

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM STRATEGY IN MONTENEGRO 2022-2026

Summary





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Summary

The new strategy is expected to improve the quality and efficiency of service delivery as well as optimisation of the public sector.

From the European Commission's 2021 Progress Report on Montenegro

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Abbreviations

AURUM	Public Administration Reform Strategy 2011 - 2016.
eDMS	Electronic Document Management System
GSV	Secretariat General of the Government
IPA III	Pre - Accession Support Program
IT	Information Technology
SISEDE	Single Information System for Electronic Data Exchange
MED	Ministry of Economic Development
MFSW	Ministry of Finance and Social Welfare
MPADSM	Ministry of Public Administration, Digital Society and Media
Moi	Ministry of Interior
MONSTAT	Statistical Office of Montenegro
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ReSPA	Regional School of Public Administration
WG	Working Group
PAR	Public Administration Reform
SIGMA	Joint Initiative of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Union to strengthen and improve the public administration system
FAI	Free access to information
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
HRMA	Human Resources Management Authority

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM CALENDAR

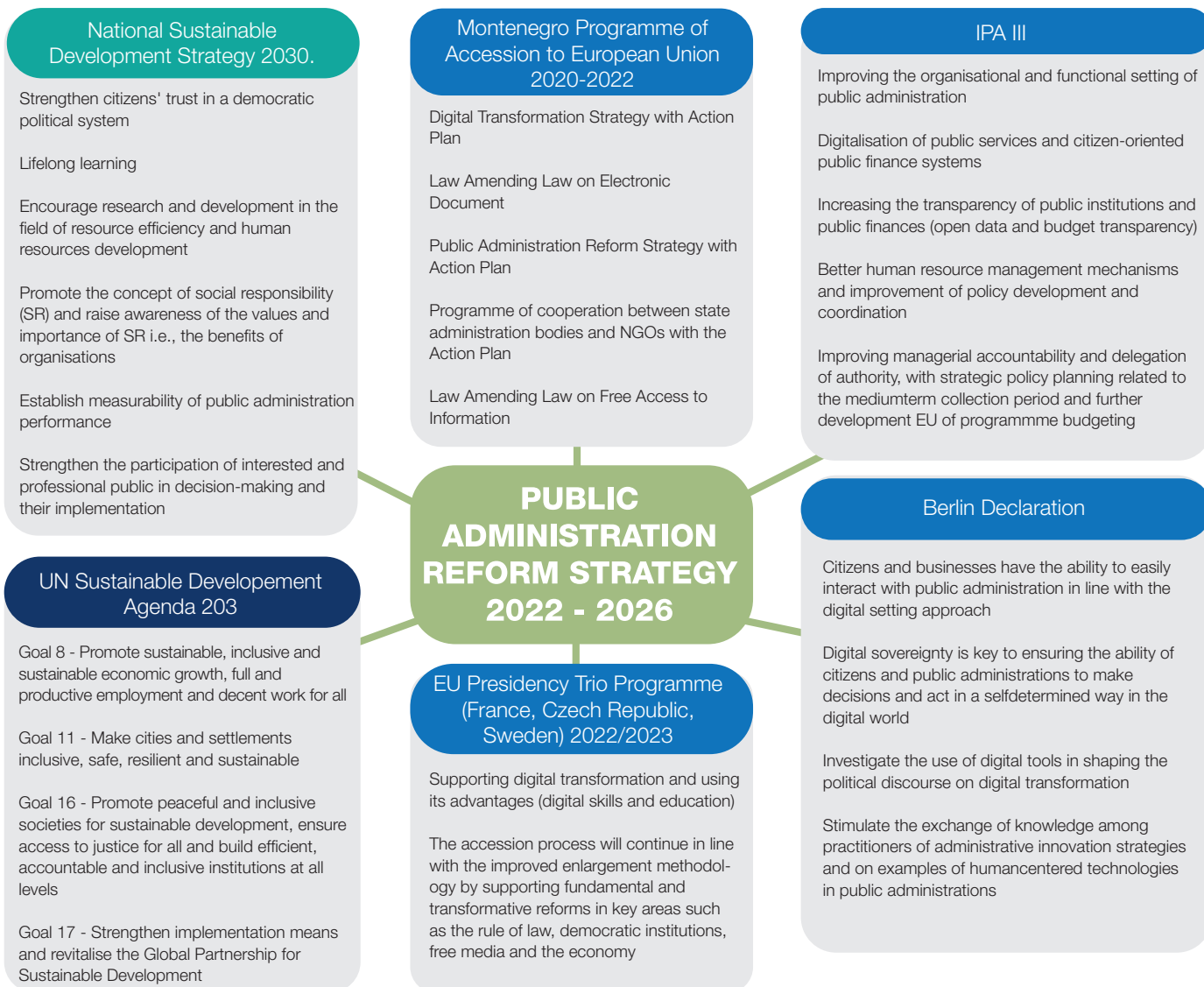
- 2011.** The Government of Montenegro adopted the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2011 - 2016 (AURUM), along with the Framework Action Plan for its implementation. The main objective of the AURUM focused on efficient, professional and service-oriented public administration to serve the citizens and other social and commercial entities.
- 2013.** PAR Special Group for public administration reform established for dialogue with the European Commission
- 2016.** Public Administration Reform Strategy of Montenegro 2016 –2020 adopted. The structure of this Strategy followed the logic of the reform areas set out in the Public Administration Principles developed by the European Commission and the OECD/SIGMA. The general objective of the reform activities until 2020 was aimed at creating an efficient and service-oriented public administration, which is characterised by the increase of citizens' trust in its work.
- 2016.** Public Administration Reform Council established
- 2016.** The Ministry of Public Administration established
- 2017.** Directorate for Public Administration Reform Implementation established
- 2018.** An operational team for the implementation of public administration reform established
- 2020.** Mid-term evaluation of the PAR Strategy 2016-2020 prepared.
- In terms of responding to the needs of public administration, the evaluation concluded that this strategy provided mainly an appropriate set of interventions to increase efficiency, public administration orientation towards services, as well as effective functioning within the European Administrative Space
- 2020.** The Ministry of Public Administration, Digital Society and Media is established with the General Directorate for Strategic Planning in Public Administration, International Cooperation and IPA Projects
- 2021.** Public Administration Reform Council appointed
- 2021.** The Government adopted the final report on the implementation of the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2016-2020.
- 2021.** The Government of Montenegro adopted the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2022 - 2026, developed taking into account the recommendations of the European Commission for progress in public administration reform.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM STRATEGY IN MONTENEGRO 2022-2026.

