

# Governments' comprehensive strategies: level of implementation, the challenges and their impact in policy making



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## ACRONYMS

ERA	European Reform Agenda
EU	European Union
DMPAR	Department for Management of Public Administration Reform
KIPA	Kosovo Institute for Public Administration
MEF	Medium-term Expenditure Framework
MAP	Ministry of Public Administration
MLGA	Ministry of Local Government Administration
ERP	Economic Reform Program
NPISAA	National Plan for Implementation of the Stabilization and Association Agreement
NDS	National Development Strategy
SMPA	Strategy on Modernization of the Public Administration
CIMS	Case Information Management System
LGS	Local Governance Strategy
SPST	Strategy on Training of Civil Servants
IPS	Integrated Planning System
SPFMR	Strategy for Public Finance Management Reform
SIPPC	Strategy for Improving Policy Planning and Coordination in Kosovo
SBRK	Strategy for Better Regulation 2.0 for Kosovo 2017-2021
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
OSP	Office for Strategic Planning

## INTRODUCTION

The most important documents aiming to advance Kosovo's process of approximation of legislation with the EU include: National Plan for Implementation of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (NPISAA) and the European Reform Agenda (ERA) as well as Economic Reforms and Budgetary Planning through the Economic Reform Program (ERP) and the Medium term Expenditure Framework (MEF).

Whereas, its long-term priorities regarding public administration reform Kosovo Government determines in the comprehensive strategic framework comprised of four (4) fundamental documents: 1) Strategy for Modernization of Public Administration 2015-2020 (SMPA); 2) Strategy for Public Finance Management Reform 2016-2020 (SPFMR); 3) Strategy for Improving Policy Planning and Coordination (SIPPC) and 4) Strategy for Better Regulation 2.0 for Kosovo, 2017-2021 (SBrK).

Nevertheless, in regulating specific fields and policies, sectorial strategies are drafted with the purpose of improving or reforming a sector or a policy. D+ chose to analyze five such documents and through this research report it will assess the level of their implementation at the level of activities, whether they have been fulfilled within the set deadlines per the respective Action Plans. These documents are one-sector regulation or multi-sectorial, while several institutions are in charge of their implementation. Despite that, their common denominator is that they are comprehensive and aim to contribute in reforming the public administration as a whole.

Strategic documents outline the priorities and set the path of public policies that responsible or line institutions need to adhere to and as such they guide major policies. Hence, it is of paramount importance to measure their level of implementation. This would serve the Government in weighing current priorities and those to be defined in the future, either related to the administrative reform, economic reform or the EU integration process.

The lead institution of two out of five selected strategies is the Office for Strategic Planning (OSP) within the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM): 1) National Development Strategy (NDS) and 2) Strategy for Improving Policy Planning and Coordination in Kosovo (SPPKP). The other two, 1) Strategy on Modernization of the Public Administration 2015-2020 (SMPA) and 2) Strategy on Training of Civil Servants the lead institution is the Ministry of Public Administration (MPA) while the Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA) is the leading institution of the Local Governance Strategy.

This research report is divided into five sections and each one tackles one strategy on three different aspects:

- **Fulfillment of Actions Plans at the level of activities;**
- **Challenges and obstacles in the implementation of the strategy; and**
- **The impact of the strategy in policy-making**

## METHODOLOGY

These five strategies were selected to analyze their level of implementation because their first Action Plan is either nearing their foreseen completion period or has already been completed. In order to assess the level of implementation of the five selected strategies, a mixture of methods, including desk research and interviews have been employed. This research assesses the five strategies on three aspects: a) fulfillment of the action plans at the activity scope; b) challenges and obstacles in the implementation of the strategy; and c) the impact of the strategy on generating new policies or decisions.

In the first stage, the level of completion of Actions Plans of the five strategies at the activity level was analyzed. For each strategy, specific activities were targeted for which the deadline of completion was the end of 2018. Out of the Action Plans, tables were designed and sent to the responsible institutions in order for them to fill out the data for activities that were or were not completed in line with the Action Plans for the years 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018. This way, the quantitative data was generated and the progress or setbacks in implementing the strategic documents will be presented.

At this stage, the data was taken through two forms: bi-annual and annual reports and the tables submitted by D+ to responsible institutions and filled out by the latter. The Department for Public Administration Reform Management and European Integration (DPARM) at the Ministry of Public Administration (MPA) insisted for D+ to conduct the assessment implementation of SMPA based only on bi-annual and annual reports that this institution produces itself on a regular basis. These reports were used for the analytical part, but in order for the table to be filled out per the set methodology, D+ contacted other departments of this ministry, including Department of Civil Service Administration, Legal Department and the Office of the Prime minister, who provided the necessary data.

