system (Albanian, Serbian, English) providing high security, efficient and quality services. The extraordinary interest of broadcasters, representatives of EU countries, the countries of the Western Balkans and other states in e-Kiosk testifies that this new digital service represents a revolution in the delivery of services to citizens.

In addition to the equipment (touchscreen, 2D and 3D scanner, smart coin dispenser, etc.), the e-Kiosk is also equipped with: a card reader and city card (a new product that was launched in 2017); a certified encryptor and fingerprint scanner (once all the residents have biometric ID cards or passports, all they will have to do to be identified is put their finger on the designated place) - making this system the best provider of services to the citizens.

The presentations organised in 2016 and 2017 were attended by the Ambassador of France in Kosovo*, representatives of the German Embassy in Kosovo*, the Macedonian Ministry of Information Society and Administration, the Ministry of Interior and the General Directorate of Civil

Status in Tirana, representatives of the City of Zagreb and the Belgian city of Namur, as well as many interested media.

3. Reform Results/Outcome

This system has reduced the waiting times from 3-4 hours (a very old problem in the Municipality of Pristina) to just minutes. Only one e-Kiosk was installed in the Pristina municipality at the beginning; four other e-Kiosks were due to be installed in the urban neighbourhoods in 2018, following the monitoring of the post-implementation phase and analysis of the efficiency of this system.

The system does not allow for any interference in personal data, or their amendment or deletion. Citizens are now identified on the basis of their ID cards (biometric or plain, since not all people are equipped with biometric IDs in Kosovo*) or passports.

Furthermore, studies on the types of documents citizens apply for have been conducted. The following parameters were analysed:

- ➢ Types of documents requested by the citizens;
- ➢ Age of the applicants;
- ➢ Highest application rate period(s); and
- ➢ Number of documents obtained by citizens from 2014 to 2015.

The age of Kosovo* and Pristina residents was also taken into consideration, in order to conclude which age categories were capable of communicating through the interface and how widespread use of IT equipment was (research conducted by USAID and UNDP was used).

Financial costs, budgeting opportunities, maintenance and hosting - all those issues were reviewed - and the Municipality finally decided to pilot the e-Kiosk project. The promotion of the e-Kiosk project on 11 June 2015 (Pristina Liberation Day) caused tremendous interest.

The software enables interconnection via the web service with the Civil Registration Agency and stores the data in the local database and the central database of the Civil Registration Agency. It can generate various reports for the Municipality of Pristina. The software provides services by communicating with the relevant equipment for issuing certificates and also contains modules for authentication and authorisation.

A total of 85,000 documents were printed by March 31, 2018. Prior to the implementation of the e-Kiosk project, citizens waited at the counter six or seven minutes on average for their documents.

After the implementation of the e-Kiosk, the average retrieval time at the counter dropped to between two and five minutes. Nowadays, nine citizens can be supplied with their documents at the counter in one hour.

With the e-Kiosk system, 80 citizens can use the same service every hour (each document is delivered in 45 seconds.

Statement by Pristina Mayor Mr. Shpend Ahmeti

"Pristina government's vision and mission regarding administrative services is that public administration is to serve the citizens, providing them with innovative and digitalised services with the aim of facilitating and transforming their lives, so that they can live them as they wish. Preparations have been made to automate the work and organisational processes, as a basis for the development of new electronic (digital) services befitting a modern public administration. The municipality aims to achieve excellence by providing smart and sustainable digital services, which will ensure a higher quality of life for its residents.

The Pristina municipal administration has been transformed into an administration in the service of citizens, by reducing waiting times and facilitating procedures for issuing civil status documents, eliminating corruption, halting sexual harassment, providing quick and complete answers to questions and requests by all citizens, fully publishing data on municipal spending, and increasing transparency.

The Pristina municipality will always remain in the service of the citizens, and the best service is provided only when the citizens are actively involved in our decisions. For this reason, we are increasingly offering opportunities for active and direct public engagement in municipal policies, especially by providing the citizens with digital and innovative services."

In two months alone, 1,889 birth certificates were issued via e-Kiosk, exceeding the municipal authorities' expectations by far.

This project won the prestigious Albanian Awards Edition IV Award in the category of Public Services in 2016.

Automation of Life Events - Delivery Unit (SERBIA)

1. Content and Background

The Unit for the Implementation of Strategic Government Projects (Delivery Unit) has been established by the Prime Minister's Office to develop and coordinate the implementation of the 2016–2018 Plan of Priority Activities for the Reduction of Administrative Burdens in the Republic of Serbia (Stop to Bureaucracy Plan),[439] aimed at identifying and eliminating tangible administrative obstacles in the citizens' life events.

The quality of public services and administrative procedures is one of the most important factors affecting the quality of life of the citizens and business competitiveness, while bureaucratisation is one of the major obstacles to ensuring service delivery quality. Serbia's inability to efficiently deal with administrative burdens and overly bureaucratised public administration is reflected in its low ranking in international reports.[440] The Delivery Unit took seriously its mandate of assisting the Government in improving the situation in this area, through the committed implementation of the Stop to Bureaucracy Plan. One of the priority projects/initiatives identified in the Stop to

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[439] The Plan is available in Serbian at: www.mduls.gov.rs/doc/Stop%20birokratiji%20konacni.doc

[440] Serbia ranks 47th in the Doing Business 2017 report and 90th in the Global Competitiveness Report.

Bureaucracy Plan is the "Baby, Welcome to the World" project,[441] involving the creation of a one stop shop service for the parents of new-borns.

The digital one stop shop for a major life event, birth of a baby (popularly called "e-Baby"), enables parents to register their baby's name, address and health insurance while still in hospital. The implementation of the project started in September 2015 with the establishment of a Working Group comprising the representatives of the following government and public institutions:

- ➢ Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Governments (MPALSG);
- ➢ Ministry of the Interior (MoI);
- ➢ Mandatory Social Insurance Central Register (CROSO);
- ➢ National Health Insurance Fund (RFZO);
- ➢ Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia;
- ➢ Office for Information Technologies and e-Government;
- ➢ Ministry of Health;
- ➢ Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy;
- ➢ The Post of Serbia; and
- ➢ The Faculty of Organisational Sciences, University of Belgrade.

The following legislation had to be amended:

- Law on Vital Records (birth, marriage, death registers) - to enable hospital staff to register births electronically;
- Law on Administrative Fees – to abolish the fee for registering the new-born's residence
- A number of MoI and MPALSG by-laws and rulebooks on the registration of residence and birth registration forms.

The Delivery Unit had to organise training on the application of the system for both Birth Register and hospital staff, in order to ensure the full functionality of the system. These trainings were delivered in Belgrade in group sessions. We had problems with IT equipment in hospitals at the outset of the implementation phase and therefore had to seek the assistance of donors in supplying us with newer computers, printers and other equipment for hospitals that had very old computers. Also, it is very important to have a good support system because there are many questions at the beginning, wherefore the establishment of a good call centre and support is necessary. In hospitals, electronic birth registration and the entire service is conducted by their staff that have other duties as well. In our view, the hospitals need to have staff that will be exclusively working on registration.

2. Change Process/Dynamics

The implementation of the "Baby, Welcome to the World'' project, or, as we call it, "e-Baby", comprises two phases:

Phase 1 – Development of a one stop shop service in hospitals with regard to three administrative

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[441] Stop to Bureaucracy Plan, p. 9

procedures:

      a) Registration of a baby in the Birth Register
      b) Registration of a baby's residence
      c) Registration of a baby's health insurance

Phase 1 implementation started in April 2016 and was completed by the end of the year, by which time the service was up and running in all hospitals in Serbia.

Phase 2 – Addition of another service: application for parental allowances and local government financial benefits to parents of new-borns.

Implementation of Phase 2 was under way and due to be completed by the end of 2018. The service of applying for parental allowances and local financial benefits has to date been launched in five local self-governments in Serbia, including Belgrade, and, by the end of 2018, it will be operational in all the local self-governments.

The total financial resources needed for the development of the application for electronic registration in the Birth Register, standing at five million RSD (app. €42,000) in 2016, were secured from the state budget. Additional equipment - computers and software - was bought with funds raised from various donors. The costs of upgrading the application in Phase 2 with the parental allowance service stood at RSD 6,750,000 (app. € 56,000) and with the local financial benefit service at circa RSD 2,500,000 (app. €21,000).

The project is implemented by the Delivery Unit, Team for Public Administration Reform, with the technical support of the Office for Information Technologies and e-Government.

Process

The first step is to ensure that *both parents* are present when the hospital staff are filling out the integrated online form. This form is available at the e-Government Portal www.euprava.gov.rs. Parents must present their valid ID cards and must agree on the following:

1. The baby's name;
2. The baby's residence (under Serbian law, parents can choose only between the mother's and father's registered residence if they differ);
3. Whether the baby will be registered as the mother's or the father's health insurance dependent.

The whole process is organised in four steps:

➢ Step 1: Authorised hospital staff log into the system and fill out the integrated form;
➢ Step 2: Authorised hospital staff enter the ID numbers of both parents, and the system retrieves all the necessary information about the parents using web services technology – information from the Birth Register kept by MPALSG, information about their registered residence from the MoI register and information about their social/health insurance from CROSO (operating within the Ministry of Finance). Most of the information is already pre-

filled and retrieved from different government datasets, which fosters the efficiency of the process.

➢ Step 3: The forms are printed out and the parents are asked to sign them.
➢ Step 4: Authorised hospital staff sign the integrated online form using their electronic certificate once the parents sign the printed paper forms.

After the authorised hospital staff sign the online form, the e-Government Portal communicates first with the Birth Register, by sending it the data in XML. Birth Register officials open these data by using their own IT system. Once the Birth Register officials verify all the data and obtain a personal identification number for the baby (direct online communication between the MPALSG and MoI), they register the baby in the Birth Register and send the information back to the e-Government Portal (birth certificate in XML form). The following two things happen once the e-Government Portal receives such notification:

1. The parents receive an SMS or e-mail notifying them that their baby has been registered in the Birth Register, and

2. The e-Government Portal sends the data to the MoI and CROSO to register the baby's residence and health insurance

Figure 123: Steps and Flow in the e-Bay Project
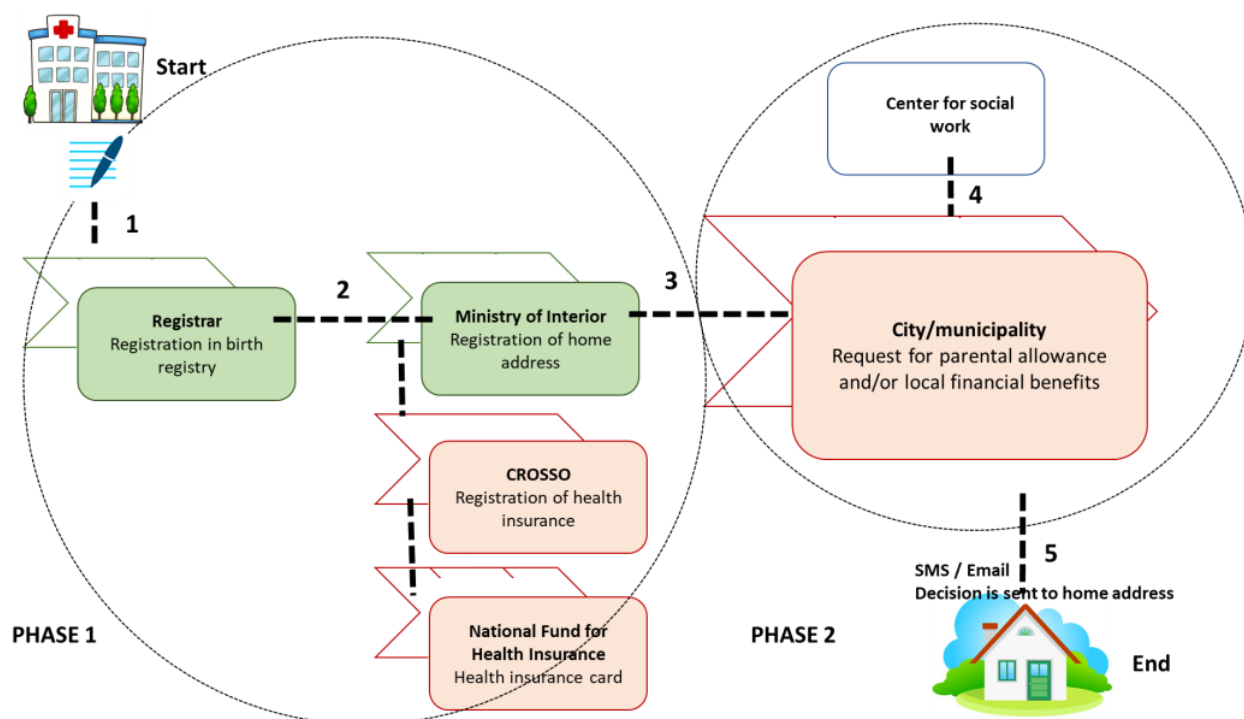
Both these two systems send the information back to the e-Government Portal once they successfully register the baby's residence and insurance and the parents receive another two text messages or e-mails notifying them thereof. Later on, hard copies of the baby's birth certificate and health card are sent to the address where the baby is registered. The hospital sends the

paper copies of the birth and residence registration forms signed by the parents to the relevant municipal offices (Vital Records Department) and police stations (MoI) every fortnight or every month just for records keeping purposes, since it is important to have the parents' signatures on these forms. Depending on how quickly the Vital Records Department staff verify the data received from the e-Government Portal, the registration in the Birth Register lasts from 15 minutes to several days (for example, in case the parents are not married and the father needs to give an official statement confirming that he is the baby's father). Once the baby is registered in the Birth Register, it takes only a *couple of minutes for the registration of the baby's residence and health insurance*. The mothers often receive SMS or e-mail notification that all the procedures have been completed while they are still in hospital.

The major challenges encountered were related to the IT infrastructure, redesign of procedures and implementation of the necessary trainings for staff in hospitals, municipal offices and social work centres.

3. Reform Results/Outcome

The e-Baby service improves the efficiency of state institutions by relying more extensively on electronic exchange of data (in line with the new General Administrative Procedures Act). It facilitates simpler and more efficient work of civil servants processing the parents' requests, savings in time and money for the parents, and elimination of paper-based evidence for exercising parental rights in various administrative procedures.

This service brings time and money savings both to the citizens and the government. As noted, it takes only several minutes to apply for one of the provided services through the system, whereas parents used to spend several days visiting a number of institutions to collect the required documentation and register their baby. Along with efficiency, higher quality service to the parents of the new-borns is ensured.