1.1 Harmonization with the strategic framework of Montenegro and international obligations

Public Administration Reform Strategy in Montenegro 2022-2026 is harmonised with the country's umbrella strategic documents, including related sectoral strategies. Special attention was paid to harmonisation with international documents and obligations in the field of EU integration.

Vertical harmonisation in relation to the umbrella strategic and international documents and their priorities can be seen through the following presentation:



1.2 Document adoption process

After the expiration of the four-year period of validity of the previous Public Administration Reform Strategy 2016-2020, progress was noted in public administration reform, especially through the creation of a European-harmonised legislative framework in the field of public administration reorganisation, civil service-based employment system and medium-term planning. However, a number of challenges remain in the reform process, for which Montenegro still has the status of an administration that is moderately prepared for further reform. Therefore, in the coming period, more efforts and political support are needed to further optimise work processes and the number of employees in public administration, establish a more functional system of accountability and delegation of authority, as well as continue the process of employment and promotion based on merit.

The Ministry of Public Administration has started work on the Draft Strategy 2022-2026 by forming a Working Group (WG) in June 2020. After the parliamentary elections in August 2020, the Ministry of Public Administration, functions as the Ministry of Public Administration, Digital Society and Media (MPADSM), with the newly established Directorate General for Strategic Planning, International Co-operation and IPA Funds. Adequately to the new approach, the members of the WG were replaced in April 2021 and consisted of representatives of MPADSM, Ministry of Finance and Social Welfare (MFSW), Ministry of Economic Development (MED), Ministry of Interior (MoI), General Secretariat of the Government (GSV), Human Resources Administration (HRA), Union of Municipalities of Montenegro, and an NGO representative.

