



ReSPA

Regional School
of Public Administration

BUILDING TOGETHER
GOVERNANCE FOR THE FUTURE

INTEGRATED PLANNING SYSTEM

IN THE WESTERN BALKANS ADMINISTRATIONS



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Integrated Planning System

in the Western Balkans Administrations

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFMIS – Albanian Financial Management information System
AL – Albania
APIGP – Action Plan for the Implementation of the Government Program
AWPG - Annual Work Plan of the Government
BA – Bosnia and Herzegovina
CoFOG – Classification of the Functions of Government
CoM – Council of Ministers
CoG - Centre of Government
CSO – Civil Society Organizations
DCO - Development Cooperation Office
DCoM – Decision of the Council of Ministers
DEP - Directorate of Economic Planning
ECTS - European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
ENER - National Electronic Register of Regulations
ERP - Economic Reform Program
EU – European Union
FBiH - Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
FS - Fiscal Strategy
FZZPR - Development Programming Institute of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
GAWP - The Government Annual Work Program
GD - General Directorate
GRK – Administrative Instruction
GS - General Secretariat of the Government
GWAP - Government Annual Work Plan
IPSIS – Integrated Planning System Information System
MTEF - Medium Term Expenditure Framework
IPMG - Integrated Policy Management Groups
IPA – Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
IPS - Integrated planning system
IPMG – Integrated Policy Management Group
LPS - Law on Planning System
ME – Montenegro
MISA - Ministry of Information Society and Administration
MK – North Macedonia
MTBP – Medium Term Budget Programme
NAIS - National Agency on Information Society
NDP - National Development Plan
NDS - National Development Strategy
NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
NIPAC - National IPA Coordinator
NPAA - National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis
NPEI - National Programme for European Integration
NSDEI - National Strategy for Development and

European Integration
NSMF - National Strategic Management Framework
OECD – Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPM – Office of the Prime Minister
PAR – Public Administration Reform
PIMIS - Public Investment Management Information System
PPD - Policy Priority Document
PPS - Public Policy Secretariat
RIA – Regulatory Impact Assessment
RoP – Rules of Procedure
RS – Serbia
SASPAC - State Agency for Strategic Planning and Aid Coordination
SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals
SGG - General Secretariat of the Government
SL - Secretariat for Legislation
SMG - Strategic Management Group
SMPF - Strategic Management Planning Framework
SPC - Strategic Planning Committee
SPO - Strategic Planning Office
SPSG - Strategic Planning Steering Group
SSC - Sectorial Steering Committee
SWG - Special Working Group
XK – Kosovo*

INTRODUCTION

Strategic planning is a key instrument for the Government to deliver on its objectives and provide high quality and affordable public services to the citizens. In order to turn the vision into administrative plans that are implementable and aligned with the financial capacity of the Government, well-functioning strategic planning process is crucial. Another key characteristic of a good strategic planning system are instruments enabling the engagement of all relevant stakeholders and external expertise. Inclusive process makes it possible to build trust towards the actions of the Government, increase the quality of the decisions and facilitate implementation as all involved counterparts have been engaged already into the planning process.

The study aims at providing comparative analysis of the strategic planning system in Western Balkan administrations, more precisely on the planning system's strategic, legal, and institutional aspects. The analysis explains thoroughly public administration institutions' role in improving the integrated planning process, provides benchmarks from the EU countries and highlights good practices from the Western Balkans.

There is no right answer to how the strategic planning process should function. Workable solutions in a given administration depend on both political and administrative culture, traditions, size and government model of the administration as well as administrative capacity to deliver. Also, there is no ideal process. Each administration has its strengths and weaknesses. Though, there are key components that need to be in place for the system to function:

- » legal framework that sets the "rules of the game" and provides framework and guidance to all bodies involved in the strategic planning process;
- » coordinating institutions that have a mandate to steer and guide the process;
- » clear system for producing key planning documents enabling the translation of the vision into whole-of-the Government plans, being these plans annual, multi-annual or long term;
- » defined and manageable sectoral planning system that enables linking the sectoral plans with central plans and is inclusive;
- » necessary minimum capacity at the central level and the ministries to keep the system running and constantly improve it.

Administrations in Western Balkans and countries elsewhere have approached these issues differently. Though, the analysis does not aim at assessing or sequencing the countries, but rather analyses existing practices in comparative way highlighting bottlenecks and well workable solutions.

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1 * 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.

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The study was conducted in the period of March to June 2023. Comprehensive methodology was developed to enable comparative data collection of how the strategic planning system of Western Balkan administrations is set up and functioning. The analysis is based on analysis of legal framework, available public materials, previous studies conducted on strategic planning in Western Balkans, information exchange with the administrations and the expertise of the authors of the study.

The study is conducted under the auspices of the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA), an inter-governmental organization for enhancing regional cooperation, promoting shared learning, and supporting the development of public administration in the Western Balkans.² The study covers ReSPA members: Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia and beneficiary Kosovo*. The ReSPA provides a platform of the complementary studies, the strategic planning study follows a comprehensive analytical study on policy coordination, conducted in 2020.³

² ReSPA's purpose is to help regional governments in developing better public administration, public services, and overall governance systems for their citizens and businesses and prepare for membership in the European Union.

³ All the ReSPA studies can be found on following web-site: <https://www.respaweb.eu/25/research#par-7>

1.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Government administrations have a key role in translating the political vision into short-, medium- and long-term deliverable and realistic policies that meet the political priorities of the Government. Strategic planning system has an instrumental role to ensure that. Governments use different methods and procedures to deliver on the integrated strategic planning task. Based on practices of the OECD and EU countries the well-functioning strategic planning system requires: capable central coordination body, clear structure of the planning documents, coherent sectoral planning system, clear links with strategic and financial planning, inclusive strategy design and transparent monitoring system.

Western Balkans use all these components in their integrated strategic planning systems. There are several similar key characteristics and challenges that can be highlighted.

Western Balkans have well elaborated legislative framework for the strategic planning. The framework provides mandate to the coordinating body(s), defines key roles of the actors and key processes that create basis for inclusive and transparent policy design, coordination and implementation. Depending on the administrative culture the tools used for setting legal framework vary from a special law on planning to the Rules of Procedure that are supported by instructions, methodologies and/or guidelines.

Institutions coordinating strategic planning effort are established and mandated by the legislation. Similarly to the OECD countries and EU Member States the strategic planning function is fulfilled either by one Centre of Government (CoG) body or the responsibility is shared between several institutions. In Serbia and Albania, the responsibility is shared with the special body on planning, in Bosnia and Hercegovina separate body is created for coordinating the strategic planning, in Kosovo*, North Macedonia and Montenegro single CoG body is coordinating the strategic planning.

Tools for planning the work of the Government are in place with either annual or multi-annual government work plans. There are also medium-term European integration planning documents, medium-term budget projections and framework for sectoral strategies in Western Balkans.

Inter-ministerial consultation framework is set, as is the framework for involving external stakeholders into the strategic planning process, both in case of government planning documents and horizontal strategies as well as sectoral strategies.

Each of the Western Balkan administrations has its strengths and good practices:

- » Albania has developed a long-term horizontal strategy covering all areas as well as European integration “National Strategy for Development and European Integration 2022-2030”.
- » Bosnia and Hercegovina has good practices in involving the stakeholders and public into the development of the framework for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.
- » Kosovo* consolidated all key strategic planning functions into the Centre of the Government.
- » Montenegro developed a capacity building program and cooperation network for the civil servants dealing with the strategic planning.

- » North Macedonia has well established planning calendar for the Government strategic planning that ensures integrated approach and linkages to the budget process.
- » Serbia has well elaborated legal framework for strategic planning with comprehensive multi-annual work plan for implementing the Government priorities.

There are only some examples of integrated strategic planning system good practices in Western Balkans. The study elaborates on approaches used in more detail.

Western Balkan administrations also have several common challenges in ensuring well-functioning strategic planning system.

Linking policy planning with financial planning is still one of the key challenges. There is vague link between policy and financial priorities, work plans and horizontal strategies are not costed and the same applies for many sectoral strategies. Overall hierarchy of the strategic planning documents could be also approved.

The same applies to sectoral strategies development, where the system is illustrated by large number of different types of strategies that are not linked with central planning documents. Coordination capacity for developing sectoral strategies and aligning sectoral policy development with the Government priorities is underdeveloped in most administrations. The line-ministries' strategic planning structures don't exist or are small in staff numbers.

The integrated planning system in Western Balkans would also benefit from more robust and transparent monitoring, where monitoring reports would be compiled regularly for all strategies (both horizontal and sectoral) and also published.

Legal framework is often applied inconsistently due to the capacity constraints, both at the Centre of the Government and in the line-ministries.

These challenges, as well as good practices of other administrations highlighted in the study, could be taken into account when developing the integrated strategic planning systems in Western Balkans.

2. OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIC PLANNING SYSTEM CHARACTERISTICS IN SOME OECD COUNTRIES

Governments are elected on the basis of promises that usually reflect a strategic vision of where the new government wants to take the society. In practice, once in office, the Head of Government and ministers tend to be preoccupied by urgent matters which leaves little time to devote to this strategic vision. The pressures of managing domestic and international policy crowd out longer-term thinking.⁴ Therefore, the Government administration has a key role in translating the political vision into short-, medium- and long-term deliverables and realistic policies that meet the political priorities of the Government.

The key role in this process lays on the body supporting the Council of Ministers, such as the Prime Minister's Office or General Secretariat – defined as the Centre of Government. The CoG can be defined more widely, through key functions, and include also some additional institutions. Coordinating strategic planning, developing the Government Program and monitoring the implementation are key tasks of the Centre of Government and also key components of the integrated planning system.

Out of 28 OECD member countries, participating at the OECD study⁵, 14 had the sole responsibility of the strategic planning and 13 shared this responsibility with other governmental body. Distribution of functions on developing the Government Program were similar, with 16 CoG bodies having sole responsibility and 10 sharing this responsibility with other body. 15 CoG institutions were responsible for monitoring the implementation and 10 sharing the responsibility with other body.

Strategic vision, accountability and strategic planning, policy coherence and strategic commitment are defined by the OECD as main roles of the Centre of Government. The role of the CoG is to put together “the whole-of-the Government vision” and promote it to all stakeholders and the society. Furthermore, the CoG is the steward of the strategic vision, being responsible for the overall results and oversight. The CoG also needs a capacity to provide to the strategic vision a specific shape, to secure its coherence and make it operational. As starting points there should be the Government Program, or similar, giving the effect to the political manifesto. Making the political manifesto operational is the key, otherwise it remains just a “dead letter”. Another crucial component is the collective commitment that can be built, developed, discussed and agreed by a wide range of actors.⁶

4 Centre Stage. OECD Centres of Government. 2018. <https://www.oecd.org/gov/Centre-Stage-Report.pdf>

5 OECD (2015), “Roles of the centres of government”, in Government at a Glance 2015 https://doi.org/10.1787/gov_glance-2015-26-en

6 OECD Public Governance Review – Estonia and Finland. Fostering Strategic Capacity Across Governments and Digital Services Across Border. OECD 2015 <https://www.oecd.org/gov/oecd-public-governance-reviews-estonia-and-finland-9789264229334-en.htm>

Figure 1. Centre of Government functions in the OECD countries⁷

	Preparing Cabinet meetings	Communicating government messages	HR strategy for the public administration	Public administration reform	Strategic planning	Risk management/strategic foresight	Preparing the Government Programme	Policy analysis	Policy co-ordination	Regulatory quality and coherence	Monitoring policy implementation	Relations with sub-national government	Relations with the Legislature	International Development and aid	Supranational co-ordination/policy
Australia	●	○	□	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○
Austria	●	●	○	○	○	□	□	○	●	○	○	●	○	□	○
Belgium	●	○	□	□	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	○	□	○
Canada	●	○	○	○	●	●	●	○	●	□	●	○	●	□	□
Chile	●	○	○	●	●	●	●	○	●	○	○	○	●	□	○
Denmark	●	○	□	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	○	○	○	□	●
Estonia	●	●	□	○	○	○	●	○	●	○	●	□	●	□	○
Finland	●	●	□	○	●	○	○	○	●	○	○	□	○	□	○
France	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	●	□	○
Germany	●	○	□	□	●	□	●	○	●	□	○	○	○	□	○
Hungary	□	○	□	□	○	○	●	○	○	□	○	□	○	□	○
Iceland	●	○	□	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	□	○	□	□
Israel	●	○	○	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	○	□	○	□	□
Italy	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	○	●	○	○	●	○	○	○
Japan	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	□	○	○	□	□	○	□	□
Korea	○	○	□	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○
Netherlands	●	○	□	□	○	□	○	□	○	○	○	□	○	□	○
New Zealand	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	○	○	□	○	□	□
Norway	●	○	□	□	○	○	○	○	○	□	○	□	○	□	○
Portugal	●	●	□	□	○	□	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Slovak Republic	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Slovenia	●	○	□	□	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	□	○
Spain	□	○	□	□	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sweden	●	○	□	□	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	□	○
Switzerland	●	○	□	○	○	□	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	□	□
Turkey	●	○	○	○	○	□	□	○	○	○	○	○	○	□	○
United Kingdom	●	○	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	□	○
United States	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
OECD Total	●	○	□												
	25	10	3	6	14	7	16	4	19	7	15	5	14	0	1
	1	18	9	13	13	15	10	20	9	14	10	12	14	6	18
	2	0	16	9	1	6	2	4	0	7	3	11	0	22	9

● Responsibility of the CoG.
 ○ Shared responsibility between the CoG and another body.
 □ Responsibility of another part of government.

Source: 2013 OECD Survey on the Organisation and Functions of the Centre of Government.

Governments use different methods and procedures to deliver on strategic planning tasks. Based on practices of the OECD countries, key components of the well-functioning strategic planning system are: capable central coordination body, clear structure of the planning documents, coherent sectoral planning system, clear links with strategic and financial planning, inclusive strategy design and transparent monitoring system.

For example, **Estonia** has a good practice of capable Centre of Government (Government Office and the Ministry of Finance) that plays a key role in co-ordinating strategic planning. The Ministry of Finance has responsibility for the overall strategic framework. It prepares necessary regulations, raises awareness and provides guidance material, and undertakes quality control of sector strategies when these are consulted between ministries (verifying the financial information). The Strategy Unit in the Government Office is responsible for co-ordinating the key horizontal agenda across the public administration – Estonia 2035 – and for ensuring the coherence between sector strategies and horizontal strategic documents.

The Strategy Unit also takes part in the preparation of sector strategies and cross-cutting strategies. It analyses sector strategies, focusing on the objectives and substance of new strategies, aiming to

⁷ OECD (2015), "Roles of the centres of government", in *Government at a Glance 2015* https://doi.org/10.1787/gov_glance-2015-26-en

ensure that they coincide with government priorities and the Government Action Plan and contribute to achieving long-term aims of the government. The role of the Strategy Unit also includes fostering the strategic planning environment by developing methodologies for strategic impact assessment and providing financial support for ministries and non-government organisations for the purposes of research and analyses on cross-cutting issues.

Both the Strategy Unit and the Ministry of Finance assess the quality of strategic documents. The Strategy Unit undertakes quality control of sector strategies before Government Sessions where strategies are approved and provides advice to the Prime Minister.⁸

Finland has established coherent structure of the horizontal medium-term planning documents.

Figure 2. Medium-term planning documents in Finland

Strategy	Time horizon	Ministry/unit responsible	Goals and objectives
Government Programme (GP)	4 years	Coalition government	While the GP was not structured under any limited whole-of-government objectives, a selection of the most important of its 900-odd measures were grouped under the 3 main objectives: 1.1. Reduction of poverty, inequality and social exclusion 1.2. Consolidation of public finance 1.3. Enhancing sustainable economic growth, employment and competitiveness
Strategic Implementation Plan of the Government Programme (HOT)	4 years	Prime Minister's Office, Policy Analysis Unit (PAY)	The HOT focuses on the Government Programme's three main objectives, defining key measures and projects to achieve these objectives, preparation responsibilities, and schedules and aims at turning them into strategic, inter-sectoral and comprehensive policies. The HOT contains 140 key projects which are monitored. The HOT was adopted at the same time as the spending limits for the electoral term.
Mid-term spending limits	Annual	Ministry of Finance, Budget Department	Mid-term spending limits are decided upon at the beginning of the government term for four years, with a rolling annual review for the next four years.

Source: OECD Public Governance Reviews: Estonia and Finland. Fostering Strategic Capacity Across Government and Digital Services Across Borders https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/governance/oecd-public-governance-reviews-estonia-and-finland/the-role-of-the-centre-of-government-in-strategy-setting-and-implementation_9789264229334-5-en#page11

Ireland has streamlined its sectoral strategies. One of the strategic actions of the Ireland's Civil Service Renewal Plan 2014, coordinated by the Department of the Taoiseach, was strengthening of the strategic planning and business planning processes. This foresees streamlining the Statement of Strategy (*sectoral strategies*) planning cycle with the Program for Government so that planning processes are aligned, mandating the Civil Service Management Board to review and challenge each Statement of Strategy prior to finalization to ensure that these integrate cross-cutting initiatives and link effectively to Program for Government commitments, and

⁸ "Estonia: Towards the Signe Government Approach", OECD, 2011 https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/governance/oecd-public-governance-reviews-estonia-2011_9789264104860-en

developing a single Statement of Strategy for the Civil Service that focuses exclusively on the strategy for delivering cross-cutting initiatives involving multiple departments, offices and agencies.⁹

France has developed a comprehensive monitoring framework of the Government priorities. The institution responsible for strategic planning coordination in France, has developed an on-line environment for monitoring the progress on all Government priorities. The reporting is done by the responsible institutions, it is sent directly the Government and is also published.