OSP is the lead institution on implementation of two strategies analyzed by D+ in this research report. Due to the structure of the National Development Strategy 2016-2021 (NDS) (see page 7) which has no Action Plan, D+ used a report sent by the OSP in its analysis. For this report, a similar methodology to that of D+ to measure the level of strategy implementation was employed. While for the Strategy on Improving Policy Planning and Coordination 2017-2021, the OSP filled out D+ 's table.

Institution/Strategy	Phase I		Phase II	
	Table designed by D+	Bi-annual and annual reports	Interviews	Bi-annual and annual reports
OSP/NDS		✓	✓	✓
OSP/ IPS	✓		✓	
MLGA/ LGS	✓		✓	
MPA/SMPA		✓		✓
MPA/STCS	✓		✓	✓

Certainly, the implementation of activities in particular and the strategies in general is not one-dimensional and detached from the context and circumstances of their implementation. Hence, in order to get a clear picture of the implementation of the strategies, during the second phase, interviews with officials responsible for evaluation and monitoring of implementation of strategies were conducted. The interviews aimed to identify two other aspects: a) challenges and obstacles in implementation of strategies and b) the impact of the strategy on generating new policies and decisions.

## LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIVE STRATEGIES

The level of implementation of a strategy should be measurable and assessed on a regular and periodic manner. Regular reporting on the level of implementation of a strategic document serves responsible and line institutions in their short and long term planning in their efforts of reaching economic, administrative and legal reforms. Evaluating the implementation of strategic documents also serves to verify the need for drafting new strategic documents, reviewing current ones and also as a good foundation for drafting subsequent strategies.

The results of D+'s research report "Policymaking at the national level 2012-2017" indicate that only a handful of leading institutions for the implementation

of the strategies undertake assessments of the level of their implementation. Out of 16 ministries and five (5) offices within the Office of the Prime minister (OPM), which were analyzed by D+ for this research document, only six (6) ministries and three (3) offices of the OPM have been able to demonstrate that they do conduct monitoring and evaluation of strategies implementation<sup>1</sup>. Nevertheless, these six (6) ministries have more than one strategic document, however monitoring and evaluation is not carried out for all strategic documents but rather for only one or just a handful of them. Meanwhile three (3) out of five (5) offices in the scope of the OPM conduct assessment of the implementation of all of their strategies.

In this research report, D+ focuses on analyzing five comprehensive strategic documents with the purpose of assessing their level of implementation. This method will serve institutions that draft and issue strategic documents, as a model for measuring implementation which in fact is mandatory per the new Administrative Instruction 07/2018<sup>2</sup>. Further, the method of measuring the implementation of strategies in a simplified way was elaborated in the annex document "Guide of planning, compiling and monitoring strategic documents and their action plans"<sup>3</sup>.

Findings on the level of implementation, challenges and obstacles in implementation as well as the impact of the five strategies selected by D+ are presented below:

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<sup>1</sup> Osmani, Roberta & Prekazi, Besnik. (2018). *National Level Policymaking, Democracy Plus*, Prishtina, at: <https://bit.ly/2QfiDC8>

<sup>2</sup> *Administrative Instruction (QRK) no. 07/2018 on planning and drafting strategic documents and action plans: article 16*, at: <https://bit.ly/2DO0yUU> p. 24

<sup>3</sup> *Guide on planning, drafting and monitoring strategic documents and their action plans*, at: <https://bit.ly/2D44bUT> p. 41



## 1. National Development Strategy (2016-2021)

The Office for Strategic Planning is responsible to assist all institutions in compiling new strategic documents and to ensure that governmental priorities are effectively reflected in these documents and synergized with other documents of the Government. Moreover, the OSP drafts national strategies and it is the main leading party for their implementation. In 2016, the Government of Kosovo approved the National Development Strategy 2016-2021 (NDS) which significantly differs from other sectorial strategies, as it defines major state policies as well as the list of top national priorities on economic development and improvement of living standards<sup>4</sup>.

The NDS aims to address the main shortcomings to Kosovo's development and is organized into four pillars: a) human capital; b) good governance and rule of law; c) competitive industry; and d) infrastructure. For the purpose of this research report, D+ focused only on its second pillar related to "good governance and the rule of law". Issues that the NDS aims to improve in regards to good governance and the rule of law are justice and impartiality of institutions as well as their efficiency in service delivery. More concretely, it aims to decrease financial costs and shorten long queues for citizens and businesses during administrative processes.

