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CENTER FOR CHANGE MANAGEMENT



# How to get better public services for citizens

Policy paper



CITIZEN-CENTRIC APPROACH TO DELIVERY OF PUBLIC SERVICES



# How to get better public services for citizens

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## Publishers:

Association for Development Initiatives – Zenith, Skopje  
Center for Change Management, Skopje

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## Circulation:

**200**

## CIP – Каталогизација во публикација

Национална и универзитетска библиотека “Св. Климент Охридски”, Скопје  
35.071.2(497.7)(047)

KARTSICHKA–Vasilevska, Rosalia

How to get better public services for citizens : policy paper / Rosalia Karchitska–Vasilevska. – Skopje : Association Zenith, 2019. – 35 стр. : илустр. ; 25 см

Фусноти кон текстот. – Публикацијата е во рамки на проектот:

“Civil-based approach in delivery of public services”. – Библиографија:

стр. 30. – Содржи и: Annex

## ISBN 978-608-4818-60-1

а) Јавна администрација – Услуги – Македонија – Извештаи COBISS.MK-ID 110557962

The publication can be downloaded for free at:: [www.zenith.org.mk](http://www.zenith.org.mk), [www.cup.org.mk](http://www.cup.org.mk)

This publication was developed within the framework of the project “Citizen-centric approach to delivery of public services”, financed by the European Union and co-financed by the British Embassy in Skopje. The content of this publication does not reflect the official opinion of the European Union nor the British Embassy in Skopje. Responsibility for the information and views expressed in this publication lies entirely with the autho

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EU	EUROPEAN UNION
LGAP	Law on General Administrative Procedure
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
MISA	Ministry of Information Society and Administration
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SIGMA	Support for Improvement of Governance and Management of Public Institutions
WCAG	Standards for Websites Content Accessibility

## Summary

This document analyzes citizens' satisfaction with the delivery of public services and identifies key challenges for improving the state of play. The analysis was made in order to provide recommendations for improving the quality and availability of public services for the citizens and their satisfaction with the delivery of public services. The analysis covers the following aspects of public services: general satisfaction with the delivery of public services, quality of the public service, manner and time of delivery, attitude of the service provider, cost of the service, complaint system and corruption in public services.

The data in this analysis are derived from conducted surveys with citizens–users of public services and analysis of secondary data.

The need for changes in the delivery of public services stems from the following findings:

- More than half of the respondents (55%) had to contact the public institution at least twice only to obtain information about the service.
- Although the satisfaction with the received public service prevails, a high 24% of the citizens are completely or partially dissatisfied. About 20% expressed dissatisfaction with the time needed for delivery of the public service, while 18% expressed dissatisfaction with the price of the services for which additional payment shall be made.
- There are problems with the lack of connection between the institutions and the provision of documents ex officio.
- The availability of electronic services and their utilization are low. Only 18% of respondents used public service electronically.
- Half, i.e. 52% of the respondents think that citizens are not treated equally by the institutions.
- Although the majority of respondents (85%) replied that they did not offer any gift for obtaining a public service, about 21% know someone who has offered.
- Almost a third of respondents consider that service providers do not have a system of collecting acclamations and complaints from users. Of those who believed that there was such a system, almost three quarters have not given any

opinion, acclamation or complaint about the delivery of the service.

- Most of the respondents did not turn to a higher instance about service delivery generally due to the following reasons: mistrust in institutions, lack of information, additional costs etc.

## 1. Citizen-oriented delivery of services

- MISA and the competent public institutions to finalize the entry of data for all public services in the Catalogue of Public Services and after the verification of the services, to launch the Catalogue.
- MISA and the competent public institutions to identify persons in the institutions-service providers who will take care of the comprehensiveness, accuracy, precision and updating of the data that will be published in the Catalogue of Public Services, as well as their comprehensibility to the general public.
- MISA and the competent public institutions to identify and overcome possible problems or differences between the legally prescribed conditions for providing public services, and the practice established in the institutions and to harmonize the practice of providing public services in different areas in the country.
- MISA and public services providers to invest in constant modernization of public service delivery in terms of reducing time and costs for the citizens and the administration.
- Informing citizens about public services to be carried out through various channels and instruments, for example, through social networks, websites, TV channels, radio channels, posters, information points and telephone.

## 2. Fair and efficient administrative procedures

- Public service providers to introduce or improve their systems for receiving complaints from users, and providing responds to the complaints to become a regular practice.
- MISA, public service providers and the Ombudsman to conduct a communication campaign in order to inform citizens better about their right to an appeal and lawsuit, including the procedure, relevant services and institutions, the available legal aid they can request, the deadlines for utilizing the right and for carrying out the procedure.
- MISA and public service providers to keep and continuously publish statistics on received complaints and appeals for various services, the reasons for their submission, the average time for acting upon them, and the outcome of the procedure.
- MISA in cooperation with the Ombudsman and the State Commission for

Prevention of Corruption to conduct a campaign to encourage reporting cases of corruption and discrimination in the provision of public services.

- In order to minimize risks of corruption and discrimination the delivery of public services to be automated, wherever possible and feasible.

### **3. Mechanisms for ensuring quality of public services**

- To establish functional interoperability and cooperation of the institutions for obtaining documents and data ex officio.
- To promote the interoperability of registers of different institutions.
- To conduct regular systematic monitoring of the satisfaction of service users through instruments that citizens can use in a fast, simple and reliable manner;
- To complete the mapping of services in a lifetime, identify services related to interrelated life events, and examine ways for better reorganizing of the provision of services in order to create an optimal path and satisfactory experience for the user.