Following chapters are analyzing the state of play of developing strategic planning systems in Western Balkan administrations, map general challenges and highlight good practices.

⁹ Republic of Ireland, *The Civil Service Renewal Plan - A Vision and Three Year Action Plan for the Civil Service*, <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/4171/101218152156-e1206bb2c0964a53888531e0c96c356e.pdf#page=1>

3.

ENABLING LEGISLATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Legislative framework

Legislative framework establishes main framework of the strategic planning process. The level of detail and the place of the regulation in the legal hierarchy (either law or secondary legislation) depends much on the administrative and legal traditions. Serbia is the only administration in Western Balkans having a special law on planning.¹⁰ Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia have set some, though not comprehensive, general rules on strategic planning in other horizontal laws.¹¹ In Bosnia and Hercegovina, the central government has established rules through decisions, though at the entities level the laws on planning exist. Kosovo* uses the Rules of Procedure as a main framework for the strategic planning and has not adopted separate legislation.

3 out of 6 administrations (Albania, Kosovo* and North Macedonia) use the Rules of Procedure as one of the main legal tools to detail the strategic planning requirements. Rules of procedures typically define the mandate of the Centre of Government in the planning process, set the legal basis for the Government Work Plan development and implementation and establish rules for inter-ministerial coordination and submission of the documents for the Government for approval.

All administrations, except North Macedonia, have adopted the special regulation to establish strategic planning rules. Serbia, Montenegro and North Macedonia have formally adopted methodology for planning as well as guidelines for further detailing the methods and techniques used for the strategic planning (for detailed overview of legal framework of all 6 administrations please see Annex 1).

Table 1. Overview of the legislative tools used

	AL	BA	XS	RS	ME	MK
Special law on planning		At the entity level		x		
Other horizontal law	X				x	x
Rules of procedures	X		x			x
Regulation approved by the Government/Council of Ministers	X	X	x	x	x	
Methodology, formally approved by the Government				x	x	x
Guidelines of methodology of commendable nature				x	x	x

Source: research by the authors of the study, April 2023.

10 Law on Planning System, adopted on 19.04.2018 <https://tinyurl.com/2p8n6568>

11 Law 9000-2003 on Organisation and Functioning of Council of Ministers, Albania (adopted on 30 January 2003); Law on State Administration, Montenegro (Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro 38/03 and Official Gazette of Montenegro 22/08, 42/11, 54/16 and 13/18) <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/42c95c3f-0c64-4657-99f4-f014f1912bc8>; Law on Government, North Macedonia (Published in the Official Gazette No. 59/2000)

Serbia has the most elaborated legal framework comprising of special law on strategic planning, several regulations detailing the methodology to be used, as well as several guidelines. Though, the approach that works in Serbia might not function well in smaller countries with different administrative traditions.

Legal framework of strategic planning in the Republic of Serbia

Serbia has adopted special *law on planning system*¹² defining the key terms on principles of planning, types of planning documents, types and minimum content of strategies, programmes, policy papers and action plans as well as horizontal planning documents, such as Government Annual Work Plan. The law also defines the minimum requirements and procedure for all medium-terms planning documents.

The law is complemented with three pieces of secondary legislation. *Regulation on the methodology of drafting mid-term plan* and *Regulation on the methodology of public policy management, impact analysis of public policies and regulations and the content of individual public policy documents* (both adopted on 16.02.2019). There is also *Decree on the Methodology of Public Policy Management, Analysis of the Effects of Public Policies and Regulations, and the Content of Individual Public Policy Documents* (adopted on 08.02.2019).¹³ These secondary acts further detail various aspects of the strategic planning process, such as detailed requirements for the structure and content of the medium-terms plans and requirements for the ex-post and ex-ante impact assessment. Additional regulation has been adopted for creating the umbrella horizontal strategy, namely on the procedure for preparing the Development Plan of the Republic of Serbia.¹⁴

Consultation with the external stakeholders as well as guidelines for including relevant internal and external stakeholders in the strategic planning process are established by two guidelines. *The Guidelines for the Inclusion of Civil Society Organisations in the Working Groups for the Drafting of Public Policy Documents*¹⁵ and *Rulebook on Guidelines of Good Practice of Public Participation in the Preparation of Draft Laws, Other Regulations, and Acts*¹⁶

Source: research by the authors of the study

As the strategic planning process is closely linked with the budget process, several administrations have regulated the planning process to some extent also in the Law on Budget (Albania, North Macedonia). In Albania, the national legal framework for budget formulation is laid down in the Organic Budget Law (last amended in 2016). The preparation of the budget is done in an orderly manner. There are 44 first-level budget organisations in the state budget, which provide comprehensive inputs both to the MTBP and to the annual budget proposal. In North Macedonia, the Law on Budget is a key legislation for establishing the planning framework. The groundwork for the strategic planning system was laid in the 2005 Law of Budget (Official Gazette No. 64/2005) that introduced the requirement for medium-term strategic plans for all budget users. The system was reinvigorated with the new version of the Law on Budget¹⁷ in 2022 outlining the Government strategic priorities as the medium-term horizontal planning framework that is implemented through the strategic plans of primary budget users defining the activities and projects to be implemented within the remit of their responsibilities. These strategic plans should be aligned with the Fiscal Strategy and the adopted (annual) Budget. The new law also requires the development of a new planning legislation, though the development of the planning law is on-going.

12 Official Gazette of RS, no 30, 20 April 2018

13 <https://tinyurl.com/4s6safxp>; <https://tinyurl.com/2p82udzv>; <https://tinyurl.com/2p82udzv>

14 Regulation on the procedure for the preparation of the Draft Development Plan of the Republic of Serbia, Official Gazette of RS, no 54, 30 June 2023, <https://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/vlada/uredba/2023/54/1/reg>.

15 Adopted by the Government Conclusion on 12.11.2021 <https://tinyurl.com/24a35z95>

16 Adopted on 19.07.2019 <https://tinyurl.com/53hvxax2>

17 Published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia, No. 203 of 19.09.2022, <https://finance.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/%D0%97%D0%B0%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BD-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%91%D1%83%D1%9F%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%B8.pdf>

3.2. Institutional framework

3.2.1. Central strategic planning coordination structures

Mandate and the capacity of the institution(s) responsible for the strategic planning has high influence over how the whole system functions. Coordinating institution has typically functions of coordinating the work plan of the Government as well as one or several medium- or long-term strategies, guiding the ministries on strategy development, ensuring delivery through monitoring and implementation of strategic plans, and ensuring the quality through acting as a gatekeeper before the Government discussions. In the EU Member States as well as in candidate countries, coordinating EU affairs belongs also to the strategic planning system as preparing the society for the EU accession requires at least well elaborated medium-term plans.

Most often the Prime Minister's Office or General Secretariat, supporting also the preparation of the Council of Ministers' meetings, is responsible for the strategic planning coordination. It is so in 3 administrations out of 6 (Kosovo*, Montenegro and North Macedonia). But it can be also a separate body. This is the case in Bosnia and Herzegovina central level, though it is an exception due to its administrative structure. At the entity level the strategic planning functions are at some level fulfilled by the General Secretariats of the entities. Common solution is also distributing strategic planning coordination functions between various institutions, which is the case in 2 Western Balkan administrations, Albania and Serbia.

Table 2. Institutions responsible for the strategic planning

AL	BA	XK	RS	ME	MK
Office of the Prime Minister		Office of the Prime Minister	General Secretariat of the Government	General Secretariat of the Government	General Secretariat of the Government
State Agency for Strategic Planning and Aid Coordination (SASPAC)	Directorate of Economic Planning (DEP) of Bosnia and Herzegovina		Public Policy Secretariat (PPS)		
	Entity level: Development Planning Institute of FBiH				
	Entity Level: General Secretariat of Republika Srpska				

Source: research by the authors of the study, April 2023.

In Montenegro, the Sector of the Strategic Planning and Coordination of the Government Policies at the General Secretariat is the main responsible structural unit. The functions of the General Secretariat comprise the development of the key planning documents – the Medium-Term Government Work Programme and Annual Government Work Programme. The Sector for Strategic Planning and Coordination of the government policies is also mandated to safeguard the coherence of the strategic planning system by analysing the quality of the structure and the content of sectoral strategic documents and by examining whether they comply with existing overarching planning documents, with the EU *acquis*, and with other international standards. Also, it monitors the implementation of the Government's Mid-term Work Program and drafts and monitors the implementation of the Government's Annual Work Program.¹⁸ Montenegro also has Ministry of European Affairs and the Ministry of Public Administration that fulfil some strategic planning coordination functions in their respective areas. Also, the Ministry of Finance has an additional role to common medium-term financial planning, namely preparing Montenegro's Development Directions and Economic Reforms Programme.

18 Rule on internal organizations of the General Secretariat of Montenegro <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/a0860f53-e9bd-4437-b004-984e4a96a707> (Sections 10, 10.1 and 10.2)

In North Macedonia, the Department on Strategy, Planning and Monitoring of the General Secretariat develops the Government strategic priorities and the Government Annual Work plan and monitors the implementation of both documents. It also ensures consistent implementation of the Methodology on Strategic Planning, develops reports on the implementation of development documents and delivers specialised trainings of strategic planning and monitoring. The Department has 2 Units: Unit for Strategic Planning and Monitoring and Unit for Development and Monitoring of the Implementation of the Annual Work Programme of the Government.¹⁹

Strategic Planning functions at the Prime Minister's Office of Kosovo*

Office of the Prime Minister in Kosovo* has consolidated in its structures the coordination of three strategic planning key components. Overall strategic planning coordination, coordination of EU Affairs and the coordination of EU and other external assistance. It has also strong legal department, responsible for legislative planning and ex-post evaluation of legislation.

Strategic Planning Office (SPO) has currently the staff of 10 persons (20 foreseen) and conduct following tasks: provides advice and support in identifying and reviewing Government's strategic priorities and ensuring that all Ministries act in accordance with them; ensures that draft policies of the Government are consistent with its overall priorities and with standards and procedures set by the Government; coordinates preparation of the national development strategy and monitors its implementation; coordinates preparation of the statement of medium-term priorities of the Government as the basis of policy priorities for the Medium Term Expenditure Framework; coordinates with ministries the preparation of concept documents (impact assessment) and their quality control; coordinates preparation of the Government Annual Work Plan and monitors its implementation; coordinates the development of a performance management system for the entire Government.

European integration departments have a staff of 19 persons (34 foreseen) and conduct following tasks: coordinates the functioning of the EU – Kosovo* joint stabilisation and association institutional bodies, with a view to setting EU integration reforms and overseeing their implementation; coordinates and supports the functioning of EU integration coordination bodies of the Government; coordinates regular reporting to the European Commission on implementation of EU integration reforms by Kosovo*; participates in drafting of public policy documents, with a view to ensuring their alignment with EU integration requirements and EU *acquis* and standards, and issuing policy compliance opinions on draft policy documents; coordinates and manages preparation of institutional structures for membership negotiations with the EU.

Development Cooperation Office (DCO) has currently staff of only 2 persons (13 foreseen) and conducts following tasks: coordinates EU and other donor assistance (programming, monitoring, implementation); prepares policies and strategic documents on development cooperation setting annual and multiannual funding priorities in support of the EU pre-accession process; fulfils the functions of the Office for the National IPA Coordinator (NIPAC); manages the donor coordination database and supports capacity building on development cooperation.

Source: research by the authors of the study, April 2023

In Albania and Serbia, the strategic planning process coordination is split between two institutions. In both countries the classical Centre of Government body (Office of the Prime Minister in Albania and General Secretariat in Serbia) is responsible for coordinating the development and implementation of the Government

¹⁹ The Law on Government https://vlada.mk/sites/default/files/dokumenti/zakoni/zakon_zavladata.pdf and the *Rulebook on Internal Organisation of the General Secretariat*.

Annual Work Plan.²⁰ In both administrations, separate institution is responsible for the coordination of strategic planning process. In Albania, the body sharing the strategic planning coordination responsibilities with the classical CoG body, the SASPAC, is still subordinated to the Prime Minister. In Serbia, the body is completely different state institution.

In Serbia, the Public Policy Secretariat (PPS) is created for overall management of the strategic planning process and for the preparation, implementation and monitoring of the Action Plan for the implementation of the Government's Program.²¹ Two sectors within the PPS perform planning related tasks. Sector for ensuring quality of public policies, regulations and services ensures compliance of legislation with strategic documents that determine public policies; prepares, monitors and implements strategic documents that determine public policies in the field of regulatory reform and conducts impact assessments of regulations. Sector for the planning system, coordination, development and improvement of public policies issues opinions on the content completeness and quality of impact assessment of public policies and reports on the implementation of public policy documents which are prepared by ministries and special organisations; provides methodological support to ministries during the development of planning documents and supports their implementation.

In Albania, the Agency for Strategic Planning and Aid Coordination (SASPAC) assists the relevant decision-making institutions responsible for strategic planning, is responsible for developing and monitoring the National Strategy for Development and European Integration (NSDEI) and to provide methodological support to the structures tasked with drafting of various sector and cross-cutting strategies in line with the NSDEI. SASPAC is also responsible for preparing the Priority Policy Document, as a component of medium-term strategic planning that provides clear guidance and precedes the process of medium-term budgeting/programming, ensuring a higher level of alignment with the strategic objectives. On 09 June 2023, the PM Order No. 74 on Approval of the Rulebook on Functioning of the OPM has been signed. This Regulation is intended to define the rules of organisation and internal functioning of the Prime Minister's Office, based on the division of roles and responsibilities between the relevant structures.

Bosnia and Hercegovina has a unique system due to its federal governance structure. Main strategic planning coordination body at the central level is the Directorate for Economic Planning (DEP) that combines economic research, macro-economic planning and long-term planning component. The DEP is responsible for the preparation, monitoring and implementation of annual, medium-term and long-term macroeconomic projections and development strategies as well as for the research and analysis of economic trends.²² The Development Programming Institute of FBiH (FZZPR) in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Entity level)²³ is the main strategic planning coordination institution being responsible for coordinating the Development Strategy of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina; developing the methodology for strategic documents as well as monitoring, reporting and evaluation of strategic documents. It also provides opinions to the FBiH Government in drafting annual work programme to ensure that it includes activities that will facilitate the implementation of development priorities from the FBiH Development Strategy. In the Republika Srpska (Entity level) the Department of Strategic Planning is created in the General Secretariat.²⁴ The Directorate is responsible for both coordinating development and implementation of the annual work plan and other strategic documents in priority areas. The Directorate coordinates also the development of sectoral strategies and develops instructions for the strategic planning.

20 In Albania the basic rules for the preparation of the annual work plan of the government are set by the Law 9000-2003 on Organisation and Functioning of Council of Ministers, Article 27, and DCM 584/2003, Articles 7-9. In Serbia the legal framework is set by the Law on Government, Art. 29, by-law on the General Secretariat of the Government, Art. 4 and the Rules of Procedure of the Government, Art. 76-77.

21 Law on Ministries, ar.38 <https://tinyurl.com/2bjvjjsu>

22 Law on the Council of Ministers, article 27 https://www.vijeceministara.gov.ba/o_vijecu_ministara/default.aspx?id=1752&langTag=en-US

23 Law on Federal Ministries and Other Bodies of Federal Administration ("Official Gazette of the Federation of BiH", No. 58/02, 19/03, 38/05, 2/06, 8/06, 61/06, 52/09 and 48/11). https://fuzip.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Zakon_o_federalnim_ministarstvima_i_drugim_tijelima_federalne_uprave_sl_novine_fbih_broj_58_2002_19_2003_38_2005_2_2006_8_2006_61_2006_80_2010_odluka_us_48_2011-1.pdf

24 The Law on Strategic Planning and Development Management (Official Gazette of the Republika Srpska, No. 63/21) and the Law on Government ("Official Gazette of RS", no. 55/05, 71/05 – correction, 65/08, 16/11, 68/12 – US, 72/12 and 7/14

Overall, strategic planning administrative set-up varies in the Western Balkans from consolidating functions into the single institution to distributing the functions between two separate institutions. Despite varying administrative set-up, the central strategic planning coordination bodies fulfil broadly similar functions. Though, there are differences in terms of the mandate and what tools the bodies have on its disposal.

3.2.2. Strategic planning units in the ministries

The strategic planning central coordination bodies need capable counterparts in the ministries. Policy departments of the ministries always play crucial role in policy and strategy design for a given area. However, often ministries have also special departments or units that provide support to the policy departments in terms of analysis, methodology and process of the strategic planning.

Special units, responsible for the strategic planning in the line ministries exist in Albania and North Macedonia, only in 2 administrations out of 6. In both cases the units face challenges in terms of staffing and capacity as well as capability of establishing itself as indispensable centre for strategic planning and monitoring competence in the ministries.