The Ministry of Public Administration, Digital Society and Media organized public consultation on the Draft Public Administration Reform Strategy 2022-2026 and the action plan 2022-2024, from 9th - 30th November 2021. As part of the public consultation on the Draft Public Administration Reform Strategy 2022-2026, the Ministry organised a Panel Discussion on 24th November 2021, with the aim that all interested organisations, communities and individuals have the opportunity to hear the views of academia, international partners, civil society and local government representatives on this strategic framework.

The Government of Montenegro, at its session held on 29th December 2021 adopted the Draft Strategy. The operationalisation of the PAR Strategy 2022-2026 will be implemented through two action plans, the first one for the 2022-2024 period and the second one for the 2025-2026 period.

Montenegro is moderately prepared on the reform of its public administration. Overall, limited progress was made in the reporting period. Some progress was made in areas such as medium-term policy planning, electronic government and public finance management as well as budget transparency... Amendments to the Law on Civil Servants and State Employees, adopted in January 2021 at the initiative of the Parliament, lowered the requirements for merit-based recruitment, competence and independence of civil servants... Reorganisation of public administration led to substantial staff changes, losing experienced staff in EU accession process related matters... Strong political will is needed to effectively address depoliticisation of the public service, optimisation of the state administration and effective implementation of managerial accountability.

From the European Commission's 2021 Progress Report on Montenegro

1.3 Objective of Document

Vision

The vision of the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2022-2026 is a professional public administration that provides quality services to end users and has adequate capacity for accession to the European Union.

The main goal of the Public Administration Reform Strategy in Montenegro 2022-2026 is joint building of an accountable, efficient, transparent public administration, focused on the needs of citizens and the economy.

Values on which the strategy is based:



1.4 We listen to the needs of citizens and their expectations from public administration

Employees in the institutions of the Montenegrin system communicate with citizens on a daily basis and provide services during the most important moments in their lives. When they register the birth of a child, ask for information on the vaccine safety, exercise the right to a pension or health insurance, check the status of a request for an administrative service, citizens expect the state to meet their needs. However, when following the legal procedure, excessively often citizens have to navigate an intricate network of institutions, websites and telephone numbers to access the necessary services.

In line with the times we live in and the advancement of technology, but also due to the pandemic, the citizens of Montenegro are increasingly turning to the Internet. In such circumstances, in order to make public administration as efficient as possible for citizens, and to help other sectors necessary for the functioning of society, such as health, education, social services, media, etc., it is necessary to work tirelessly to achieve as complete as possible digital transformation of all services.

That is why we have decided to write the most important strategic document in the field of public administration reform for the period until 2026 in cooperation with citizens and other interested publics. We are proud of the fact that we have the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2022-2026 developed in a fully inclusive process. We held:

- 8 focus groups with more than 60 participants
- 7 meetings where we summarised the findings for each strategic goal with more than 80 participants
- meetings of the Working Group for the preparation of the Public Administration Reform Strategy of Montenegro 2022-2026
- 3 two-day workshops of the extended Working Group, with over 60 participants
- 12 meetings with representatives of SIGMA and other international institutions
- 3 sessions of the Public Administration Reform Council

We consulted colleagues from relevant public administration institutions (line ministries, Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms of Montenegro - Ombudsman, Protector of Property and Legal Interests of Montenegro, Administrative Court, Agency for Personal Data Protection and Free Access to Information, Union of Municipalities of Montenegro, local self-governments, Administrative Inspection, Administration for Inspection Affairs, and many others). We also consulted with international partners (European Commission, Delegation of the European Union to Montenegro, World Bank, UNDP, ReSPA, and SIGMA), non-governmental organisations, academia, and trade unions. This way of working/consulting all stakeholders in the early phase of the draft strategy document, as well as during its development, will serve as best practice to all relevant bodies and will be promoted by the General Secretariat of Government (GSV) when developing strategic documents of public administration bodies.