A total of 109,660 new-borns have been registered since the introduction of the e-Baby service in hospitals. Parents of 11,995 babies either did not want to or could not complete the necessary procedures in hospital and opted for completing the process in the traditional manner. The overall number of babies, whose parents wanted to complete the procedure in hospital and, thus, gave their consent, stood at 97,666; of them, 93,753 babies have been registered in the Birth Register, 93,316 babies have registered residence, and 84,861 babies have been registered as health insurance dependents.[442]

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

As the implementation of this project requires excellent coordination and dedication of all stakeholders, it might be good to have top-down coordination by a high strategic level, such as the Delivery Unit's coordination of this initiative. One of the major added values of the e-Baby initiative as the first one stop shop service in Serbia is that it provided the MPALSG and other

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[442] Official data retrieved from the system on 9 July 2018

relevant institutions with the necessary information and experience to implement similar one stop shops, and its potential for replication to other services is huge. Phase 2 of the project is thus being implemented, replicating the e-Baby service to another life event – application for parental allowances. It is currently available in five cities, City of Belgrade being one of them, which even went a step further and added its local benefits to this one stop shop. The project's replication potential is also apparent in the aspiration to expand the initiative to other municipalities to follow Belgrade's example and add their local benefits to this one stop shop. As per transferability to other countries in the region, the excellent statistics and public opinion about the service in Serbia can only serve as encouragement to the countries in the region to seek any support they may need to understand all the steps taken in developing such a one stop shop.

> **Statement by Head of the Delivery Unit of the Public Administration Reform Sector Ms Ana Šarenac**
>
> "The digital one stop shop for a major life event, the birth of a baby (popularly called "e-Baby"), enables parents to register the baby's name, residence and health insurance while the mother and baby are still in hospital. The implementation of the project started in April 2016 and all maternity wards were providing this service by the end of the year.
>
> The service was recently expanded to enable parents to apply for parental allowances. This so-called Phase 2 of the project will be implemented successively throughout 2018. Currently, it is available in five cities, the City of Belgrade being one of them, which even went a step further and added its local benefits to this one stop shop. We encountered major challenges related to IT infrastructure, redesign of procedures and necessary trainings for hospital, municipal and social work centre staff. The introduction of such a service requires excellent coordination and dedication of all stakeholders. The project's current focus is on encouraging other municipalities to follow Belgrade's example and add their local benefits to this one stop shop."
>
> Given the excellent statistics and public opinion about this service, I would encourage all colleagues in the region to reach out for any support they may need to understand all the steps taken in developing such a one stop shop. This service brings time and money savings to both the citizens and the government, but, most importantly, it brings high quality service to the parents of new-borns. It is a genuine reform."

Electronic Construction Permit Issuance System (MACEDONIA)

1. Content and Background

The Macedonian Association of Local Self-Government Units (ZELS) represents the interests of local governments in communication with the central government. ZELS (100+ staff) has been actively contributing to the development of local democracy and the successful implementation of the decentralisation process and related national efforts.

The main goal of the e-Construction Permit project, implemented in tandem with the Ministry of Transport and Communication, was to put in place a solution enabling the tracking of the construction permit issuance process through management of the required legal steps, documents and inter-institutional communication. The goal of this information system has been to enable access to information to anyone involved in the process, anywhere and on any device and to speed up decision-making, improve transparency and cut the red tape in municipalities and other relevant institutions.

The system orchestrates and automates the construction permit issuance process by managing all the required legal steps, documents and inter-institutional communication, thus ensuring compliance with regulations and timely service delivery. It:

➢ Reduces the time necessary for submission;
➢ Defines the roles of all relevant municipal staff;
➢ Distributes cases within municipalities;
➢ Tracks time, status and process;
➢ Provides insight in independent reviews of applications by municipality/case officer/ institution/role/applicant;
➢ Interconnects all municipalities with external institutions relevant to permit issuance (electrical company, water authority, Cadastre, etc.);
➢ Facilitates simple and flexible communication between citizens and municipalities and municipalities and institutions;
➢ Measures the performance of civil servants involved in the process; and,
➢ Reduces paper usage by municipalities and institutions – green e-solution.

2. Change Process/Dynamics

The development and deployment of the complete main e-construction permit issuance process solution was completed in six months, but the system continued growing and expanding to all other related application processes over the next 12 months. Currently, the system covers more than 20 application processes.

The main obstacles/implementation challenges were:

➢ Transparency of municipal operations and the issuance process;
➢ Cutting down the duration of the issuance process by measuring and monitoring municipal performance;
➢ Significant reduction of application submission and processing costs;
➢ Optimisation of the processes;
➢ Increasing the agility of the administration; and,
➢ Connecting with external relevant institutions.

3. Reform Results/Outcome

Macedonia soared to 1st place in the Doing Business 2015 report in Europe and Central Asia for Dealing with Construction Permits when it launched the system. The process is 100% paperless. The usage of digital signatures is 100%.

The system was implemented in all the institutions in the country authorised to issue construction permits, notably in:

➢ 81 municipalities;
➢ 200+ external institutions (power supply, public utility, waste water companies, etc.);
➢ 1,000+ trained stuff;
➢ 8,700+ submitted applications in three years.

Complete transparency of all construction permit applications in the country, for citizens and for

civil servants has been achieved.

Outputs/benefits for citizens:

➢ Fast and effective way of submitting applications without long queues, misunderstandings or working hour constraints;
➢ Transparency of the complete permit issuance process, through insight in the applications' status;
➢ Provision of detailed information about the applications' status via SMS and e-mail notifications; citizen engagement if any additional documents are required in the process;
➢ Direct savings in application submission since only digital files and scans are required, no printing/photocopying costs, etc.

Outputs/benefits for the Government, municipalities and institutions

➢ Complete overview of the applications' status;
➢ Overview of the applicants' compliance with legally binding deadlines;
➢ Digital interconnection with external institutions to ensure their accurate response and receipt of their opinions on each application;
➢ Greater efficiency;
➢ Process control;
➢ Increased productivity and capacity for processing applications;
➢ Transparency of each segment of the issuance process;
➢ Covers the complete permit issuance process.

The application was designed on the "Wizard principle" for each process. Applicants can attach all the required documents for every type of application, digitally sign the applications and submit them through the system, wherefore the civil servants involved in the process cannot request any "new" previously unspecified documents afterwards. The system allows the collection of consents and approvals of all the relevant external institutions, dynamically, case-by-case, through the system, and in just a few days, thus shortening the complex procedure and ensuring its transparency for the applicants. All the steps are proven by the digital signatures of all users.

The system was designed and developed in line with all the user interface standards, so it is easy to use and navigate, and provides all the requisite notifications and alerts.

The preparation phase involved consultations with several municipalities, external institutions and the association of architects and all their suggestions were taken into the consideration. There were no promotional activities as the use of this system is mandatory by law and the official launch of the system was covered by all news media.

The system was developed in accordance with the legal framework and procedures, but converted and modified for digital use only.

The system has been continuously improved and upgraded to reflect the changes in construction

law. As per infrastructure, the system was upgraded on cloud platform to reduce costs. All submission fees remained the same.

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

As regulations changed several times during the design and implementation phases, the system was continuously customised. Its use was at first optional but later became mandatory for all applicants.

One of the challenges we had to face arose from the fact that all construction projects submitted in the past had to remain in hardcopy and additionally processed in the system in accordance with the previous paper-based procedures, meaning that, at one point, there was sequential implementation of the application process.

The solution can be replicated in other countries, which should, however, consider:

  ➢ Performing a precise analysis of their permit application processes under construction law; and,
  ➢ Tailoring the offered solution to their local context, taking into account the aspects of the application procedure.

Use of Electronic Certificates to Declare Imports and Exports in a Single Administrative Document (ALBANIA)

1. Content and Background

The national customs authorities have the main responsibility for supervising international trade in the Republic of Albania, contributing to open and fair trade by enforcing trade policies and in other sectors of the Albanian economy affecting the market and security of the entire commercial chain. For this purpose, the customs authorities intend to protect the financial and environmental interests of the Republic of Albania from unfair and illegal trade, while supporting legal business activities; ensure the security and safety of the Republic of Albania and its inhabitants, as well as the environment, in close cooperation with other authorities, where necessary; and, maintain the proper balance between customs controls and facilitation of legitimate trade.

The Albanian Customs Administration (ACA) has consistently been endeavouring to successfully fulfil its mission, and the commitments undertaken by the Government within Albania's EU accession process.

The Albanian Council of Ministers adopted Decree No. 9 on 11 January 2017 providing for a new organisational structure of the Albanian Customs Administration to ensure it fulfils its administrative duties, realises its institutional mission, increases the efficiency of its work and responds to new challenges.

ACA has been focusing on the implementation of the provisions of the new Customs Code providing for a transition to paperless customs, i.e. submission of customs declarations only in electronic form.

ACA intends to assess the fulfilment of conditions regarding interoperability and interconnectivity with the EU IT systems. The national Tariff system should be compatible with EU TARIC and it has to be operational before Albania's accession to the EU.

2. Change Process/Dynamics

ACA has been involved in adapting the Albanian Customs IT system to ensure its full compliance and interaction with the EU systems. It has also been taking steps to improve its organisation, training and communication with the Albanian authorities.

For nearly a year now, ACA has been actively involved in simplifying and reducing procedures for entrepreneurs and citizens, with a view to creating paperless customs, including, inter alia, the implementation of a central evaluation system in the General Directorate of Customs.

Electronic Documentation Certification is another achievement of the Customs Administration in the framework of creating paperless customs. Electronic certification does away with the submission of physical documentation to Customs Offices. Actually, ACA is in the testing process and is pursuing the goal of carrying out paperless clearance in cooperation with the National Agency for Information Society (NAIS).

ACA is actively involved in the deregulation process undertaken by the Albanian Government.

Within the scope of this reform, ACA has proposed the online mapping of 24 permits, licences and authorisations, entailing the entities' online application for authorisation involving electronic attachment of the required documentation, the ability to track the progress of their applications and electronically receive the customs authorities' replies.

This reform will ultimately render unnecessary the entrepreneurs' physical presence in ACA, eliminate delays and drastically cut the time spent on collecting documents, applying and waiting for a response. According to a study conducted by ACA, the process of collecting documents and filing applications, which used to take over eight hours, now takes just a few minutes.

The following seven applications can be made via the e-Albania portal at the moment:

1. Authorisation for temporary exemption regime with partial exemption;
2. Authorisation for passive processing mode;
3. Authorisation for active processing mode;
4. Authorisation for customs warehousing regime;
5. Creation of a profile in the Sicpatrace system for creating fiscal stamps;
6. Modification profile in the Sicpatrace system, additional product category; and,
7. Modification profile in the Sicpatrace system, additional supplier.

The initial phase, launched at the end of 2017, focuses on the use of e-certificates during the process of delivering goods.

3. Reform Results/Outcome

The software includes the electronic signature possibility. Its use, which will constitute a legal obligation, provides for paperless declarations and a sense of freedom for businesses. With the use of electronic certification, it is unnecessary to physically go to the customs office to submit the declaration and accompanying documents.

On the other hand, this system:

1. Guarantees compliance with and uniform application of the customs valuation methodology in the entire territory, ensuring the equality of the entities by finally solving the problem of the differential treatment of the same goods in different customs areas.
2. Reduces scope for corruption to a minimum by eliminating direct, physical contacts between the entrepreneurs or their representatives and the customs staff.
3. Creates a paperless customs environment. Although the operation of paperless customs is not dependent only on customs centred evaluation, the successful operation of this system is crucial for transition to the paperless system. Upon the completion of the six-month pilot phase, all customs procedures will be processed electronically. Economic operators can also declare directly from their headquarters without having to physically present the documentation. This operation mode is expected to shorten the time economic operators spend on filing, since they will not be required to submit documentation on paper at the customs counters. On the other hand, it enables more accurate monitoring of customs declarations by the oversight authorities. Also, the paper archive will now be replaced with the electronic archive.
4. Shortens the time of customs clearance. The introduction of the Blue Channel, this innovation of the customs system, eliminates the need to subject customs declarations to documentary and/or physical checks at customs terminals; control takes place at a later time, after the goods are delivered. Blue Channel operates automatically, does away with duplicate controls, and increases the accountability of customs personnel. This way of control provides lawful businesses with more breathing space, moving the time of customs control from the customs premises to those of the economic operators, and reducing the money and time they spend on processing the goods.
5. Introduces the notion of post-operation control, based on a risk analysis that enables a fairer allocation of human and logistic resources by focus on major issues. Automatic selection does away with duplicate controls and increases the accountability of customs personnel.
6. Increases transparency in decision-making. Traceability and transparency in electronic communications, as well as in decision-making on customs valuation both instantly and during the conduct of post-clearance control, will lead to increased accountability for compliance with customs legislation. Electronic communication will eliminate delays and misinterpretations in decision-making.

ACA experts are currently working on both the electronic format and paper declaration. This development simplifies declaration, reduces time for following up declarations, as well as costs of

purchasing customs declarations, photocopying documents attached to all copies of the declarations and their printing.

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

The project can serve as a pilot for initiatives undertaken by other institutions.

"Content specific" factors (both in the project itself, but also the context in which it is implemented) influencing the results (positive or negative) remain to be identified during its performance since precautions have been taken to ensure that there is no impact on the IT infrastructure, both hardware and software.

Every environment where the use of an electronic certificate is implemented has its specifics. In ACA, the project has mainly focused on the electronic certification of data in the declaration.

EDI - the Fast and Easy Way to Declare Taxes (Kosovo*)

1. Content and Background

The Tax Administration of Kosovo* (TAK), is an autonomous executive Agency under the supervision of the Ministry of Finance. Its mission is to:

 ➢ Maximise voluntary and full compliance with tax law;
 ➢ Provide professional, transparent and effective services to the taxpayer community in order for them to understand their tax paying obligations; and
 ➢ Ensure fair and uniform application and enforcement of tax law in order to collect revenues for the government budget in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

TAK's mission is to maximise voluntary compliance with applicable law, as well as provide professional, transparent and effective services to taxpayers.

To accomplish this mission, TAK has consistently been committed to creating more favourable conditions for taxpayers and easier and simpler procedures for their fulfilment of their tax obligations. Within this objective, TAK launched a project to enable taxpayers to electronically declare their taxes, via the so-called EDI.

Manual disclosure of tax liabilities has been assessed as ineffective and with many deficiencies such as: multiple documents, time consuming; disclosure in limited time; numerous visits to TAK offices, taxpayer delays in tax declaration, etc.

The EDI is a modern, fast and easy way to declare taxes. This system allows taxpayers to create online accounts with TAK, where they can complete, declare, pay, check their tax histories, as well as receive other services without visiting TAK at all.

The EDI has its advantages compared with the manual system, since it reduces the number of required documents and visits to the TAK office; saves time and money; enables immediate,

reliable and secure submission of tax declarations and payment of taxes 24/7 and quick and accurate processing of declarations, etc.

2. Change Process/Dynamics

The EDI was launched in September 2011. At first, only taxpayers subject to the TAK Directorate of Big Taxpayers were in the position to declare their Value Added Tax. As of early 2012, all taxpayers were able to declare VAT through the EDI system. Payment of payroll tax and pension contributions via EDI became possible in April 2012. Since 2013, the EDI system has been continuously developed for the purpose of providing billing and payment services re other types of taxes. The system was completed in 2015 and all types of taxes in Kosovo* can be declared and paid via EDI ever since.

The EDI notably offers the following services to taxpayers:

- ➢ Declaration and payment of all types of taxes;
- ➢ Declaration and payment of pension contributions;
- ➢ Correction of all types of taxes/pension contributions;
- ➢ Insight in outstanding obligations;
- ➢ Printing of tax slips;
- ➢ Online payment of taxes/contributions;
- ➢ Tax history;
- ➢ Tax balance;
- ➢ Taxpayer's statement;
- ➢ Payroll list;
- ➢ List of workers;
- ➢ Purchase book;
- ➢ Sale book;
- ➢ Tax certification;
- ➢ Application for VAT registration;
- ➢ Change of profile and password;
- ➢ Appointment of tax consultant/accountant;
- ➢ Request for help.