In Albania, the ministries formally shall have three coordinating divisions: Policies and Development General Directorate, Regulatory and Compliance General Directorate, Administrative and Support Services General Directorate. Out of these GDs, Policies and Development GDs are responsible for the strategic planning coordination, including setting the strategic priorities of the ministry, aligned with the Government priorities and supporting the development of sectoral strategies. The directorates are also involved in the planning of external assistance that gives them additional leverage.²⁵

In North Macedonia, all ministries are required to establish an organisational unit responsible for strategic planning, policy development and monitoring.²⁶ The Unit reports directly to the State Secretary. In practice, 15 out of 16 ministries have established organisational units for strategic planning but the organisational set up of the units is different in different ministries – 8 ministries have a separate Unit for strategic planning reporting to the State Secretary, 3 ministries have Strategic Planning Units within a Department with other responsibilities (for example Department for Human Resource Management and Strategic Planning in the Ministry of Justice, or Department for Coordination and Strategic Planning in the Ministry of Health) and 4 ministries have a Department for Strategic Planning.

Due to the different set up of this function, the responsibilities are not unified in all ministries. For example, in the Ministry of Education, Department of Strategic Planning and Policy Analysis²⁷ has a very strong research and analysis component in addition to the strategic planning coordination and liaising with the General Secretariat on the Government Annual Work Plan and implementation of the Government priorities. The Departments are still rather small having 3 employees on average (data in March 2023) and would benefit from the increased capacity, though the General Secretariat is providing capacity building programs regularly.

In other administrations, covered by the study, there is no streamlined approach to the strategic planning coordination in the line-ministries. Also, in all administrations Secretary General of a given ministry is responsible for the strategic planning and there aren't separate top officials in the ministry coordinating planning and analysis that could help to raise the profile and leverage of the strategic planning and ensure better outcome in terms of planning for the Government priorities implementation and designing sectoral strategies.

²⁵ "Reform of the Governance System – Ministries set-up – structural organization model", Office of the Prime Minister of Albania, 2017.

²⁶ The Decree on the Principles of Internal Organisation of the State Administration Bodies (Official Gazette No. 105/2007), Article 8

²⁷ Rulebook on Internal Organisation of the Ministry of Education and Science, amendment of 16 October 2020

4.

TRANSLATING POLITICAL VISION TO ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

One of the key aims of the strategic planning system is to enable the Government to implement its political vision. There are various tools the administration can use for successful delivery of the priorities. Crucial questions that should be answered are: which central planning documents the Government is using for planning administrative actions to implement the political platform? Which horizontal strategies are used to establish strategic priorities? How is the process of horizontal strategy development, implementation and monitoring designed? What type of system or framework is used for the strategic planning and bringing all the components together? If and how the link with the financial planning is created when the policy plans are made?

4.1. Government planning documents and horizontal strategies

The Governments use different tools for the work planning. There can be only annual legislative plan that doesn't provide many opportunities for planning delivery of the Government medium-term priorities. Therefore, many governments have developed a medium-term plan that includes also clear objectives with the performance indicators.

The picture is similar in the Western Balkans. North Macedonia and Albania have an Annual Work Plan of the Government, but not a multi-annual administrative one. Both economies have 4-year Government Program that is a political platform of the Government based on which the Government is mandated by the Parliament.²⁸

Kosovo* has multi-annual (3 years) plans, in parallel the ministries have 3 year institutional plans. In Kosovo* the Government Work Plan equals the National Development Plan, the latest for the period 2023-2025, there is no annual work plan of the Government.

Montenegro, Serbia and Bosnia and Hercegovina have both annual and multi-annual plan for translating the political vision into the administrative action.

Bosnia and Hercegovina entities have also government annual work plans with FBiH having also medium-term planning documents.

In Montenegro and Bosnia and Hercegovina annual and multi-annual plans are developed and monitored by the same institution (General Secretariat).

In Serbia different institutions are responsible for the annual and multi-annual plans. The General Secretariat and PPS respectively. In case the Government uses work plans with different time perspectives it is crucial to align the plans in terms of objectives, priorities and also concrete actions.

²⁸ Respective documents for Albania <https://www.kryeministria.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Government-Program-2021-2025.pdf> and for North Macedonia https://vlada.mk/sites/default/files/programa/2022-2024/programme_of_the_government_2022-2024.pdf

Table 3. Overview of the Government planning document's

	AL	BA	XK	RS	ME	MK
Annual Work Plan	<i>The annual legislative plan of the Government</i>	<i>Annual plan of the Council of Ministers</i>	-	<i>The Government Annual Work Plan²⁹</i>	<i>Government Annual Work Plan³⁰</i>	<i>Annual Work Programme of the Government³¹</i>
Medium-term Work Plan	<i>Government Program (4 years)</i>	<i>Three-year plan of the Council of Ministers³²</i>	<i>The National Development Plan (3 years)</i>	<i>Action Plan for the Implementation of the Government Program (4 years)³³</i>	<i>Government Mid-term Work Plan (4 years)³⁴</i>	-

Source: research by the authors of the study, April 2023.

5 out of 6 administrations covered by the study use multi-annual Government planning tools. For 2 administrations (Bosnia and Hercegovina and Kosovo*) three-year plans are used, 3 administrations (Albania, Serbia and Montenegro) use 4 years plans that are linked also with the electoral cycle. The plans are developed for the expected governance period of the Government. With the exception of Serbia, the Government work planning is a responsibility of a single institution, the classical CoG body (the OPM or the GS).

Mapping of the horizontal strategies provides more diverse results. Many EU Member States and OECD countries use horizontal strategies that define the overall development goals and, in some cases, the indicators which then would be cascaded down in the other planning documents or sectoral strategies and link to the objectives in those documents. This structure ensures a whole-of-government approach in planning which is indicated at the beginning of the report.

The strategies used in Western Balkans differ both in time span and in broadness, as well as in ensuring a whole-of-government approach in planning.

Serbia doesn't have long-term horizontal strategy, though foreseen by legislation. Preparation of the Development Plan has started, but it is not yet finalised.

The National Strategy for Development and European Integration of Albania provides the links between the national strategies with the EU policies and the SDGs and the 2030 Development Agenda, covering the period of 8 years. It serves as the basis for preparation of the sector and cross-cutting strategies.

Kosovo* is the only administration having long-term National Development Strategy (NDS) that is also operationalised by the 3-year government planning document.

North Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Hercegovina have a Sustainable Development Strategy with time-span varying from 10 to 21 years. Montenegro and North Macedonia have also developed Regional Development Strategies.

29 For the latest example please see <https://tinyurl.com/mrx4t78r>

30 For the latest example please see <https://wapi.gov.me/download-preview/83c638de-063b-4bff-b881-03798b9d74c3?version=1.0>

31 For the latest example please see https://vlada.mk/sites/default/files/dokumenti/godishna_programa_za_rabota_na_vlada-ta_na_rsm_za_2023.pdf

32 For the latest example please see <http://www.dep.gov.ba/default.aspx?pageIndex=1&langTag=en-US> 2020-2022

33 For the latest example please see <https://tinyurl.com/3js7j9at>

34 For the latest example please see <https://wapi.gov.me/download-preview/7c683907-59a9-41e8-8a1f-72fded711eac?version=1.0>

Table 4. Overview of horizontal strategies

AL	BA	XK	RS	ME	MK
National Strategy for Development and European Integration 2022-2030 (9 years) ³⁵	Framework for implementation of Sustainable Development Goals 2030 ³⁶	National Development Strategy 2030 (8 years)	-	Development directions of Montenegro (3 years) ³⁷	National Sustainable Development Strategy 2009 – 2030 (21 years) ³⁸
			-	Sustainable Development Strategy (15 years) ³⁹	Strategy on Regional Development 2021 – 2031 (10 years) ⁴⁰
				Regional Development Strategy (4 years) ⁴¹	

Source: research by the authors of the study, April 2023.

Responsible institutions for coordination of the implementation of the long-term horizontal strategy also vary.

While in Kosovo* the NDS is managed by the OPM and in Bosnia and Hercegovina the sustainable development framework by the Directorate of Economic. In North Macedonia sustainable development strategy is managed by different institutions leading by the CoG, and respectively the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning. While in Albania the NSDEI is managed by the State Agency for Strategic Planning and Aid Coordination (SASPAC). This is due to the fact that although horizontal in nature, these strategies are focused on attaining the SDGs and often these are seen as primarily linked to environmental policies that is not the case as sustainable development covers almost all policy areas and sustainable development strategies are coordinated by the CoG in many EU and OECD countries.

North Macedonia's regional development strategy is managed by the Ministry of Local Self-Government.

In Montenegro, the responsibility over sustainable development strategy was traditionally also the responsibility of the respective line-ministry, however the Government has recently followed the example of many EU countries and shifted the responsibility to the CoG with the creation of the Sustainable Development Office in the General Secretariat.

All the administrations have Economic Reform Programs (ERP) due to the requirement of the European Commission. The Programs are used as one of the factors taken into consideration when deciding about EU financial support. ERPs have streamlined structure across the economies and consist of priority objectives, indicators as well as key reform plans. To some extent the ERPs can fill the gaps of horizontal planning, but the process how the documents are developed and how much they are practically used in strategic planning processes, varies in the administrations. ERPs are often managed by the Ministries of Finance, Kosovo* and Bosnia and Herzegovina being exceptions where the ERP is developed and implemented by the main CoG body.

35 Adopted in February 2022, Decision of Council of Ministers, no. 88, dated 22.2.2023

36 [Okvir-za-realizaciju-Ciljeva-odrzivog-razvoja-u-BiH-latinica.pdf](https://okvir-za-realizaciju-ciljeva-odrzivog-razvoja-u-bih-latinica.pdf) (dep.gov.ba)

37 <https://wapi.gov.me/download-preview/1a5fab12-ec7a-4f28-b1e9-83c9d0dadb79?version=1.0>

38 <https://www.moepp.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Nacionalna-Strategija-za-Odrziv-Razvoj-vo-RM-NSSD-Del-1.pdf>

39 <https://wapi.gov.me/download-preview/6852d215-af43-4671-b940-cbd0525896c1?version=1.0>

40 https://brr.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/st_76_2021.pdf

41 <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/4b0f63fd-e49d-4f0c-9f09-99426dc8d51b>

These examples illustrate that often there is no consolidated approach to the horizontal planning that makes it challenging to build up coherent strategic framework and link the long-term development plans with both sectoral policy documents and priority setting of the Government. Government institutions also struggle to keep the long-term horizontal strategies updated or operational as in several cases new strategies are not yet adopted, though the old ones have ended.

4.2. Government planning documents development process

The strategy development process determines the quality of the final product and lays the basis for the successful implementation as inclusive process increases the quality of input, ensures that relevant expertise is taken into account and strengthens the ownership over the plans. The strategic planning process set-up and practices vary in the administrations, though there are common challenges.

Table 5. Overview of horizontal strategy development

	AL	BA	XK	RS	ME	MK
Does the regulation establish coordination mechanisms between the institutions involved in coordinating strategic planning and planning the work of the Government?	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
Are there regular meetings between the strategic planning bodies?	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Do the strategic planning bodies consult other involved institutions when developing horizontal strategic plan?	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Is the opinion of other involved bodies binding?	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Is there public consultation requirement when horizontal strategies are developed?	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Do the sponsoring institutions need to provide justification when public consultation proposals are not taken into account?	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO

Source: research by the authors of the study, April 2023.

In Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is no formal coordination mechanism or structure that would facilitate the coordination between the key institutions involved in the strategic planning process.

In North Macedonia, there is no formal coordination mechanism prescribed in the regulation, however there are organizational units in line ministries responsible for strategic planning, coordinating with the General Secretariat when developing the Government Annual Work Plan, as well as when developing the strategic priorities of the Government for the next planning cycle.

Kosovo* and Albania have established permanent coordination structure, though regular efficient usage of the structures remains a challenge.

Kosovo* has established two strategic planning coordination bodies: Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) and Strategic Planning Steering Group (SPSG).⁴² SPC is the political-level coordination body chaired by the Prime Minister, whereas SPSG is the policy-level coordination body. However, the bodies are not convened regularly and this limits their role in managing the strategic planning system and serving as a platform for inclusive cross-government strategic planning.

Albania is using a similar approach. The Strategic Planning Committee, chaired by the Prime Minister has been created as the main decision-making body in establishing government priorities, ensuring alignment between strategies and the MTBP and monitoring progress in implementing NSDI. The SPC has met regularly to discuss and approve the NSDI 2022-2030 as well as sector and cross-cutting strategies as well as to approve the Medium-Term Budgetary Program. The Strategic Planning Committee has discussed the new Priority Policy Document 2024-2026, which has been approved on 26 June 2023 through the Decision of Council of Ministers No. 447. In addition, the reorganization of IPMGs has also been discussed in the Strategic Planning Committee. Six (6) Integrated Policy Management Groups (IPMG) and 38 Thematic Groups have been established, regarding integrated public policy planning, fulfilling also the function of monitoring implementation of IPA funds.⁴³ After the creation of the SASPAC as donor coordinating agency, the IPMG mechanism was reviewed and an update was approved in August 2023, through the PM Order no. 90, dated 01.08.2023. It is envisaged that after the review the IPMGs and thematic committees meet regularly at least twice a year, in April and October, aiming to ensure the linkage with the MTBP, with the first meetings schedule in autumn 2023.

In all of the administrations, the inter-ministerial consultation and consultation with external stakeholders is a general requirement set in regulations that applies also to strategic documents. Though, also in all the administrations, the opinions of other bodies are not binding. Justification for not incorporating the opinions of external stakeholders in the planning documents should be provided in Kosovo*, Serbia and Montenegro, but not in other economies.

Albania and Serbia have also developed separate digital solution for the integrated planning system (IPS) that brings all the strategic planning information into one digital environment and enables also submission of information to the coordinating bodies. Though, Albania has not fully used the potential of the digital IPS due to many organisational and procedural changes in the administration. Also, the Public Policy Secretariat of Serbia is working on further developing and improving the Single Information System, the digital solution for policy planning, monitoring, coordination and reporting. In Montenegro, several digital solutions are not used to a sufficient extent. In the part of sector strategies, it is envisaged that the existing digital solution will be improved to meet the needs of the integrated planning system. In 2020, the Ministry of Public Administration presented a digital solution for monitoring the implementation and reporting on the Government's medium-term work program. In 2022, SGG, in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Administration, started the process of adapting the existing digital solution for medium-term planning with the Methodology for the Government medium-term working program. The goal was to adapt the system to the methodological requirements for reporting.

Table 6. Digital integrated planning system characteristics of Albania and Serbia

Question	Serbia	Albania
Does the system include priority policy objectives of the Government?	YES	YES
If YES are the performance indicators set for the priority policy objectives?	YES	YES
Does the system include sectoral policy objectives?	YES	YES
If YES are the performance indicators set for the sectoral policy objectives?	YES	YES

42 The Administrative Instruction (GRK) No. 07/2018 on Planning and Drafting Strategic Documents and Action Plans.

43 PM Order 90 of 01.08.2023 "On taking measures for implementation of sector wide/cross-cutting approach, as well as the establishment and functioning of the sectorial/ integrated cross sectorial mechanism", replacing Order no. 157, dated 22.10.2018.

Is there a requirement to link activities/measures with the political program of the Government?	YES	NO
Is there a requirement to link sectoral policy objectives with the sectoral strategies?	NO	YES
Is there are requirement to have costing for the programs included in the digital IPS?	NO	YES
Is there a requirement to have costing for the measures included in the digital IPS?	YES	YES

Source: research by the authors of the study, April 2023.

Overall, digital integrated strategic planning systems are considered as a strong element in the strategic planning of the Western Balkans. Though, the efficiency of the system depends on the implementation practices and how the developed IT solutions are modified based on structural changes and adjustment of work processes. Developing coherent framework for planning in terms of legislative framework, procedures and institutional set-up is one of the key challenges for the Western Balkans.

In Albania, the IPSIS system is in the phase of reassessment, review, and upgrading of functionalities, though it has not been practically functional since its launch in 2021. Among other things, the functioning of IPMGs will also be part of IPSIS. SASPAC is working with the National Agency on Information Society (NAIS) to prepare the terms of reference for the company that will carry out the upgrade.

Kosovo* is working on establishing the National Strategic Management Framework (NSMF), including capacity-building for senior and middle management staff of ministries on functioning of such a framework. It is also working on rationalizing and consolidating the architecture of the sectors and the pertinent strategic planning framework, based on the CoFOG model.

Serbia plans revision of the Law on Planning System. Moreover, the Public Policy Secretariat has initiated the process of developing the National Development Plan, which is required by the Constitution (since 2006) and the Law on Planning System (since 2018), but has not yet been developed.

Bosnia and Hercegovina and North Macedonia are planning, similarly to Serbia, to update the legal framework for planning. The Bosnia and Hercegovina plans to revise of the Decision on the procedure for medium-term planning, monitoring and reporting in the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

North Macedonia is in the process of developing a Law on the Planning System. The scope of the law is still under discussion but, generally, it should regulate the hierarchy and typology of planning documents, alignment among the long-, medium- and annual policy planning, as well as the alignment with the budget planning and European integration planning. Also, the development of the National Development Strategy is under way. It will be a 20-year strategy setting the development goals in six priority areas covering: territorial development; green and digital society; demographic and socially balanced development; innovative and competitive economy; secure, safe and resilient society and good governance. The National Development Strategy should be adopted by the end of this year.