### **4. Availability of public services**

- To improve the availability of services by introducing and implementing standards for web presence of the institutions, standards for persons with disabilities, reorganization and standardization of websites.
- To introduce more electronic services for citizens, without neglecting the needs of older people who often prefer direct contact with the desk officer.
- To invest in digital literacy for citizens in order to improve their ability to access new emerging electronic public services. Such educational support should be envisaged especially for vulnerable and marginalized groups.
- To improve the attitude and courtesy of officials towards citizens seeking services at all stages – obtaining information, collecting documents, delivering the service.
- An alternative way of providing a fast, efficient, cheap and easily accessible public service which needs to be considered by the decision-makers is sharing, delegating or transferring the delivery of public services to third parties. In addition to the traditional way of delivering public services by state authorities, innovations in the delivery of public services on the basis of partnership with the private sector and civil society are widely utilized in the world.

## Introduction

This analysis addresses the public services of administrative character that are provided by the executive government in the following forms: resolution of individual administrative cases by adopting administrative acts and undertaking administrative actions at the request of an individual or on other grounds, acting upon citizens' requests and enabling citizens to carry out their duties to the state (for example, paying taxes).

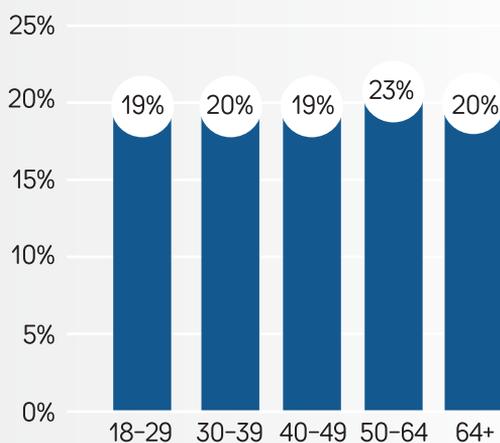
Public services are the most important and the most visible segment of public administration for citizens. Quality provision of public services is part of good governance and is one of the key stimuli for economic growth. Paying taxes, change of personal documents that have expired and applying for social protection are some of the most common interactions that citizens have with the administration. Improving the quality and accessibility of public services for all groups of citizens, including vulnerable groups, is crucial for building citizens' trust in the public administration and implementation of necessary structural reforms aligned with EU standards. As a joint initiative of the OECD and the European Union, SIGMA<sup>1</sup> points out that the institutions should provide easy access to information on public services for the citizens. Communications and the actions of the institutions should be available through electronic channels, while official websites and various printed materials from the institutions should contain accurate contact information, clear directions for the services, as well as information on the rights and obligations of citizens and institutions when delivering public services. In its public administration principles<sup>2</sup>, SIGMA recommends that public administration reform should play a fundamental role in the EU integration process, so that it will enable the implementation of key reforms and organize an effective accession dialogue. The ability of the institutions to provide public services and to foster the competitiveness and growth of a country depends on the existence of a functional public administration which is a requirement for transparent and effective democratic governance. The EU enlargement criteria recognize and emphasize the need for countries to build a public administration with capacity to follow the principles of good administration and effectively transpose and implement the EU (acquis communautaire). Considering the

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1 As a joint initiative of the OECD and the European Union, SIGMA (Support for Improving Governance and Management in Public Institutions) has a key objective to strengthen the foundations for improving public sector governance and thus support socioeconomic development through capacity building of the public sector, to improve horizontal management and to improve the design and implementation of public administration reforms, including appropriate prioritization, monitoring and budgeting.

2 <http://www.sigmaxweb.org/publications/principles-public-administration.htm>

membership candidacy in the European Union, the Republic of North Macedonia in the last decade is undertaking significant reforms to improve the public administration, and in particular public services. According to the SIGMA indicators from the Monitoring Report for the country from 2017<sup>3</sup>, the orientation of the public administration towards the citizens, the quality and availability of public services in the Republic of North Macedonia is about or above average values in the Western Balkans<sup>4</sup>. However, as part of the reforms related to EU accession, the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2018–2022 emphasises the improvement of the quality and availability of services for all citizens.



Age of telephone respondents

This analysis, developed within the project “Citizen-centric approach to delivery of public services”,<sup>5</sup> aims to identify the key challenges in delivering public services to citizens and to present recommendations for improving their quality, availability and satisfaction of citizens with delivery of public services. The analysis is mainly based on the survey of citizens’ satisfaction with public services, conducted within the framework of the project, in two phases:

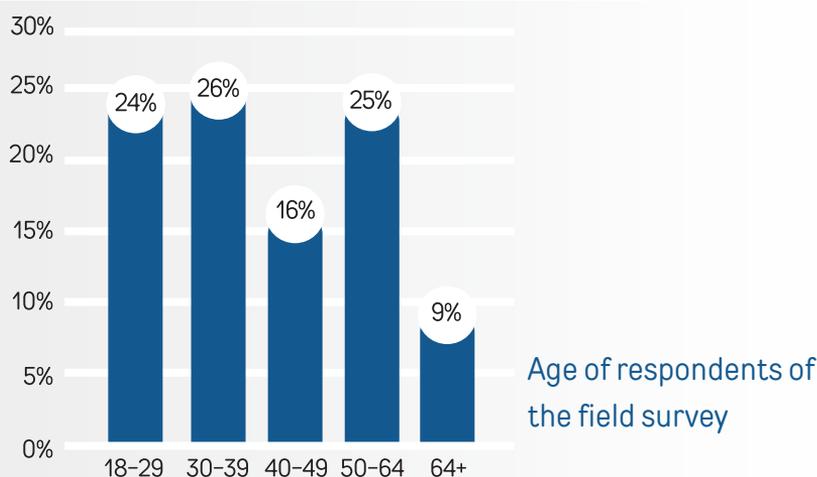
3 Monitoring Report: The Principles of Public Administration, SIGMA, 2017, <http://bit.do/eQf9i>

4 Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro.

5 The project “Citizen-centric approach to delivery of public services”, funded by the European Union and co-financed by the United Kingdom Government with the support of the British Embassy in Skopje, was implemented by the Center for Change Management and the Association for Development Initiatives – Zenith. The main goal of the project is to strengthen the civil society involvement in the implementation of the public administration reform as a priority reform process for accession to the European Union. Within this project, a survey on citizens’ satisfaction with the delivery of public services was conducted, a contribution to the National Catalogue of Public Services was made, analyzing the relevant legislation and entering data in the Catalogue, analyzing the relevant EU recommendations and best practices in the delivery of public services services and a network of civil society organizations to improve public services was created.