The EDI system was developed by TAK employees: tax law professionals developed/designed the processes, which were then translated into EDI by TAK's IT professionals.

3. Reform Results/Outcome

All the EDI services were introduced as TAK had planned. In general, all taxpayers use the EDI to meet their tax obligations. VAT and payroll tax and pension contributions can only be paid electronically, via EDI, while other types of taxes can be declared either electronically or physically (albeit only a negligent number of taxpayers use the latter option). In conclusion, taxpayers generally use EDI.

Thanks to EDI, TAK is in possession of precise taxpayer data. As of 27 March 2018, EDI has

been used by 76,739 of the 79,643 taxpayers registered since the system was launched in September 2011, and a total of 7,555,631 tax declarations have been filed in that period.

EDI has eliminated all the possible errors taxpayers can make when physically declaring their taxes, since the due taxes are automatically calculated.

Also, many taxpayers have been saving time by not having to visit TAK for other services, such as obtaining tax certificates. Furthermore, other services such as VAT registration, generation of tax slips (debts) and tax histories, etc., are considered to have greatly facilitated the taxpayers' fulfilment of their obligations.

The EDI is a very simple and user-friendly system. Furthermore, guidelines are available for each service, e.g. the EDI Registration Guide, the Tax Declaration and Pension Contributions Guide, the Tax Download Guide, the Purchase and Sale Book Guide, etc.

The EDI system immediately identifies any errors by taxpayers, notifies them thereof (in a message) and does not allow them to proceed unless they correct them. For example, if a taxpayer is declaring payroll taxes and pension contributions and an employee has misplaced his/her personal number, the system immediately identifies the error and sends a message to the taxpayer notifying him or her that the personal number is incorrect. So even if the taxpayer has a large number of employees, e.g. 500 employees and one of them has misplaced his or her personal number, the system identifies the error and notifies the taxpayer which employee has made the mistake.

In conclusion, the EDI has been providing many facilities for the taxpayers by not allowing them to make errors in their declarations.

EDI's electronic system structure is fully based on the need to relieve the taxpayers of cumbersome tax procedures. The entire process of designing and creating the system architecture has been developed in close cooperation with the Taxpayer Service Department, architects and IT systems analysts, bearing in mind the taxpayers' requirements.

The EDI provides a significant number of taxpayer services, but is also being developed to provide other new taxpayer services in the near future.

The EDI has been promoted in various ways, such as: taxpayer notifications, media, portals, spots, Facebook, presentations to stakeholders, seminars with taxpayers, et al. The EDI is highly rated by all users, who consider it extremely user-friendly.

Furthermore, TAK's Electronic Tax Declaration project in 2014 won an Albanian ICT Award for the "Best Public Service" in 2014

The EDI is continuously being developed. It is expected to offer new services in the near future, such as the submission and processing of:

- ➢ requests for VAT deregistration;
- ➢ requests of big businesses to be taxed under the real income taxation scheme;
- ➢ requests of small businesses to be taxed under the real income taxation scheme;
- ➢ business transfer requests;
- ➢ debit-credit compensation requests;
- ➢ requests for refunding pension contributions to employers;
- ➢ requests for refunding pension contributions to the self-employed;
- ➢ requests for summary reports on withholding taxes.

The EDI system continues to expand with new services, modifications and upgrades, with a view to being the best and easiest way to communicate with the taxpayers. Based on the current technical capacities, we believe that the EDI will function and provide continuous and sufficient support to the taxpayers.

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

As described above, the implementation of electronic services projects through the EDI system has facilitated the taxpayers' fulfilment of their tax obligations, as well as the work of TAK by enabling its electronic provision of information.

The key "specific-content" factors of the EDI system include:

- ➢ Its role as a mechanism/communication platform between taxpayers and TAK vis-à-vis the former's fulfilment of their tax obligations.
- ➢ Technical staff possessing the skills and knowledge for designing and developing the system as part of the existing systems.

The experience gained from the implementation of this system is huge, both in technical terms and in terms of making changes to improve labour processes, simplification and drastic cost reduction for both taxpayers and TAK.

The process of applying such a system is facilitated by clear user requirements and sufficient knowledge of the technical environment to be put in place.

e-Parliament (MACEDONIA)

1. Content and Background

The Macedonian Assembly is a representative body of citizens and a legislative branch of power. The Assembly is unicameral and has between 120 and 140 MPs. The MPs are elected to four-year terms in office at general and direct elections by secret ballot.

e-Parliament is perceived as a continually evolving concept that is embedded in the institutional approach to modern technologies in the complex parliamentary environment. It is defined as the use of ICT in parliamentary institutions with the objective of enhancing and strengthening their core functions and operations. The objective of the solution is not just to employ new technologies, but also to integrate these technologies in the existing rules and procedures, thus resulting in the successful implementation of the e-Parliament system in the Assembly's everyday operations. The aim of the e-Parliament system is to achieve more transparent, cost-effective and faster processes in the parliament by use of IT; provide access to ample, contextual information to everyone involved in parliamentary processes: MPs, professionals, experts, media and citizens; and allow faster decision-making and lesser bureaucracy via information systems enabling access to information to anyone, anywhere and on any device.

e-Parliament represents the basis for transforming the Assembly's operation methods, as well as the MPs' mindset and conduct and raising the parliament's operations to a new and advanced level. The e-Parliament system is a web application that covers the entire legislation process within the Assembly, including law initiation, preparation and holding of committee and plenary sessions, parliamentary questions, amendments, the work of the Table Office, MPs and other Assembly officials. The solution transforms the whole legislation process from a paper to paperless process, thus providing a high level of efficiency, cost-effectiveness, mobility, transparency and accountability in the process of preparation, implementation and the daily coordination of the decisions resulting from the legislation process of the Assembly. It can be used by all parliamentary staff, including the Speaker, Secretary General, all MPs and department employees. The solution also brings the legislative procedure closer to the citizens, by providing them with access to the laws and other public documents on the parliament website. This is a unique vertical solution tailored to the needs of the Assembly to achieve 100% compliance with its Rules of Procedure. The system is contextual and parliamentary role based (MP, Speaker, Secretary General, Committee member), allowing information targeting and contextual actions according to the user's role. e-Parliament aims to achieve the following goals:

➢ Provide efficient, flexible, available and transparent services to citizens;
➢ Ensure transparency in legislative operations;
➢ Redefine and optimise the existing processes;
➢ Measure and monitor parliamentary performance;
➢ Increase operational efficiency;
➢ Cut operational costs;
➢ Put in place the foundations for building "legislative knowledge";
➢ Use the potential of the existing investments in IT; and
➢ Maximise value for the taxpayers' money.

2. Change Process/Dynamics

The e-Parliament system was initially released in 2009 and has been continuously upgraded with new functionalities to improve user satisfaction. Today, the system covers the following procedures:

- ➢ Entire legislative proceedings;
- ➢ Assembly Committee proceedings;
- ➢ Plenary session proceedings;
- ➢ Amendment proceedings;
- ➢ MP question proceedings; and
- ➢ Provision of additional information, such as minutes, records, audio and video recordings, voting results.

Following is the list of its main features:

- • Single enactment consisting of a set of multiple documents and metadata;

- ➢ Workflows;
- ➢ Remote access;
- ➢ Digital signatures on every critical action;
- ➢ System generated documents and letters at every step of the process based on templates;
- ➢ Notification of deadlines, new sessions, draft enactments submitted for adoption through solution interface, e-mail, SMS;
- ➢ Collaboration (instant messaging, wikis, blogs, e-mail integration);
- ➢ Single sign-on;
- ➢ Mobile viewing;
- ➢ Contextual interface based on roles;
- ➢ Information targeting;
- ➢ Subscriptions for notifications;
- ➢ Multiple versions of enactments and documents; and,
- ➢ Business intelligence for monitoring and reporting (Scorecards and Key Performance Indicators)

3. Reform Results/Outcome

General benefits:

- ➢ Increased efficiency of MPs during the preparation and holding of plenary and Committee sessions;
- ➢ Shorter learning curve for parliamentary officials (process driven);
- ➢ Savings due to elimination of paper in the process of preparing and holding plenary and Committee sessions;
- ➢ Simple and flexible communication between the Assembly and the Government and the Assembly and the Official Gazette;
- ➢ The administration saves time and money because it no longer needs to print, copy, package, post and transport parliamentary material;
- ➢ Performance measurement; and,
- ➢ Compliance with the Assembly Rules of Procedures.

Benefits for citizens and society:

> ➤ Enables transparent access to members of the public;
> ➤ Increases transparency in operations and accessibility of the decisions;
> ➤ Contributes to the reform of the public administration enabling accumulation of "legislative knowledge"/resources;
> ➤ Protects natural resources and ecosystems; and,
> ➤ Greatly reduces adverse environmental impact and costs.

According to the latest processed statistics, for 2018:

> ➤ Number of adopted enactments: 664,
> ➤ Number of enactments submitted for adoption: 143
> ➤ Number of filed amendments: 37,223
> ➤ Number of asked questions: 174
> ➤ Number of answered questions: 160
> ➤ Number of sittings not open to the public: 224
> ➤ Number of completed sittings 130

The e-Parliament system is a solution that hugely benefits the work of the Macedonian Assembly. It collects the entire work of the parliament in one place to ensure that the entire institution functions in a productive, easy and organised fashion.

The solution was designed and developed in line with all the UI standards, so it is easy to use and navigate, and it provides all the requisite notifications and alerts. The system guides the users through the process, letting them perform only the actions they are allowed to under the parliamentary Rules of Procedure.

The Assembly web portal contains all the necessary information and enables the citizens to closely monitor the work of the legislature. Internet as a medium enables citizens to communicate with the MPs via the website. The principles of e-democracy and e-inclusion call for greater and more active involvement of the citizens, which has been enabled by the functionalities on the parliament's web portal, such as: ask the President, ask an MP, send a suggestion, Internet TV channel, public discussions, etc. All the documents related to a draft legal enactment submitted for adoption are available to the public users throughout its lifecycle in the parliament, as well as afterwards. Publication of this information on the parliament's public portal enables a higher degree of transparency, which ensures more prominent involvement of the citizens in the work of the Assembly.

The system was developed in accordance with the legal framework and procedures, but converted and modified for digital use only.

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

e-Parliament is composed of different modules: legislative processes, questions, sessions and Committee meetings. The system reduces process complexity, improves parliamentary effectiveness in meeting the needs of the citizens and access to and quality of services and communication.

Today, every country needs integrated management, monitoring and reporting on the nationwide legislation development lifecycle. The law-making process consists of several stages. As a rule, during its lifecycle, an act is prepared, scrutinised, adopted and published. The e-Parliament system is a solution that covers the entire legislative proceedings, plenary sessions and Committee meetings and provides additional information, such as minutes, records, audio and video recordings, voting results, etc.

The solution is transferable to other countries but some of the actions need to be taken into consideration beforehand, e.g. a precise analysis of legislation processes needs to be performed and the offered solution needs to be tailored to the local context, taking into account the aspects of the application procedure.

PART 5: One Stop Shop Solutions

A one stop shop (OSS) is essentially a single channel (office or webpage) where multiple services are offered and hence the customers can find the information they need and typically conduct transactions (including applications, registrations, payments, etc.) in one place.[443] The OSS is usually described as bringing many services 'under one roof'. This scenario is popular among municipalities in many countries, for example, for representing a range of functions or departments in a single location, as an alternative to the town hall.

The aim should be that the citizen or entrepreneur can initiate, process and complete a request to the administration through an OSS. There are certain requirements for this to be achieved: users need to know what administrations can do for them, which translates into a 'catalogue of services', so that everyone is aware of what is available for delivery; the description of these services should be standardised in such a way that it can be read, understood and replicated across different parts of the administration; and the services should follow the structure of 'life events', whether business or personal.

This part presents the following inspiring practices:

> ➢ Integrated Service Centres (ISCs) Managed by ADISA - the Agency for the Integrated Delivery of Services (ALBANIA)
> ➢ Construction Permit Centre in the Banja Luka City Administration (BiH)
> ➢ Social Card – Integrated Social Welfare Information System (MONTENEGRO)
> ➢ NGO Electronic System (KOSOVO*)

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[443] Please note that 'one stop' is not the same as 'once only'. The OSS is a mechanism to access multiple services, but does not necessarily mean that user information will be shared across administrative units and never again requested. While some OSS do also offer 'once only' data registration, this is not a definitive characteristic of an OSS.

The Integrated Service Centres (ISCs) Managed by ADISA - the Agency for the Integrated Delivery of Services (ALBANIA)

1. Content and Background

The Integrated Service Centres (ISCs) managed by the Agency for the Delivery of Integrated Services Albania (ADISA) are centres in which the latter provides front office services for a number of central government institutions, thus making access to public services transparent, fast and easy for citizens and businesses.

Before the introduction of ISCs, the situation in public service delivery, notably the delivery of administrative services by central government institutions, gave rise to the following problems: lack of transparency, predictability and accountability in service provision; presence of corruptive practices; absence of standards, including at a more basic level of what constituted a public service; unnecessarily difficult access to information on services; a culture based on administrative prerogatives/arrogance with little regard for customer service; no service delivery performance monitoring; and, unsystematic complaint management.

As such, long queues, multiple visits, hard to find and access offices often lacking service windows, but bogged down by red tape, delays, unjustified denial of service and requests for bribes, generally affected the entire population in need of administrative public services. This resulted in a waste of time and money and contributed to lack of trust in government institutions, as well as a widespread perception that one could not get what one was entitled to unless 'palms were greased', even when one was merely trying to get information. This led to two extremes, with people either engaging in petty corruption or boycotting government institutions, thus exacerbating informality in the country.

It is against this background that the Albanian Government designed the citizen-centric service delivery reform, focusing on administrative services provided by central institutions. ISCs were introduced in Albania in accordance with the key strategic goal of citizen-centric public services articulated in the 2015–2020 Public Administration Reform Strategy (PAR Strategy).

2. Change Process/Dynamics

The establishment of ISCs via ADISA, involving the separation of the front and back offices and putting citizens at the centre through the adoption of innovative solutions in service delivery in Albania, entailed a fundamental change in how the state institutions interact with citizens.

Statement by ADISA Executive Director Mr Lorin Ymeri

"I am happy to present the Agency for the Delivery of Integrated Services (ADISA) as an inspiring practice in public service delivery in ReSPA member countries. ADISA is a young organisation devoted to improving public service delivery in Albania.

ADISA has since the very start been planning and setting up Integrated Service Centres in Albania, thus separating front and back offices and putting citizens at the centre by adopting innovative solutions in service delivery. This has resulted in a fundamental change in how state institutions interact with citizens. The main achievements include the development of new work organisation and service delivery standards, increased client satisfaction, shorter waiting and application processing times and enhanced transparency for service beneficiaries, both citizens and businesses.