Montenegro is in the process of preparing new edition of the Methodology for strategic planning. The new edition includes a gender perspective on strategic planning. In addition, specific methodological guidelines and a tool are created for conducting a strategic environmental impact assessment that are integrated into the Methodology. Montenegro plans also the revision of the plans of the organization of ministries in order to form units for strategic planning as well as to analyse the overall legal framework for the strategic planning with the view to develop the law on strategic planning in the future.

5.

PLANNING FOR THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

European integration process is a key driver of reforms in all of the accession countries as harmonisation of national legislation with the EU *acquis* requires substantial reforms in most of the policy areas. Well-functioning strategic planning system is a pre-requisite for progressing in the European integration path. Planning comprises preparation and conducting of accession negotiations, but more importantly planning for preparing the administration and the whole society for the accession. The latter includes legislative activities, implementation of legislation and good financial planning.

Separate European integration plan is a common pre-requisite for keeping the focus in the European integration process. At the same time, the Government needs to link European integration priorities with overall priorities of the Government in terms of activities and resources planning. There are three commonly used models for coordinating the European integration in terms of where the coordination and strategic planning body is located: at the classical CoG (Albania, North Macedonia, Kosovo*, Bosnia and Hercegovina), separate ministry (Montenegro, Serbia) or in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the Western Balkans two models are used, either CoG or the Ministry of European Affairs.

Table 7. European integration planning documents and coordination bodies

European integration planning document	Duration	Coordination body
Albania		
National Plan for European Integration	2023-2025	Office of the Prime Minister
National Strategy for Development and European Integration ⁴⁴	2022-2030	SASPAC
Bosnia and Hercegovina		
There is no valid European integration planning document (latest document was adopted in 2005)		
Kosovo*		
National Programme for European Integration (NPEI) ⁴⁵	2023-2027	Office of the Prime Minister
Serbia		
National Programme for the Adoption of Acquis of the EU (NPAA) ⁴⁶	2022-2025	Ministry of European Integration

44 Decision of Council of Ministers no. 88 dt. 22.02.2023 <https://qbz.gov.al/share/3VxOqmLUSwOWhi00jsdZUg>

45 Formerly the National Programme for Implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, NPISAA. NPEI 2023-2027 is available at <https://integrimievropian.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/3-PKIE-2023-2027-miratuar-nga-Ku-vendi-ENG.pdf>.

46 <https://tinyurl.com/2at27fzh>

Montenegro		
Program of accession of Montenegro to the European Union ⁴⁷	2023-2024	Ministry of European Affairs
North Macedonia		
National Programme for Adoption of the Acquis (NPAA) ⁴⁸	2021-2025	Secretariat of European Affairs

Source: research by the authors of the study, April 2023.

All administrations, except Bosnia and Hercegovina, have a clear medium-term plan for the EU accession preparations. Duration of the plan varies from 2 to 5 years. Albania has also developed a longer-term strategy that sets integration priorities and provides the framework for planning the EU assistance. Practices used for linking the European integration planning with overall Government planning depend on the responsible institutions, but also on how advanced is the Government work planning.

Table 8. Linking European integration planning with the Government work planning

Questions	AL	BA	XK	RS	ME	MK
Do horizontal planning documents include the link with the EI planning document?	YES	-	YES	YES	YES	YES
Is the institution responsible for the EI consulted during the development of horizontal planning documents?	YES	-	YES	YES	YES	YES
Is the EI planning document updated every year?	YES	-	YES	NO	YES	NO
Does the document include priorities?	YES	-	YES	YES	YES	YES
Does the EI planning document have a costing requirement?	YES	-	YES	NO	NO	YES
If YES is the requirement for more detailed costing?	YES	-	YES	-	-	YES
Is there a regular reporting requirement?	YES	-	YES	YES	YES	NO
If YES is the report publicly available?	NO	-	YES	YES	YES	-

Source: research by the authors of the study, April 2023.

Strategic planning frameworks of all administrations (except Bosnia and Hercegovina) foresee the requirement to refer to European integration related activities either in the Government annual or multi-annual work plan. Mostly, the special reference column is used in the work plans that links activities in the work plan with the EI process.

In Montenegro the linkage is vaguer, also the cycle of planning for European integration differs from general government work planning (European integration plan is compiled for 2 years and general development

⁴⁷ <https://wapi.gov.me/download-preview/0fe5350b-58fe-4970-a8cc-1d55fac2d73e?version=1.0>

⁴⁸ <https://www.sep.gov.mk/data/file/NPAA/NPAA%202021/NPAA%202021-2025.pdf>

directions for 3 years). Alignment is supported by the fact that the European integration plan is updated annually. Requirement of linking the plans through a separate column does not necessarily lead to coherence of the plans. There are discrepancies that derive from different timing of the plans, varying duration and some coordination challenges, despite the principle that institution responsible for the EI is consulted during the development of the Government work plans.

Coherent planning of European integration and overall government priorities in Kosovo*

The National Development Strategy 2030⁴⁹, together with the National Development Plan (NDP) 2023-2025, was adopted by the Government on 28 February 2023, while the National Plan for European Integration (NPEI) 2023-2027 was approved by the Government on 31 March 2023 and adopted by the Assembly on 15 June 2023. The linkage of NDS 2030 and NPEI 2023-2027 can be analysed at two levels: structure and content.

In terms of the **structure**, NDS 2030 contains four pillars: (1) Sustainable Economic Development, (2) Equitable Human Development, (3) Security and the Rule of Law, and (4) Good Governance. Each pillar contains development goals to be reached by 2030. On the other hand, NPEI 2023-2027 contains three pillars: (1) Political Criteria, (2) Economic Criteria, and (3) European Standards/acquis chapters, further subdivided into chapters covering specific policy areas. Each chapter contains medium-term objectives and short-term measures. NDS is structurally linked NPEI and the documents are coherently aligned.

Source: analysis by the authors of the study, April 2023 and July 2023.

European integration plans are updated annually in Albania, Kosovo* and Montenegro. Annual revision enables to keep the plans up to date and feed acute information into the Government work planning cycle, facilitating also actual implementation.

The costing is conducted in Albania, Kosovo* and North Macedonia where annex 3 of the plan gives a detailed overview of the indicative costing (2021-2024) by (negotiating) Chapter and Programme/Activity. The Programmes/activities are divided into several categories such as the budget programme, Government programme, administrative activity (employments, capacity development, etc.) or capital project.

Regular reporting has equal importance with the annual update of the plans, adding transparency and governmental scrutiny element. Reporting requirement exist in all economies except in North Macedonia, however, reporting practice is sporadic in some cases. For example, in Serbia, reports have not been compiled in 2020 and 2021.⁵⁰

In Albania, the implementation of the NPEI is monitored regularly.⁵¹ The Department of Policy and European Integration within the OPM (European Secretariat under the Minister of State and Chief Negotiator) monitors weekly NPEI 2023-2025. Regular reports regarding implementation of the NPEI are provided in the weekly meetings of heads of legal departments of ministries and weekly meetings of secretary-generals as part of the preparation of the weekly programme of the CoM. However, these implementation reports are not publicly available.

Overall, the European integration plans are well designed, mostly costing and provide good basis for linking the EI with the Government work planning. However, the plans are not regularly updated in several administrations that makes it more challenging to use the plans as operational planning documents.

49 An overview of development goals for each pillar is available at <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/en/national-development-strategy-2030/>.

50 Monitoring Report. The Principles of Public Administration. Serbia. 2021. OECD/SIGMA <https://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Monitoring-Report-2021-Serbia.pdf>

51 As stipulated by the Decision of the Council of Ministers No 122 of 1.03.2023.

6.

ENSURING FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Financial framework for the Government policies is normally set in the medium-term budgetary strategy and operationalised in the annual budget. To ensure strategic planning that is realistic and implementable, the Government sets sectoral policy objectives and budget ceiling for sectoral policies (or to the organisations). In parallel, governments seek to ensure that the cost of each measure and action in the planning documents (such as work plans, horizontal strategies or sectoral strategies) is analysed in the strategic planning process. Clear cost of measures enables to set the overall spending need for a given strategic plan and prioritise the measures in the plan as well as between the strategies. Applying the financial impact assessment and understanding financial implication of the Government actions is often most challenging task in the strategic planning process.

6.1. Medium-term budgetary planning

All the administrations covered by the study have a medium-term fiscal strategy. However, the content and purpose of these strategies vary and enable different extent of practical linkage of the government work plans and medium-term financial plans.

Table 9. Overview of financial strategies for linking government work planning with the financial planning

	<i>Does the document include priority policy objectives</i>	<i>Does the document include sectoral or organisational policy objectives</i>
Albania		
<i>MTBP – Mid-term Budget Programme 2023-2025</i>	YES	YES
Bosnia and Herzegovina		
Global Framework of Fiscal Balance and Policies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2022-2024 projections ⁵²	YES	NO
Medium term expenditure framework for institutions of BiH	YES	NO
Kosovo*		
Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) ⁵³	YES	Sectoral objectives in priority areas

⁵² <https://www.mft.gov.ba/Content/Read/globalni-fiskalni-okvir>

⁵³ <https://mf.rks-gov.net/desk/inc/media/F4CB1BDF-67C6-49A8-954F-21434E5363F1.pdf>

Serbia		
Fiscal Strategy (FS) ⁵⁴	YES	NO
Montenegro		
Macroeconomic guidelines and fiscal policies 2022-2025 ⁵⁵	YES	NO
North Macedonia		
Fiscal Strategy 2022 – 2024 (with projections by 2026) ⁵⁶	YES	NO

Source: research by the authors of the study, April 2023.

In Serbia, Montenegro and North Macedonia, medium-term strategies are mainly fiscal strategies that focus on fiscal framework and macro-economic targets. The strategies include priority policy objectives, but don't set any spending targets and allocate spending by sectors or organisations. That poses challenges for linking the strategic planning with budgeting as there is no financial framework for policy priorities and sectoral policies.

Bosnia and Hercegovina, Albania and Kosovo* use some elements of sectoral policy objectives and spending targets in the medium-term expenditure frameworks (MTEF). For example, Kosovo* has sectoral objectives in priority areas and Bosnia and Hercegovina has MTEF for organisations that complement the fiscal projections document. In Albania a special system (AFMIS) is used for compiling the Medium-Term Budgetary Programme (MTBP). The AFMIS system is currently used by all line ministries (11) and central institutions (35). All institutions prepare budget request for MTBP through the system that is also used for producing budget reports.

However, medium-term expenditure planning remains a challenge that makes it difficult to provide financial framework for government policies and establish strategic planning system that results with implementable and realistic policies.

6.2. Costing government work plans and horizontal strategies

To ensure financial sustainability of government policies it is also needed to cost key strategic plans of the Government, such as the Government Work Plan and horizontal strategies. That enables to understand the spending need for implementing the Government priorities, but also other policies.

Table 10. Overview of costing practices of government work plans and horizontal strategies

	AL	BA	XK	RS	ME	MK
Is the Government Work Plan costed?	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
Is any other horizontal planning document costed?	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
Is there a guidance or methodology setting the frame for costing?	YES ⁵⁷	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES
Are programs used when compiling the budget?	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO

Source: research by the authors of the study, April 2023.

54 <https://tinyurl.com/yscf72et>

55 <https://wapi.gov.me/download-preview/4a53f44a-1bf3-44c2-8cfd-b7650984a88c?version=1.0>

56 <https://finance.gov.mk/%d1%84%d0%b8%d1%81%d0%ba%d0%b0%d0%bb%d0%bd%d0%b0-%d1%81%d1%82%d1%80%d0%b0%d1%82%d0%b5%d0%b3%d0%b8%d1%98%d0%b0/>

57 DCM No. 290/2020 of 11 April 2020 on the Creation of the State Database of the Information System of Integrated Planning (IPSIS), including Guidelines and methodology for costing of sector strategies as part of the IPSIS system.

In Albania NSDEI and the strategic action plans should be costed. A separate guideline and methodology about the costing of the sector and cross-sector strategies has been provided⁵⁸, based on Methodological Guide for Costing of Government Strategies, developed by ReSPA. In order for the strategic documents to be aligned with national legal and policy requirements: they are required to follow the IPSIS methodology and be linked to MTBP and the other relevant national strategies. In addition, SASPAC presents to the Strategic Planning Committee, for review the Priority Policy Document, which is a component of medium-term strategic planning and precedes the process of medium-term budgeting/programming (MTBP), ensuring a higher level of alignment with the strategic objectives of the Council of Ministers. It focuses on key priorities/strategic objectives that are sufficiently specific and covers a medium-term time frame.

In Bosnia and Hercegovina both the Government Work Plan and the three-year plan are costed. Though, there is no separate methodology the costing is detailed and provides overview of the cost of various measures.⁵⁹

In Kosovo*, the work plan and the horizontal planning documents are costed and there is a detailed guidance and methodology for costing of policies provided in the Manual on Budget Impact Assessment issued by the Ministry of Finance.

Serbia is using program budgeting and has developed a methodology for costing the Government policies⁶⁰, however the work plan of the government is not costed. A medium-term government work plan, the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Government Program, includes costing of some measures.

Montenegro has costed the central planning documents, similarly to BiH and Kosovo* and is using elements of program budgeting. The program budgeting is formally used, but in practice not fully implemented. Data is collected in accordance with the program budget, but at the end of the process, the budget is prepared through the “traditional” procedure.

North Macedonia has a requirement to cost the Government Annual Work Plan (GAWP). In accordance with the Guidelines for Development and Monitoring of the Government Annual Work Programme, each of the initiatives proposed and included in the GAWP should present the fiscal impacts and the source of funding. However, in practice this is not fully respected. For example, in the legislative part of the programme (laws to be adopted by the Parliament) of the GAWP 2023 only 12% of the proposed initiatives are costed. North Macedonia also has a methodology for costing. However, the Form for the Fiscal Impact Assessment and the guidance for completing the form was adopted by the Minister of Finance already in 2002 and has not been updated since. In 2021, the Minister of Finance adopted the Guidelines for Costing of Sectoral Strategies. Although the current structure of the state budget is grouped in two categories, Government Programmes and Budget programmes, the programme budgeting is used only formally. The provisions of the new Law on Budgets (2022) ensure programme budgeting procedures and structure and better links with the Government strategic priorities. The National Program for the Adoption of the Acquis has also an annex with the budget projections.

Overall, ensuring financial sustainability of government policies is one of the weakest elements of the strategic planning systems in the Western Balkans. There are some positive examples, all administration cost at some level annual work plans of the Government, but setting medium-term budgetary framework of the Government policies and introducing systematic costing of at least priority policies remains a challenge.

58 The Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 290/2020, dated 11 April 2020, on the Creation of the State Database of the Information System of Integrated Planning (IPSIS).

59 See the latest work plan https://www.vijeceministara.gov.ba/home_right_docs/default.aspx?id=40130&langTag=bs-BA and three year plan <http://www.dep.gov.ba/default.aspx?pageIndex=1&langTag=en-US> as examples

60 <https://rsjp.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/Prirucnik-za-utvrđivanje-troskova-javnih-politika-i-propisa.pdf>

7.

ENSURING POLICY FEEDBACK AND SCRUTINY THROUGH MONITORING AND REPORTING

Monitoring and reporting is a key component of the integrated strategic planning system, as it provides overview on implementation to the Government. When developed transparently, the Government's performance on delivering its priorities can be assessed by the public, external stakeholders and media. Well-functioning cross-government monitoring and reporting has the components of coordinated regular reports that are submitted to the Government and made public. In many administrations, these regular reports include overview of outcomes, based on performance indicators and overview on costing.

Table 11. Overview of monitoring the cross-government work plans

Questions	AL	BA	XKS	RS	ME	MK
Is there a regular reporting requirement for horizontal planning documents such as Government Work Plan?	YES	YES	YES	YES ⁶¹	YES	YES
Is the reporting cycle quarterly/monthly?	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
Is the reporting cycle annual?	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Is the report submitted to the Government?	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Is the report made public?	NO	YES ⁶²	NO	YES	YES	NO
Does the report include reporting on outcomes (such as performance indicators)?	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO
Does the report include overview of spending?	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO

Source: research by the authors of the study, April 2023.

In all the administrations, there is a regular reporting requirement on the Government work plans.

Albania, Kosovo* and Montenegro use more frequent cycle, other administrations rely on the annual reporting. Reports are submitted to the Government, but are made public only in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. None of the administrations uses reporting on outcomes and spending.

In Albania, the reporting is based on monitoring legislative actions. Reporting requirements expect from the ministers to periodically report "on the enforcement of the acts, which are adopted by the Council of Ministers, for the areas that they cover and the activity that they manage pursuant to the implementation of the political

⁶¹ Serbia has two horizontal Government work planning documents and the requirements for these documents differ.

⁶² <https://www.parlament.ba/act/ActDetails?actId=1306>

program of the Council of Ministers”.⁶³ The progress is monitored on weekly basis, through checks of the E-Acts system by the Department of Regulatory and Compliance of the OPM that also sends regular weekly reports to the General Secretary of the OPM. Monitoring reports for the GAWP are prepared also on monthly and annual basis. The implementation percentage of the GAWP in the period 2014 - 2022 has increased from 31% (for 2014) to 70% (for 2021).