# How to get better public services for citizens

- 1. Telephone survey** conducted between 19 and 30 November 2018, on randomly selected representative sample of 1.300 adult respondents – out of which half were men and half were women. 65% of respondents were Macedonians, 25% Albanians, and 10% were members of other ethnic communities. In terms of educational structure 53% respondents have finished secondary, 19% high and 18% primary education. In terms of place of residence 61% of the respondents lived in a city, while 39% in a village. 60% of the respondents were users of public health services, 14% have used services of issuing personal documents, 9% – public services in the field of finances, 7% replied about their experiences related to property, while the remaining 5% have used other public services.



- 2. A field survey** of 250 anonymous respondents<sup>6</sup> was conducted from 25th of November to 10th of December 2018 in 11 cities.<sup>7</sup> One third of the respondents were interviewed near health institutions, social protection institutions and administrative buildings of the local self-governments. 51% of the respondents were men, while 49% were women. 60% of the respondents were Macedonians, 25% Albanians, while 14% were of another ethnicity. 52% of the respondents were with secondary, 19% with high and 17% with primary education. In terms of place of residence 90% lived in the city, while 10% lived in a village.

In addition to the data from the survey, we analysed secondary data<sup>8</sup> as well, including the

6 Following the code of research of ECOMAP.

7 Bitola, Gostivar, Kumanovo, Kichevo, Ohrid, Prilep, Strumica, Veles, Tetovo, Stip and Skopje

8 Public Administration Reform Strategy with Action Plan 2018–2022, MISA, 2018, [http://www.mio.gov.mk/sites/default/files/pbl\\_files/documents/strategies/srja\\_2018-2022\\_20022018\\_mk.pdf](http://www.mio.gov.mk/sites/default/files/pbl_files/documents/strategies/srja_2018-2022_20022018_mk.pdf); Draft-annual report on the implementation of the Action Plan of the Public Administration Reform

European Commission reports, the assessment of achievements in accordance with the SIGMA principles, the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2018–2022 and the reports on its implementation, as well as two regional researches relevant to this area.

The analysis of the findings is based on the SIGMA principles in the part of service delivery as one of the six areas of public administration reform that the European Commission focuses on and the SIGMA's key requirement: The public administration is citizen-oriented; the quality and accessibility of public services is ensured.

In terms of methodology limitations, the randomly selected telephone sample of public service users showed that public health services users prevail. In the field survey, however, the percentage of the interviewed respondents who lived in the city (90%) is significantly above the national average. The use of additional, secondary, data including comparisons with other regional surveys, as well as relevant reports, additionally ensures the comprehensiveness and objectivity of the findings and reduces the risk of certain demographic and other specificities of the sample significantly to affect the findings. An additional methodological limitation is that SIGMA's public administration reform policies formally refer to public services of the central government, while the conducted surveys include administrative public services of the local self-government also.

This document is designed to be understandable to a wider audience, not just to the expert public. The intention is to serve as assistance and support in decision-making and policy making in order to improve the delivery of public services.

The analysis is structured according to the SIGMA principles related to the provision of public services, and for each principle one SIGMA indicator is separated, which is then analyzed under a special title: citizen-oriented delivery of services, fair and efficient administrative procedures, mechanisms for ensuring quality of public services are in place, and the accessibility of public services. Findings of the survey related to citizens'

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Strategy 2018–2022, MISA, 2019, [http://mioa.gov.mk/sites/default/files/pbl\\_files/documents/rja/godishen\\_izveshtaj\\_srja2018\\_finalen\\_17052019.pdf](http://mioa.gov.mk/sites/default/files/pbl_files/documents/rja/godishen_izveshtaj_srja2018_finalen_17052019.pdf); First semi-annual report on the implementation of the Action Plan of the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2018–2022, MISA, 2018, <http://mioa.gov.mk/?q=mk/node/2086>; Balkan Barometer 2018 – Analytical report, RCC, 2018 <https://www.rcc.int/pubs/66/balkan-barometer-2018-public-opinion-survey>; Commission Staff Working Document: The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2018 Report, SWD(2018) 154 final, European Commission, 2018, <http://bit.do/eQf8M>; Commission Staff Working Document: North Macedonia 2019 Report, SWD(2019) 218 final, European Commission, 2019, <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20190529-north-macedonia-report.pdf>; Baseline Measurement Country Report: The Principles of Public Administration, SIGMA, 2015, <http://sigmaweb.org/publications/Baseline-Measurement-2015-fyRMacedonia.pdf>; Monitoring Report: The Principles of Public Administration, SIGMA, 2016, <http://bit.do/eQmLo>; Monitoring Report: The Principles of Public Administration, SIGMA, 2017, <http://bit.do/eQf9i>; Methodological Framework for The Principles of Public Administration, SIGMA, 2019, <http://sigmaweb.org/publications/Methodological-Framework-for-the-Principles-of-Public-Administration-May-2019.pdf>; Putting citizens first- exploring public perceptions of administrative services in the Western Balkans, WEBER, April 2018, [http://idmalbania.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/PUTTING-CITIZENS-FIRST\\_EXPLORING-PUBLIC-PERCEPTIONS-OF-ADMINISTRATIVE-SERVICES-IN-THE-WB.pdf](http://idmalbania.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/PUTTING-CITIZENS-FIRST_EXPLORING-PUBLIC-PERCEPTIONS-OF-ADMINISTRATIVE-SERVICES-IN-THE-WB.pdf).

perceptions about the biggest problems and reform priorities in the provision of services are presented in a separate section, followed by conclusions and recommendations for improvement of the provision of public services to citizens..