A constant challenge in doing so is to ensure harmonised interventions given the multiple stakeholders in the field. To address this, high-level engagement and coordination, as well as facilitation by the Prime Minister's Office, have been sustained by the work of joint teams formed by ADISA and the relevant agencies and supported by adequate expertise.

In the future, ADISA plans to expand throughout Albania, guaranteeing all citizens access to standardised, transparent, and fast public service delivery."

Four regional Integrated Service Centres, at which ADISA provides front office services for a total of nine institutions, have been established to date. For these ISCs, ADISA designed a new service delivery model, which is based on separated service windows, the integration of services and collocation, thus making life easier for the customer.

Its main achievements include the development of new work organisation and service delivery standards, increased client satisfaction, shorter waiting and application processing times and enhanced transparency for the customers.

ADISA has not only made processes and communications in public services delivery customer friendly in its ISCs. It applied the citizen-centric approach also in the design of the Centres, ensuring they were located in accessible ground floor spaces, with bright and friendly waiting areas, a functional queue management system, play areas for children, etc.

In all its ISCs, ADISA has set higher service delivery standards based on customer care principles, especially with regard to:

> ➢ Ensuring an adequate working environment in the front offices;
> ➢ Providing continuous training for front office staff;
> ➢ Equipping the Integrated Service Centres and Front Office Tirana with the requisite user-friendly guidance and directions, parking facilities, and children areas;
> ➢ Setting up a queue management system and providing waiting areas;
> ➢ Establishing a Complaint Management System (CMS);
> ➢ Providing the necessary infrastructure to allow access to people with disabilities, e.g. ramps and dedicated restrooms; and
> ➢ Conducting performance monitoring.

All these amenities are present in all ISCs, where ADISA has been offering 369 public services of nine institutions to a total of 800,000 service beneficiaries so far.

To establish activities on a firm footing, two strategic documents were produced following extensive consultations: 1) Law No. 13/2016 on Public Service Delivery at the Front Office Level in the Republic of Albania of 18 February 2016, and 2) a long-term policy document on the delivery of citizen-centric services by central government institutions, approved by Council of Ministers Decision No. 384 of 25 May 2016.

In 2016, a Front Office–Back Office Feasibility Study providing a nationwide distribution model for central government services was performed and a pilot ADISA Integrated Service Centre was launched in Kavaja, followed by the establishment of ISCs in Kruja, Fier and Gjirokastra during the first half of 2017. The establishment of an ISC in Shkoder was under way at the time this Study was finalised.

The reform programme is monitored closely by the Delivery Unit at the Prime Minister's Office, which provides monthly reports on progress against the work plan. Quarterly and semi-annual reviews take place at the meetings of the Public Services Inter-Ministerial Committee. Quarterly and annual implementation reports are submitted for different projects, as well as the PAR Strategy. Progress is measured against indicators, some of which are also linked to disbursements.

Crucial for the introduction of ISCs has been the political will of the Government reflected in its establishment of ADISA, led by then Minister of State for Innovation and Public Administration (MIPA) and now by the Deputy Prime Minister of Albania, who steers the public administration reform in Albania, with emphasis on the establishment of ISCs. In addition, ADISA is staffed by a very ambitious team constantly negotiating with back offices and municipalities with a view to increasing the number and quality of its ISCs.

Resistance to change has been a key reform challenge. The motives range from perceived loss of authority to loss of opportunity for petty bribes and corruption to incur favours, as well as added scrutiny over performance. An inward-looking institutional culture and conservative stance exacerbated the situation. The counter response has been based on the strength of the reform imperative and an evidence-based approach. Its key elements have included strong high-level involvement, employment of high-stakes piloting facing resistance head on, a win-win collaborative attitude focused on tangible benefits for institutions, addressing objections both at the leadership and technical levels, employing citizen feedback and regular reporting.

The flip side to the resistance to change has been the challenge to ensure harmonised interventions given multiple implementing stakeholders. To address this, high-level engagement and coordination, as well as facilitation by the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit have been sustained by the work of joint teams formed by ADISA and the relevant agencies and supported by adequate expertise. Promoting best practices across institutions and following through with their replication has been instrumental. Regulatory instruments, such as Council of Ministers decisions, have also been effectively employed.

Given the scope of the reform, funding constraints in terms of amount and timing have been a challenge to sustaining the reform momentum. The forming of the donor pool fund proved to be

a crucial support instrument. The commitment of state funds, especially at the start of the reform, proved essential.

Managing success has also proven challenging during the implementation of the reform, with ongoing pressures to expand its scope. A clear governance structure and review process has enabled that this take place organically and in line with the overall staged approach to reform.

3. Reform Results/Outcome

The reform has enabled the energetic introduction of customer care standards whilst implementing putting-the-citizens-first, in a bold anticorruption move neatly separating front and back offices and integrating the former in centrally located one stop shop and in-one-place Integrated Service Centres. This has translated into ensuring dedicated front office service, including an information desk, queue management, standardised front office-back office interaction and complaint tracking, a welcoming environment, fair and respectful treatment, and regular reporting on service delivery. In just the first four months, client satisfaction increased by 46% with the Tirana Immovable Property Registration Office (IPRO), which carries out nearly 40% of all property-related transactions nationwide, where ADISA first piloted front office-back office separation. On the other hand, the dissatisfaction rate, historically one of the highest compared with other central government institutions, has dropped considerably, as has the number of complaints.

The impact is much larger inasmuch as ADISA ISCs bring services provided by different institutions under one roof.

In 2017, online user satisfaction surveys were conducted following the takeover of the Tirana IPRO front offices and the establishment of Integrated Centres in Kavaja, Kruja, Fier and Gjirokastra by ADISA.
1. Tirana IPRO
64% of the surveyed citizens expressed positive opinions about the changes made by ADISA at IPRO in Q4 2017.
2. ISC Kavaja
65% of the surveyed citizens expressed positive opinions about the changes made by ADISA at the Kavaja Integrated Centre in Q4 2017.
3. ISC Kruja
79% of the surveyed citizens expressed positive opinions about the changes made by ADISA at the Kruja Integrated Centre in Q4 2017.
4. ISC Fier
98% of the surveyed citizens expressed positive opinions about the changes made by ADISA at the Fier Integrated Centre in Q4 2017.
5. ISC Gjirokastra
73% of the surveyed citizens expressed positive opinions about the changes made by ADISA at the Gjirokastra Integrated Centre in Q4 2017.

Evidence collected through different surveys shows that the launch of ISCs has simplified life for

Albanian citizens at many levels. They, inter alia, now know where they can seek information about public services, they can access different services of different institutions at a single point (one stop shop, single point of contact) and the separation of front and back offices has reduced opportunities for petty corruption.

ADISA front offices are visually attractive and easy to recognise by customers/citizens. ADISA has prepared questionnaires to measure satisfaction, which have shown that all citizens are satisfied with the redesigned Service Centres. They now have more space, a queue management system and the necessary infrastructure allowing access to people with disabilities.

The ISCs were redesigned by a company ADISA contracted and in cooperation with ADISA's specialists.

ADISA promotes the ISCs via Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and its website, which includes contact forms. Website feedback is collected and monitored.

ADISA has been organising focus groups to gauge citizens' reactions. Information obtained from those groups helps refine operations, especially in the separated front offices. Additionally, ADISA uses "open days" to reach out to the wider community to solicit experiences and viewpoints through online surveys. Visitors to the Centres can also express their opinions via survey forms available in dedicated boxes in each Centre.

Youth outreach activities have included the organisation of a competition of young programmers and IT students on ideas for developing an ADISAapp. A user motivation activity, encouraging high school students to write essays about public service delivery, was also under way at the time the Study was finalised.

The ISCs have been introduced because of the problems citizens faced in the delivery of administrative services by central government institutions, coupled with higher expectations of service delivery based on the experience with the private sector in Albania, especially telecommunications, as well as banking.

Foreseeable life events and users' timing are taken into account when assessing the need for services at ISCs. At the moment, ADISA is exploring user-friendly ways to offer public services related to different life events.

ADISA plans on making its services available across Albania, and is at present elaborating a business plan concerning the opening of a number of ISCs over the next few years. Preparations for opening an ISC in the city of Shkoder are under way. Experts and consultants are taken on board to ensure the sustainability of these projects.

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

The establishment of ISCs has yielded benefits at many levels, including the standardisation of work organisation and service delivery, increased citizen satisfaction, reduction of waiting and application processing times and enhanced transparency for the customers.

Political will and commitment at all levels is prerequisite for any such project to succeed, as resistance is to be expected for different motives, ranging from perceived loss of authority to loss of opportunity for petty bribes and corruption to incur favours.

The introduction of ISCs is transferable, given the political will, the establishment of a legal framework, the resources and the cooperation of stakeholders.

Construction Permit Centre in the Banja Luka City Administration (BiH)

1. Content and Background

In early January 2018, the City of Banja Luka announced the opening of a one stop shop for construction permits, a move highly welcomed by the public. The OSS operates under the jurisdiction of the City Administration's Urban Development Sector, which mainly deals with location, building and use permits, extracts of spatial planning documentation, and reviews requests to initiate the spatial planning administrative procedure.

Regional conferences and round tables organised in the past have raised awareness of the need to deliver services in a user-friendly manner, to remove barriers and constraints imposed by the administration, and save the clients' time and money. The Banja Luka City Administration identified an urgent need to simplify and accelerate the issuance of construction permits in order to attract more investments. The objective was to reconstruct the Urban Development Sector and enable the administration to implement the "one stop shop principle". This was one of the first steps towards introducing e-construction permits and one of the most important reforms in the Banja Luka City Administration.

Before the one stop shop was introduced, the clients needed to submit their applications to at least 12 different City Administration offices, and some other administrative units as well.[444] Instead of getting high-quality services for their money, users often ended up acting as the administration's couriers, frequently finding they were missing a vital piece of information and had to pay another round of visits to public administration offices. The eGovernment approach in Republic of Srpska is regulated by the 2009-2012 eGovernment Development Strategy, which puts in place the legal prerequisites for the OSS.

2. Change Process/Dynamics

The Banja Luka City Administration is one of the beneficiaries of the Life Project (World Bank in cooperation with the British Embassy, December 2015 – January 2019), pursuing the following objectives: reducing the regulatory burden at the local level, closing the regulatory implementation gap, advancing transparency in regulatory service delivery, and increasing investment through generating, facilitating and retaining investors in the country.[445] Cooperation with the Life Project has been successful, resulting in the below mentioned tangible results.

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[444] http://www.paragraf.ba/dnevne-vijesti/13112017/13112017-vijest8.html

[445] http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/887891479327570622/pdf/investmentclimate-bosnia-project.pdf

For the one stop shop to succeed, the Urban Development Sector needed to amend the Job Classification Rulebook, reorganise the front office, provide IT equipment, and train the employees in providing full service to users.[446] These steps were initiated and completed without any major problems, but activities, such as staff training, need to continue.

The main actors in the implementation of the one stop shop are the employees of the City Administration, especially the Permit Centre's front office, as well as the back office, essential for the overall success of the one stop shop. The key actors are the RS Geodetic Administration, the Cadastre Office, court clerks, notaries, the Mayor's Office and others.

The overall and continuous dedication of the Banja Luka City Administration to standardising its processes and meeting the requirements of the Business Friendly Certificate (BFC) since 2015 also warrants mention.[447] The ISO 9001 standard has been applied as well, but there is no evidence of recertification at present. However, the effects of the applied standard are still visible in the users' possibility to express their level of satisfaction and to suggest improvements.

3. Reform Results/Outcome

Complete applications for different permits are now processed within three days.

More than 1,000 applications have been filed for location and construction permits, use permits, building demolition, advertising, environmental issues, et al, since the launch of the one stop shop.[448] According to the Banja Luka Administration, between 50% and 60% of the investors have chosen to obtain the permit using the one stop shop, and as of end May 2018, 40% of applications were approved.[449]

In addition, the citizens have access to the following information and documents:

> ➤ Zoning documents (public insight and permit issuance);
> ➤ Information and advice to potential investors about construction possibilities and requirements;
> ➤ Instructions on procedures and how to apply;
> ➤ Process Guide;
> ➤ Information on the documents that must be filed with the application, and how to obtain them;
> ➤ Instructions on rights and responsibilities of investors in the process of constructing and using buildings;
> ➤ Laws and by-laws on the construction process and permit issuance; and,
> ➤ Information on application status can be obtained in person or by telephone or e-mail.

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[446] http://www.banjaluka.rs.ba

[447] http://bfc-see.org/

[448] http://www.banjaluka.rs.ba

[449] *Ibid.*

The one stop shop genuinely simplifies the process for the users, for they no longer need to make multiple visits to different departments of the City Administration. There is no difference in the fees, whether one opts for the one stop shop or not. The status of the application cannot be tracked online, but information can be obtained by making a call to the Permit Centre, or by e-mail. The City Administration communicates clearly, proactively and strategically, regularly updating the news (print, online) and its Facebook page. There is, however, room for improving its visual appearance. Results show that the provided services can be qualified as highly attractive to the users compared with the Sector's prior practice.

However, problems have arisen because of incomplete applications (the number of pending applications stands at around 12,000) and lack of clear communication with the Republic of Srpska Geodetic Administration (access to and insight in geodetic information is not properly regulated). Provisions of the General Administrative Procedures Act and the Law on Real Estate are also unclear, additionally prolonging the process, especially for those missing a document (there are no guidelines on how to deal with incomplete applications). Therefore, the front office needs further training, employees need to be additionally informed about the statutory procedures and obligations (*ex officio*), and customer treatment. This issue must be resolved to the customers' full satisfaction, and it represents one of the major steps toward using e-services in this sector.

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

The Banja Luka City Administration and its Permit Centre can be trendsetters for other municipalities in both entities. Some are already on their way to providing specific one stop shop services: the municipalities of Žepče, Tešanj, Bijeljina, Teslić, and Trebinje also received support from different international stakeholders. Political and managerial will is crucial for identifying and addressing the needs and expectations of the users of municipal services, very often the first point of contact between the citizens and the public administration.

Still, even where there is will, the resources are often limited, especially in view of budgetary constraints. Therefore, the support provided by the World Bank in cooperation with the British Embassy, through the Life Project, has significantly contributed to the operationalisation of the Permit Centre – One Stop Shop, Banja Luka.

Banja Luka could share its experiences with other municipalities, inter alia, via the network of 20 municipalities involved in the Life Project. That would ensure transferability, since the solution can mostly be replicated in other municipalities. As foreseen in the Life Project, methodologies will be developed as useful tools for use by other municipalities.

The negative effects include: increased workload for the back office, without clear procedures and communication with the Geodetic Administration. These issues should be addressed as soon as possible, in a genuine dialogue and the spirit of cooperation, having in mind the ongoing WB Real Estate Registration Project implemented by the Geodetic Administrations of both entities.

The City Administration has to date concluded Memoranda of Understanding with other public authorities, including the RS Geodetic Administration, to define the permit issuance process, the exact documentation needed, fees, and deadlines (8-10 days)[450], but these Memoranda need to be further operationalised, in terms of putting in place clear procedures, especially regarding incomplete applications and how/where to resolve the issue.

The Permit Centre should be encouraged to develop even more efficient (direct) customer feedback and to systematically assess client satisfaction in order to improve the efficiency of its services.