Based on the challenges defined by the participants in our consultations, we determined the most important strategic goals as follows:

1. Organisation and work of public administration in the function of citizens' needs
2. Citizens and the economy use quality public administration services
3. Professional public administration
4. Transparent and open public administration
5. Policy planning with citizens and for citizens.

Guided by these goals, we will focus on more organised administrative work in order to simplify the access of citizens to institutions and services, and make work easier for administrative workers.



With public administration reform, we continue to establish better standards at all its levels, from the creation and implementation of public policies, personnel planning and management of the civil service system, to quality standards in service delivery.

The services that the public administration provides to citizens and the economy should be as simple and accessible as possible, and the work of employees should be accountable and efficient. Citizens must also be provided with openness and access to all information in the work of public institutions, as well as quality participation in the creation of laws and public policies.

Thus, the main goal of the Public Administration Reform Strategy in Montenegro 2022-2026 **is to build jointly an accountable, efficient and transparent public service focused on the needs of citizens and the economy.**

One of the biggest issues facing the public administration in Montenegro is the lack of a unified record of the number of employees. The reason for this is certainly the lack of a reliable starting point for assessing the efficiency of measures to optimise the number of employees. An integral part of this strategy is therefore a record of the number of employees at the central and local levels. These records, along with clear instructions for its keeping, will be the basis for monitoring the number of employees according to the established scope, also defined by the strategy.

Thus, records on the number of employees will include public institutions at the central and local levels for the first time. This creates a basis for monitoring changes in the number of employees at a deeper level of the public administration structure, which will contribute to greater transparency in terms of personnel management.

In addition, in order to improve the management of the total gross wage, we are planning projects to establish a system of centralised payroll. This refers to the development of a software solution for a single system of calculating the salaries of employees who receive salaries from the Budget of Montenegro. This will ensure an efficient payroll process, a higher degree of control and reporting, as well as better management of public sector wage spending.

During one of the public opinion polls, citizens expressed the opinion that state bodies are formed on the basis of party interests and that there are no basic preconditions for proper development of public administration, which only contributes to strengthening distrust in the work of state institutions. Citizens certainly do not expect perfect public administration, but they still want it to do its job professionally, accept mistakes and try to correct them. We have all been in a situation where obtaining the simplest administrative paper takes several hours, often days, due to waiting in lines, poor communication with employees at counters and in various offices, which leads to misunderstandings, loss of time and patience, and often quarrels. In response to the currently prevailing opinion of citizens, in order to improve the functioning of public administration, we will strengthen oversight of its work and the application of the concept of managerial accountability. This implies that **accountability should be a basic and concrete measure of the value of the work of each individual and institution in public administration.**

Among other, our goal is to significantly shorten the duration of administrative court proceedings and increase the number of implemented recommendations of the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms of Montenegro - Ombudsman regarding the work of public administration bodies. In addition, all ministries should report on the results achieved and delegate authorities for financial management and control.

By the reform, we want to improve the level of professionalism of employees in public administration, but also shorten the duration of procedures.

We also asked citizens whether they use the services of institutions via the Internet (online). We met the concrete criticism, but we also received praise.

Namely, according to public opinion, the Corona virus pandemic contributed to the acceleration of digitalisation and showed how important it is to have online services, at the same time without losing their quality, simplicity and security.

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The system and organisation of the state administration are derived from the constitution; the legal framework is limited, so our state authorities have a self-regulatory function. There is only an approximate method according to which regulations are adopted, and state authorities are formed on the basis of party interests. Functional analysis of state administration has never been done. Thus, the basic assumptions for the proper development of public administration do not exist. We have not cleared up yet what the public administration actually is. State administration is one small segment of a much broader, public administration. It is necessary to separate the public service from other public bodies. The biggest problem is the absence of legal status.

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Focus group participant

However, according to the citizens, it is necessary to improve electronic communication between institutions, but also to provide citizens with easier online access, as well as some kind of confirmation that the request for a certain document or process has been accepted, to make sure they have successfully completed the online procedure.