## Indicator “Citizen oriented delivery of services“

This SIGMA indicator for public administration is based on the principle that states that aim to become members of the European Union should establish policy by which public services will be designed according to the needs of the users and to avoid excessive administrative burden on citizens. Under this principle, states should establish a legal framework to provide e-services.

In the Country Report of 2018, the European Commission notes that “in the past few years, user-oriented administration has not been developed ... mainly due to the lack of coordinated efforts and political commitment to reforms by the government”. SIGMA monitoring report from 2017 noted that the new Public Administration Reform Strategy 2018–2022 has established a **new long-term vision or action plan to improve the delivery of services** in public administration, and a policy for providing digital services. In one of its four main pillars, the Strategy focuses on providing services and ICT support to the administration, with a general goal of providing services in a fast, simple and easily accessible way. This pillar includes activities for::

- *Increased quality and availability of public services* (improved availability, improvement of the quality system, standardization of data, simplification of services, introduction of “Single point of service” centers, informing the administration and the public about public services, measuring the satisfaction of the service users, etc.);
- *Digital environment that enables access to and possibility to use e-services* (among other things, by increasing the number of highly sophisticated e-services available in one place).

MISA is formally responsible for coordination and horizontal application of **digital governance**<sup>9</sup>. In 2018 the National Council for ICT and Cyber Security was founded,

<sup>9</sup> Monitoring Report: Principles of Public Administration; The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, November 2017, SIGMA, <http://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Monitoring-Report-2017-the-former->

and it should provide coordinated management of projects in the field of information and communication technologies (ICT), including the preparation and monitoring the implementation of the national ICT strategy, as well as by giving an opinion on the annual public procurement plans and the technical specifications of the tender documentation of the public sector institutions<sup>10</sup>. A relatively solid legal framework for digital governance has been established. The amendments to the legal framework for electronic operation and electronic services are in the final stage of adoption in the Assembly. This includes the proposals on the Law on Electronic Documents, Electronic Identification and Confidential Services, the Law on Electronic Management and Electronic Services and the Law on Data in Electronic Form and Electronic Signature. According to MISA, these laws complete the legal framework, which enables smooth electronic operation and obtaining full electronic service (electronic signatures, electronic valid documents, electronic documents ex officio, etc.).

SIGMA emphasizes that although MISA has paid attention to the **administrative simplification** in the harmonization of laws with the Law on General Administrative Procedure, yet, there is no special plan for administrative simplification<sup>11</sup>. According to the EU country report from 2019, the simplification of administrative procedures is extremely difficult since the Law on General Administrative Procedure is still not systematically implemented by the administration. In the annual report for the implementation of the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2018–2022, MISA recommends preparation of the Catalogue of Public Services as a first step that will enable simplification of services. It is expected that the Catalogue will help to identify and overcome possible problems or discrepancies between the legally prescribed conditions for different services and established practice in institutions, as well as to harmonize the practice of providing public services in different locations in the country.

SIGMA's methodology regarding this indicator also provides for the collection of data on the perceptions **of orientation towards citizens in the delivery of public services**, which among other things is measured by the number of contacts needed to obtain a particular service. The results of the telephone survey of the project "Citizen-centric approach to delivery of public services" show that more than half of the respondents had to contact the public institution at least twice only to get information about the service, but not the service itself.

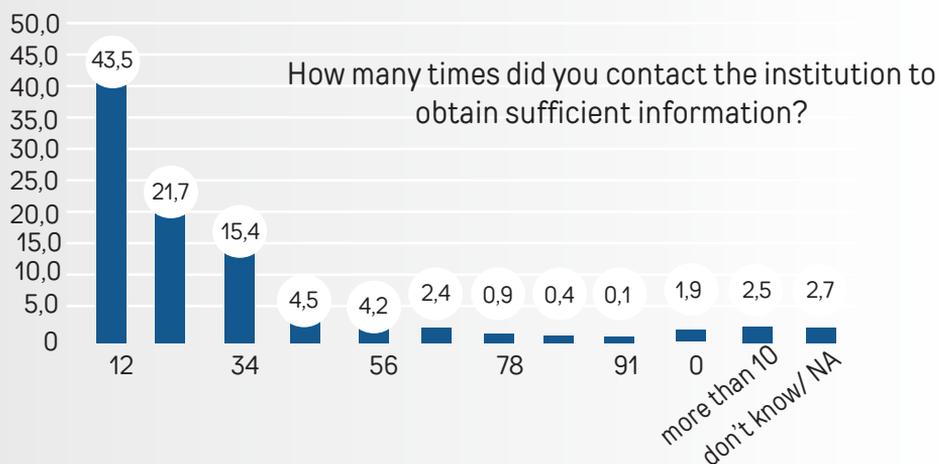
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Yugoslav-Republic-of-Macedonia.pdf

<sup>10</sup> Draft-annual report on the implementation of the Action Plan of the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2018–2022, MISA, 2019, [http://mioa.gov.mk/sites/default/files/pbl\\_files/documents/rja/godishen\\_izvestaj\\_srja2018\\_finalen\\_17052019.pdf](http://mioa.gov.mk/sites/default/files/pbl_files/documents/rja/godishen_izvestaj_srja2018_finalen_17052019.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Monitoring Report: Principles of Public Administration; The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, November 2017, SIGMA, <http://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Monitoring-Report-2017-the-former-Yugoslav-Republic-of-Macedonia.pdf>

## How to get better public services for citizens



Such findings should be analyzed in a context in which 91% of the respondents said they contacted the institutions personally, i.e. over the counter, and for 84% of the respondents the information and directions for obtaining the service have been sufficiently detailed, clear and accurate. Hence, the need to visit the institutions more than once in order to obtain information about a particular service can be sought in the insufficient availability of information to citizens via electronic channels, including information about the working hours of the relevant services and officers. Therefore, in the concrete recommendations given under this indicator, we point out that it is necessary to significantly improve citizens' awareness via various information channels, social networks, info points, TV, radio, printed material, etc. It is very important to identify specific target groups and to use the means of information they prefer. For example, it is likely that the younger ones would prefer Internet and social networks, while for some of the older citizens it would be more acceptable to receive information via telephone, TV, radio, info points, at counters and other similar channels.