The visual appearance of the Permit Centre could benefit from certain improvements. Perhaps a (symbolic) public award could be given to students or gifted young people who design the best new logo and a 3D model of the one stop shop.

Social Card – Integrated Social Welfare Information System (MONTENEGRO)

1. Content and Background

The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare[451] of the Republic of Montenegro is in charge of the Government labour and social welfare policies. It is, therefore, responsible for implementing the key labour and social policy reforms defined by the Government, including the initiative to introduce the social card (back in 2001) and digitalise the overall process by introducing an information system to support it.

The concept of the social card was introduced by the 2010 Decree on the Social Card.[452] It defined the social card as a "collection of data on households in the Republic of Montenegro, their property, income, specific expenditures, social and healthcare needs". The definition of the social card concept was one of the major preconditions for launching the integrated social welfare information system.

After the Government launched the "Social Card" initiative in line with the reform processes in the country, the Ministry prepared a project proposal and detailed technical specifications for the realisation of the "Social Card" project, aiming to collect data about citizens applying for social protection through an information system. The ultimate goal of the initiative was to integrate the data on the social status of citizens, develop accurate reports and gain insight in the status of social welfare based on which social benefits would be determined.

The project "Integrated Social Welfare Information System – ISWIS ("Social Card")" was initiated and launched by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, with the support of UNDP in Montenegro. The decision to implement this solution was a natural evolutionary step on the path

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[450] http://www.banjaluka.rs.ba

[451] http://www.mrs.gov.me/en/ministry

[452] Article 2, paragraph 1, Decree on the Social Card (Official Journal of the Republic of Montenegro No. 41/01)

of modernising the social welfare system in Montenegro. The technical aspect of the project (software solution) was developed and applied by the SandT,[453] a regional company with a team of consultants able to address all the complex requirements of creating and implementing such a system.

For example, a four-member family needed to submit 98 proofs of eligibility/documents to various public authorities for the determination of its eligibility for means-tested social transfers.

The system was expected to consolidate the data of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and other users, and align the work of all stakeholders participating in the process of fulfilling the social rights of the citizens of Montenegro.[454] The system generated various e-registers and the Business Intelligence module. It allows for determining a family's eligibility for means-tested social transfers the same day it submits its application, facilitating the citizens' access to their rights and reducing the burden of collecting paper-based proofs of eligibility.

2. Change Process/Dynamics

The system was piloted in a number of Social Work Centres (SWCs) in July 2014. By the end of 2014, it was implemented in all SWCs in Montenegro, as well as in the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare of Montenegro. During the implementation of the pilot, a review of all active rulings on specific payments – 40,000 cases - was conducted by using the ISWIS system.

The project has been implemented in two phases: Phase 1) covering the 2012-2015 period and Phase 2) covering the 2015-2019 period.

Phase 1 involved the implementation of a sophisticated system for social cash transfers, including: processing, approval, calculation, payments (over 81,000 payment transactions), monitoring and audit. In addition to social cash transfers, (11) war veterans' transfers have been implemented as well.

The ISWIS is an electronic data exchange infrastructure covering all business processes in the SWCs, including the introduction of case management (social services), referrals and issuance of decisions on placement, revisions, complaint procedures, etc.:

- ➤ case management,
- ➤ social transfers/application for benefits,
- ➤ processing,
- ➤ approval,
- ➤ monitoring and audit – approximately €70 million annually for benefits alone,
- ➤ calculations,
- ➤ payments,
- ➤ new record-keeping system,

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[453] www.snt.me

[454] The project "Social Card": expert opinion on the state of affairs, UNDP, 2016, p. 5

- ➢ improved supervision and management,
- ➢ reporting, and,
- ➢ creation of real-time data for evidence-based policymaking.

The total value of Phase 1 of the project was €1,279,979, including UNDP's contribution (€127,979).[455]

In Phase 2, the ISWIS has been upgraded to include public residential social welfare institutions, such as old people's homes, the home for children without parental care, and others, and integrate with the information system for SWCs. Phase 2 involves the continued development of the information system and contains the following components:

- ➢ Monitoring and further development of Phase 1;
- ➢ Institutes - construction of an information system for social and child protection;
- ➢ Interoperability;
- ➢ Capacity building (institutional, technical, staffing).456

The system has become a one stop shop through the interoperability module, which enables automatic data exchange with ten other official registers, including the registers/datasets of the following institutions:

- ➢ Ministry of Interior – Central Register and Motor Vehicles Register;
- ➢ Ministry of Education;
- ➢ Employment Office;
- ➢ Tax Administration;
- ➢ Pension and Disability Insurance Fund,
- ➢ Health Insurance Fund;
- ➢ Real Estate Agency;
- ➢ Veterinary Agency.

The ISWIS will contain data related to the current status (social anamnesis), measures already taken (social right and/or services used), as well as changes in status (suspension of right/service). The system introduced the rule on maintaining electronic records of the (potential) beneficiaries. The ISWIS will contain all the data, in electronic form, which are the product of the implementation of laws and relevant to the work of SWCs: Domestic Violence Law, the Criminal Code (part related to juvenile delinquency) and the Family Law.[457]

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[455] Government of Montenegro – Information on the Activities Related to the "Social Card" Project

[456] The First Annual Report on the Implementation of Obligations under the Action Plan on the Gradual Transposition of the Acquis and for Building up the Necessary Capacity to Implement and Enforce the Acquis Chapter 19 – Social Policy and Employment, March 2016.

[457] http://media.institut-alternativa.org/2013/02/institute_alternative_social_card_in_montenegro.pdf, p. 3

The system involves the following three steps:

1. A citizen submits a request claiming a social right;
2. An authorised social worker initiates the process of automatic data gathering, by examining the databases of institutions relevant to social rights;
3. The social worker decides whether the applicant is entitled to claim the social right the same day he or she submitted the application.

3. Reform Results/Outcome

ISWIS proved to be the backbone of the structural social welfare reform. It is an excellent example of citizen-oriented service delivery, as well as a mighty tool for public spending monitoring and savings (reduction of inclusion and exclusion errors).

The system has enabled the interoperability of the key registers and exchange of data about social security beneficiaries across the linked state registers. However, the interoperability framework needs to be expanded to cover other sectors. The system is an excellent example of citizen/user-oriented service delivery. It requires hardcopy documents only for entry into marriage and hardcopy divorce certificates, given that the local courts are not connected to the ISWIS.

ISWIS slashed the number of paper-based proofs, which the citizens need to submit to the SWCs when applying for different services. As it generates e-registers, the system represents a huge database for reporting and evidence-based policy making. Furthermore, it serves for monitoring quality of work and performance.

A system's added value is that it facilitates more efficient public services, in terms of time and cost reduction for citizens/beneficiaries of the social protection system in Montenegro. Furthermore, it has led to a more effective and fairer system of social protection and quality service for the poor and vulnerable groups of the population.

More specifically, the system:

➢ Provides better insight into who the beneficiaries of social protection are;
➢ Filters those ineligible for social protection (reducing exclusion and inclusion errors),
➢ Reduces the number of recipients of multiple benefits;
➢ Cuts administrative costs, while at the same time creating more room for extending welfare coverage to a greater number of those in real need of social protection;
➢ Saves the beneficiaries and applicants time and money they need to spend to collect the paper-based documentation.

On the other hand, social workers will be significantly relieved of the administrative burden and able to dedicate more time to the ones in need of 'soft' measures.

The system also generates data about people found ineligible (and reasons therefor), as well as income patterns, social situation, geographical location and other socio-demographic characteristics of the applicant pool and beneficiaries caseload. These real-time and evidence-

based data provide highly valuable information for policy formulation, for monitoring implementation, and for assessing social impact.

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

The project implemented by the Ministry, with UNDP's support, goes far beyond the development of ISWIS as it has supported change of the legislative framework, institutional/organisational changes, provided full ICT infrastructure and hardware equipping and, most importantly, continuous human resources capacity building. It is a well-known fact that implementation of structural reforms faces a plethora of challenges (beyond time and money), such as: continuous commitment, legal, technical, organisational, human resources and staff resistance, etc.

Statement by Social Card Programme Manager, United Nations Development Programme Podgorica - Ms Aleksandra Višnjić
"The "E-Social Card – Integrated Social Welfare Information System" (ISWIS) project, implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and UNDP, proved to be the backbone of the structural social welfare reform. The project has been implemented in two phases (2012-2015 and 2015-2019). Phase 1 involved the implementation of a sophisticated information system for social cash transfers (processing, approval, calculation, payments (circa 81,000 transactions a month), monitoring and audit) and war veterans' transfers (11). The system covers almost all other business processes in social welfare, including introduction of case management (social services), referrals and issuance of decisions on placement, reviews, complaint procedures, etc. Phase 2 involves the development of the IS to cover public residential social welfare institutions (old people's homes, the home for children without parental care, etc.) and its integration with the SWC IS. The system has a one stop shop (interoperability module) that enables automatic data exchange with ten other official registers (Tax Administration, Public Revenues, Pension Fund, Real Estate, etc.) so that a family's eligibility for means-tested social transfers can be determined the same day it submits the application. This facilitates the citizens' access to rights and reduces the burden of collecting proofs of eligibility (for example, a four-member family needed 98 proofs of eligibility/papers). The system generates various e-registers and the Business Intelligence module – a huge base for reporting and evidence-based policy making, but it also serves for monitoring quality of work and performance. The project goes far beyond the development of ISWIS as it has supported change of the legislative framework, institutional/organisational changes, it provided full ICT infrastructure and hardware equipping and, most importantly, continuous human resources capacity building. It is a well-known fact that implementation of structural reforms faces a plethora of challenges (beyond time and money), such as: continuous commitment, legal, technical, organisational, human resources and staff resistance, etc."

This is a long-term project. To make the information system sustainable, it takes both strong institutional capacities, preferably in most cases accompanied with outsourcing (software and hardware) contracts on regular upgrading and maintenance. In the experts' opinion, it is a sample project in terms of the integration of functionalities and a model how to actually implement the reform. Various professionals in other WB countries have already paid study visits to Montenegro, to familiarise themselves with the system. In addition, the system has introduced a substantial structural sector reform. Full and strong central Government commitment proved to be a major precondition for the success of this and other similar initiatives.[458]

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[458] Based on the statement by UNDP Office in Montenegro Social Card Programme Manager Ms Aleksandra Višnjić of 22 June 2018.

The analysis of the system's implementation and its benefits showed that the former was impeded mainly by the lack of an appropriate normative framework in the area of social welfare. More specifically, the by-laws regulating the creation of social cards need to be developed.[459] Furthermore, civil society organisations extending some social protection services are not obliged by the law to exchange data with the SWCs.

NGO Electronic System (KOSOVO*)

1. Content and Background

This project, conceived and managed by the Agency for Information Society (AIS) in cooperation with the Department for Non-Government Organisations (DNGO) of the Ministry of Public Administration within the framework of the PAR process, involved digitalising delivery of services to NGOs.

Statement by AIS General Director Mr. Kujtim Gashi

"The Kosovo* Government has been closely cooperating with civil society for years. It, inter alia, enacted the 2013-2017 Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society, envisaging the creation of an online electronic system, enabling NGOs to remotely access online services.

The NGO electronic system includes digitalised procedures for NGO registration and deregistration, applying for the status of beneficiary of public benefits and other online services extended to NGOs by the MPA Department for NGOs. The system, inter alia, enables the more efficient and effective provision of services to NGOs, digitalisation of NGO data, accurate and real-time reporting, interoperability (exchange) of data between relevant NGO related institutions, and it has increased the level of transparency and accountability to NGOs and citizens.

In the past, NGO registration, as well as data retention, were performed physically, resulting in lengthy procedures for NGO registration, reporting, fiscal fitting, certification by the Tax Administration of Kosovo*, inaccuracy of data on NGOs, etc.

This application has had direct impact on improving the provision of services to citizens (NGOs), as well as on coordination, harmonisation and rationalisation processes within the relevant institutions. The system has also cut the time and costs of services, which is among the primary goals of the Kosovo* Government in the process of developing e-governance while providing the best services."

NGO-related processes and services had not been digitalised until this system was developed. There was no online NGO registration application form and the NGO application and registration processes and data retention were performed physically. The NGO registration numbers were manually set (there was no algorithm for the automatic generation of NGO numbers). Hardcopy cases opened 10 years ago were not in electronic format (migrated to the database/previous application) and the registration of NGO data was partial. There was no centralisation and digitalisation of NGO-related data and processes, such as application forms, reports, accurate and real-time statistics, interoperability with registers of other Kosovo* institutions that have data on NGOs, transparency or accountability, etc. In result, procedures for NGO registration, reporting, fiscal fitting, certification by the Tax Administration of Kosovo* (TAK) took a long time, the NGO data were inaccurate, etc.

The aim of the project: digitalisation of the NGO registration procedure and other services

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[459] http://media.institut-alternativa.org/2013/02/institute_alternative_social_card_in_montenegro.pdf

provided by the DNGO, provision of more efficient and effective services to citizens and NGOs, digitalisation of NGO data, centralisation of services for NGOs, process harmonisation, accurate and real-time reporting, interoperability of data on NGOs in other Kosovo* institutions, increased transparency and accountability, etc.

2. Change Process/Dynamics

The MPA (AIS/ DNGO) performed a preliminary analysis of the state of play of NGO registration, reporting, processes and other NGO data, starting with the DNGO and other government institutions, and in meetings with civil society (NGOs, citizens). After the situation was analysed, the Terms of Reference were drafted, and the operator to develop the Electronic System for Non-Government Organisations was selected. The developed system was tested and promoted together with TAK, the Ministry of the Interior (MoI) and the national Trust Agency (AKM) and launched in January 2016.

The MPA formed a project team consisting of AKM and DNGO officials and civil society representatives to analyse the situation. This team analysed the situation in Kosovo* institutions and took into consideration the NGOs' requirements, suggestions and difficulties. Based on the legislation, processes and situation analysis, the MPA drafted the Terms of Reference. This stage lasted approximately three months. The next stage involved the development of the Electronic System for Non-Government Organisations, which was scheduled to be completed in 60 workdays, but was finalised in 90 workdays due to the complexity of the endeavour.

The main actors involved in the project included the following Kosovo* institutions: Ministry of Public Administration, which took the lead, the Ministry of Finance (Tax Administration of Kosovo*, Kosovo* Customs, Treasury Department), Ministry of the Interior (Civil Registration Agency – ARC, Department for Asylum, Citizenship and Migration - DSHAM), as well as civil society. Several challenges arose during the implementation of the project, in view of the fact that:

a) This was the first time that such a Register for NGOs was being developed, which, in addition to the part designated for DNGO officials, includes the online application part and interacts (exchanges digital/electronic data on NGOs) with the systems of other Kosovo* government institutions.
b) NGO related processes in Kosovo* government institutions (legislation, procedures, forms, etc.) had not been harmonised.
c) There was lack of support for/maintenance of the relevant applications/registers facilitating technical data exchange with the NGO application (SEOJQ) within the Kosovo* government institutions.
d) A new Law on NGOs was being drafted at the time of implementation, wherefore the system had to be redesigned to respond to the changes (in procedures, forms).