In Serbia, the monitoring system is based on three reporting requirements. Article 43 of the Law on Planning System (LPS)⁶⁴ sets out detailed requirements for reporting on all public policy documents. Article 44 of the LPS establish the requirement for the PPS to develop an annual report on the implementation of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Government Program and article 45 determines the same requirement for the Annual Work Plan of the Government (AWPG). Article 78 of the Government Rule of Procedure requires the Government to adopt a report on its work, which is submitted to the National Assembly. All cited articles include the obligation to publish these reports. However, this requirement is not consistently met. While AWPG reports for 2020 and 2021 are available⁶⁵, for the APIGP a single report for 2020-2022 has recently been published⁶⁶, while previously no reports were published. The GAWP implementation report does not include any information on the achievement of outcomes since the GAWP itself focuses on outputs rather than outcomes. However, PPS prepares regular reports on the implementation of APIGP, which is a positive development.⁶⁷

In North Macedonia, according to the Methodology on Strategic Planning and Development of the Annual Work Programme of the Government, the General Secretariat prepares an Annual Report on implementation of the Government Priorities. The report is based on the reports of the ministries on implementation of their (institutional) Strategic Plans. At the beginning of each new planning cycle, the General Secretariat submits the report that is also a basis for the Decision of the Government for the new Medium-Term Priorities. Based on the methodology, the Report on the Government Priorities should be analytical and include policy outcomes based on performance indicators included in the ministries Strategic Plans, but in practice it is more activity based than result/outcome based. Also, the General Secretariat develops semi-annual and annual reports on implementation of the Government Annual Work Programme that are not public. There are 7 indicators that are monitored by the General Secretariat and reported on in the annual Report on Implementation of the Government Work Programme. However, the indicators are not linked to the policy outcomes, but are of technical nature linked with the legislative programme.

In Montenegro internal coordination within the administration to monitor the implementation of the horizontal planning documents was recently improved with the creation of respective commission.⁶⁸ First meeting of the commission is planned to be held by end of 2023.

The aim of the initiative is to simplify communication and monitoring of the horizontal planning documents, with state secretaries and general secretaries being members (with the exception of Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Capital Investment that are represented by expert-managements and expert-level officials).

Overall, the basis for the cross-government monitoring is set in all economies with regular reporting requirements to the Government. Though, reporting practices are not fully consistent, often the reports are not made public and don't include overview of the Government's performance as well as spending against planned costs.

63 Law No. 9000/2003, Article 27.

64 <https://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/skupstina/zakon/2018/30/1/reg>

65 <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/prikaz/583756>

66 <https://rsjp.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/APSPV-Finalni-izves%CC%8Ctaj-usvojen-30.6.2022..pdf>

67 Monitoring Report. The Principles of Public Administration. Serbia. November 2021. OECD/SIGMA <https://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Monitoring-Report-2021-Serbia.pdf>

68 Decision on establishing the Commission for monitoring the implementation of Mid-term Government Working Programme 2022-2024 and Annual Government Working programmes (June 30 2023) <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/5b11deb1-26ec-4af4-8816-439bbb7144d1>

8.

COHERENT SECTORAL POLICY PLANNING

The Government priorities require coherent cross-government planning in terms on sequencing and resources. However, integrated strategic planning would not function without coherent sectoral policy planning. Government priorities are implemented through sectoral policy design and enforcement, delivery will suffer when the sectoral policies are not aligned with the priorities or with each other, when the policies are not operational or covered with sufficient resources. Therefore, it is relevant to ensure that there is clear framework work the sectoral strategies development, minimum quality requirements for sectoral strategies as well as functioning monitoring system.

8.1. Sectoral policy planning framework

Well-functioning framework starts with having a coordinating body with the clear mandate as well as defined legal framework that sets “rules of the game” for all the ministries. Most often, the body responsible for coordinating the sectoral strategies coincides with the main strategic planning coordination body, but not always.

Table 12. Bodies coordinating sectoral policy planning

<i>Name of the institution</i>	<i>Name of the unit</i>	<i>Number of staff dealing with sectoral strategies coordination</i>
Albania		
State Agency for Strategic Planning and Aid Coordination (SASPAC)	Strategic Programming Directorate	16
Bosnia and Hercegovina		
<i>The function is conducted at the sub-national level.</i>		
Kosovo*		
Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)	Strategic Planning Office	5
Serbia		
Public Policy Secretariat (PPS)	Sector for planning systems, coordination, development and improvement of public policies (Department for public policy planning support and Department for economic analysis)	17

Montenegro		
General Secretariat of the Government	Sector for strategic planning and coordination of the government policies	9
North Macedonia		
General Secretariat of the Government	Department for Strategy, Planning and Monitoring	4

Source: research by the authors of the study, April 2023.

In Albania and Serbia, coordination of sectoral strategies is conducted by the body responsible for the overall long-term strategy development.

In Serbia the role is not fully formalised, however, the PPS provides support to ministries and other institutions in the development of strategies and provides written opinions on the draft strategies.

In other administrations, the role is fulfilled by the classical CoG body.

In Bosnia and Hercegovina, the coordination of sectoral strategies is implemented at the Entity level. The resources dedicated to sectoral strategy coordination vary from 4 to 17 persons, though it is difficult to compare the capacity of the bodies as the staff conducts also other tasks, depending on the organisation of work.

Table 13. Overview of the sectoral policy planning framework

	AL	BA	XK	RS	ME	MK
Does the legislative framework cover also sectoral strategic planning and development of sector strategies?	YES ⁶⁹	NO (function is at entity level)	YES ⁷⁰	YES ⁷¹	YES ⁷²	YES ⁷³
Is the legislation binding (for example by-law)?	YES		YES	YES	YES	YES
Does the legislation establish typology of strategic documents?	YES		NO	YES	YES	YES
Does the legislation establish hierarchy of strategic documents?	YES		NO	YES	NO	YES
Is there an overview/list of all sectoral strategies and policy documents?	NO		YES	YES	YES	NO
Is the list of sectoral strategies publicly available?	NO		YES ⁷⁴	YES	YES	NO

Source: research by the authors of the study, April and July 2023.

69 DCM No. 290/2020 of 11 April 2020 on the Creation of the State Database of the Information System of Integrated Planning (IPSIS). <http://qbz.gov.al/eli/vendim/2020/04/11/290>

70 Article 3, the Administrative Instruction (GRK) No. 07/2018 on Planning and Drafting Strategic Documents and Action Plans also covers sector strategies.

71 Article 12 on the Law on the Planning System (LPS)

72 Decree on methodology and procedure for drafting, aligning and monitoring the implementation of strategy documents (Official Gazette of Montenegro, 54/2018)

73 the Guidelines and the Methodology on the Structure, Contents, Development, Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation of Sector and Cross-Sector Strategies, adopted in May 2022.

74 The list of valid strategic documents of the Government of Kosovo* is available at: <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/en/blog/list-of-strategic-documents-valid-update-with-13-june-2023/>.

All the administrations have the binding legal framework for the sector strategy development, though Bosnia and Hercegovina has it at the Entity level.

The regulations in North Macedonia establish clear typology as well as hierarchy of the sectoral strategies identifying the National Development Strategy as the umbrella strategy which should guide the policies design in the government policy sectors. However, the National development Strategy is not yet adopted.

In Albania, the alignment of the sectoral strategies with a number of horizontal strategies and plans is required, such as Government Program 2021-2025, NSDEI 2022-2030, Priority Policy Document 2024 -2026, National Plan for European Integration 2023-2025 and Economic Reform Program 2023-2025.

Most of the administrations still have challenges with implementing the sectoral strategies framework that is illustrated also by high number of sectoral strategies – 59 in Montenegro and 55 in Serbia. Kosovo* has 29 sectoral strategies.⁷⁵ In North Macedonia, Albania and Bosnia and Hercegovina the number of sectoral strategies could not be verified. The list of sectoral strategies is compiled and is publicly available in Kosovo*, Serbia⁷⁶ and Montenegro⁷⁷.

Quality and monitoring requirements of the sector strategies

To ensure proper delivery of policies, administrations often set clear quality requirements for the sectoral strategies. These requirements cover the content that needs to be included in the strategies. Requirements for costing and clear operational plan also facilitate implementation of the strategies.

Table 14. Overview of the requirements set to the sectoral strategies

	ALB	BIH	KSV	SRB	MNE	NM
Are there minimum quality requirements for the sectoral strategies?	YES	NO (function is at entity level)	YES	YES	YES	YES
Is there a costing requirement for the sectoral strategies?	YES		YES	YES	YES	YES
Is there an action plan or operational plan requirement for the sectoral strategies?	YES		YES	YES	YES	YES
If YES, are there costing requirement for the action plan/operational plan?	YES		YES	YES	YES	YES

Source: research by the authors of the study, April 2023.

All the administrations, except Bosnia and Hercegovina where sector strategies are coordinated at the level of Entity, have set minimum requirement for the strategies. The level of detail varies.

For example, in Serbia the requirements for both strategy and the action plan are elaborated in detail.

⁷⁵ List of valid strategic documents of the Government of Kosovo*, <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/en/blog/list-of-strategic-documents-valid-update-with-13-june-2023/>.

⁷⁶ There is a searchable database of all strategies available on the website of the PPS: <https://tinyurl.com/22fhx5z2>

⁷⁷ Special website is dedicated to policy planning system in Montenegro. Within policy sectors (defined in the Decree) the list of sectoral strategic documents is provided. www.javnepolitike.me

All the administrations have also set the costing requirement. Costing is typically done at the level of the Action Plan that is also required in all administrations. However, various studies and assessments illustrate that the actual implementation of the requirements is still a challenge in all administrations, in particular concerning the costing as well as having updated actions plans for all strategies.

Well-functioning monitoring improves the implementation and also the quality of the sectoral strategies through the governmental and public scrutiny as well as regular review.

Table 15. Overview of the monitoring requirements of the sectoral strategies

	AL	BA	XK	RS	ME	MK
Does the legislation establish monitoring requirement?	YES	NO (function is at entity level)	YES	YES	YES	YES
Are the reports of all sectoral strategies submitted to the Government regularly?	YES		NO	NO	YES	YES
Are the reports of all sectoral strategies published regularly?	NO		NO	NO	YES	YES

Source: research by the authors of the study, April 2023.

All the administrations have introduced monitoring requirement for the sectoral strategies, though there are some differences in the monitoring frameworks and the actual implementation of the requirements.

In Kosovo*, there is no requirement to submit all sectoral strategies to the Government regularly. However, the implementation reports of strategic documents should be presented and discussed in the Strategic Planning Committee, chaired by the Prime Minister, but the reports are not made public.

In Montenegro, all the monitoring reports of the strategies are submitted to the Government and also published.

In Serbia, there is a requirement to submit the reports and also make them public, however, practice to follow it is uneven.

In North Macedonia, new practices are developing after adoption of new legal framework that sets the requirement to submit the reports regularly to the Government and also publish them. However, there is not enough practice yet to draw the conclusions on the functioning of the system.

Overall, the legal framework for establishing coherent sectoral strategy planning system is in place in all of the administrations. Practical implementation remains a challenge that is illustrated by either high number of sectoral strategies or lack of overview of the strategies. Countries would also benefit from transparent monitoring that ensures both political and public scrutiny.

9.

INCLUSIVE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Inclusive strategy development increases the quality of the strategic planning and support implementation through higher ownership of the stakeholders to contribute to the implementation. Cross-government strategic documents have high number of responsible sponsoring institutions that need to be closely involved in the development and delivery process. Most of the sectoral strategies cover also large number of inter-ministerial and external stakeholders. Therefore, established framework and working practices should promote inclusive strategic planning process as much as possible.

9.1. Framework and practices for inter-ministerial consultation

There are numerous ways to ensure inter-ministerial consultation of government bodies. Classical way of written consultation might not be sufficient in the strategy development process. Establishing and gathering regularly working groups is one of the efficient tools for inclusive strategy development and coordination of implementation.

Table 16. Overview of inter-ministerial consultation practices of horizontal strategies

Questions	AL	BA	XK	RS	ME	MK
Are there separate inter-ministerial consultation requirements for horizontal strategies (in addition to normal-regular inter-ministerial coordination)?	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES
Is there a requirement to have inter-ministerial working group for compiling horizontal strategies?	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
Are inter-ministerial working groups gathered in practice for horizontal strategies development?	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
Is there are requirement to have inter-ministerial working meetings for the horizontal strategy development?	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES
Are inter-ministerial working meetings gathered in practice for horizontal strategies development?	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES

Source: research by the authors of the study, April 2023.

In most of the administrations there is no special inter-ministerial consultation requirement for horizontal strategies and the issue is regulated in general by the rules of procedure. Kosovo* has a special requirement for pre-consultation for horizontal strategies.

Administrations don't use the requirement to have inter-ministerial working groups for the strategy development, except Albania and Kosovo*. Interestingly these administrations don't use the inter-ministerial working groups in practice. However, in practice inter-ministerial working groups are used for the strategy development in all other administrations (Bosnia and Hercegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia).

In Serbia, there is formally no requirement for creating inter-ministerial working groups for strategies and legislation, although it is a widespread practice across the administration. However, there are currently no horizontal strategies in Serbia. Serbia has developed a separate process for the preparation of the National Development Plan (NDP), through the Government decree on the procedure for preparation of the National Development Plan (adopted on 30 June 2023). According to the draft bylaw, the process will include formation of special inter-ministerial bodies at political and expert level.

The requirement to gather the formal working meetings for inter-ministerial consultation is present in Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Kosovo* and North Macedonia. In practice the working groups and working meetings are still gathered in most of the administrations. Montenegro has not set formal requirements for inter-ministerial working groups for strategy development, but inter-ministerial cooperation functions at the informal level.

North Macedonia stands out with well elaborated process which, besides the working meetings and the written consultation modalities, includes a requirement for the strategies to be published at the special platform for consultations – the National Electronic Register of Regulations – where all stakeholders have a possibility to comment on the draft strategy.

In Bosnia and Hercegovina, most of the strategy development happens at the level of Entities where the legal framework, including horizontal and vertical coordination mechanisms, are set in the laws and decrees for the development of the strategies. These mechanisms include also consultation requirements of different organisations, governmental levels and external stakeholders. Despite no formal rules at the central level there are still good practices of strategy development.

Development of Sustainable Development Goals in the Bosnia and Hercegovina

Directorate for Economic Planning of Bosnia and Hercegovina (federal level) coordinated drafting of the Framework for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals in Bosnia and Herzegovina, after which the Strategic Framework for institutions of Bosnia and Hercegovina was adopted. The document serves as an orientation for strategic planning in terms of its multisectoral approach (i.e. the FBiH Development Strategy is aligned with the SDG Framework, and it is a reference point for the currently prepared Sustainable Development Strategy of Republika Srpska).

The consultations during the period of preparation of SDG Framework were extensive and included workshops, conferences, e-consultations and the involvement of academic community.

The SDG of Bosnia and Hercegovina was followed by the FBiH Development Strategy that was developed through the Coordination Committee (CC). Committee consisted of representatives of the Office of the Prime Minister of the Federation, the FZZPR, the FBiH Chamber of Commerce, federal ministries, the General Secretariat of the Government of the Federation, all 10 cantons, the Union of Municipalities and Cities of the Federation of BiH, The Gender Center of the Federation of Bosnia and Hercegovina, the Federal Bureau of Statistics and the Association of Employers. Also, representatives of the Directorate for Economic Planning of Bosnia and Herzegovina were invited to the Committee meetings as observers. The draft of the Strategy was posted on the website and a deadline of 30 days

was given for the submission of comments. In parallel the comments were received throughout the development period of the strategy. All the comments were analysed and feedback on inclusion or non-consideration provided.

Source: research by the authors of the study, April 2023.

When developing sectoral strategies, usage of inter-ministerial working groups and meetings is more wide-spread.

Working groups and working meetings are organised in all administrations, except Kosovo* where the working groups and meetings are still organised, but not regularly and in a systematic way.

For example, in Serbia, formation of working groups to develop policy and legal proposals has become a widely spread practice, despite of voluntary nature. The working groups usually gather a number of relevant ministries, as well as some of the CoG institutions.⁷⁸

In Albania, as foreseen in the RoP, groups working with experts for drafting strategies, policies, studies or special draft acts shall be established upon the order of the Prime Minister or, upon the order of the minister for the relevant ministries.⁷⁹

Table 17. Overview of inter-ministerial consultation practices for sectoral strategies

	AL	BA	XK	RS	ME	MK
Is there are requirement to form working group(s) for sectoral strategies development?	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Are there separate formal working group(s) for developing sectoral strategies in practice?	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Is there are requirement to have inter-ministerial working meetings for the sectoral strategies development?	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO
Are inter-ministerial working meetings gathered in practice for sectoral strategies development?	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES

Source: research by the authors of the study, April 2023.