Our imperative is constant work on improving the satisfaction of citizens with the services of public administration, i.e., the institutions of the system. Therefore, we will introduce a systematic measurement of satisfaction of public service users, so that we always have information based on which we will improve services and maintain a quality management system of institutions and processes. The end result should always be an improvement in the quality of services and continuous optimisation of processes in public administration authorities.

According to survey participants, the issue is also the selective publication of information, so citizens still place the greatest trust in Internet search engines. That is why mistakes often happen, precisely because of following the content found on the Internet instead of that on the official websites of the administration.

In parallel with the adoption of the Public Administration Reform Strategy in Montenegro 2022-2026, work was underway on the development of the Digital Transformation Strategy 2022-2026. This strategy is one of the most important strategic documents of the Government of Montenegro, because the success of its implementation will affect the degree of success of other strategic documents, and the processes of digital transformation in the age in which we live are reflected in all spheres of society. Thus, the goal of the Digital Transformation Strategy is to recognise the principles on which to build further transformation of society by adopting the principles that guide the countries of the European Union and other developed countries.

For a state that is custom-made for the citizens, focused on providing quality services, it is important to ensure cooperation and exchange of information between different institutions of the system and organisations. This means efficient cooperation of all public administration bodies, as well as automation of exchange and quality integration of processes at all levels. In order for administration authorities to serve citizens efficiently, it must be possible to collect reliable data in real time and manage that data adequately.

Availability of quality and accurate data is a key prerequisite for quality digital services and management of electronic and other systems. It is therefore necessary to provide a comprehensive legal framework for the maintenance of electronic registers, secure data exchange in terms of access

Why digitalisation of public administration?

One of the operational goals of public administration reform is the full interoperability of information systems and increasing the number of high-level electronic services, which implies digital transformation.

What does that actually mean? Digitalisation is a means to an end, not an end in itself. Digitalisation is creating the basis for better results in solving the problems of citizens in the era of the Internet, in which we all expect speed and simplicity.

rights, as well as technical capabilities for secure data storage and exchange. In addition to the availability of data, it is necessary to create new digital solutions that will use the potential of existing data, by using and reusing data.

In order to obtain accurate and timely data, a legal framework and infrastructure is needed for a secure and high level of data exchange, following the principles of EU regulations.

Recognising the value and great economic importance of open data, as well as data in a format that allows their reuse, strategy also encourages the creation of new digital solutions, generating new economic value and improving transparency and accountability of public administration. The realisation of the above is not possible without full respect for legal norms and ethical principles regarding the right to privacy and control over the use of data.



Citizens, businesses and organisations should be able to make better decisions based on insights from non-personal data, which should be available to all.

Thus, the data created by the institutions should be available to everyone: other institutions and bodies, researchers, the business and civil sector, academia and citizens. Moreover, the continued establishment of interoperable data registers and single data exchange will enable their free flow within the state and better communication with the European Union.

State authorities have at their disposal more than 300 registers that differ in number, type of data, manner of data management, as well as the possibility of their exchange with other authorities. Considering the tendency of growth of records and registers, it is necessary to digitalise the registers, i.e., to transfer them to electronic form.

Public authorities must use data already collected by other public authorities from individuals and companies, instead of requesting the same data several times or collecting information from one public authority only to pass it on to another.

Although this exchange of information between state authorities is formally legalised - in practice it does not happen. Therefore, it is necessary to standardise and systematise digital databases/registers and data exchange between them. It is necessary that all ministries and other institutions of the system/state authorities start communicating with each other on the basis of a once-only principle, *ex officio*, and in accordance with the legal obligation. This means that citizens no longer have to leave the same data in different places, and thanks to this principle, the state will no longer be allowed to search for them again, but will download them from a single, valid database, in accordance with the legal obligation.

This will also relate to the use of electronic signatures and placement of spectrum of digitalisation services and building national standards, improvement of electronic document management system (eDMS) and eGovernment portal, as well as continuation of all strategic projects identified through the Digital Transformation Strategy and Public Administration Reform Strategy. The goal of the transformation of these services is to connect them, so that citizens can communicate with institutions through them.