3. Reform Results/Outcome

This application has had direct impact on improving services to citizens, NGOs, but also within the Kosovo* institutions. Citizens can now apply and register an NGO online, from any point where they have access to the Internet. NGOs can rapidly access all services (registration, change of

data, application for and recognition of the status of beneficiary of public benefits, etc.) online and receive prompt notifications by e-mail. NGOs have real-time access to their data at all times, through their accounts (created at the time of application). This has saved the citizens and NGOs time and money. SEOJQ has impacted on coordination, harmonisation/unification of processes, centralisation of services, and the accuracy of data on NGOs. SEOJQ enables online application processing.

The incorporation of the fiscal number in the NGO registration certificate, which is automatically generated by the TAK system, has contributed to reducing time and costs.

This application helps citizens and NGOs to access the system at any point where they have access to the internet. Kosovo* institutions provide centralised, digitised data, statistics generation, real-time reporting etc. The realisation of this project has contributed to the alignment and integration of Kosovo* institutions' processes.

Benefits for citizens and NGOs:

- ➢ Centralisation of services;
- ➢ Online application and registration (up to the receipt of the registration certificate);
- ➢ Application for single project pipeline reform;
- ➢ Request for change of NGO data;
- ➢ Online reporting;
- ➢ Notification of NGOs by e-mail;
- ➢ Fusion of two certificates in one (registration certificate and fiscal number);
- ➢ Transparency and accountability;
- ➢ Saving time and money, etc.

Both the Kosovo* institutions and NGOs have benefited from this project. The former improved their mutual coordination, and harmonised and aligned much of their internal processes by eliminating duplication of data and completion of the same forms/data (notably, the Ministry of Finance (TAK and Treasury Department) and MoI (Civil Registration Agency and Department for Asylum, Citizenship and Migration). The whole process of registration, change, reporting, notification, statistics, etc. regarding NGOs can now be performed online in real time. NGOs can register and obtain their certificates at any point where they have access to the Internet. NGOs have access to NGO records (through the NGO account) from any point. The system complements the Open Data Condition, where NGO data are published in real time and are accessible to the public. All information about DNGO/MPA related to NGOs is published on SEOJQ (https://ojq.rks-gov.net/). Citizens registering NGOs do not need to go to TAK to get the fiscal number, which is automatically generated by SEOJQ in the NGO registration certificate. The Kosovo* Cadastral Agency retrieves data on NGOs from SEOJQ, through real-time web services.

SEOJQ has significantly simplified the work of DNGO and Kosovo* institutions as far as NGOs are concerned. SEOJQ is extremely user friendly.

SEOJQ automatically retrieves data about Kosovo* citizens from the Civil Register and data about foreign citizens from the relevant MoI Register in real time (online), increasing accuracy and minimising the time of NGO registration and shortening procedures for foreign nationals. The service is easy to use. Its Guide is published in two formats, as a text document and as an extremely user-friendly Video Tutorial. Its features have largely eliminated any potential problems given the accurate, centralised data and appropriate information (on services) for NGOs.

User satisfaction with the system has been high since it was launched. Their satisfaction with this system, compared with their satisfaction with the prior system, has increased by over 90%. Also, e-Box user evaluation of services shows a substantial increase in satisfaction with these services for NGOs, nearly all of which are now offered online.

Technological Adaptation - SEOJQ is compatible with desktop and mobile devices.

The service was promoted in the media, on the MPA website (which also promotes it on social networks - Facebook), via NGOs, etc. The promotion of the service involved the organisation of a special event in cooperation with and with the participation of all stakeholders such as Kosovo* institutions, NGOs, and citizens.

The development of the service mainly takes into account the requirements of the users of Kosovo* institutions, NGOs and citizens.

Project activities were still ongoing at the time this Study was finalised. This project can be evaluated as viable.

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

Herewith some of the lessons learned from the project:

- ➢ Service development must be preceded by a genuine analysis;
- ➢ All stakeholders need to be involved;
- ➢ Key inputs should be provided by service users, including the relevant DNGO officials, NGOs and members of the citizens.
- ➢ Adaptation to the service is very important, etc.

PART 6: Towards a User-Centric Culture by Assuring Standards and Embedding Quality Management Principles

At the heart of user/citizen organisations lies the deep belief that listening to citizens/users and ensuring thorough insight in the needs, expectations and values of different groups and segments of the population/users can have impact on the level of satisfaction, the performance of organisations and the relationship between citizens/users and public sector organisations in particular and the government on the whole. If the culture of an organisation is not shifting from a purely internal process and product driven approach towards a demand and citizen/user approach, it is not changing much. In such cases, instruments are merely serving internal purposes and the behaviour of staff and leaders towards citizen/users is not changing. It calls for moving from being an inward looking (and acting) organisation towards an outward looking (and acting) organisation.

This part presents the following inspiring practices:

- ➢ National Interoperability Framework and Platform (MACEDONIA)
- ➢ e-GAPA - Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Governments (SERBIA)
- ➢ Methodology for Monitoring and Evaluating GAPA Implementation (MONTENEGRO)
- ➢ Introduction of Quality Management at State and Entity Levels (BiH)
- ➢ Accessibility Audit Association, Interactive Accessibility Map (SERBIA)
- ➢ My Administration Portal – Institute Alternativa (MONTENEGRO)

National Interoperability Framework and Platform (MACEDONIA)

1. Content and Background

The Macedonian Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA), which is responsible for the development and promotion of information society and the design of a national strategy for the development of electronic communication at the national and business levels, has launched a project to introduce the interoperability system.

Simplified data exchange in an interconnected and interoperable environment is prerequisite for enabling e-Government, i.e. increasing government efficiency, improving and delivering public services 24/7, reducing use of paper, enhancing transparency etc. The aim of the National Interoperability Platform is to provide interoperability through a central communication hub, registration and enrolment authority and technology for seamless integration with various back-end systems. Furthermore, the solution provides the core architecture for e-service delivery, as well as the required core services enabling the delivery of such e-services and the execution of online transactions in a secure manner. In order to achieve this model of service delivery, the solution is designed to offer highly secure, scalable and interoperable technology, namely industry/de facto standard interfaces, while providing best of breed security technology to guarantee security and privacy to e-Government users. The solution uses open standards, which allow cooperation with the existing lines of business (LOBs). It does not come with the philosophy

"rip and replace", which is unacceptable since every government has to protect the existing investments.

The solution provides a single integrated view of the Government, by standardising the process for submitting transactions and documents and providing a single registration and single sign-on experience, providing solutions to the common challenging problems faced by every government organisation when conducting business electronically:

- ➢ The institution-based approach is substituted by a single approach which is service based and centralised;
- ➢ Single, secure point of access;
- ➢ XML-based technologies were used for the integration of the information systems, as well as the display of data;
- ➢ Enterprise (Government) Application integration;
- ➢ Secure transmission of information;
- ➢ Information systems provide and use services through a layer of data exchange, based on multilateral deals;
- ➢ Management of user identity and service authorisation.

The system is based on the following basic principles of the Macedonian Interoperability Framework:

- ➢ Technical interoperability - IOP-T (Interoperability Technical Document) - covers the technical issues of linking up computer systems and services. This includes key aspects, such as open interfaces, interconnection services, data integration and middleware, data presentation and exchange, accessibility and security services;
- ➢ Organisational interoperability - IOP-O (Interoperability Organisational Document) - concerned with defining business goals, modelling business processes and bringing about the collaboration of administrations that wish to exchange information.
- ➢ Semantic interoperability - IOP-S (Interoperability Semantics Document) - concerned with ensuring that the precise meaning of exchanged information is understandable by any other application not initially developed for this purpose.

Interoperability is both a prerequisite for and a facilitator of efficient delivery of public services in Macedonia. Interoperability addresses the need for cooperation among public administrations with the aim of establishing public services; exchanging information among public administrations to fulfil legal requirements or political commitments; and sharing and reusing information among public administrations to increase administrative efficiency and cut red tape for citizens and businesses. This results in improved public service delivery to citizens and businesses by facilitating the one stop shop delivery of public services; and in lower costs for public administrations, businesses and citizens due to the efficient delivery of public services.

The Government Gateway solution has the following major components:

- ➢ Registration-Authentication-Authorisation (RAA)
    - o Registration
    - o Authentication
    - o Authorisation
    - o Single Sign-On
    - o e-Service Management

- ➢ Transaction and Messaging (T&M)
    - o Service identification
    - o Transaction routing
    - o Auditing and Tracking

- ➢ Application Integration (AI)
    - o Mapping and integration with the existing LoB systems

- ➢ Payment process
    - o Clearing between institutions

In terms of the key technical benefits, the National Interoperability Platform allows adding new institutions to the ecosystem with minimal configuration (zero coding) via communication clients; there is a "one click" process for adding new web services as well as a "zero coding" mechanism for adding new services; the CILL Platform supports an unlimited number of web services; and the integration with the institution's back end system is easy.

2. Change Process/Dynamics

The implementation of the project started in January 2015 and ended in March 2016. The following Macedonian public institutions are part of the National Interoperability Platform:
1. MARNET-Macedonian Academic Research Network
2. Statistical Office
3. Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
4. Employment Service Agency
5. First Basic Court in Skopje
6. Second Basic Court in Skopje
7. Ministry of Information Society and Administration
8. Health Insurance Fund
9. Central Registers
10. Customs Administration
11. State Election Commission
12. Directorate for Civil Registry Books within the Ministry of Justice
13. Ministry of Education and Science
14. Ministry of Foreign Affairs
15. Ministry of the Interior

16. Customs Administration
17. Official Gazette
18. e-Delivery Vendor – Macedonian Telecom (*Makedonski Telekom)*
19. e-Delivery Vendor – *Nextsense*
20. Public Revenue Office

3. Reform Results/Outcome

The National Interoperability Platform provides safe, secure and standardised electronic exchange of information and documents through established world standards and protocols between the public institutions under the Macedonian Government, and improves the efficiency of their everyday work. The National Interoperability Platform provides a possibility for connectivity and communication between other heterogeneous information systems in different institutions through the interoperable system, which was built based on generally recognised global operability standards. By standardising the process for submitting transactions and documents and providing a single registration and single sign-on (SSO) experience, we have provided solutions for the common challenging problems faced by every government organisation conducting business electronically:

> ➢ The institution-based approach has been substituted by a single approach that is service-based and centralised;
> ➢ Single, secure point of access;
> ➢ XML-based technologies are used with regard to the integration of the information systems, as well as the display of data;
> ➢ Enterprise (Government) Application integration;
> ➢ Secure transmission of information;
> ➢ Information systems provide and use services through a layer of data exchange, based on multilateral deals; and,
> ➢ Management of user identity and service authorisation.

The National Interoperability Platform connects 20 government institutions providing over 190 services; more than 10 million transactions were conducted through it in the past two years. Although the National Interoperability Platform is a G2G 'back end' system, it provides the only possible foundation for citizen-oriented systems. The future National Portal of e-services will be fully based on the National Interoperability Platform and will become a single point of interaction between the citizens and public authorities that will support and greatly increase the efficiency of the administration. By connecting government institutions and agencies on the Interop, the portal will secure implementation of electronic services to a maximum level of sophistication – fully transactional; it will integrate several existing services and provide service conducting information for the rest of the services. In order to enable transactional services, the submission of service requests, along with the required data, and proofs provided by citizens or by other institutions in electronic form must be effected through the National Interoperability Platform in order to ensure secure, reliable and interoperable communication at the machine-to-machine level.

Governments should strive for interoperability for a number of reasons. The seamless flow of

information across the national government and between government and citizens increases transparency and accountability. The Macedonian Government can now deliver public services faster and more fairly prerequisite for a vibrant democracy because:

1. e-Government interoperability leads to better decision-making. In most countries, policy makers are facing not only overlapping and uncoordinated data sources, but also the absence of common terms of reference and means of presenting these data. This results in the time-consuming and expensive process of comparing differently presented data. Interoperability allows data compiled by different institutions and agencies to be used together to make better decisions.
2. Interoperability allows better coordination in delivering public services to citizens and businesses.
3. Interoperability is the foundation of citizen-centric, one stop service delivery through a variety of channels.
4. The implementation of the National Interoperability Platform leads to cost savings and/or cost avoidance. By making systems 'talk' to one another, the need for new systems that were once deemed necessary is now slowly fading. Furthermore, demanding interoperability breaks reliance on single vendors and yields choice for governments in their purchases, upgrades and as they scale.
5. Interoperability also promotes regional – Western Balkan and international cooperation. Interoperability among governments can help create the infrastructures necessary to solve cross-border problems such as drug trafficking, environmental pollution, money laundering and illegal arms trade.

The National Interoperability Platform is an ongoing process. The project at first involved 15 institutions and 40 services. Currently, the National Interoperability Platform connects more than 20 government institutions. Sustainability is secured by the latest amendments to the legislation, specifically the Law on Electronic Management and the General Administrative Procedures Act, laying down the obligation that overall data exchange among public institutions shall be conducted only electronically, via the National Interoperability Platform.

Interviews and workshops with the relevant institutions and government agencies were conducted during the implementation of the project and all of their inputs were taken into the consideration. The end of the project was marked by a final conference attended by over 80 participants and the official launch of the system was covered by all the news media.

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

The lessons from the implementation of the National Interoperability Platform can be summarised as follows: e-Government interoperability cannot be achieved only by addressing technical issues. To truly enable interoperability across the public administration, a bottom-up approach starting with the technology must be avoided despite the fact that a common standard modelling framework, architecture and general technological paradigm to be followed are to be proposed and best practice guides for the public administration need to be documented. The starting point is situated at the top - the government's strategic framework, the vision and goals of its leaders. In this context, articulating organisational, political and human resource issues deserves higher

priority and effort than the technical dimension that already has mechanisms and standards in place.

No matter how well prepared a public organisation is, it is illusionary to believe that it can achieve e-Government transformation at once, in one big step. The starting position of the public sector should be well understood and benchmarked so that the gap between the "as is" and the "to be" states is well defined. Securing e-Government progress is a process that includes many incremental activities over time, which is constantly monitored and where the long haul quick wins will seem to be small wins in the grand scheme of things. Winning "hearts and minds" is crucial and mechanisms for increasing awareness must be foreseen. Bringing together public sector officials from across government agencies to discuss the implementation of electronic services, system-to-system exchange of data, gapping the islands of information, along with the participation of businesses and citizens, may go a long way, but it will ensure acceptance in the long term.

The connection of diverse data, systems, people and processes is the only way to achieve success in digital transformation processes. A holistic approach to interoperability at the technical and organisational levels, with strong focus on policy and legal issues (that must be resolved prior to the establishment of the platform), can lead to the successful replication/localisation of the solution in other countries.

e-GAPA - Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self- Governments (SERBIA)

1. Content and Background

The Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Governments (MPALSG), one of the 18 ministries of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, is in charge of overall coordination of the public administration reform (PAR),[460] and has overall jurisdiction over the enforcement of the General Administrative Procedures Act (GAPA).

The Department for the Preparation and Monitoring of the Implementation of Regulations and General Enactments, formed within the MPALSG's Good Governance Development Sector, inter alia monitors the implementation of the GAPA and compliance of special administrative procedures with this law. However, the Department lacks the capacity to perform these functions and there are plans to form an organisational unit mandated to coordinate and monitor GAPA implementation in the coming period with GIZ' support.