### Progress in implementing the strategy

The NDS is a multi-sectorial strategic document that differs significantly from other strategies due to the way it is organized. This document does not comply with the structure of compiling strategic documents envisaged in the Administrative Instruction 02/2012, particularly when it comes to its Action Plan. Thus, the NDS has no Action Plan, but has compiled a "Guideline for Implementation of the Strategy" that was approved on April 2017. For this reason, D+ was not able to use the same methodology as for other strategies analyzed to measure the level of implementation based on the foreseen activities and deadlines set in the Action Plan. Nevertheless, the OSP produces annual reports measuring the level of implementation of the strategy in four (4) pillars, while in 2018 it issued the first report assessing the first two years of implementation of the strategy. D+ used the data from this report in order to analyze the level of implementation.

According to this report, the NDS is characterized by a large number of measures and activities foreseen to be implemented within the five-year period.

Table 1. Organization of the NDS

Pillar	Measure	Activities	Implementation deadline
4	34	135	2017-2019

Source: First OSP report on the assessment of implementation of the NDS

<sup>4</sup> National Development Strategy 2016-2021, at: <https://bit.ly/2iB1i3S>

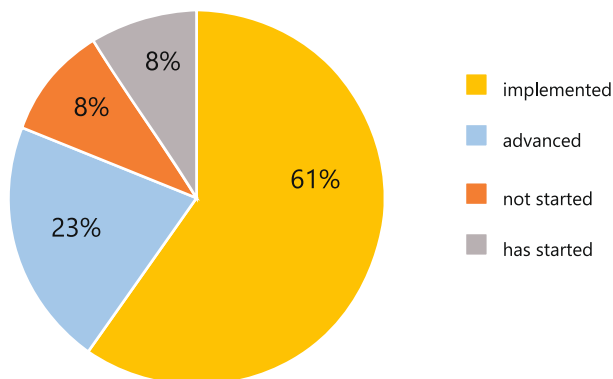
Within the scope of the second pillar “good governance and rule of law”, the NDS has eight (8) measures. In the assessment report on the implementation of the strategy, the OSP provides percentages and phases of implementation of these measures. For the eight measures of the second pillar, a total of 32 activities in total have been foreseen. The below figure that was developed by the OSP and measures the progress of implementation of the strategy shows that the majority or 62% of the foreseen measures within the scope of the second pillar have been initiated, 23% of them are in an advanced level of implementation, 8% have not started implementation at all while only 8% have been completed.

In some of the measures under “good governance and rule of law” pillar, a number of activities have had no progress at the OSP reporting time, while they are related to decreasing administrative obstacles, increasing efficiency of the inspection system, data based decision-making, strengthening of public procurement and property rights system.

### Challenges and obstacles in the implementation of the strategy

Some of the ministries responsible for implementation of the measures foreseen, according to the NDS were late with initiating implementation of activities, which consequently affected the lack of implementation of 15 measures within the anticipated deadlines. For a successful implementation of this strategy would help integration of activities and sub-activities in the scope of the Action Plan of the Government Plan (APGP). The NDS attempted to do this, but faces discrepancies between APGP activities and the NDS, a challenge that will remain for the upcoming years as well. Further, a challenge remains in the agreement between the OSP and the ministries responsible for certain measures of the NDS in gathering data and reporting on the level of strategy implementation. According to the OSP report, ministries should not withhold information related to the implementation of the APGP objectives connected to the activities and sub-activities of the NDS. Implementation of activities of this strategy is further hindered by how Kosovo budget is planned, which according to the OSP report prioritizes institutions instead of policies.

Figure 1. Level of implementation of activities



Source: First report on the implementation of the NDS

### The impact of the strategy in policy-making

The OSP report shows that the NDS had a direct impact in reforming institutions in four pillars composing the strategy. In terms of the second pillar “good governance and rule of law”, the OSP considers as a success the raised efficiency of the judiciary and public procurement through new procedures that have been developed to decrease administrative burdens on citizens and businesses<sup>5</sup>. Additionally, it is considered that progress has been achieved in tax and customs inspections, but there were delays in preparing legislation for a unified inspection system. The biggest success may be considered the initiation of implementation of the Case Management and Information System (CMIS) that aims to raise transparency, efficiency and accountability in providing services from the judiciary and prosecutorial system in Kosovo<sup>6</sup>.

## 2. Strategy for Improving Policy Planning and Coordination in Kosovo (Integrated Planning System) (2017-2021)

The policy making system in Kosovo is fragmented and characterized by a relatively large number of ministries and independent agencies entitled to draft national level policies. Hence, the coordination of a wide range of policymaking institutions, in order to keep them from acting disengaged from each other but to rather plan well, is a crucial issue.

The Office for Strategic Planning during 2016 drafted the Strategy on Improving Policy Planning and Coordination in Kosovo (Integrated Planning System) 2017-2021” (IPS). This strategic document aims to regulate the relationship between financial and administrative institutions that play a key role in coordination and moving beyond fragmentation and duplication of policy planning system at the central level.<sup>7</sup>The full implementation of this strategy would contribute the national policymaking to issue policies in a more efficient and better coordinated manner.