In order to achieve trends in modern public administrations focused on user experience, i.e., citizens and the economy, we have defined an action plan through the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2022-2026. Some of the activities identified in the action plan are:

- Strengthening the capacity of employees through education and training in the areas of IT management and change management;
- Possibility to retain staff dealing with IT affairs;
- Improvement of EDMS and SISEDE systems (i.e. the Electronic Document and Records Management System and the Single Information System for Electronic Data Exchange);
- Establishment of an eGovernment platform for service provision;
- Implementation of the project “Montenegro digital”, etc.

In order to implement digital transformation at the level of the entire government, modernise public administration, strengthen internal capacities, optimise IT costs and enable sustainable and purposeful development of digital services, we will launch the *Montenegro Digital* project, which will:

- Define digital standards and standardise technology at the level of the entire government
- provide modular procurement and optimise consumption in the procurement of IT equipment, software solutions, licenses and implementation of digital solutions
- create an open digital market
- vigorously develop the policy process and platforms in line to the needs of citizens

Through the implementation of the *Montenegro Digital* project, we will work on the realisation of the main goals of MPADSM:

- Citizens will have a simple, accessible and best user experience in all public services;
- Citizens will log in only once to access the services, anytime, anywhere and from any device;
- Citizens will be able to use any public service, without obstacles and exceptions.

1.5 Scope of the reform and strategic goals

According to the strategy, the reform will include state authorities, state administration bodies, legal entities exercising public authority (funds, agencies, etc.) and public institutions at the central level, and at the local level local self-government units, local government bodies, services and institutions.



1. CITIZEN-ORIENTED ORGANISATION AND OPERATION OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 1.1. Functional public administration with efficient oversight of its implementation application of the managerial accountability concept

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 1.2. Paperless administration

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 1.3. Strengthening functional and financially independent municipalities to ensure more balanced development of all LGUs

Accountability should be a basic, measurable and specific value for the work of every individual and every institution in public administration.

In order to meet this goal, it is necessary to improve the system of external control (courts, State Audit Institution, Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms - Ombudsman, Protector of Property and Legal Interests) and internal control and supervision (inspections, supervision by hierarchically higher bodies over hierarchically lower administrative bodies), control of the legality of public legal acts in administrative proceedings within the right to appeal in administrative proceedings, control of state administration bodies over local administration bodies and other holders of public authority).

In order to improve the accountability of institutions, it is necessary to improve the planning and reporting on the work of state administration bodies and other holders of public authority, which will be based on measurable goals, performance indicators and target values. The focus is on further delegation of authority and development of the concept of managerial accountability through training and further normative solutions.

Based on the planned activities, by 2026 citizens can expect an increased percentage of implementation of the Ombudsman's recommendations that all ministries will report based on the results achieved, that 80% of public administration bodies will establish an electronic document management system, which is a prerequisite for electronic communication with citizens and the economy, as well as reducing the amount of funds collected in litigations.



2. CITIZENS AND BUSINESSES USE HIGH-QUALITY SERVICES OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 2.1. Efficient service delivery and introduction of service delivery quality management

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 2.2. Full interoperability of information systems and increased number of electronic services with high level of sophistication

The implementation of activities identified in Strategic Goal II will enable the establishment of simpler and faster communication between citizens and administration, primarily by improving the efficiency of authorities' work in resolving administrative cases and fully implementing the legal obligation of authorities to exchange data from official records to improve procedural efficiency and economy. We believe that the citizens will benefit greatly from the introduction of the Catalogue of Offline and Online Services, which will serve to obtain feedback from users and take measures to improve services. In this way, citizens will directly influence the improvement of the work of public administration, which are created for them. By standardising the work process in the entire public administration, establishing a catalogue of services and a book of administrative procedures, the development of e-services for the needs of citizens and the economy will continue.

We will continue to connect further key registers in order to enable electronic exchange of documents and their delivery ex officio, without burdening citizens.