Inclusive inter-ministerial strategy development process in North Macedonia

The regulations on sectoral strategies (Guidelines and Methodology) have separate inter-ministerial consultation requirements. The responsible ministry is required to plan the process of strategy development, including the involvement of stakeholders comprising ministries and other public institutions as well as other interested stakeholders. At the start of the process, the responsible ministry is required to publish an announcement at the website of the National Electronic Register of Regulations (acronym in Macedonian language ENER) and at the ministry's web-site with information on the title of the strategy, the planned steps and timelines for development, and the URL address where drafts will

⁷⁸ National Study on Policy Coordination Processes in Serbia, <https://tinyurl.com/44pzpc5c>

⁷⁹ Law No. 9000, Dated 30 January 2003 On the Organization And Functioning of the Council of Ministers

be published for comments. Responsible ministries are required to consult all stakeholders throughout the development process. The ministries may use different forms of consultation (working groups, written comments, meetings, public hearings or through ENER). Before submitting the draft strategy to the Government for review and adoption, the responsible ministry must submit the draft for formal opinion to the General Secretariat, the Ministry of Finance and the Secretariat of European Affairs.

Inter-ministerial working groups are formally established by formal decision of the relevant Minister or by the Government, depending on the nature of the strategic document. In some cases, representatives of relevant NGOs and the academia are also invited as members of the working group.

The decision for establishment of the working group usually specifies the mode of coordination and operation of the working group. In some cases, the working group is required to adopt formal Rules of Procedure for operation of the working group in the process of development of the strategy.

The same rules apply to the horizontal and sectoral strategies. The most recent example has been the development of the new PAR Strategy. At the outset of the process, the Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA) published an announcement informing the public on the start of the process and invited relevant NGOs to nominate representatives who would participate as members of the working sub-groups in each of the 4 priority areas covered in the PAR Strategy. Eight NGOs expressed their interest to participate in the development of the strategy and nominated their representatives. The NGOs participated in the meetings of the working sub-groups and gave their input/comments throughout the strategy development process.

Also, the MISA published all drafts on the ENER and the ministry website inviting comments from stakeholders and the general public and organised a public debate where all interested parties could share their comments.

Source: research by the authors of the study, April 2023.

9.2. Inclusive strategy development through public consultations

Involving external stakeholders such as business organisations and NGOs to the strategy development facilitates implementation, adds legitimacy to the process and increases trust to government. The same applies to proper impact assessment (both ex-post and ex-ante). Most often impact assessment is used for regulatory actions, but many administrations use impact assessment also in the strategic planning process.

Table 18. Overview of public consultation procedures

	AL	BA	XK	RS	ME	MK
Is there are public consultation requirement when developing a sectoral strategy?	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Can stakeholders be involved in the strategy development process (for example through preparatory working groups(s) that are also including relevant stakeholders)?	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Source: research by the authors of the study, April 2023.

All the administrations have established the requirement to have public consultations when developing sectoral strategies and enable external stakeholders to participate in the strategy development process through working groups, in case these exist. There are several good public consultation examples.

Developing the Government Medium-term Work Program in Montenegro

The formal public consultation process is complemented with the Decree on the election of representatives of non-governmental organizations in the working bodies of state administration and the implementation of public hearings in the preparation of laws and strategies⁸⁰ that adds additional mandatory elements to consultation process, such as organization of public hearings and the inclusion of representatives of civil society and the academic sector to the discussions. That has led to active public participation in the development of many strategic documents. A series of public events is generally organized with a prior invitation to the interested public.

The example of the Government's Medium-term Work Program 2022-2024 is important because the process of creating it was open to the public for the first time. In order to obtain the highest possible quality suggestions from interested subjects, 10 focus groups were organized. 61 participants took part in the public debate (54 focus group participants and 13 submitted questionnaires with suggestions). A total of 112 specific comments and suggestions related to the objectives and a larger number of general comments were submitted.

Source: research by the authors of the study, April 2023.

In Albania, each legal act for discussion in the government sessions, including the strategies adopted by the Government, is complemented with a report on the outcome of public consultation, which needs to be made public and available via the Government online consultation portal or the website of the respective ministry. A minimum duration for written public consultation through the Government online consultation portal (Electronic Registry of Public Notification and Consultation⁸¹) is established and remains set at a minimum of 20 days and may be extended to 40 days regarding especially complex and important matters⁸². The legal consultation requirement is further clarified in the Guideline on the Public Consultation Process.⁸³ Public consultation is required for draft laws and draft policy strategic documents of high public interest. Guidelines require from each ministry to prepare the Annual Public Consultation Plan and report quarterly on its implementation. Also, annual reports on the progress of the quality of public consultations should be published.

In Serbia, the public consultation requirements, set by law, are complemented with the consultation manual that provides further guidance on how to consult stakeholders and the public.

Developing Public Administration Reform Strategy in Serbia

The Public Administration Reform Strategy was adopted after a broad consultative process that has begun in the early stages of development. The participation of civil society organizations (6) in the early phase was ensured by means of their involvement in the work of the Special Working Group (SWG) for PAR Strategy development, which was based on a transparent call for applying for SWG membership. CSOs could choose a PAR area of preference beforehand, and the actual work of the SWG was divided into sub-groups, framed around specific objective of the Strategy, i.e. PAR areas. Consequently, selected

80 Adopted on 14 June 2018 <https://wapi.gov.me/download-preview/afe2a97a-5f9c-44db-8060-680599dd0ce0?version=1.0>

81 <https://konsultimipublik.gov.al/>

82 Law No. 146/2014 on Public Notification and Consultation.

83 The Order of Secretary General of CoM No. 3 of 29 January 2021 "On Public Consultations"

CSOs have contributed to the Strategy development in the areas of their initial preferences, although the Ministry of Public Administration allowed participation in discussions for more than one specific objective.

Source: research by the authors of the study, April 2023.

Impact assessment is widely used in the Western Balkans. There are specific instructions for conducting impact assessment and responsible bodies. Responsible bodies are mainly legal departments and the focus of impact assessment is on legislative acts, not on strategic documents. Serbia is standing out, by setting clear rules and requirements also for the impact assessment of strategies. Impact assessment requirement of public policies is set in the law⁸⁴ and the framework is detailed in the Regulation on the methodology of public policy management, impact analysis of public policies and regulations and the content of individual public policy documents.⁸⁵

Overall, there is well developed framework of public consultations/involvement while developing strategies in the Western Balkans. At the same time, inter-ministerial consultation practices vary, inter-ministerial coordination is formal and often doesn't rely on actual cooperation through working groups and working meetings. That also decreases the impact of public consultation.

84 Law on the Planning System of the Republic of Serbia, 2018, <https://tinyurl.com/2ppevry4>

85 Adopted on 16.02.2019 <https://tinyurl.com/2p82udzu>

10.

OVERVIEW OF THE INTEGRATED STRATEGIC PLANNING SYSTEMS IN WESTERN BALKANS

Albania

The Integrated Planning System (IPS) represents a “made-in-Albania” reform developed in the early 2000s to address the mounting complexity and volume of policy, financial and EU-related decisions facing the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers at that time. A legitimate question arises: is IPS still relevant in 2023?

The founding IPS principle, that decision makers are better served if the core policy and financial planning systems of government are harmonized and mutually reinforcing, depends on the establishment of effective coordinating mechanisms at both decision-making and administrative levels. The IPS was variously described as the coordination of NSDI, MTBP and EU integration, a contributing component of public administration reform accompanied with an IT system (IPSIS).

In Albania, the IPS represents a set of principles governing the way in which policy and financial options and recommendations are conveyed to decision makers; i.e., they must be coherent, clearly-defined, evidence-based, affordable and priority-focused. As such, the IPS provides a bridge between the supporting processes and structures and the decision makers.

With respect to policy coordination, a mix of longstanding and new mechanisms exist. The Strategic Planning Committee (SPC), chaired by the Prime Minister, has reactivated its role in establishing government priorities, drafting of the NSDI and sector strategies, ensuring alignment between strategies and the MTBP and monitoring progress in implementing NSDI and sector strategies. Given the ongoing EU negotiations, the SPC’s role in ensuring that available funding is directed to high-priority areas within a sound fiscal plan becomes crucial.

The establishment of the IPMG architecture constitutes a major reform of decision-making structures in Albania. Although there is considerable variation in approach by respective IPMGs, focus should be placed on strengthening these new structures to ensure that they achieve their potential. There is ample evidence that Albania’s configuration of high-level inter-ministerial committees has been successfully used internationally.

The development of the IPSIS platform provides a major innovation with the potential to strengthen the development, harmonization and monitoring of strategic planning documents. Individual modules have been developed for all key IPS-related processes that enable strategic goals, policy goals and specific objectives to be aligned and easily monitored in all key processes.

To assist decision makers, Albania has developed an analytic instrument, the Policy Priority Document (PPD), that summarizes key competing pressures. The Policy Priority Document represents a solid contribution to the always challenging process of determining which measures are to be funded within programme budget ceilings. The PPD was revived in 2020 to inform the 2021-23 MTBP/budget process and has been prepared regularly since then. The Priority Policy Document 2024-2026 was approved for the first time through a Decision of the Council of Ministers. Prepared jointly by SASPAC, OPM and MFE with contributions from line ministries, the PPD creates a solid foundation for priority setting that can be strengthened in the years ahead as a core input to SPC decision making. The document describes and provides cost estimates for a range of high-profile policy reforms and a short list of potential strategic public investment projects. The PPD also sets

out the medium-term macro/fiscal framework. This plan establishes the aggregate expenditure ceiling that, in turn, determines the latitude SPC will have in identifying the reforms or projects to be reflected in preliminary programme budget ceilings. Each year, the SPC and the CoM decide which policy or public investment proposals requiring significant new or expanded funding will be reflected in the programme budget ceilings. Inevitably, the cumulative demands from all priority sources exceed available funds, so choices must be made by the SPC. The preparation of the PPD already benefits this difficult process and can be strengthened in future years by sharpening the identification of policy and fiscal trade-offs. The inclusion of options on cost-savings measures could also be helpful, since expenditure reductions can expand the pool of funding available for new or expanded policy measures, including public investments.

The IPS was founded on the premise that strategic planning, medium-term budgeting and European integration needed to be harmonized and mutually reinforcing. Today, MTBP remains the centerpiece of financial planning and budgeting and continues to evolve. With the IPS reform, Albania became the first, among Western Balkan administrations, to articulate and institutionalize these fundamental linkages. The preparation of the NSDI alongside a comprehensive set of sector strategies better enables the Government to establish an aggregate fiscal plan that can then be broken out by sector. Combined with improved costing of policy proposals and strategic interventions in the sector strategies, a much tighter link between strategic planning and the MTBP will be achieved.

Development of robust instruments (e.g., enhanced RIAs) enable decision makers to determine optimal policy options based on a thorough assessment of socio-economic impacts and fiscal costs was described. This offers a potential avenue to significantly reduce the problem of unfunded mandates arising from approval of improperly costed legislation. The prospective synergies between AFMIS and IPSIS create a potentially powerful tool for ministries and central institutions to ensure the MTBP appropriately and affordably reflects the government's policy priorities.

The institutional framework and associated European integration coordination mechanism are comprehensive and complex. Both political and technical structures have been set up to manage the EI process. This includes the preparation, monitoring and reporting of the National Plan for European Integration (NPEI) as well as organizing the negotiation process.

The establishment of the IPMG architecture constitutes a major reform of decision-making structures in Albania. Although there is considerable variation in approach by respective IPMGs, focus should be placed on strengthening these new structures to ensure that they achieve their potential. There is ample evidence that Albania's configuration of high-level inter-ministerial committees has been successfully used internationally.

Looking ahead, the decision-making environment over at least the medium term promises to be exceptionally challenging. For the next several years, the EU accession negotiations will place a significant policy and legal burden on decision makers as Albania negotiates the 33 integration chapters, incorporates the EU *Acquis* and raises administrative capacity to EU standards. From an IPS perspective, it is important to emphasize that, despite the distinct requirements of the EU accession process and opening up of negotiations with the EU, the decision-making procedures for EI-related policies are subject to the same requirements as domestic policy proposals. Accordingly, EI-related policies do not require special procedures; they need to be prioritized and mainstreamed through the government's decision-making system.

Since when IPS was introduced for the first time, in the mid-2000s, Albania has introduced a sophisticated array of policy and financial planning processes, instruments and tools. In fact, the information vacuum that once existed has been replaced by an abundance of information and analysis drawn from multiple sources and systems.

The IPS, which focuses on the link between policy and financial planning and the decision-making system, is more relevant than ever. Today's policy and financial environment and available tools are dramatically different. What is required is a full IPS reboot to streamline, modernize and, most importantly, harmonize the supporting processes. All the pieces of the puzzle now exist and they must next be carefully and collaboratively put together.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Due to its administrative structure, Bosnia and Herzegovina has developed a complex regulatory and institutional framework for strategic planning. Namely, central government, due to its primarily coordinating roles, has restricted input in sectoral planning, but leads development of overarching planning documents, such as Framework for Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals in Bosnia and Herzegovina. On the other hand, two entities, Federation of BiH (FBiH) and Republika Srpska, developed a comprehensive legal framework for planning, with laws on development, strategic and mid-term planning adopted in 2017 in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and 2021 in the Republika Srpska, and complementary by-laws that are being periodically amended.

Further, separate rules are developed in Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as the third administrative unit at subnational level, while ten cantons in the Federation of BiH adopt additional rules for planning, in line with FBiH regulations. These are outside of the scope of this study.

At the level of institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the two regulations set the rules for strategic planning: Decision on the procedure for medium-term planning, monitoring and reporting in the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina⁸⁶ and Decision on annual work planning and methods of monitoring and reporting on work in the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁸⁷ In the Federation of BiH, there is a specific Law on Development Planning and Development Management in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina⁸⁸, complemented with Decree on Triennial and Annual Work Planning, Monitoring and Reporting in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina⁸⁹ and Decree on Strategic Documents Drafting in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the Republika Srpska, Law on Strategic Planning and Managing Development⁹⁰ and Decree on Strategic Documents in RS⁹¹ are the legal basis for planning process.

Institutional setup differs among the levels of government in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The main strategic planning coordination body at the central level is the Directorate for Economic Planning (DEP), responsible for the preparation, monitoring and implementation of annual, medium-term and long-term macroeconomic projections and development strategies as well as for the research and analysis of economic trends.⁹² Ministry of Finance and Treasury is also included in medium-term planning process, while the annual government work planning process is led by the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers.

The Development Programming Institute of FBiH (FZZPR) in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Entity level)⁹³ is the main strategic planning coordination institutions being responsible for coordinating the Development Strategy of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina; developing the methodology for strategic documents as well as monitoring, reporting and evaluation of strategic documents. It also provides opinions to the FBiH Government in drafting annual work programme to ensure that it includes activities that will facilitate the implementation of development priorities from the FBiH Development Strategy. In the Republika Srpska (Entity level) the Department of Strategic Planning is created in the General Secretariat.⁹⁴ The Directorate is responsible for both coordinating development and implementation of the annual work

86 "Official Gazette of BiH", No 62/14. Revision of the Decision is currently prepared.

87 "Official Gazette of BiH", No 80/22.

88 "Official Gazette of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina" No. 32/17.

89 <https://fzzpr.gov.ba/en/normative-documents/regulations>

90 Official Gazette of RS" No 63/21.

91 "Official Gazette of RS" No. 94/21.

92 Law on the Council of Ministers, article 27 https://www.vijeceministara.gov.ba/o_vijecu_ministara/default.aspx?id=1752&langTag=en-US

93 Law on Federal Ministries and Other Bodies of Federal Administration ("Official Gazette of the Federation of BiH", No. 58/02, 19/03, 38/05, 2/06, 8/06, 61/06, 52/09 and 48/11). https://fuzip.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Zakon_o_federalnim_ministarstvima_i_drugim_tijelima_federalne_uprave_sl_novine_fbih_broj_58_2002_19_2003_38_2005_2_2006_8_2006_61_2006_80_2010_odluka_us_48_2011-1.pdf

94 The Law on Strategic Planning and Development Management (Official Gazette of the Republika Srpska, No. 63/21) and the Law on Government ("Official Gazette of RS", no. 55/05, 71/05 – correction, 65/08, 16/11, 68/12 – US, 72/12 and 7/14

plan and other strategic documents in priority areas. The Directorate coordinates also the development of sectoral strategies and develops instructions for the strategic planning.

The main horizontal planning documents include the Framework for implementation of Sustainable Development Goals 2030⁹⁵, as a country-wide strategic document, which formed a basis for development of separate strategies for each level of government,⁹⁶ namely

- » 2030 Strategic Framework of institutions of BiH⁹⁷
- » 2021-2027 Development Strategy of the Federation of BiH.⁹⁸

Governments prepare annual and three-year plans (apart from the Republika Srpska that only prepares annual government work plans), such as:

- » Annual plan of the Council of Ministers⁹⁹
- » Three-year plan of the Council of Ministers.¹⁰⁰

Having in view the complexities of the planning system in Bosnia and Herzegovina and its recent and underway developments, the main strengths are recognized in the strong legislative framework in two entities and concentrated planning roles in one institution at the centre of government of both entities, namely General Secretariat of the Republika Srpska and the FBiH Development Programming Institute.

At the central government, the roles and responsibilities of institutions involved are yet to be clearly established, as well as the rules for planning processes upgraded. Nonetheless, the successful implementation of the preparation of country-wide sustainable development planning document and widespread involvement of public in planning process is applaudable.