Table 2. IPS Action Plan structure

Overall objective	Specific objective	Activities	Implementation deadline
4	11	42	2017-2019

Source: Action Plan, IPS

<sup>5</sup> First report on the implementation and results of the National Development Strategy 2016-2021

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Venhar Nushi, Senior Policy Planning Officer at the OSP. Date 21.01.2019

<sup>7</sup> Strategy for Improving Policy Planning and Coordination in Kosovo (Integrated Planning System) 2017-202, at: <https://bit.ly/2sZlYqL>

### Fulfillment of the Action Plan

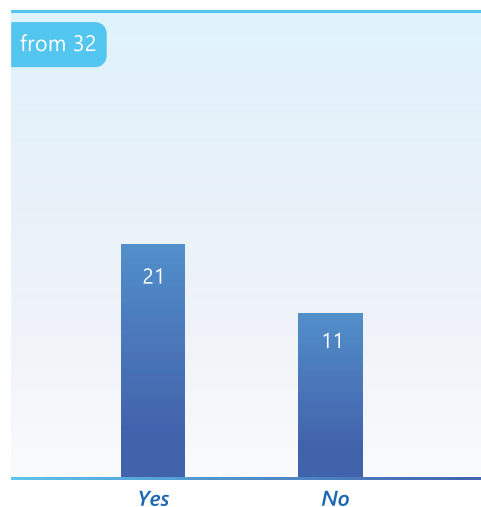
The 2017-2019 Action Plan of the IPS has been drafted jointly with the strategy and complies with all set criteria for drafting strategic documents per the Administrative Instruction 02/2012<sup>8</sup>. Compared to other strategies, the IPS Action Plan is very specific and aims to regulate some important fields related to coordination and planning of policies as well as improving the strategic planning framework; improving the inter-linkages of strategic documents and financial resources as well as the integration of practices and monitoring processes.

The time period this research is concentrated on, includes the time since the strategic document entered into force and until the end of December 2018, when the research was concluded. For this reason, only activities with the deadlines of implementation within these years have been analyzed. The activities planned to be implemented during 2019, were excluded from the research; two (2) out of 42 activities were planned to be implemented during 2019. While out of the 40 activities that were planned to be

implemented during 2017-2018, 29 were successfully completed with 11 have not been implemented.

Although the majority of activities are implemented, out of the ones not completed or expected to be completed in the upcoming years, there are some activities of paramount importance that have an impact on other important processes and documents as well. The fourth activity on “Ensuring liaison between ERA and the NDS, PRE, NPISAA” that falls under the specific objective of “Improving strategic planning of policies on fulfilling the SAA obligations” was not implemented. However, had this activity been implemented, it would have unblocked implementation of many other activities of this and other active government strategies. Another important activity in regards to monitoring and evaluation of implementation of strategies that was not implemented was the “Establishment of the strategic management group (SMG) within each ministry that would be headed by the Minister”. Implementation of this activity would have regulated one of the problems of reporting on strategy implementation.

Figure 2. Implementation of the Action Plan Activities 2017-2019



Source: Data provided by the OSP

<sup>8</sup> Administrative Instruction No. 02/2012 on the procedures, criteria and methodology of preparation and adoption of strategic documents and their implementation plans, at: <https://bit.ly/2Beb5b8>

### Challenges and obstacles in the implementation of the strategy

Implementation of this strategy did not face many obstacles as the OPM and its offices, are the responsible institutions primarily the OSP. For the rest of the activities, a handful of institutions are in charge of implementation, mainly Ministries of Finances and European Integrations, which provided for a smooth implementation of the strategy. The only challenge and obstacle remains the change of Governments and consequently governmental priorities. With the new government that did not draft the strategy document coming into power, the harmonization of government priorities and objective of this very document becomes difficult<sup>9</sup>.

### The impact of the strategy in policy-making

The impact of the strategy in policy-making IPS is characterized by a large number of implemented activities that were foreseen in the first Action Plan. Out of these implemented activities, the impact of the strategy has been prominent in two important fields, namely in policy coordination and planning. First, as a result of this strategy, capacity building trainings to raise the capacities of the staff of ministries and institutions to compile strategic documents were held. Secondly, the ISP affected the improvement and structuring strategic framework of the Government, making it more unified and standardized, thus enabling a de-fragmentation of policy planning and coordination.