Priority will be to improve and promote the eGovernment portal and electronic communication between authorities and clients, develop new e-services, introduce completely new digital services for vital events (eBirth, eStudent, eRegistration), improve the e-payment portal, e-authentication and e-identification of users. **In this way, we will create conditions for electronic, and by default an easier access to the necessary documents (paperless).**





3. PROFESSIONAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 3.1. Efficient HR planning system based on identified needs, de-politicization and improving human resources recruitment procedure and further digitalization of civil service system

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 3.2. Public administration attractive employer – efficient system of assessment, promotion and rewarding based on merits and continuous development

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 3.3. Optimal administration

Caring for employees through caring for their job satisfaction and additional professional development, which will contribute to better results in the workplace and in achieving the goals of the organisation as a whole, are the key results that will lead to the implementation of this strategic goal. By monitoring the work of employees, their results and progress are monitored, but also the needs for further training and development are identified. Our driving force here is – satisfied worker is a good worker, and a good employee in public administration also means satisfied users, i.e., citizens.

The environment for the work of professional and competent employees in public administration includes:

- equal position of all employees financed from the Budget of Montenegro,
- fair and competitive system of salaries in public administration,
- monitoring the work of employees, constant professional development in accordance with the job description, evaluation related to promotion, remuneration and professional development,
- creation of an efficient system of planning and employment in public administration on the basis of identified needs and synchronised development of the personnel plan and budget,
- digitalisation of the processes in the field of civil service system that would be implemented only through the personnel information system: personnel plan, training, evaluation, vacations, etc., as well as the digitalisation of human resource management phases: eEmployment, eLearning, eEvaluation
- up-to-date Central Personnel Records,
- optimisation of processes and employees within the authority, based on functional analyses for the entire public administration.



4. TRANSPARENT AND OPEN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 4.1. Improvement of the functioning of the system of legal protection in the FAI area and strengthening of the capacities of the Personal Data Protection and Free Access to Information Agency

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 4.2. Improvement of the application of the FAI Law by those obliged to apply the Law with a view to ensuring adequate exercise of the access to information right

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 4.3. Improvement of information reuse and increasing the availability of open data

Improving the functioning and strengthening the capacity of the Agency for Personal Data Protection and Free Access to Information, overall improvement of the functioning of the legal protection system in the field of free access to information (FAI), improving the implementation of the FAI Law by public authorities and raising awareness and development of skills of FAI officers, improving the re-use of information and increasing the availability of open data are just some of the activities whose implementation will provide conditions for creating a transparent and open public administration.

This will strengthen the process of publishing data in public authorities, including the publication of records in machine-readable format, while improving quality in reactive transparency where authorities publish information of public importance on request. The focus is on improving the quality and legality of the work of first instance authorities in decision-making procedures on requests for free access to information, while strengthening the role and capacity of the Agency for Personal Data Protection and Free Access to Information.

What is certainly most important for the citizens is that they will be greeted at the counters by kind administration workers, satisfied with their job, since citizens mostly complain about the rudeness of the administrative officers.

With the support of SIGMA and in cooperation with the Agency for Personal Data Protection and Free Access to Information, the Ministry of Public Administration, Digital Society and Media has prepared specific activities to achieve these goals as part of a special Action Plan in order to contribute to exercising the right of access to information as effective as possible, so that all the problems recorded in practice are overcome.



5. POLICY PLANNING WITH AND FOR CITIZENS

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 5.1. Strengthening the evidence-based planning system that leads to sustainable policies and achievement of Government priorities

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 5.2. Improved institutional coordination for stronger policy impacts

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 5.3. Increased scope of RIA and capacities for its implementation

Policy planning with citizens and for citizens, in the next four years, relates to strengthening the medium-term planning system and developing an integrated strategic planning system. This means linking medium-term budget planning, planning medium-term and annual work programmes of the Government and ministries, planning sectoral policies and European integration process.

An integrated planning system should contribute to the inclusion of monitoring, reporting and evaluation results into future planning cycles to ensure that public policies are fact-based.

We will ensure the contribution to the databased policy-making system by strengthening cooperation with the research and academic community, non-governmental organisations, the Statistical Office of Montenegro - MONSTAT and other producers of official statistics in order to increase the availability and use of data. The emphasis will be on defining specific mechanisms for cooperation and forming a unit modelled on innovative hubs and research centres. In addition to research work, their task will be to enhance cooperation between the public administration and researchers/academia and civil society and the effective use of data and research.