In that direction, the first steps were taken to improve the work of the Center for telephone support for the citizens to receive services on the number 15 111, i.e. a working group has been formed to implement all necessary steps for its successful transformation according to the best interest of the citizens.<sup>12</sup>

Additionally, about 14% of respondents felt that the necessary information they received

<sup>12</sup> Draft-annual report on the implementation of the Action Plan of the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2018–2022, MISA, 2019, [http://mioa.gov.mk/sites/default/files/pbl\\_files/documents/rja/godishen\\_izveshtaj\\_srja2018\\_finalen\\_17052019.pdf](http://mioa.gov.mk/sites/default/files/pbl_files/documents/rja/godishen_izveshtaj_srja2018_finalen_17052019.pdf)

for obtaining a public service has not been sufficiently detailed, clear and accurate. Hence, it is necessary to: define the data that need to be published for each service; prepare them in a manner that is easy for the general public to understand; to identify persons in institutions–service providers who will take care of the comprehensiveness, accuracy, correctness and updating of these data, as well as to share them with the citizens. The completion of the Catalogue of Public Services prepared by the MISA can be of great help in this area. It contains detailed information about the services, including contact of the responsible services, information on possible payments for the services, and the necessary forms will be attached to it. After the verification of the data in the Catalogue of Public services by the institutions, the Catalogue will be published on the Internet and will serve, inter alia, for systematic information of citizens about the services.

## Indicator “Fair and effective administrative procedures“

This SIGMA indicator for public administration is based on the principle that there should be a coherent and harmonized legal framework for administrative procedures, which will be implemented by all institutions at central and local level. In the process of managing citizens’ complaints, institutions should respect the principles of legality, fairness, equal treatment, openness and transparency, impartiality and objectivity. Also, the institutions are obliged to state the reasons for their decisions and to inform the citizens about their right to appeal and/or to sue.

According to the SIGMA report of 2017, regarding the legal framework for administrative procedures, the country has achieved the maximum possible number of points according to the indicators in this area. The Law on General Administrative Procedure (LGAP)<sup>13</sup> adequately protects the rights of the parties in administrative procedure, simplifies procedures for citizens and businesses, and prescribes provision of documents ex officio. Although the LGAP takes into account the international standards and numerous recommendations of SIGMA, in relation to this principle, SIGMA lists the following weaknesses:

- MISA did not provide support to public institutions for the implementation of the new LGAP, with training or public awareness campaigns. Regarding this the European Commission’s Country Report of 2019 states that the Ministry

<sup>13</sup> Law on General Administrative Procedure, published in the “Official Gazette” no. 124/2015.

# How to get better public services for citizens

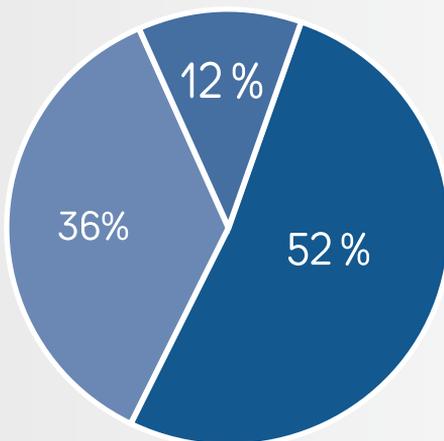
of Information Society and Administration has established a team to support central and local authorities in implementing the law, but it also emphasizes the need for considerable further training and raising public awareness to ensure legal certainty for citizens and businesses.

- The Government did not continue with extensive consultations with civil society organizations or citizens, i.e. for 169 substantive laws that were harmonized with the LGAP, civil society organizations were very poorly consulted.

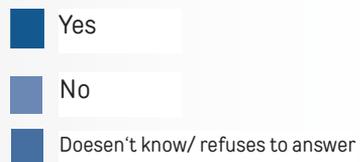
Despite the listed weaknesses, according to SIGMA, over 70% of citizens have the perception that administrative procedures are effective.

In terms of **equal treatment** of service users, half, or more precisely 52% of respondents in the telephone survey of the project “Citizen-centric approach to delivery of public services” consider that institutions do not treat the citizens equally. The situation is somewhat better with the services provided by health institutions, social protection institutions and local self-governments, where almost 24% think they are not treated equally.

## Do you consider that all citizens are equally treated by the institutions when obtaining public services?



Do you consider that when obtaining the service all the citizens are treated equally by the institutions?

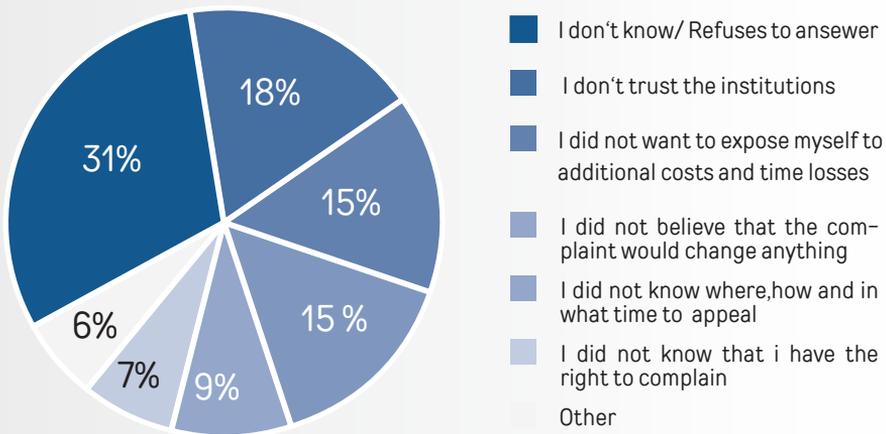


Almost half of the respondents considered that a system of collecting acclamations/ complaints from users at the institutions that provide services exists, but almost three quarters of them have not given an opinion, acclamation or complaint about the delivery of the service. The lack of communication through the established complaints/compliment systems may be partly due to the fact that a few respondents who tried to use these systems, even 45% did not receive a feedback from the institution, while about 36% received an answer from the institution.