## 3. Strategy on Modernization of the Public Administration (2015-2020)

MPA's strategic document, the Strategy on Modernization of Public Administration (SMPA) to be implemented in a five-year period 2015-2020, aims to reform public administration in three pillars. It aims to set the path for a smoother and more successful implementation of major government policies related to economic development and administrative service provision to citizens and businesses.<sup>10</sup>

The SMPA Action Plan 2015-2017 complies with all the criteria for drafting documents as foreseen in the AI 02/2012, while for a smoother implementation it is divided into three pillars: a) Civil service; b) Administrative procedures and administrative public service delivery; and c) Organization of public administration and accountability.

### Fulfillment of the Action Plan

For the SMPA strategic document, MPA drafted two action plans: Action Plan 2015-2017 that has already expired and Action Plan 2018-2020 which is currently under implementation. D+ analyzed both action plans however the for analysis of the level of implementation conducted only the first one. The SMPA Action Plan is one of the most voluminous and complex plan due to its purpose of advancing the entire Kosovo Public Administration.

Table 3. SMPA Action Plan structure

Overall objective	Specific objective	Activities	Implementation deadline
3	15	54	2015-2017

Source: Action Plan SMPA

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Vera Rexhepi, Senior Policy Planning Officer at the OSP. Date 21.01.2019

<sup>10</sup> Strategy on Modernization of Public Administration 2015-2020, at: <https://bit.ly/2g9yuwb>

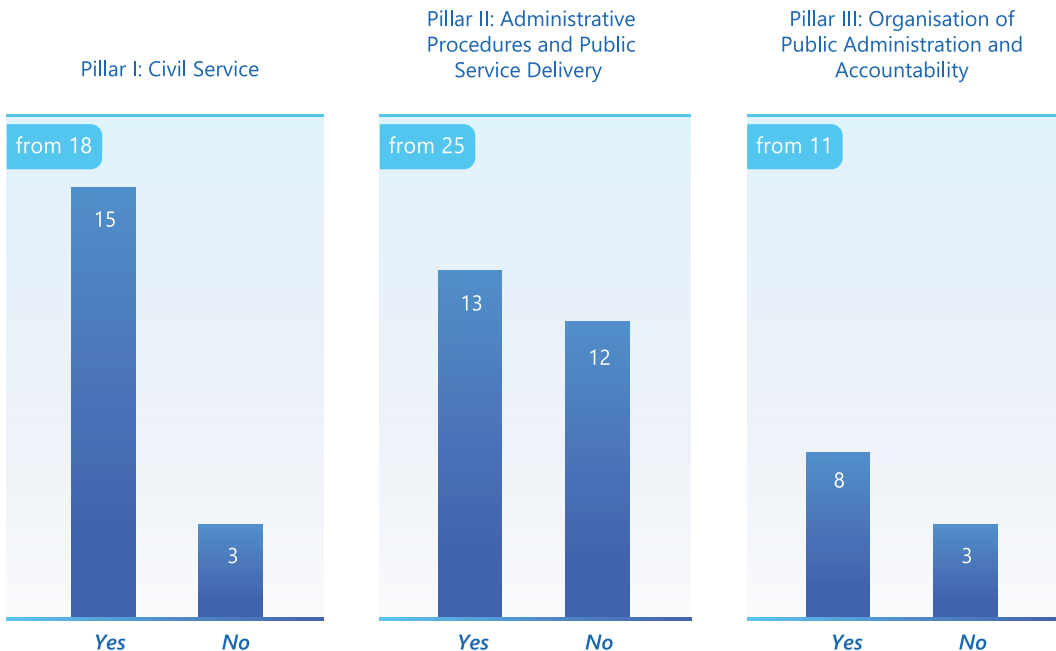
First pillar “Civil Service” is composed of 18 activities in total, foreseen to be implemented during the period of 2015-2017. The data provided by the MPA (presented in figure 4) show that the majority of activities foreseen under this pillar, namely 15 have been implemented while only three (3) have not been implemented and have been already included in the Strategy of Training Civil Servants, hence they are expected to be implemented in the scope of this strategy.

Pillar II “Administrative Procedures and Administrative Public Service Delivery” contains the largest number of activities compared to the other two pillars, or 25 activities overall. Out of them, 13 activities

have been implemented, while 12 were not implemented. The 12 activities of this pillar that were not implemented, although they are spread amongst different strategic objectives and specific objectives, have one common denominator: digitalization of public administration. The establishment of one-stop shops to provide services for citizens, integration of electronic systems and inter-operability are amongst the actions not implemented out of these 12 activities.

Lastly, in the third pillar “Organization of Public Administration and Accountability” had the least number of activities or 11 overall, while eight (8) of them were implemented.

Figure 3. Implementation of activities under three pillars of the Action Plan 2015-2018



Source: Data provided by the: OPM, DASHC, LG/MPA

## Challenges and obstacles in the implementation of the strategy

Based on the bi-annual and annual reports that MAP used to assess the implementation of the strategy, main challenges on implementation of activities and implementation of the indicators, which are recurring almost every year:

- a) Financial;
- b) Delays in adopting legislation;
- c) Implementation of reforms.