Overall, fragmentation of the planning system among several levels of governance remains the main weakness. Moreover, there are no digital solutions for the planning systems in the country, which makes it a cumbersome task in development, but even more so in monitoring and reporting on implementation of strategic and planning documents. The main institutions at centres of government note that theirs and the limited capacities in line ministries are mostly reflected in the quality of monitoring, evaluation and reporting. Partial digital solutions are available in budget planning (BPMIS) and integrated system for Public Investment Program where all levels of government from municipal, cantons, entities and state level submit investment projects into digital solution called PIMIS (Public Investment Management Information System). Public Investment Program does include statement on the priority policies, however, on a very general level.

The introduction of programme budgeting at four levels of government starting from 2025¹⁰¹ is a chance to initiate development of integrated planning systems: apart from digital solution that is designed for financial planning and execution, a solution that would integrate planning processes, would significantly contribute to the transparency and efficiency of the system and simplify tracking of progress and reporting, which is a major deficiency in the planning system at the moment.

95 [Okvir-za-realizaciju-Ciljeva-odrzivog-razvoja-u-BiH-latinica.pdf \(dep.gov.ba\)](#)

96 RS Sustainable Development Strategy is currently being prepared and is expected to be adopted by the end of 2023.

97 [Microsoft Word - Strateski okvir institucija BiH_ februar2023.docx \(dep.gov.ba\)](#)

98 <https://fzzpr.gov.ba/en/strategic-documents/strategic-documents-of-fbih>

99 [default.aspx \(vijeceministara.gov.ba\)](#)

100 For the latest example please see <http://www.dep.gov.ba/default.aspx?pageIndex=1&langTag=en-US 2020-2022>

101 Including Brčko District. Cantons in the FBiH are envisaged to implement programme budgeting starting from 2027.

Kosovo*

After 2008, Kosovo* started taking first steps towards the establishment of the Integrated Planning System (IPS). In 2009 it established Strategic Planning Office within the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and developed first IPS policy and legal framework. Key legal basis for the introduction of the IPS has been Administrative Instruction (GRK) No. 07/2018 on Planning and Drafting Strategic Documents and Action Plans.¹⁰² AI provides a unified practice in the development of strategic documents, as defined in the Government Rules of Procedure, by determining a set of uniform IPS criteria and methodology. To support the whole-of-government efforts, Government established respective IPS inter-ministerial bodies. Against this background Kosovo* adopted its first National Development Strategy 2016 – 2021.

Most recently in 2022 Kosovo* embarked upon fine-tuning of the IPS framework with the introduction of the Strategic Management Planning Framework (SMPF). SMPF enables a consistent approach to the management of public policy and resources through the introduction of a more measurable hierarchy of objectives, actions and indicators. Against this backdrop most recently Kosovo* adopted new Development Strategy 2030¹⁰³ and Development Plan 2023-2025.¹⁰⁴ Whilst the strategy serves as a guiding umbrella planning document, the plan serves as operational implementing document.

With regard to institutional framework, Strategic Planning Office within the OPM, is key government body responsible for coordination and oversight of the IPS functioning in Kosovo*. In this capacity it is supported by the Legal Office of the OPM, Government Coordination Secretariat and departments for EU integration within the OPM. To support IPS whole-of-government efforts Government established following inter-ministerial bodies: (1) the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC), (2) the Strategic Planning Steering Group (SPSG) and (3) the Strategic Management Group (SMG).

Kosovo* IPS framework is composed of four key horizontal planning documents:

1. Development Strategy 2030 and its implementing Development Plan 2023-2025;
2. Programme for European Integration 2023-2027;
3. Economic Reform Programme 2023-2025;
4. Public Administration Reform Strategy 2022-2027 and Action Plan 2022-2024.

Since IPS introduction there is an overarching consensus in Kosovo* on key strengths of the IPS:

- » Improved good governance and rule of law in all public policy areas and processes through empirical policy making processes;
- » More effective and sustainable development of public policies driven by an evidence-based approach;
- » Better informed decision-making by government institutions;
- » More sustainable involvement of stakeholders and the wider public in governance;
- » More realistic and feasible public policies, with more sustainable impact and measurable results.

However, current experience has also highlighted several IPS weaknesses:

- » Too sophisticated rules and procedures given capacity constraints and maturity of the governance system;
- » Time-consuming and too slow given capacity constraints, and thus inadequate to keep up with and respond to market dynamics and needs of the society;
- » 'Too long-term' in the face of changing dynamics of political agendas and a political system that favours fragmented coalition governments;
- » Too many competing needs to meet and reforms to implement with public resources available.

102 <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=18813>

103 <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/06032023-Strategjia-dhe-Plani-Kombetare-per-Zhvillim-2030.pdf>

104 <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/blog/plani-kombetar-per-zhvillim/>

Montenegro

The analysis of the strategic planning system in Montenegro, prepared by the Ministry of European Affairs in 2017, determined that Montenegro lacks a uniform methodology for drafting strategic documents and monitoring their mutual (vertical and horizontal) compliance. In the period before this analysis, the categorization of strategic documents was not defined, so the difference between strategy, program, and plan, both in structure and duration, was not clearly established. In addition to mapping the overall strategic framework, a clear need for adopting a legal framework and accompanying instructions that will regulate the process of defining and adopting strategic documents to improve their structure and content has been established.

Due to the need to urgently improve the quality of strategic documents through a mechanism that would enable quick implementation and verification of designed solutions in practice, a special Decree¹⁰⁵ was drafted, instead of passing instructions or laws (solutions that exist in the administrations of the region). The first Methodology for policy development, drafting and monitoring of strategic planning documents¹⁰⁶ was created in order to clarify the principles of the Decree in detail. Two more editions of the Methodology followed later. These two documents prescribe a precise categorization of strategic documents, the basic principles of planning, drafting and implementation of strategic documents, the grouping of policies into seven sectors within which strategic documents are drawn up and implemented, a categorization of strategies that shows which units belong to which sector and the number valid strategies at the sector level, but also in the unit itself, including umbrella and sector strategic documents.

The General Secretariat of the Government is a key institution in coordinating policy planning and monitoring the quality of strategic documents and reports on their implementation. This work is the core of the SGG Sector for Strategic Planning and its two departments. Secretariat for Legislation (SL), on the other hand, is the institution responsible for the alignment of laws and by-laws. As in most other Western Balkans and European administrations, the Ministry of Finance is responsible for ensuring the affordability of public policies and their alignment with the budgetary framework. As a leading candidate country for accession to the EU, the alignment with EU policies and obligations stemming from the European integration process is of utmost importance, where the Ministry of European Integration has a leading role. The Ministry of Public Administration, as the leading institution for PAR, is responsible for monitoring the inclusiveness of the policy development process through public consultations and debates. Additionally, the new PAR strategy made a step forward in identifying policy-making with citizens and for citizens as one of its strategic goals, thereby combining policy development and public consultations and debates.

In the past few years, when the Decree has been applied, significant progress has been made in the planning and policy coordination system. The proliferation of strategic documents has been stopped, while their quality has been significantly improved. The integrated planning system is still in its infancy. Although the initiatives exist, the methodology, as well as the attempts to plan the program budget, the lack of political will, the support of decision-makers and top management, and awareness about the benefits of integrated planning prevented its full implementation. The Center of Government exists only in theory, but in practice, it is not operational. The institutions have established strategic communication mechanisms, there is no awareness of the importance of adopting multi-sector strategic documents and resolving possible overlaps in competencies during the preparation of strategic documents. The Decree does not establish a hierarchy of strategic documents, but only explains the categories of strategic documents from strategy to action plan, as well as planning principles. However, the Methodology provides an overview of the relationship between the prime minister's exposé, umbrella and sectoral strategic documents.

¹⁰⁵ Decree on methodology and procedure for drafting, aligning and monitoring the implementation of strategy documents, "Official Gazette of Montenegro", No. 54/2018 of 31.7.2018, which entered into force on 8.8.2018.

¹⁰⁶ Methodology, second edition. Available at: <https://javnepolitike.me/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/UNDP-Metodologija-razvijanja-politika-2020-ENG-draft4-09JUL21.pdf>

Figure 3. Integrated planning system in Montenegro



Source: Methodology and procedure for drafting, aligning and monitoring the implementation of strategy documents

Digital solutions for integrated planning and for the system of strategic planning and reporting on the implementation of strategic documents have not been sufficiently developed. Specific solutions exist, but they are not fully aligned with the users' requirements, while on the other hand, the awareness of the users themselves about the benefits of digitalization is not expressed.

However, there are several significant examples of good practices in the system of coordination and strategic planning in Montenegro. The first is the licensed Program for Education of the Civil Servants for Strategic Planning, and the second is the Network of Civil Servants for Strategic Planning.

The Program represents the first educational program of this type in Montenegro and the region. The Program contains 6 ECTS credits and received national accreditation in March 2018. It is intended for civil servants who are involved in the preparation of sectoral strategic documents within their departments. The main goal of the Program is for the participants to apply the acquired knowledge in their daily work on the development and monitoring of the implementation of strategic documents, as well as to be the point of contact within the department for all issues related to the preparation of planning documents. The Program itself is divided into six modules that follow the structure and content of strategic documents defined in the Methodology. The Program is held over a period of six months, where each month one working week is scheduled for holding a certain module - two working days per month for each group of participants. The lectures are based on a theoretical and practical approach, with an emphasis on interaction and discussion between lecturers and participants. The participants are divided into working groups for the preparation of a sample strategic document, as a basic condition for the successful completion of the Program. After each module, participants are required to work on the segment of the strategic document that was the subject of the lecture on the specific module.

The Network is the first informal forum for civil servants who work on the creation and reporting of the implementation of strategic documents. The network is chaired by the General Secretariat of the Government and consists of representatives of all ministries who were also participants in the first cycle of the Program for the education of civil servants for strategic planning. The goal of the Network is to provide a platform for the exchange of opinions and knowledge in the area of importance for policy planning, as well as to improve interdepartmental cooperation.

SGG achieved significant progress through project activities and cooperation with regional and international organizations. Project activities, financing and cooperation with ReSPA, UNDP in Montenegro, OECD-SIGMA, and the EU Delegation in Montenegro led to expert support, improvement of existing and creation of new methodological manuals and guidelines, additional strengthening of knowledge and skills of SGG employees.

Available reports and studies suggest that the legislative framework is not consistently applied in practice and that Montenegro is moderately prepared for public administration reform. Although significant progress is recognized in the work of the SGG, coordination with relevant development policy stakeholders needs to be further strengthened. Progress is also visible in the preparation of the annual and mid-term work program of the government, however, detailed guidelines for methodological approach as well as procedures for co-ordinating process are still lacking. In the part of quality management and application of postulates of performance management, an evidence-based approach to policy planning remained one of the problems.

North Macedonia

The integrated strategic planning system was first introduced in 2003 with the adoption of the *Methodology for Strategic Planning and Development of the Annual Work Programme* of the Government. The formal adoption of the *Decision for the Strategic Priorities of the Government* on 9 June 2003¹⁰⁷ marked the start of the first medium-term planning cycle and it covered the period 2004–2006. The Government strategic priorities reflected the four-year political programme. The Government Annual Work Programme for 2004, which was developed in accordance with the Methodology, reflected the Government strategic priorities and the priorities of the line ministries. In April 2005, by conclusion of the Government all line ministries were required to develop their Strategic Plans (covering the medium-term period 2006–2008) laying out their programmes and activities which will contribute to achievement of the Government strategic priorities. In 2005, the Law on Budgets¹⁰⁸ was amended to include a requirement for all institutions (budget users) to develop their Strategic Plans presenting the programmes that will be funded by the budget. Over the following years, this process was supported by development of relevant regulations, guidelines and handbooks, as well as capacity building activities. The *Methodology for Strategic Planning and Development of the Annual Work Programme* was later amended several times (in 2008, 2009 and 2018) to reflect requirements for development of Capital Projects Plans of ministries and for development of annual work plans and annual reports for implementation of the work plans.

In May 2022, the Government adopted the regulations on sectoral and cross-sectoral strategies which set the grounds for linking long-, medium-, and short-term planning, the typology and hierarchy of strategies.

A number of laws and regulations establish the legislative framework for the integrated strategic planning system, including:

*The Law on Government*¹⁰⁹ regulates the operation and organization of the Government including the requirement for development of an annual work programme.

*The Law on Budgets*¹¹⁰ regulates the budget process and links the budget and strategic planning processes. The Government strategic priorities are based on the fiscal policy statement, the fiscal rules and regulations, the political Government programme, the results in implementation of the Government priorities, the planning documents, the sector strategies and the assessment of the current social and economic situation in the country. The priorities are set for the next 5 years. The primary budget users develop a Strategic Plan which is based on the strategic priorities and objectives of the Government. The law also sets the grounds for programme budgeting.

*The Rules of Procedure*¹¹¹ regulate in detail the operation and organization of the Government and the planning, policy development and decision-making requirements and procedures. Chapter 2-a regulates the strategic planning and development of the annual work programme. The Government Annual Work Programme (GAWP) operationalizes the Government political programme and includes initiatives that will be submitted to the Government for review and adoption. The GAWP and the budget incorporate the Government strategic priorities and the fiscal policy. The RoP give the authority to the General Secretariat to review the strategic plans of the line ministries with the purpose to ensure coordination and alignment of the plans.

107 Official Gazette, No. 38 of June 2003

108 Official Gazette, No 64 of August 2005

109 Official Gazette No. 59/2000, 26/01, 13/03, 55/05, 37/06, 115/07, 19/08, 82/08, 10/10, 51/11, 15/13, 139/14, 196/15, 142/16, 140/18, 98/19

110 Official Gazette No. 203/2022

111 Official Gazette No. 38/01, 98/02, 9/03, 47/03, 64/03, 67/03, 51/06, 5/07, 15/07, 26/07, 30/07, 58/07, 105/07, 116/07, 129/07, 157/07, 29/08, 51/08, 86/08, 114/08, 42/09, 62/09, 141/09, 162/09, 40/10, 83/10, 166/10, 172/10, 95/11, 151/11, 170/11, 67/13, 145/14, 62/15, 41/16, 153/16 и 113/17, 228/19, 72/20 и 215/20

*The Methodology for Strategic Planning and Preparation of the Annual Work Programme of the Government*¹¹² defines the strategic planning cycle and sets the steps in the process, the relevant procedures, the planning calendar, and the responsibilities of the key players in the planning process, i.e. the General Secretariat of the Government (GS) and the Ministry of Finance (MoF), as the Centre of Government (CoG) bodies, and the line ministries. The methodology integrates the policy and budget planning into a medium-term (three-year) rolling process. It is a balanced top-down and bottom-up process that is cyclically repeated every year.

*Guidelines on the Process, Contents and Format of the Strategic Plans and the Annual Work Plans of the Ministries and other State Administration Bodies*¹¹³ regulate the process of strategic planning in the line ministries and set the requirements for the content and the format of the Strategic Plan and the Annual Work Plan which are developed by the line ministries and other state administration bodies.

*Guidelines on the Development and Monitoring of the implementation of the Annual Work Programme of the Government*¹¹⁴ regulate the procedure for development of the Government Annual Work Programme (GAWP), the format of the initiatives that are submitted by the ministries, the timelines for development as well as the procedures for monitoring of the GAWP.

*Guidelines on the Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting on the Strategic Plan and Annual Work Plan*¹¹⁵ regulate the process of monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the (institutional) Strategic Plan and set the requirements for the structure and contents of the monitoring report on implementation of the Annual Work Plan. The Guidelines also establish the link to the monitoring and reporting on the Government strategic priorities that marks the start of the new planning cycle of the government.

*Guidelines on the Structure, Contents, Development, Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation of Sector and Cross-Sector Strategies*¹¹⁶ regulate the process of development of sectoral strategies and set the requirements for the structure and contents of the sectoral and cross-sectoral strategies, as well as the process of monitoring, reporting and evaluation and development of the annual report on implementation. It also establishes the link between the sectoral strategies and the Strategic Plan of the relevant line ministry and sets the standards for consultations with the stakeholders.

*Methodology on the Development Process, Implementation, Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation of Sector Strategies*¹¹⁷ establishes the hierarchical set-up, typology of strategies and the linkages between the long-, medium- and short-term planning system. It also gives a step-by-step description of the strategic planning process and development of the sectoral strategy, the planning tools and the consultation process. The methodology defines the roles and responsibilities of the involved institutions in the process, as well as the internal organisational units in the line ministry responsible for development, implementation, monitoring and reporting on the sectoral strategy.

112 Official Gazette No 124/2008, 58/2018

113 Official Gazette No. 131/2018

114 Official Gazette No. 222/2019

115 Official Gazette 131/2018

116 Official Gazette No 122/2022

117 Official Gazette No. 122/2022

Figure 4. Hierarchy of the strategic document in the North Macedonia



Source: *The Methodology on the Development Process, Implementation, Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation of Sector Strategies*

The General Secretariat was established as an expert service of the Government responsible for:

- » coordination and expert support for the needs of the Government, the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Ministers, and the Ministers;
- » cooperation and coordination with the line ministries and especially in relation to the strategic priorities of the Government and the Framework Agreement;
- » coordination of the development, adoption and the monitoring of the implementation of the Annual Work Plan of the Government;
- » offering relevant information and expert advice related to the development and coordination of policies of the Government;
- » monitoring and informing the Government on implementation of the Government decisions;
- » ensuring efficient organisation and implementation of Government meetings and the meetings of the Committees;
- » informing the public on the work of Government;
- » coordinating the activities related to the public administration reform;
- » cooperating with the Expert Service of the Parliament, the President of the Republic and other expert services of other state institutions, as well as with non-governmental organisations;
- » managing the work processes of the Government;
- » performing other expert and logistical tasks established by the Government Rules of Procedure or requested by the Prime Minister or the Government.