This indicates the dysfunctional setting of these systems. Most often, citizens do not use them due to lack of trust in the institutions, and in the rare cases when they do utilize these mechanisms, they do not receive feedback.

Citizens do not trust higher instances. Indeed, almost all those who have had a problem obtaining the service did not address to a higher instance about the delivery of the service. Only about 7% of the respondents decided to address to a higher instance for the problem, and 51% of them said that no solution has been found.

Why didn't you turn to a higher instance?



As shown in the chart, the respondents in the field survey did not appeal to a higher instance about the service delivery generally due to the following reasons: mistrust in the institutions, lack of information, additional costs, etc.

Therefore, it is implied a conclusion that increasing confidence in the institutions and the effectiveness of their complaint systems in relation to public services is necessary. Hence, public service providers need to introduce or improve their systems for receiving complaints from users, and responding to the complaints should become a regular practice. One way to create pressure in this direction is MISA and public service providers to keep and publish statistics about complaints received related to different services, the reasons for their submission, the average time to act upon them, and the outcome of the procedure on regular basis. Such transparency will stimulate institutions to have a more systematic approach to the development of complaints systems, it will help them to identify critical points in the procedures that arise problems, and on the other hand will influence to improve public perception of them. In addition, public institutions should encourage

unsatisfied citizens with the course of a particular administrative procedure to use the remedies available to them, and to inform them in more detailed manner how they can do so.

In the research of the Center for Change Management from 2017 “Administrative and Legal Protection of Citizens and Public Administration Employees – Report on the Work of the Second Instance Commissions and Administrative Courts” it is emphasized that the number of meritorious decisions, i.e. decisions for which the State Commission deciding in administrative procedures and labor procedures in second instance annulled the decision of the first instance body, and solely decided completely on the main job, it is very small and almost negligible. That number is 85 decisions that for the first time appear in 2015. The number of filed lawsuits against Commission decisions from 2012 to 2015 increased from 352 to 527, while considering the total number of resolved cases in the same period the number of initiated administrative disputes decreased for 4.1% (352 lawsuits against acts of the Commission against 8.619 decisions cases in 2012) rises to 8.7% (527 lawsuits against Commission acts versus 6.064) of the total number of resolved cases in 2015. 2039 lawsuits have been filed against the State Commission decisions, which means that for the whole period only 12.65% of the citizens who were rejected decided to sue before the Administrative Court, which in turn indicates either a high degree of confidence in the decisions of the Commission or, difficult access to administrative–court protection.<sup>33</sup>

## Indicator “Mechanisms for ensuring quality of public services”

This SIGMA indicator for public administration is based on the principle with the same title that institutions should use instruments to ensure the quality of delivered services, including Catalogue of Public Services, interoperability of institutions and registries, as well as recognition of digital signatures and their issuance under affordable prices. The principle requires from the institutions to carry out regular monitoring of the provision of services based on the user’s satisfaction or needs. The total value of the indicator in the SIGMA report for 2017 is 40%.

Regarding mechanisms at the central government level for ensuring the quality of public services, the 2017 SIGMA Monitoring Report points out the implementation of two

international quality standards – ISO 900114 in 101 institutions, as well as the Common Assessment Framework (CAF)<sup>15</sup> in 37 institutions. The European Commission notes that satisfaction surveys are not used systematically to improve the quality of public services,<sup>16</sup> and the quality of services for natural persons remains lower than the services offered to businesses.<sup>17</sup> Out of 53 institutions from the central and local government that were subject of the research conducted by the Regional School of Public Administration, 24 institutions perform surveys for measuring the satisfaction of the service users, 14 institutions have introduced a one-stop-shop system in the delivery of services, 11 institutions apply systems for customer relationship management, employee satisfaction surveys are conducted by 10 institutions, 5 institutions use the “secret buyer” instrument, while 8 institutions have implemented a reengineering ring, i.e. re-defining the processes of service delivery.<sup>18</sup>

As part of a regional survey of 2018, less than one third of the citizens in the Western Balkans (31%) confirmed that the public administration requested feedback from them on how to improve administrative services over the past two years. This experience is shared by 44% of the respondents in Albania, followed by North Macedonia with 29% and only 13% of the respondents from Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>19</sup>

Hope for improvement of the situation in this field in North Macedonia provides the developed program for conducting trainings for implementation of instruments for measuring the satisfaction and quality management in the public sector institutions and the beginning of the strengthening the employees capacities in the public sector for the implementation of the instruments for measuring the satisfaction.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, the Government adopted the National Quality Management Plan in the public sector (2018–2020).<sup>21</sup> The plan focuses on establishing a sustainable quality management process. One of the envisaged activities includes revision of existing and development of new instruments for measuring the users’ satisfaction with the services, as well as development of guidelines for their application in the institutions.<sup>22</sup> Although this activity is planned to

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15 [https://www.eipa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/CAF\\_Manual\\_2013.pdf](https://www.eipa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/CAF_Manual_2013.pdf)

16 Commission Staff Working Document: The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2018 Report, SWD (2018) 154 final, European Commission, 2018.

17 Commission Staff Working Document: North Macedonia 2019 Report, SWD (2019) 218 final, European Commission, 2019.

18 Draft-annual report on the implementation of the Action Plan of the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2018–2022, MISA, 2019.

19 Citizens in the first place – perceptions of administrative services in the Western Balkans – WeBER, 2018, [http://epi.org.mk/docs/Exploring%20public%20perceptions%20of%20administrative%20services\\_WeBER%20Report.pdf](http://epi.org.mk/docs/Exploring%20public%20perceptions%20of%20administrative%20services_WeBER%20Report.pdf)

20 Draft-annual report on the implementation of the Action Plan of the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2018–2022, MISA, 2019.