The changes anticipated with the strategy and in particular those related to the new salary system are accompanied with financial implications and budgetary deficiencies. Starting on 2015 and until 2018 there were no sufficient funds allocated from the Republic of Kosovo budget, thus causing delays in a number of other reforms foreseen SMPA.<sup>11</sup> Delays in adopting legislation derived from the SMPA, amongst others also impacts the implementation of the strategy and hinders implementation of following activities or activities dependent on the adoption of this legislation. Lastly, the implementation of the planned reforms according to the SMPA demanded consistency in the work of institutions touched by these reforms. The MPA reform presents as a shortcoming the movement of officials within a very important department, such as the Department on Public Administration Reform Management (DPARM).

## The impact of the strategy in policy-making

The impact of the strategy in policy-making Since the biggest progress in implementation of activities was noted in the first pillar or "Civil Service" and third one on "Organization of Public Administration and Accountability", the impact of the strategy is also related to these two fields. More precisely, the quality of reporting in regards to monitoring of implementation of the legislation on civil service, expansion of the electronic system for human resources management in all public administration institutions and the creation of the jobs catalogues were improved in the first pillar. On the third pillar, the biggest impact especially related to accountability was the drafting and approval of the concept-document on Access to Public Documents by the Government.

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<sup>11</sup> 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 annual reports. Progress of implementation of the Strategy on Modernization of Public Administration 2015-2017

## 4. Local Governance Strategy (2016-2026)

The Ministry of Local Government Administration as the coordinator and monitor of the work and actions of the municipalities has drafted the strategic document, Local Governance Strategy (2016-2026) aiming to place citizens at the center towards all local bodies obligations for quality and efficient municipal services<sup>12</sup>. MLGA's strategic document, Local Governance Strategy 2016-2026 is destined to serve as a guide for municipalities in advancing local governance.

### Fulfillment of the Action Plan

The deadline for the implementation of the Action Plan for the Local Government Strategy 2016-2026 is ten years.<sup>13</sup> This makes the Action Plan different from other plans as it is in contradiction to the IA UA 02/2012 as the Instruction clearly required

Action Plans not to be longer than three years. Nevertheless, this research focuses on and evaluates only the activities, that have timelines of three years starting as of 2016 and up until 2018. This Action Plan is composed of five overall objectives, 11 specific objectives and 74 activities overall, however this research focuses only in 41 activities foreseen for the period of 2016-2018.

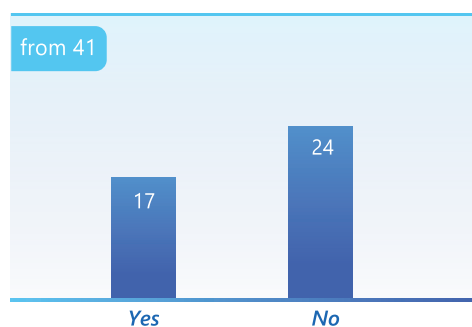
In the data provided by the MLGA presented in the figure below, it is noted a low level of strategy implementation, with majority of activities having been foreseen to be implemented during this reporting period, still not being completed. Out of 41 activities, only 17 were implemented. All activities that were implemented primarily deal with legal, management and administrative regulations.

Table 4. Structure of the Action Plan of Local Governance Strategy 2016-2026

Overall objective	Specific objective	Activities	Implementation deadline
5	11	74	2016-2026

Source: Action Plan

Figure 4. Implementation of Action Plan activities 2016-2018



Source: data provided by the MLGA

<sup>12</sup> Local Governance Strategy 2016-2026, at: <https://bit.ly/2DOHxBE>

<sup>13</sup> Administrative Instruction No. 02/2012 on the procedures, criteria and methodology of preparation and adoption of strategic documents and their implementation plans, at: <https://bit.ly/2UzTFfr>



On the other hand, activities not implemented fall in the scope of important local governance fields and are spread in many strategic and specific objectives. Local economic development is a segment that the strategy aims to advance but unfortunately none of the activities under the specific objective of “business and agriculture support” were implemented during 2016-2018. Another specific objective, important to the local governance “effective participation of citizens in governance” has only one completed activity. Lastly, an aspect that would greatly contribute to an effective local governance is the support of civil society and encouraging civic volunteerisms. However, the majority of activities under the strategic and specific objective dealing with these issues have not been implemented.