Main strengths of the North Macedonia integrated strategic planning system include:

- » solid legislation and regulations (Methodology and Guidelines) that enable development of the ISP system and sectoral planning;

- » awareness in the administration on the importance of strategic planning, especially in terms of institutional strategic planning and linkages to the budget;
- » well established planning calendar for Government strategic planning that ensures integrated approach and linkages to the budget process.

However, current experience has also highlighted several IPS weaknesses:

- » inconsistent implementation of the regulations and relatively slow overall development of the system. The improvements and development of both the regulations and the implementation have been slow;
- » lack of political support and leadership for the ISP system;
- » insufficient capacities in the General Secretariat to lead and drive innovative changes in the system. The GS has been only technically/mechanically managing the process;
- » weak analytical capacities both in the GS and the line ministries for policy analysis and for developing analytical reports on implementation and achievement of the planned objectives;
- » lack of regular coordination between the GS and line ministries and between the GS and the Ministry of Finance throughout the process.

Serbia

Serbia has a well-developed policy planning system, with strong elements of an integrated system under development. The entire system is governed by the Law on the Planning System of the Republic of Serbia (LPS), which regulates the management and coordination of public policies and mutual compliance of planning documents. Article 23 of the Law prescribes an obligation for each document to be aligned with the Constitution, ratified international treaties, the rest of the legal framework, and obligations arising from the EU accession process. All planning documents must be aligned with other planning documents of higher or equal importance, which provides a clear hierarchy and ensures a well-integrated system of public policy development. The same Article established a rule that, when a document is drafted, it must be aligned with the document under which it is adopted by taking over the special objective of that document and making it the general objective of the one that is being developed, i.e., adopted (for example, special objective 8 of the Public Administration Reform Strategy for 2021-2030 regarding the local self-government system became the general objective of the Programme for the Reform of the Local Self-Government System for 2021-2025). In order to ensure continuity with the previous planning documents, public policy documents are developed in accordance with the results of *ex-ante* analysis of effects and *ex-post* analysis of effects of valid public policy documents and other regulations in a specific area (Article 31). LPS introduced the Unified Information System for planning, monitoring the implementation, coordination of public policies and reporting, which is run by the Government through the Public Policy Secretariat. Individual aspects of the Law are further developed by different bylaws.

The main institution in charge of developing, coordinating, monitoring and quality-assuring the system is the Public Policy Secretariat (PPS). The PPS performs expert tasks related to public policy development and coordination, the implementation of regulatory reform and the analysis of the effects of public policy documents and regulations prepared by ministries and special organisations. When it comes to impact assessment, the PPS guides the bodies which propose public policy documents regarding the manner in which the *ex-ante* assessments should be performed and how detailed they ought to be.¹¹⁸ Also, the PPS evaluates the completeness of the report on the conducted impact assessments and the compliance of a document or regulation with already adopted public policy documents and regulations. If it deems it necessary, the PPS gives proposals for improvement (Article 48, LPS). The Secretariat is in charge of providing access to users for entering and downloading data from the aforementioned Unified Information System, but also informs the public by making public policy documents publicly available through its website (Article 73, LPS).

The Law on the Planning System recognises three types of planning documents: development planning documents, public policy documents and other planning documents. Development planning documents have the widest scope and are of the highest importance for the body in charge of their development. There are four types of development planning documents: 1) Development Plan; 2) Investment Plan; 3) the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia (and other spatial plans or general urbanistic plan); and 4) autonomous province development plan and local self-government unit development plan (in that hierarchical order). Public policy documents determine or further develop already established public policies. There are four types: 1) strategy; 2) programme; 3) public policy concept document; 4) action plan (in that hierarchical order). As for other planning documents, they include: the Government Programme, the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Government Programme (APIGP), the Annual Government Work Plan and the National Programme for the Adoption of the *Acquis*. The APIGP must be in line with the Government Programme, while the Annual Government Work Plan must be in line with the APIGP. Other planning documents are also mid-term and financial plans, planning documents of the autonomous provinces (which must be in accordance with the central-level planning documents), as well as planning documents of local self-government units (which must be in accordance with the central-level documents and, if applicable, documents of the autonomous province).

The main strength of the system lies in the legislative framework, which provides for a well-structured system, enables a clear hierarchy of different planning documents, and prescribes an obligation to conduct impact

¹¹⁸ Article 8, Regulation on the methodology of public policy management, analysis of effects of public policy documents and regulations, and the content of individual public policy documents, Official Gazette No. 8/2019.

assessments, thus ensuring continuity and compliance among the documents. An additional strength is found in the existence of a specialised Government body in charge of developing and coordinating the system – the PPS. Despite a certain lack of human capacities, the PPS is a strong driver of continuous development and improvement of the planning system. Albeit not fully developed, the Unified Information System promises to become a powerful tool for full integration of the planning system in the years to come.

On the other hand, available reports and studies suggest that the legislative framework is not consistently applied in practice. For example, the share of public policy documents adopted in 2022 containing a complete impact assessment was only 40%, seven percentage points less than in 2021.¹¹⁹ The fact that the legislation allows for acceptance of documents with ‘partial impact assessment’ limits their quality, overall. Moreover, in the current legislative system, PPS can only issue written opinions on the quality of proposed documents, which can formally be ignored by the responsible ministries or other authorities. This means that PPS does not hold the power to return proposed planning documents in case they do not meet the prescribed quality criteria. Finally, public consultations are inconsistently applied, while the quality of consultation reports varies, with PPS having no authority to perform quality assurance in this domain.

119 Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, Annual Report for 2021 on the Implementation of the PAR Strategy for 2021-2030, p.23. Available at: <http://bitly.ws/B77R>

ANNEX 1. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK ESTABLISHING INTEGRATED STRATEGIC PLANNING IN WESTERN BALKANS

ALBANIA		
Title of the legislation	Legal reference (when adopted and published)	Link (if available)
The Constitution of the Republic of Albania	approved by Law nr. 8417, date 21.10.1998 (amended with the Law nr.9675, date 13.1.2007; nr.9904, date 21.4.2008; nr.88/2012, date 18.9.2012; nr.137/2015, date 17.12.2015; nr.76/2016; date 22.7.2016; nr. 115/2020, date 30.7.2020; 16/2022, date 10.2.2022)	https://qbz.gov.al/preview/635d44bd-96ee-4bc5-8d93-d928cf6f2abd
Law 9000-2003 on Organization and Functioning of Council of Ministers	30 January 2003	http://qbz.gov.al/eli/ligj/2003/01/30/9000
DCoM 584/2003 on the approval of the rules of procedure of the Council of Ministers	DCoM 584, dated 28.08.2003, as amended – the latest amendments are made in 2018 to include RIA (2018) (Amended by DCoM No. 201, date 29 March 2006; DCoM No. 4, date 7 January 2009; DCoM No. 233, date 18 March 2015; DCoM No. 653, date 14 September 2016, DCoM No. 197, date 11 April 2018)	http://qbz.gov.al/eli/ven-dim/2018/10/24/613
DCoM on approval of “Consolidation of the Integrated Planning System in Albania”;	DCoM 692/2005	
Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 290/2020, on Establishment of the State Database of the Information System of Integrated Planning (IPSIS), including Guidelines and methodology for costing of sector strategies as part of the IPSIS system.	DCoM No. 290/ 11 April 2020 As amended by DCoM No. 12, date 13 January 2022	http://qbz.gov.al/eli/ven-dim/2022/01/13/12

Law No. 90/2012 on Organisation and Functioning of the State Public Administration;	Law 90/2012 Adopted on 27 September 2012	https://www.dap.gov.al/images/LegjislacioniAP/Ligj_90_2012.pdf
Law no.9936/2008 "On management of budgetary system in the Republic of Albania. As amended (Organic Budget Law)	Law no.9936 dated 26.06.2008 Organic Budget Law No. 9936 2008, as amended by law no. 114/2012, approved on 7.12.2012; and amended by law no. 57/2016, approved on 2.6.2016	http://qbz.gov.al/eli/ligj/2008/06/26/9936

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Title of the legislation	Legal reference (when adopted and published)	Link (if available)
<i>Institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina (central government)</i>		
Decision on the procedure for medium-term planning, monitoring and reporting in the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina	("Official Gazette of BiH", number 62/14) Mid-Term Work Program of the Council of Ministers (hereinafter: SPRVM) the basis for the preparation of the Framework Budget Document and medium-term work plans of BiH institutions. Based on the SPRVM, the Annual Work Program of the Council of Ministers is drawn up in accordance with the Decision that regulates annual planning in the institutions of BiH. 1./ "Decision on the annual planning of work and the method of monitoring and reporting on work in the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina", Official Gazette of BiH, number 94 /14.	http://www.sluzbenilist.ba/page/akt/O9qZi8GMNew= ("Official Gazette of BiH", number 62/14) http://www.mpr.gov.ba/biblioteka/podzakonski_akti/05%201%20Odluka%20za%20srednjorocno%20planiranje%20u%20institucijama%20BiH%20-%20BJ.pdf

Decision on annual work planning and methods of monitoring and reporting on work in the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, at the 56th session held on October 26, 2022, passed ("Official Gazette of BiH", number 80/22). Annual Work Program of the Council of Ministers is drawn up in accordance with the Decision that regulates annual planning in the institutions of BiH.	http://www.sluzbenilist.ba/page/akt/lbmk3jH-7vnw=
Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Entity)		
Law on Development Planning in FBiH	Law on Development Planning and Development Management in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina ("Official Gazette of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina" No. 32/17	https://fzzpr.gov.ba/en/normative-documents/laws
Law on Budgets FBiH		http://www.fmf.gov.ba/v2/stranica.php?idstranica=3&idmeni=1
Sub-law on preparation		
Decree on triennial and annual work planning, monitoring, and reporting in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina		https://fzzpr.gov.ba/en/normative-documents/regulations
Decree on strategic documents drafting in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina		https://fzzpr.gov.ba/en/normative-documents/regulations
Decree on methods and criteria for the preparation and monitoring of realization of public investment projects		http://www.fmf.gov.ba/v2/stranica.php?idstranica=180&idmeni=29
Sub-laws on evaluations		
Decree on regulatory impact assessment		https://fbihvlada.gov.ba/bosanski/zakoni/2014/uredbe/26.htm
Decree on strategic documents evaluation in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina		https://fzzpr.gov.ba/en/normative-documents/regulations
Rulebook on the procedure for making a statement on the fiscal impact		http://www.fmf.gov.ba/v2/stranica.php?idstranica=3&idmeni=1
Republika Srpska (Entity)		
Republika Srpska Law on Strategic Planning and Managing Development	OG. RS Nu 63. Year 2021.	https://www.vladars.net/sr-SP-Cyrl/Vlada/Sekretarijat/stratplan/propisi/Pages/default.aspx

Decree on Implementation documents in Republika Srpska	O.G. RS No. 8, year 2022.	https://www.vladars.net/sr-SP-Cyrl/Vlada/Sekretar-ijat/stratplan/propisi/Pages/default.aspx
Decree on Strategic Documents in Republika Srpska	O.G. RS No. 94, year 2021.	https://www.vladars.net/sr-SP-Cyrl/Vlada/Sekretar-ijat/stratplan/propisi/Pages/default.aspx
Decision on the Regulatory Impact Assessment		Odluka o procjeni uticaja propisa - PDF.pdf (vladars.net)

KOSOVO*

Title of the legislation	Legal reference (when adopted and published)	Link (if available)
Rules of Procedure of the Government 09/2011	Adopted on 7 September 2019 Published on 12 September 2019	https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=3259
Administrative Instruction (GRK) No. 07/2018 on Planning and Drafting Strategic Documents and Action Plans	Adopted on 4 April 2018 Published on 16 April 2018	https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=18813
Public Administration Reform Strategy 2022-2027 and Action Plan 2022-2024	Adopted on 28 December 2022 Not yet published	Not available online.

MONTENEGRO

Title of the legislation	Legal reference (when adopted and published)	Link (if available)
The Law on State Administration (Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro 38/03 and Official Gazette of Montenegro 22/08, 42/11, 54/16 and 13/18)	2018 (last amended)	https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/42c95c3f-0c64-4657-99f4-f014f-1912bc8
Decree on methodology and procedure for drafting, aligning and monitoring the implementation of strategy documents (Official Gazette of Montenegro, 54/2018)	2018	https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/23c216b2-3eb7-453c-b0a7-3cdae9e9742e
Methodology for policy development, drafting and monitoring of strategic planning documents	2018	https://javnepolitike.me/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Methodology-for-policy-development-drafting-and-monitoring-of-strategic-documents-2018.pdf

Methodology for policy development, drafting and monitoring of strategic planning documents	2020	https://javnepolitike.me/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/UN-DP-Metodologija-razvijanja-politika-2020-ENG-draft4-09JUL21.pdf
Guidelines for Reporting on implementation of the strategic documents	2020	https://javnepolitike.me/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Smjernice-za-izvjestavanje-o-sprovođenju-strateskih-dokumenata.pdf
Manual on evaluation of the strategic documents	2022	https://www.gov.me/clanak/sektor-za-koordinaciju-pracenje-uskladenosti-i-pracenje-sprovođenja-strategija-kojima-se-utvrđuju-javne-politike
Guidelines for the preparation of the strategic documents	2022	https://www.gov.me/clanak/sektor-za-koordinaciju-pracenje-uskladenosti-i-pracenje-sprovođenja-strategija-kojima-se-utvrđuju-javne-politike

NORTH MACEDONIA		
Name/title of the legislation	Legal reference (when adopted and published)	Link (added in footnotes)
The Law on Government ¹²⁰	First adopted in 2000 followed by numerous amendments; The Official Gazette No. 59/2000	
Rules of Procedure ¹²¹	First adopted in 2021 followed by numerous amendments Published in the Official Gazette No. 38/01, 98/02, 9/03, 47/03, 64/03, 67/03, 51/06, 5/07, 15/07, 26/07, 30/07, 58/07, 105/07, 116/07, 129/07, 157/07, 29/08, 51/08, 86/08, 114/08, 42/09, 62/09, 141/09, 162/09, 40/10, 83/10, 166/10, 172/10, 95/11, 151/11, 170/11, 67/13, 145/14, 62/15, 41/16, 153/16 и 113/17, 228/19, 72/20 и 215/20	

¹²⁰ https://vlada.mk/sites/default/files/dokumenti/zakoni/zakon_za_vladata.pdf

¹²¹ https://vlada.mk/sites/default/files/dokumenti/delovnik_za_rabota_na_vladata_neoficijalen_prechisten_tekst.pdf

The Law on Budgets ¹²²	The Law was adopted in 2022 and this Article came into effect on 1 January 2023; The Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No. 203/2022	
The Methodology for Strategic Planning and Preparation of the Annual Work Programme of the Government ¹²³	Adopted in 2008 and amended in 2018 and 2019; Official Gazette No 124/2008, 58/2018	
Guidelines on the Process, Contents and Format of the Strategic Plans of the Ministries and other State Administration Bodies were first adopted by the Government in 2005 and amended in 2018 (Guidelines on the Process, Contents and Format of the Strategic Plans and the Annual Work Plans of the Ministries and other State Administration Bodies). ¹²⁴	First adopted in 2005 and amended in 2018 Official Gazette No. 131/2018	
Guidelines on the Development and Monitoring of the implementation of the Annual Work Programme of the Government ¹²⁵	First adopted in 2015 and amended in 2019; Official Gazette No. 222/2019	
Guidelines on the Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting on the Strategic Plan and Annual Work Plan ¹²⁶	Adopted in 2018; Official Gazette 131/2018	
Guidelines on the Structure, Contents, Development, Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation of Sector and Cross-Sector Strategies ¹²⁷	Adopted in May 2022; Official Gazette No 122/2022	
Methodology on the Development Process, Implementation, Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation of Sector Strategies ¹²⁸	Adopted in May 2022; Official Gazette No. 122/2022	

122 <https://finance.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/%D0%97%D0%B0%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BD-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%91%D1%83%D1%9F%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%B8.pdf>

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Title of the legislation	Legal reference (when adopted and published)	Link (if available)
Law on the Planning System	19.04.2018.	https://tinyurl.com/2p8n6568
Regulation on the methodology of drafting mid-term plans	16.02.2019.	https://tinyurl.com/4s-6safxp
Regulation on the methodology of public policy management, impact analysis of public policies and regulations and the content of individual public policy documents	16.02.2019.	https://tinyurl.com/2p82udzu
Government decree on the procedure for preparation of the National Development Plan	30.06.2023.	
Conclusion on the Adoption of the Guidelines for the Inclusion of Civil Society Organisations in the Working Groups for the Drafting of Public Policy Documents and Drafts	12.11.2021.	https://tinyurl.com/24a35z95
Rulebook on Guidelines of Good Practice of Public Participation in the Preparation of Draft Laws, Other Regulations, and Acts	19.07.2019.	https://tinyurl.com/53hvxax2
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