21 [https://vlada.mk/sites/default/files/dokumenti/strategii/MIOA/nacionalen\\_plan\\_za\\_upravuvanje\\_so\\_kvalitet\\_2018-2020.pdf](https://vlada.mk/sites/default/files/dokumenti/strategii/MIOA/nacionalen_plan_za_upravuvanje_so_kvalitet_2018-2020.pdf)

22 Activity 6.2. of the Plan.

## How to get better public services for citizens

be implemented during 2019, in the meantime, the lack of universal instruments in which citizens can express their satisfaction with the public services in a simple and quick way and identify the ways in which the provision of those services can be improved remains. CSO Network is trying to bridge over this shortcoming to improve public services, with the support of the project “Citizen-centric approach to delivery of public services”.<sup>23</sup> The network has initiated the development of an internet-based IT solution (javniuslugi.mk) where, among other things, citizens can evaluate their satisfaction with the delivery of 29 frequently used public services, for four parameters – information about the service, employees’ attitude, delivery time and functionality of electronic service delivery systems.

As one of the standards for providing public services promoted by SIGMA, with the support from the European Union and the British Embassy in Skopje, in the advanced phase of filling out is the Catalogue of Public Services. The Catalogue of public services is country’s public service register, which will be available online, and which will contain all data for obtaining public services. Among other things, the Catalogue systematizes public services and life events of citizens (eg birth, education, employment, marriage, etc.). This allows mapping of services related to each life event, as well as services regarding to interrelated life events, and to examine ways of improving reorganization of provision of services in order to create an optimal path and the most satisfying experience for the user. The Catalogue, at the time of issuing this analysis, covers 1162 services regulated in 192 laws, but this number continues to increase with donor support..

**The state of play regarding interoperability**, according to the 2017 SIGMA report findings, is most favourable in 27 institutions that provide 80 public services, but only a third of these institutions have met the standards for active exchange of data. The EU 2019 report for the country states that application of the interoperability framework has increased, but political will and funding is needed to achieve its full potential. Hence, despite the obligation to exchange data according to the official duty according to the LGAP, in providing public services, many institutions still require from the citizens to deliver many documents and data from other institutions. The survey conducted by the project “Citizen-centric approach to delivery of public services” confirms this statement and shows that out of those who were unsatisfied with the delivery of the public service, 17% cited the overwhelming documentation that is necessary to collect in order to obtain a public service. Problems with insufficient linkage of institutions and provision of documents ex officio show also that 34% of respondents in the telephone survey for obtaining the public service needed documents from another public institution, different from the institution-provider. The state shown by the field survey that was focused on the services of health institutions, social protection institutions and local self-governments is, in contrast, diametrically opposed. Here, in 60% of the cases, for obtaining the service it has been necessary to submit documents issued by another public institution.

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<sup>23</sup> Financed by the European Union and the British Embassy in Skopje.

Among the major interoperability problems listed in the 2017 SIGMA report is unsatisfactory quality of data in the data registers, as well as incomplete implementation of data exchange standards. In response to these problems, the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2018–2022 envisages series of measures to improve interoperability and the use of an electronic signature, including digitizing service registries, and introducing an electronic identity for the use of e-services. In that direction, the legal framework for the establishment of the Central Register of Population has been prepared, and the basic prerequisites for connecting the Register of the Interoperability Platform have been established. In addition, possible systems for electronic identification and authentication in the administration and their advantages and disadvantages have been identified.<sup>24</sup>

## Indicator “Accessibility of public services”

This SIGMA indicator for public administration is based on the principle with the same title, according to which institutions should provide easy and simple access of citizens to services and information about services. The official websites and the printed materials of the institutions should provide accurate contact information, clear directions for obtaining the services, as well as information on the rights and obligations of citizens and institutions in the delivery of public services. It is necessary to reduce the time citizens spend, as well as the need for their physical presence in order to obtain the public service. Service providers should enable electronic communication with the citizens and they should offer their services in the same manner. Services, including e-services, should also be tailored to the needs of specific groups of citizens – for example, people with disabilities or the elderly. Institutions should provide access to services throughout the country, as well as places for one-stop service provision. The total value of the indicator published by SIGMA in 2017 is 60%.

Regarding the improvement of availability, the survey conducted by the project “Citizen-centric approach to delivery of public services” project shows that the vast majority (86%) of citizens is dominantly using and prefers personal contact with the institutions, i.e. the counter. In second place, with only 9%, is the phone contact, and then the contact through the Internet.

<sup>24</sup> Draft-annual report on the implementation of the Action Plan of the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2018–2022, MISA, 2019, [http://mioa.gov.mk/sites/default/files/pbl\\_files/documents/rja/godishen\\_izvesthaj\\_srja2018\\_finalen\\_17052019.pdf](http://mioa.gov.mk/sites/default/files/pbl_files/documents/rja/godishen_izvesthaj_srja2018_finalen_17052019.pdf)

# How to get better public services for citizens



In such context, the decision to invest in creating **single point of services** where citizens could get services from several institutions seems legitimate. In February 2019 the practical part of the project promotion that will significantly reduce the waiting time for citizens when receiving services and will contribute to the creation of a public administration at citizens' service has started. At these service points, citizens will be able to obtain services and information from the following institutions: the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Transport and Communications – the Department for Road Transport and Infrastructure, the Public Revenue Office, the Agency for Real Estate Cadastre, the Employment Agency, The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy – Centers for Social Work, the Central Register, the Health Insurance Fund, the Office for Management of Registers of Births, Marriages and Deaths, the Pension and Disability Insurance Fund and the Ministry of economy. In cooperation with competent institutions and with the support of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the first “Public Services Hall” in Skopje is opened, in

which, in the initial 59 services are available. In 2018, the Government obliged involved institutions to appoint responsible person for the organization of their counter at the Public Service Hall, through which the coordination with the MISA will be realized.