### **Challenges and obstacles in the implementation of the strategy**

Amongst the key challenges in implementing the strategy are the implementation and reporting on the activities’ completed by the responsible and line institutions. The MLGA, as the leading institution of the strategy has completed all activities it is directly responsible for<sup>14</sup>. On the other hand, in regards to activities that other line ministries and institutions are responsible for, the MLGA has faced negligence in implementation from them. Additionally, reporting on the implementation of the responsible institutions also remains a challenge, as they do not report on a regular basis and periodically to the MLGA on the stage they are at, in regards to activities implementation. Lastly, the Action Plan for this strategy also presents a challenge as it has activities planned for 10 years, hence its revision and of the entire strategy itself are very difficult.

### **The impact of the strategy in policy-making**

The impact of the strategy in policy-making One of the biggest successes of this strategy is the drafting and publishing of profiles for all 38 municipalities of Kosovo, containing information on the demography, economic capacities and natural resources, territory and geographic location of all municipalities. Furthermore, the drafting and adoption of the concept-document on Local Economic Development generated out of the Local Governance Strategy may be considered an important achievement as well.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Ferdi Kamberi, European Integration and Policy Coordination Department at the MLGA, date: 18 January 2019

<sup>15</sup> Report: Implementation of the Local Governance Strategy: January-December 2016, January-December 2017 and January-June 2018, at: <https://bit.ly/2TwbQ5L>

## 5. Strategy on Training of Civil Servants (2016-2020)

The MPA drafted the Strategy on Training of Civil Servants (2016-2020) that will be implemented within a five year period while it aims to advance and professionalize civil servants through provision of permanent trainings<sup>16</sup>. This way, civil servants will be equipped with new and adequate skills affecting the improvement of service delivery but also to help Kosovo’s aim of approximation with EU states and integrating in its structures. In addition, signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement between Kosovo and the EU in 2015 brought new challenges for the public administration, which this strategy aims to address.

### Fulfillment of the Action Plan

The Action Plan for the Strategy on Training of Civil Servants (2016-2020) contains five overall strategic objectives, with each having either one or two specific objectives as well as a relatively big number of activities, foreseen to be implemented within a three-year period. Out of 32 activities planned to be implemented in the years 2016, 2017 and

2018, D+ analysis results show that in 2016, 25 of them were implemented within the set deadline, while seven (7) were not completed. In 2017, the implementation dynamics decreased with only 21 activities completed while 11 were not completed. As for 2018, MPA has yet to complete its internal report in regards to the implementation of activities foreseen for this year.

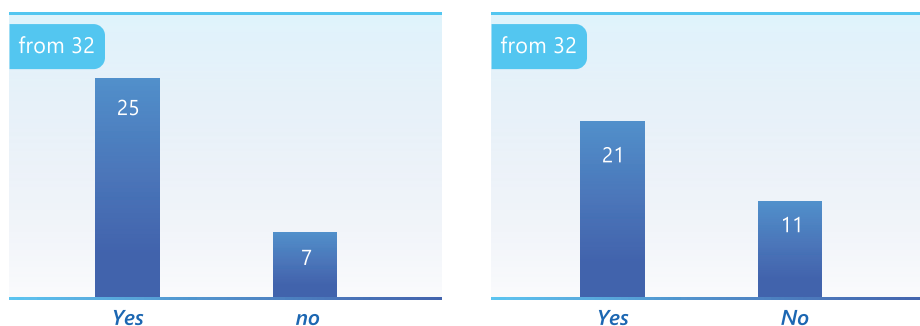
The activities that were not completed during 2016 and 2017 are related to important training programs aiming to advance civil servants in using various computer programs and in implementing legislation or approximation of legislation with the EU. These activities fall under the overall objective: 2, specific objective: 1 “developing and raising capacities for the European Integration process with a focus on policy planning, legislation approximation, assistance programs, evaluation and monitoring”, and overall objective 4, specific objective 1. “Trainings in the IT field through basic programs”.

Table 5. Total number of overall objectives, specific objectives, number of activities and deadlines for implementation

Overall objective	Specific objective	Activities	Implementation deadline
5	7	32	2016-2018

Source: Action Plan of the Strategy on Training of Civil Servants (2016-2020)

Figures 5 & 6. Number of activities implemented from the Action Plan 2016 and 2017



Source: Data provided by KPAI

<sup>16</sup> Strategy on Training of Civil Servants 2016-2020, at: <https://bit.ly/2GgthkE>

## Challenges and obstacles in the implementation of the strategy

Kosovo Public Administration Institute (KAPI), is a governmental institution established with the purpose of raising capacities of civil servants and it is responsible for implementation of this strategy. Lack of budgetary means allocated to KAPI by the Government weighs heavily when it comes to the implementation of the strategy. On the other hand, an important challenge in implementing this strategy is defining the Action Plan and the fact that the latter does not address the necessities for training programs for civil servants acknowledged in the strategy. According to SIGMA, this plan looks more like a training plan.<sup>17</sup> Hence, while drafting it, each activity was not amply defined, which makes their implementation difficult. KAPI attempted to overcome this impediment by drafting training programs catalogues, where detailed trainings for civil servants of Kosovo public administration were listed and interlinked with the Action Plan.<sup>18</sup>