Pursuant to the GAPA, state institutions participating in administrative proceedings are obliged to gather all datasets kept in official records. This called for the development of a technical solution that would facilitate coordination among the state institutions and data exchange among civil servants. As a result of this requirement, the development of the system for electronic exchange

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[460] www.mduls.gov.rs/en

of data among civil servants – the e-GAPA Information System (e-GAPA) - was initiated by MPALSG.

The e-GAPA was developed and launched in 2017 to facilitate electronic exchange of data among civil servants, in line with the GAPA. The system was developed with the technical support of the former Directorate for e-Government (transformed into the Office for Information Technologies and e-Government[461]), which acts as the administrator of the e-GAPA system.

The system is based on a simple technical solution, as a sub-system on the already existing e-Government portal (www.euprava.gov.rs). It is accessed via an Internet browser for free and ensures the provision of web-based services to the state institutions, while at the same time ensuring a sufficient level of control over the institutions' actions and high-level security of data exchange among the institutions. Apart from the obligation of electronic data exchange laid down in the GAPA, exchange of data among state institutions is regulated also by the Decree on Obtaining, Processing and Sharing Data about Facts Registered in Official Records and Necessary for Administrative Decision-Making.[462]

2. Change Process/Dynamics

The e-GAPA system became operational on 9 June 2017. Authorised civil servants log on the system by using an electronic certificate. The software integrates all the centralised registers of the state institutions and offers certain datasets to public institutions requiring various data in possession of other state institutions in order to take administrative decisions. It offers certain datasets corresponding to the datasets contained in the most frequent certificates (in 2015, around 6.7 million certificates with those datasets were requested and obtained by citizens in Serbia).[463]

The following six state institutions were the first to provide 14 datasets, which were integrated by the e-GAPA:

➢ Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Governments - three datasets from civil register books,
➢ Ministry of the Interior - three datasets,
➢ National Employment Service - three datasets,
➢ Social Insurance Office- one comprehensive dataset,
➢ Pension and Disability Insurance Fund - one dataset,
➢ Tax Administration - three datasets.

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[461] www.ite.gov.rs/en

[462] Available in Serbian at http://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/reg/viewAct/7c6490d4-d845-4f4e-9ea6-8b1eb27489a8

[463] As MPASLG Adviser Mr Milan Josimov told ReSPA Regional Expert Ms Jelena Miletić during the semi-structured interview on 10 July 2018

The registers of the Republican Geodetic Authority and Ministry of Justice were recently integrated in the system as well.

Upon access to the system, authorised users are provided with an overview of the available services.

The e-GAPA technical solution provides for the system's constant improvement and inclusion of new services (and corresponding forms and templates). Furthermore, plans are to further develop the technical solution into an e-Government back office solution. Thanks to the introduction of the e-GAPA, a number of administrative procedures have been simplified, and thus, digitalised.

The e-GAPA was introduced in stages, in order to achieve its full applicability. By using the existing capacities of the e-Government portal, which have been strategically planned, the MPALSG enabled public administration and local self-government staff to independently create electronic services for different purposes and a new module of Portal was designed to provide IT support for GAPA implementation and ensure simplified and transparent administrative procedures (electronic data exchange between state bodies).

3. Reform Results/Outcome

The key added values of the e-GAPA Information System arise from the fact that it is:

- ➢ A web-service oriented system for electronic official data exchange;
- ➢ An innovative way of exchanging official data applied by using the existing resources, since the users (state institutions) do not need any additional software;
- ➢ A user-friendly oriented tool;
- ➢ A new function of the e-Government portal for civil servants to exchange data in official records for administrative decision-making;
- ➢ An anti-corruption mechanism in situations when civil servants are obliged to obtain official data in a timely manner;
- ➢ A one stop shop providing services (standardisation of 188 administrative procedures); and that it
- ➢ Increases efficiency in terms of time and resources for the civil servants' exchange of datasets necessary for the implementation of various administrative procedures.

All the aforementioned features facilitated the rapid increase in usage of the e-GAPA system. On 9 July 2018 (i.e. one year after e-GAPA was launched), the system showed that it had 258 users and that 219,572 inquiries had been made, meaning that these data had been obtained electronically rather than by sending paper-based requests and certificates. The next day, on 10 July 2018, the system had 291 users and 270,000 inquiries had been made, which shows a progressive increase in the scope of the information system.[464] The types and number of users are expected to continue growing as additional datasets are introduced in the imminent future.

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[464] The data were provided by Mr Milan Josimov.

Apart from enabling data exchange, the added value of implementing the e-GAPA system is that it increases awareness of the advantages of establishing e-Government in Serbia both among the citizens and the civil servants, which is crucial following the adoption of Law on e-Government in April 2018.

One of the main challenges for GAPA implementation lay in the lack of interoperable electronic registers for inclusion into the e-GAPA system. Now that the e-GAPA has been introduced, various state authorities are getting ready to use e-Government solutions, and, consequently, provide better public services to Serbia's citizens.

Another challenge has arisen due the lack of a system for monitoring service provision by the public administration. However, having in mind that the legal deadline for data exchange is 15 days, and that the system enables the users to obtain data within one second, the value of the solution is undeniable.

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

Implementation of the e-GAPA to date shows that it is beneficial to start by applying systematic solutions even if they are not fully developed because that brings a certain amount of pressure to bear on the state bodies to "board the train" that has already been set in motion. Broad mutual dialogue among state institutions is crucial for success because it influences their understanding and acceptance of the new processes within the public administration as their own.[465]

Statement by Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Governments of the Republic of Serbia Adviser Mr Milan Josimov

"The e-GAPA information system, launched by MPALSG in 2017 with the technical support of Directorate for e-Government (transformed into Office for Information Technologies and e-Government), integrates centralised electronic registers and provides civil servants with an electronic data exchange tool helping them make decisions on administrative matters in a more timely fashion. The system offers certain datasets that correspond to datasets contained in the most frequently sought certificates (around 6.7 million certificates with those datasets were requested and obtained by citizens in Serbia in 2015).

By using the existing capacities of e-Government Portal, which have been strategically planned, we enabled public administration and local self-government staff to independently create electronic services for different purposes and the new module of the Portal was designed to provide IT support for GAPA implementation and ensure simplified and transparent administrative procedures (electronic data exchange between state bodies). The rapid expansion of e-GAPA usage was facilitated by the fact that the users do not need any additional software and that it is user-friendly, wherefore the e-GAPA information system is used by over 280 state administration authorities at the moment; around 240,000 queries have been made through it to date. Additional datasets will be introduced in the imminent future, wherefore the type and number of users will continue growing.

Apart from enabling data exchange, the added value of implementing the e-GAPA system is that it increases awareness of the advantages of establishing e-Government in Serbia not only among citizens, but among civil servants as well, which is crucial following the adoption of the Law on e-Government in April 2018. The main challenge lay in the lack of interoperable electronic registers for inclusion into system. Now that the e-GAPA has been introduced, various state authorities are getting ready to use e-Government solutions, and, consequently, provide better public services to citizens of Serbia."

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[465] Conclusions drawn from an interview ReSPA Regional Expert for Serbia and Montenegro Ms Jelena Miletic conducted with MPALSG Adviser Mr Milan Josimov on 10 July 2018.

The MPALSG had a vision of the next steps that needed to be taken for implementing systematic tools for providing quality services by the public administration and the efficient usage of the existing resources, enabling its full insight in the advantages of e-Government. Political support at the highest level was crucial and decisive for this to become a reality. On the other hand, the state of the electronic databases (in terms of accuracy and promptness) may impinge on the users' interest in applying the presented solution, wherefore they should be upgraded in the coming period.

Depending on the existing capacities, the applied solution can be used to satisfy needs with minimal investments in the necessary infrastructure, improvement of the electronic records to a satisfactory level, coupled with a legal framework enabling the future functioning of the aforementioned elements.

Methodology for Monitoring and Evaluating GAPA Implementation (MONTENEGRO)

1. Content and Background

The Ministry of Public Administration (MPA)[466] was recently created and took over the competences of two ministries. It has, on the one hand, assumed the competences of the erstwhile Ministry of Information Society, covering digital government policy and implementation and the use of modern information technologies in the public administration. On the other hand, it has taken over jurisdiction related to public policy making and implementation regarding local self-governments, public administration reform and administrative simplification, which had been within the remit of the Ministry of Interior (MoI).

The MPA is in charge of the horizontal coordination of the overall public administration reform process, including public service delivery policy and digital projects in Montenegro. In addition to its mandate regarding the overall coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the 2016-2020 Strategy for Public Administration Reform (PAR Strategy) and the Information Society Development Strategy until 2020, the MPA has also been in charge of the development and enforcement of the General Administrative Procedures Act (GAPA),[467] which came into force on 1 July 2017.

Reform objective 4.2 – Service Delivery of the 2018-2020 Action Plan for the Implementation of the 2016-2020 PAR Strategy envisages the establishment of a system for monitoring and evaluation of GAPA enforcement[468] as a key requirement for improving public service efficiency and effectiveness and the citizens' satisfaction with the quality of public services. The GAPA introduced the principle that by-laws (rulebooks, orders and instructions on implementation of the law) may be enacted only by ministries, not by other public administration bodies.

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[466] The website of the Ministry of Public Administration of the Republic of Montenegro: www.mju.gov.me

[467] General Administrative Procedures Act (Official Journal of the Republic of Montenegro, Nos. 56/2014, 20/2015, 40/2016 and 37/2017).

[468] 2018-2020 Action Plan for the Implementation of the Public Administration Reform Strategy.

The MPA drafted a by-law – the Rulebook on the Content of Reports on Activities, Content and Manner of Keeping Records in Administrative Procedures.[469] The Rulebook is the most important general legal enactment of the Ministry. It elaborates certain provisions of the GAPA, as well as the provisions of other regulations relevant to their enforcement. The MPA adopted the Rulebook after integrating the comments of the Secretariat for Legislation, the public administration institution which is, inter alia, in charge of ensuring compliance of draft legislation with the Constitution and the overall legal system.

The analysis performed during the preparation of this by-law on monitoring administrative procedures showed that reports were incomplete and outdated, that state institutions often did not comply with record-keeping and reporting regulations, and that the classification of the administrative area was usually not applied. The analysis involved a time-consuming perusal of the reports and indicated the need for a detailed overview of the state of affairs regarding the implementation of administrative procedures and for better monitoring of the enforcement of the new legislation on administrative procedures, notably the GAPA.

Under Article 159 of the GAPA, public authorities in Montenegro shall submit their annual reports on the administrative matters they handled the previous year to a state administrative or local self-government authority in charge of the respective administrative field, by the end of January at the latest. The state administrative or local self-government authorities shall submit these reports to the state administration body in charge of overall public administration, which will integrate them in its annual report for the previous year by end February.[470]

Achievement of the aforementioned objective involves a set of mutually complementary activities, which will together form the system for monitoring and evaluating GAPA implementation. They include:

1. The development and adoption of the Methodology for Monitoring and Evaluating GAPA Implementation;
2. Preparation and delivery of training in the proper implementation of the Methodology to one member of staff of each public institution – a total of 100 (by the end of 2018); and,
3. Preparation of regular annual reports on GAPA implementation, starting with the first report covering the second half of 2017 and 2018 (due in in Q1 2019).

In order to create the basis for the continuous implementation of the GAPA, and thus a solid foundation for its future monitoring and evaluation, the MPA prepared and adopted the Rulebook on the Content of Reports on Implemented Administrative Procedures and the Content and the Manner of Keeping Record of Administrative Procedure Actions.[471]

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[469] Available in Montenegrin at http://www.mju.gov.me/biblioteka/direktorat_du/pravilnici

[470] As Ms Marija Tomović of the Ministry of Public Administration wrote in her responses to questions posed to her by ReSPA regional expert for Serbia and Montenegro Ms Jelena Miletić on 16 July 2018.

[471] Available in Montenegrin at: http://www.mju.gov.me/biblioteka/pravilnici

2. Change Process/Dynamics

In view of the fact that the GAPA entered into force on 1 July 2017, the 2018-2020 Action Plan for the Implementation of the 2016-2020 PAR Strategy envisages the preparation of a consolidated annual report on GAPA implementation in the July 2017-December 2018 period by the end of March 2019.

The 2018-2020 Action Plan envisages the training of one or more employees of each public institution in Montenegro in the application of the uniform methodology for monitoring and evaluating GAPA implementation by the end of Q4 2018. The target of training 100 employees was defined by the MPA, which is to deliver the training in tandem with the Human Resource Directorate.[472]

3. Reform Results/Outcome

Montenegro is the only country in the region that has developed a thorough methodology for monitoring and evaluating GAPA implementation (Serbia initiated the development of its methodology and processes for monitoring GAPA implementation, but not much else has been done in this regard yet).

Although the Methodology has not been applied yet, it is expected to increase efficiency and prevent possible bottlenecks in GAPA implementation.

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

It is difficult to draw concrete conclusions on the Methodology's usability and applicability at the moment, given that the GAPA entered into force in mid-2017 and the first report on the GAPA implementation is due by the end of Q1 2019.

Introduction of Quality Management at State and Entity Levels (BiH)

1. Content and Background

The introduction, promotion and capacity building of Total Quality Management (TQM) are envisaged in the Revised Action Plan 1 (RAP 1) in the Human Resource Management area. RAP 1 set the following objective for the Public Administration Reform Coordination Office (PARCO): "Enable institutions to use a Total Quality Management – TQM model (…) if they choose to do so." In order to achieve this goal, the following activities were specified:

- ➢ Translation and implementation of the selected TQM model;
- ➢ Development of training in TQM in general, and the TQM system in particular;
- ➢ Development of a training manual for the selected TQM system;

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[472] Based on the written replies by Ms Marija Tomović of the Ministry of Public Administration to the questions posed to her by ReSPA regional expert for Serbia and Montenegro Ms Jelena Miletić on 16 July 2018.

➢ Establishment of a TQM information centre and database.

The PARCO and Civil Service Agencies (CSAs) at both the state and entity levels, as well as other BiH civil servants, participated in the ReSPA training in the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) in 2011, 2012, and 2013, at which the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) experts presented the CAF as a model for continuous improvement of public administration.

2. Change Process/Dynamics

In 2010, PARCO began cooperating with the GIZ Strengthening of Public Institutions Programme, where QM was identified as one of the measures to pursue. In 2013, the Programme initiated a comparative study in cooperation with PARCO, to evaluate and recommend the best systems and models for quality management in BiH's public administration. The study identified poor use of quality management and irregular implementation of client satisfaction measurements in BiH. Hence, the recommendation was to gradually introduce ISO 9001 or CAF, depending on the set-up and general practice of the institutions.

In 2014, cooperation was established with the European Public Administration Institute in order to develop a framework document/roadmap for introducing quality management, which resulted in the development of a set of guidelines and an activity plan aimed at building the public administration's capacity for implementing selected quality management models. PARCO was the main implementer of these activities and it identified the need for close cooperation with the BiH Institute for Standardisation (BAS) and the BiH Civil Service Agency in order to involve all key stakeholders in the joint promotion, improvement, and introduction of quality management in public administration.[473]

In 2015, the BiH Council of Ministers charged PARCO, BAS and the BiH Civil Service Agency with QM promotion, introduction and capacity building. In 2016, PARCO prepared the 2016-2018 QM Action Plan, which was approved by the Council of Ministers. It will be subject to evaluation at the end of 2018, and the one covering the next period will be prepared. In 2017, the Republic of Srpska Government charged the RS Civil Service Agency with applying to the Austrian Centre for Public Administration (KDZ) for support in CAF implementation and scaling up QM implementation in this entity.[474] The FBiH Government asked the FBiH Civil Service Agency to do the same in mid-2016.