Our focus will also be on institutional cooperation and development mechanisms, as well as on strengthening institutional and personnel capacity in specific areas necessary for efficient policy coordination (Network of Civil Servants for Strategic Planning and Establishment of Strategic Planning and IPA Programming Units).

In order to increase the transparency of public policies, we will dedicate ourselves to strengthening the system of public consultations and public debates, primarily in the context of empowering officials to implement these processes in the preparation of laws and strategies. We will also focus our efforts on strengthening the mechanisms for achieving greater influence of local self-governments and local communities on decision-making bodies and mandatory consideration of their requests, as well as acting on priorities.

Thus, citizens and the economy can expect better quality public consultations, which means the creation of better public policies, as well as high-quality analysis of the effects of regulations (RIA) with conducted studies of impact on citizens and the economy that will be publicly available and published on the eGovernment portal.

1.6 Equal opportunities for all

For further modernisation of public administration, it is essential to base its work on respect for diversity, equality, inclusion, anti-discrimination and equal opportunities for all. To be a public administration of all citizens.

As a reminder, in 2004, the European Union launched an initiative called the “Diversity Charter”, accepted in 26 countries, backed by over 12,000 signatory organisations and more than 16 million employees. The aim of the Charter is to promote diversity, equality, non-discrimination, inclusion and equal workplace opportunities.

The Constitution of Montenegro as the highest legal act in the country, the Law on Gender Equality and the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination form the normative basis, which defines issues of gender equality in the Montenegrin legal system. In Montenegro, there are several activities related to anti-discrimination, but not to diversity. In the previous period, more work was done on inclusion, gender equality, equality of minority and marginalised groups - Roma and Egyptians, people with disabilities.

Gender equality activities have been identified in public administration, which permeate all strategic goals and focus on a number of activities that should contribute to the implementation and improvement of this standard.

Demographic changes (increased mobility, population aging, and migration), changing market conditions and globalisation factors contribute to the growing diversity of the workforce within organisations and in the labour market. There is a high probability that employees will encounter at work different needs, values, motivations, different contributions and ways of building relationships. Diversity is more than gender, the age or race of an individual. Diversity, inclusion and equality have always been a source of progress and development of more just society.

As there has been no broader concept of diversity so far, the strategy will address this issue as a horizontal issue. The concept of diversity relates to respect for the values of diversity, non-discrimination and equal opportunities in relation to each individual.

The Strategy goals are aimed at creating a coherent diversity policy that will provide an inclusive environment and give all employees the opportunity to feel included, respected and valued. In this sense, activities related to gender equality and inclusion in public administration were recognised, which permeate all strategic goals, and include the policy-making process, service provision and human resource management, focusing on the implementation of activities that should contribute to the implementation and promotion of this standard.

Citizen engagement and public participation (inclusion) in all segments of public administration is becoming more important than ever. Through this strategic document, the principle of inclusiveness permeates all strategic goals and includes all those interested in the processes, from preparation to implementation.

Special focus will be placed on the application of inclusion standards in policy making when defining services for the needs of citizens, for their optimal user experience, which will use qualitative and quantitative research that will serve as a basis for actions of public administration bodies and determining directions for improvement in the delivery field.

USEFUL LINKS:

GOVERNMENT OF MONTENEGRO

<https://www.gov.me/>

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

<https://www.gov.me/mju>

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM COUNCIL

<https://www.gov.me/vlada-crne-gore/savjet-za-reformu-javne-uprave>

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM STRATEGY 2022-2026

<https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/823842f4-2ffd-4a0d-936e-c1b00c669115>

eGOVERNMENT PORTAL OF MONTENEGRO

Government portal of Montenegro

<https://www.euprava.me/>

ePETITION

<http://epeticije.gov.me/>

CATALOG OF ELECTRONIC SERVICES

https://www.gov.me/e-servisi?sort=published_at