## The impact of the strategy in policy-making

The impact of the strategy in policy-making The impact of the Strategy on Training of Civil Servants (2016-2020) in Kosovo public administration may be measured by KAPI data such as number of training programs attended by civil servants and number of civil servants that participated in the trainings, which KAPI shared with D+. In the first year of implementation of the training programs for civil servants, KAPI organized 81 programs and trained 3.761 civil servants.

In 2017, the number of training programs was even bigger, with 86 programs, however the number of trained civil servants dropped to 3.624 civil servants.

According to MPA annual reports for the state of the civil service, in 2016, the total number of civil servants was 17.989<sup>19</sup>, while for 2017 it increased to 18.249<sup>20</sup>. Nevertheless, the ratio between the total number of civil servants for the years 2016 and 2017 and those who joined the training programs, shows that an insufficient number of civil servants (approx. 20%) attended training programs delivered by KAPI. Consequently, one can assume that the impact of the Strategy on Training of Civil Servants 2016-2020 has not been significant on improving the quality of services delivered by the public administration. Nevertheless, SIGMA recommendation to regulate financing of civil servants' trainings through a dynamic norm based on the civil servant salaries has commenced. This norm means that out of the salaries budget, not less than 1% of the total amount would be dedicated to trainings.

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<sup>17</sup> SIGMA/OECD. *Kosovo Report, November 2017. Paris: OECD/SIGMA. f-75*

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Enver Haxhijaj IKAP, at MAP, 17.01.2019

<sup>19</sup> Report on the state of the civil service in the Republic of Kosovo for 2016, May 2017, *Composition of civil service* p-21.

<sup>20</sup> Report on the state of the civil service in the Republic of Kosovo for 2017, May 2018, *Composition of civil service* p-39.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Institutions responsible for implementation of these strategies should rely on the timelines defined in the Action Plans for implementation of activities as a guide for implementation of the strategies by:

**a) Prioritizing activities that have the nearest deadline for implementation without neglecting those with later deadlines; and**

**b) Keeping evidence of the activities that have not been completed or are in process and will be implemented during the year or the upcoming implementing period.**

Reporting on the level of Action Plans implementation of respective strategies should prioritize measurement of strategy impact, which can be done according to specific and measurable indicators.

### OSP, NDS

More should be done to pressurize responsible and line institutions to implement activities and report on their accomplishment.

### OSP, IPS

Should put more pressure to all ministries to institute strategic management groups (SMG) in order to impact a smoother implementation of the IPS and other strategic documents.

### MPA, SMPA

It should increase efforts in implementing Pillar II activities, as this pillar has the lowest progress achieved in the first Action Plan;

More pressure should be made to the Government to allocate the necessary budget in the new salary system, as the lack of completion of this process, has blocked a range of other reforms and changes in the public administration.

### MPA: Strategy on Training of Civil Servants

The new Action Plan should directly address the identified needs from the strategy and to compile a more specific and easily implementable Action Plan.

Mechanisms for selection of participants for the training programs should be defined in order to decrease the number of civil servants to follow the program twice and to include as many civil servants as possible throughout the years.

### MLGA

In the scope of the Local Governance Strategy, the Action Plan should be revised by drafting a new one with a shorter implementation period of a maximum of three years, as foreseen by the IA 07/2018.

More local authorities, municipalities, businesses, non-governmental organizations and associations should be involved in planning for the Action Plan and reviewing the strategy with the purpose of needs identification and facilitation of implementation.

More pressure should be made to the implementing and line institutions for implementing and reporting on the activities assigned to them.





Democracy Plus (D+) is a non-governmental organization that brings together people with strong beliefs in democratic values and in a Kosovo with sustainable democracy. The main goal of D+ is to promote democratic values and practices as well as policies that stimulate civic activism.

D+ is organized into three programs: Good Governance, Rule of Law, and Elections & Political Parties. D+ supports government institutions, citizens and the media in improving governance, advancing public policy and empowering the rule of law.

Our organization focuses on the use of information technology for the aforementioned purposes, and as a result has built two online platforms [ndreqe.com](http://ndreqe.com) and [qeverisjatani.info](http://qeverisjatani.info) which provide space for civic participation in decision-making and accountability of government institutions. Moreover, D + is a member of ProOpen, a coalition of NGOs aimed at increasing transparency in public procurement and preventing the misuse of public money.

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