PARCO initiated the establishment of an inter-institutional working group for quality management, which has been active since 2015. Senior public servants, e.g. of the Statistical Office, shared their expertise in developing, analysing and following up on systematic client satisfaction surveys with other institutions, resulting in the Methodological Guidelines on Measuring Client Satisfaction

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[473] http://spi.ba/en/news-en/archive-news/overview-of-programme-results-in-2015-achievements-in-quality-management

[474] http://adu.vladars.net/latn/?page=22&kat=1&vijest=4562

with the Public Administration,[475] which can be used widely, regardless of the administrative level. BAS, the BiH Institute for Metrology and BiH Central Bank professionals have been providing expert advice on ISO 9001 implementation and maintenance. All institutions with representatives in this inter-institutional working group are systematically conducting client satisfaction surveys. They can be expected to introduce the practice of proactively publishing improvement plans, informed by the survey results, thus opening up even more to the clients and reducing the risk of conducting client satisfaction surveys just for their own sake.

3. Reform Results/Outcome

➢ CAF implemented in 12 state institutions;
➢ 30 CAF trainers trained (state and entity levels);
➢ CAF implemented in three entity institutions;
➢ CAF initial trainings conducted at state and entity levels;
➢ Two QM conferences (one of which with ReSPA, the third in the pipeline);
➢ Client satisfaction surveys regularly conducted in institutions using ISO/CAF, showing an increase in client satisfaction;
➢ CAF Resource Centre established at PARCO, aiming to serve institutions interested in implementing CAF;
➢ CAF Coordinators/PARCO/ regularly participate in EU CAF events; a BiH case was presented for the first time at the EU CAF event in Sofia in 2018 - the BiH Statistical Office presented client satisfaction management;
➢ Translation of CAF 2013 into Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian published; Client Satisfaction Surveys in PA – Guidelines, Implementation of the ISO 9001:2008 in PA – Guidelines, developed and published;476
➢ Template for ISO tender – Terms of Reference;
➢ Promotional materials and videos developed;
➢ This means that PARCO, together with the other institutions, has fully achieved the objective specified in RAP 1.

The above activities have clarified the clients' expectations; communication has been increased by use of social media, direct surveys and feedback, and process reengineering and optimisation are used to provide better quality services; the standardisation of services and processes has been achieved. Nevertheless, truly tangible results and long-term effects will be visible only after the second CAF/ISO cycle and the review of the objectives achieved during the first Cycle.

In addition, note has to be made of the cultural change in institutions using CAF or ISO. Especially in CAF, the dialogue required during self-assessment brings together the team of the institutions, including the management. Managerial accountability can start there, by an open and fair dialogue with employees, working on their task to improve the overall efficiency of the institution and to strengthen the inclusion of the citizens and clients. As per ISO, all institutions applying ISO in BiH

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[475] http://rju.parco.gov.ba/hr/upravljanje-kvalitetom/ The second edition, with more details on the indexing and analysis of client satisfaction surveys, was due to be published in the autumn of 2018.
[476] http://rju.parco.gov.ba/upravljanje-kvalitetom/

conduct regular client satisfaction surveys, which are mandatory prior to certification or recertification.

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

The non-mandatory optimisation of the processes and opening toward employees and clients/citizens in BiH's public administration by using quality management systems, models and/or tools was captured by SIGMA's 2017 report (state level here) and Transparency International. Therefore, policy makers are encouraged to strongly emphasise the future QM activities in the PAR Strategy and the part of the Action Plan devoted to service delivery, including objectives, activities, indicators and risks/assumptions, as well as institutions in charge of the overall processes. This should include regular client satisfaction management and use of QM tools in a systematic fashion, to optimise processes, ownership and proactive communication with all stakeholders.

The public administration is facing budgetary constraints; the need for support from donors, notably the WB, EC and GIZ, is more than obvious to facilitate systematic planning and introduction of QM, areas in which PARCO, CSAs and other relevant institutions are in need of significant assistance. The BiH institutions using CAF will be ready to apply for the CAF external feedback procedure soon, and will need support for that. Institutions that are to implement ISO (because of their particular set-up) need to receive more support in trainings, for example, in ISO 27100 (data security), but in overall ISO implementation (First Cycle) as well.

The entities have received requests from other institutions for CAF mentoring/coaching, and we strongly recommend development of CAF mentoring, and/or giving thought to the establishment of entity CAF Resource Centres, in close synergy with PARCO (reuse of methodologies, promotional materials and sharing lessons learnt). The entities could tailor PARCO's first QM Action Plan to their particular needs. Support is strongly needed in this area as well, since they are at the very beginning of the QM approach.

The inter-institutional working group on QM should be expanded and include representatives at the entity levels and all institutions actively working on CAF and/or ISO. Furthermore, this working group is expected to publish the Guidelines on ISO 9001:2015 Implementation in the Public Administration and Guidelines on Public Administration Staff Satisfaction Surveys. Staff satisfaction surveys are only sporadically conducted in a systematic way, wherefore focus on this issue should be stronger in the coming period.

Since ReSPA has established the QM working group, it might wish to consider collecting the existing products in the region and scaling up the good practices,[477] as well as continuing its cooperation with the relevant stakeholders in BiH. The QM approach can widely support active

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[477] Feasibility Study on the Establishment of a Regional Centre on Quality Management in ReSPA and Baseline Study on Quality Management in Public Administration: https://www.respaweb.eu/library

public and client involvement in decisions on public policies, and more generally, in the modernisation and opening of the PA, so greatly needed in BiH.

The Accessibility Audit Association, Interactive Accessibility Map (SERBIA)

1. Content and Background

The Accessibility Audit Association (AAA)[478] was founded in 2009. It was established by experts in accessibility standards application committed to creating an accessible environment for all and to advancing skills, experience and resources of individuals and organisations. It is the leading organisation in Serbia focusing on making and implementing policies on *accessibility*, and practical work in this area through education, auditing, promotion, participation in government working groups preparing and amending laws, advocacy and development of tools for the efficient application of accessibility standards. The AAA relies on the European accessibility concept *Design for All (inclusive design).*

In 2011, the AAA launched a project involving the development of the Interactive Accessibility Map to support persons with disabilities or mobility limitations.

The Interactive Accessibility Map contains information on the accessibility of public facilities in the entire territory of Serbia to persons with disabilities and/or movement limitations. The map is available at: www.mapapristupacnosti.rs and presents the findings of research of over 10,000 facilities in Serbia in 16 categories:

- ➢ Administration
- ➢ Movement through the city
- ➢ Culture
- ➢ Shopping
- ➢ Medical needs
- ➢ Education
- ➢ Parking with disability parking spaces
- ➢ Crossroad, crosswalk
- ➢ Accommodation
- ➢ Sports facilities
- ➢ Associations – societies – media – political parties
- ➢ Tourism
- ➢ Social protection services
- ➢ Service-oriented sectors
- ➢ Penal institutions
- ➢ Religious facilities

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[478] www.pristupacnost.org

The outline of the online platform is presented on the screenshot below:

Figure 124: Outline of the Online Platform

2. Change Process/Dynamics

The Interactive Accessibility Map has been continuously updated, amended and visually improved with AAA's own and additional donor resources since it was launched in 2011. The data integrated in the Map have been collected with the support of citizens, civil society organisations, local self-governments, state institutions and other authorities vested with public powers, and in close cooperation with the Ombudsman in 2014.[479] The Ombudsman forwarded the questionnaires prepared by the Accessibility Audit Association to local self-governments. The collection of the responses lasted more than six months, and their analysis took almost a year. The Ombudsman's communication with the local self-governments resulted in the inclusion of over 4,000 new descriptions of state-owned facilities extending public services in the database. In order to maintain continuity in the collection of data, the Accessibility Audit Association has regularly been

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[479] The Ombudsman assisted the Accessibility Audit Association in its endeavours to collect data on the accessibility of public facilities and areas in Serbia within the project "Promotion of Human and Minority Rights through the Ombudsman's More Intense Contacts with the Citizens", which was financially supported by the Government of Norway. More at: www.ombudsman.rs

inviting citizens and interested parties to continue sending data on the accessibility of certain public facilities and areas for the Map.

However, various grave accessibility problems were identified during the collection of data from local self-governments (LSGs), public institutions and other state authorities, e.g. that only 26 of circa 170 Social Work Centres in Serbia were accessible to people with movement limitations.

3. Reform Results/Outcome

The main added value of the Interactive Accessibility Map is that it also serves as a tool for continuous monitoring of the situation in this field, as additional information on accessibility of public institutions is continuously filled in. The Map also continuously promotes good practice examples among organisations and institutions active in the service delivery area.

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

As the Interactive Accessibility Map promotes access to public services, primarily in terms of physical access, but in general as well, the platform should be developed also in the languages of national minorities in Serbia. The Map could also be upgraded to facilitate access by the visually impaired, pursuant to the Guidelines on the Development of the Web Presentations of State, Provincial and Local Self-Government Authorities 5.0 developed by the Office for Information Technologies and e-Government.[480]

My Administration Portal –Institute Alternativa (MONTENEGRO)

1. Content and Background

The Institute *Alternativa* (Alternative)[481] is a prominent think-tank in Montenegro, established in September 2007 by a group of citizens with experience in civil society, public administration and the business sector. Its research and advocacy activities are structured within five main programme areas: i) public administration, ii) accountable public finance, iii) security and defence, iv) parliamentary programme, and v) social policy.

The goal of the public administration programme is to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of the public administration: the government, the local self-governments, and *public services.* This programme is especially dedicated to harmonising the legislative framework and practices with the principles of the European administrative space, organisation and rationalisation of public administration, merit-based recruitment and career advancement, as well as the quality of law-making and policy development.[482]

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[480] Available in Serbian at: http://www.ite.gov.rs/doc/Smernice_5_0.pdf

[481] More on *Alternativa*'s website: http://institut-alternativa.org/en/about-us/

[482] http://institut-alternativa.org/en/ia/public-administration/

Within this programme area, *Alternativa* implemented the project "Civil Society for Good Governance: To Act and Account!"[483] The aim of the project was to enhance good governance practices and public service delivery in Montenegro. The implementation of this two-year project was initiated in 2016, with the support of the Delegation of the European Union to Montenegro (in the amount of €172,500).

 Alternativa commissioned a survey conducted by IPSOS, which showed that the citizens generally rated public administration services as "average", and that 40% of the users were satisfied and 44% dissatisfied with them. This triggered the idea to develop an online platform, called "*Moja uprava*" ("My Administration") as a user satisfaction tool within the project. "My Administration" was upgraded throughout 2017 and now provides the citizens with the opportunity to report any irregularities or problems they had in contacts with the public administration.

The "My Administration" portal (www.mojauprava.me) was primarily designed as an online tool for prospective civil servants, enabling them to familiarise themselves with their rights but also to report irregularities in recruitment procedures. On the other hand, it was to collect evidence about administrative obstacles and unfair treatment of users of public services through satisfaction surveys and mystery shopper visits to public administration bodies.

In 2016, *Alternativa* upgraded the platform, which now allows citizens to anonymously report any problem they encounter while exercising their rights before the public administration.

2. Change Process/Dynamics

The portal is administered by a project coordinator and project assistant, with the technical support of an IT expert. In 2017, it was upgraded to enable citizens to report any irregularities or problems they had in contacts with the public administration.[484]

Alternativa regularly provides feedback to written comments and the citizens' reports on the website (and holds face-to-face meetings with some citizens to advise them on how to resolve various administrative disputes) in order to raise public awareness of the people's rights related to public service delivery and of how the public administration operates. In order to provide useful feedback to the citizens filing complaints through the website, the *Alternativa* team has been conducting the necessary research and contacting the relevant state institution in charge of the particular problem, informing it about the complaint and requesting of it to respond and remedy the problem.

The website was extensively promoted in the social media to increase its public outreach: Facebook boosting (about 10 Facebook boosts) was used as a valuable tool to increase the project's visibility in general and to promote the webpage. Boosting of Facebook posts has resulted in better reach (views), i.e. more than 80,000 people, and engagement (likes or

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[483] http://institut-alternativa.org/en/ongoing-projects/

[484] Interim Narrative Report on the Implementation of the "Civil Society for Good Governance: To Act and Account!" Project for 2017, Institute *Alternativa*, p. 2

comments on the post) – more specifically, there have been more than 2,000 engagements to date. *Posts promoting the "My Administration" website on Facebook alone reached 15,000 people.*

3. Reform Results/Outcome

In 2017, there were more than 1,000 unique visitors to the portal, achieving the target value within the project result on upgrading and maintaining "My Administration".[485] Institute *Alternativa* has to date received more than 50 complaints from citizens through the "My Administration" platform regarding various issues, from problems with public administration recruitment to ineffective service delivery and administrative silence.

For example, a citizen filed a report against a local waste collection company, which was forwarded to the Consumer Protection National Council. The Council's reply was also **published on the website along with the report,** thus providing added value of informing citizens of their rights and raising public awareness of the protection of public service users.

4. Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

Similar initiatives have already been launched by civil society organisations in the region. Ideally, the governments in the region will design something similar in line with their commitment to modernise the administration. They can start to listen to the real problems people face every day in their contacts with the administration and focus on problems prioritised by the service users, to improve the effectiveness of their work and their accessibility to all their citizens.

> **Statement by Institute Alternativa Public Policy Researcher Ms Milena Milošević**
>
> "The "My Administration" website (www.mojauprava.me) was primarily designed as an online tool for prospective civil servants, enabling them to familiarise themselves with their rights as well as report irregularities in recruitment procedures. We upgraded the platform in 2016 and it now allows citizens to anonymously report any problem they encounter while exercising their rights in dealings with the public administration.
>
> Institute Alternativa has to date received more than 50 complaints from citizens through the "My Administration" platform regarding various issues, from problems with public administration recruitment to ineffective service delivery and administrative silence. Every time it receives a complaint, the Alternativa team contacts the relevant institution, alerts it to the citizen's complaint and requests a response. For example, a citizen filed a report against a local waste collection company, which was forwarded to the National Consumer Protection Council. The Council's reply was also published on the website along with the report, thus providing added value of informing citizens of their rights and raising public awareness of the protection of public service users.
>
> More often, reports provide important insights into the practical challenges of service delivery, especially when they are accompanied with documents substantiating the claims. For example, the case of a citizen waiting for the final completion of an administrative procedure since 1998 is an excellent illustration of the ping-pong effect as the key impediment to the effective public service delivery.
>
> Similar initiatives have already been launched by civil society organisations in the region. Ideally, governments in the region will design something similar in line with their commitment to modernise the administration. They can start to listen to the real problems people face every day in their contacts with the administration and focus on problems prioritised by the service users, to improve the effectiveness of their work and their accessibility to all their citizens."

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[485] *Ibid*, p. 6