**The availability of electronic services and their use is low.** Only 18% of respondents in the telephone survey of the project “Citizen-centric approach to the delivery of public services” used some public services electronically, compared to 72% who did not use it. In the field survey, over 59% of the respondents had no opinion on electronic services, probably because they had no opportunity to use them. If a regional comparison is made, the rates of utilization of e-services are the highest in Serbia (35%) and Kosovo (31%), while in North Macedonia they are 23%.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, the most familiar with the provision of e-services by their administrations were the respondents from North Macedonia (53%), compared with only 19% in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the regional average of 41%.

The SIGMA Monitoring report from 2017 for the country, shows that there is significant difference between the scope of e-services for businesses (online services for company registration, construction permits, customs declarations, value added tax, corporate income tax and annual filing, closing a business) and those for the citizens (obtaining personal documents and certificates, filing an e-tax return, checking paid taxes for a natural person, etc.). In the Country Report for 2018,<sup>26</sup> the European Union notes that services for business entities are to a greater extent digitized than services for citizens. However, as a positive development, we can mention the upgrading of the National Service Portal to serve as a sole point of contact with the state administration. The software part of the National e-services portal has been prepared, but the procurement of equipment for the portal and the Population Register has been postponed, as well as the analysis of the e-services that will be found on the National Portal for e-services.<sup>27</sup>

The findings from the telephone survey of the project “Citizen-centric approach to delivery of public services” show that the most frequently requested services by electronic or online media are the issuance of various documents, followed by health services with around 10%, while 5% of the respondents have requested an electronic service related to financial reports and transactions.a

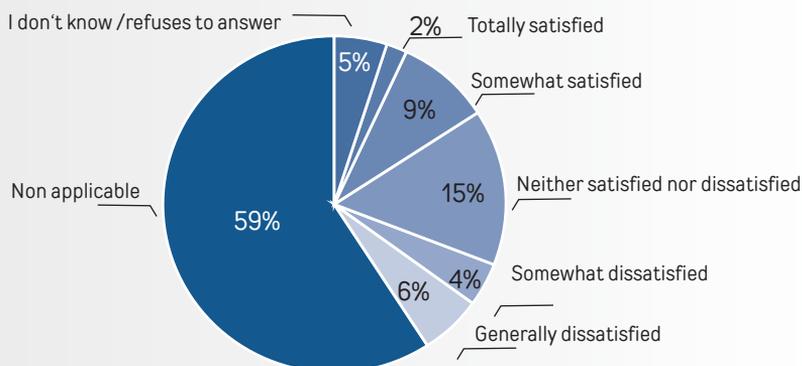
Regarding the percentage of satisfied and dissatisfied citizens from the electronic services, over 87% of the respondents from the telephone survey using electronic services are completely or partially satisfied with them.

25 Citizens in the first place – perceptions of administrative services in the Western Balkans– WeBER“,2018 r. The data are obtained from a regional survey on general perceptions of administrative services in the Western Balkans involving over 6,000 citizens from Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Serbia, North Macedonia, Kosovo and Montenegro.

26 Ibid

27 Draft-annual report on the implementation of the Action Plan of the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2018–2022, MISA, 2019.

Overall, how satisfied are you with the electronic delivery of the public service?



Such findings are confirmed by the regional public opinion survey **Balkan Barometer 2018**,<sup>28</sup> conducted by the Regional Cooperation Council, whereby satisfaction with the availability of public services in digital form is the highest in the Republic of North Macedonia.

However, there is a serious weakness in reference to the compliance with international standards such as WCAG 2.0 AA, the publication of documents in unreadable formats for persons with disabilities – which cannot be searched later, insufficient availability of open data, etc. The Braille writing system is not at all used by public service providers. According to the information from the first semi-annual report on the implementation of the Public Administration Reform Strategy, certain steps have been undertaken in order to ensure working environment for persons with disabilities, and in that direction the European standards for accessibility of the content of the websites<sup>29</sup> and guidelines for accessibility to web content have been adopted. However, the e-services availability on the Internet with the application of the e-Services Web Accessibility Standards is low.

The Public Administration Reform Strategy 2018–2022 includes extensive activities to improve the **physical availability of services**, in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities.<sup>30</sup> The strategy is based on the commitment that all public services should be equally accessible and unhampered for citizens with disabilities. In this segment initiatives for promotion of the availability and use of new technologies – including information and communication technologies, mobile devices, devices and supporting technologies suitable for people with disabilities; providing access to

28\_ <https://www.rcc.int/pubs/66/balkan-barometer-2018-public-opinion-survey>

29 WCAG AA, <https://www.wuhcag.com/wcag-checklist/>

30 <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/Konvencija%20za%20pravata%20na%20licata%20so%20invalidnost.pdf>

information for persons with disabilities related to mobile devices, devices and supporting technologies, as well as other forms of assistance, supported services and facilities. The legal framework regulating the rights of the citizens with disabilities is formally set up, but its practical implementation, including the physical access to facilities provided by the Law for Construction,<sup>31</sup> is inadequate for persons with disabilities. Out of a total of 144 state bodies, only 40 have prepared action plans for accessibility that are monitored at central level.<sup>32</sup> In response to that, a gradual expansion of the application of the standards for physical accessibility of the institutions (access platform, lift or mobile platform, lanes for smooth movement of persons with impaired vision) is beginning.<sup>33</sup>

According to SIGMA, the availability of services is also measured according to the general satisfaction of the service users. Regarding the **general satisfaction with the public service**, the findings from the survey of the project “Citizen-centric approach to delivery of public services” show that the satisfaction of the received public service prevails in almost three quarters of the respondents (50% are completely satisfied with the delivery of the public service they received, and 24% are partially satisfied), which is in line with regional researches. An interesting fact is that women gave more positive grades than men. The most satisfied are the users aged 30–39, while the users who are aged 50–64 years are the most dissatisfied.

Over 80% of the respondents are fully or somewhat satisfied with the politeness of the authorized personnel for providing the specific public service, with women giving more positive marks than men. Out of those who were not satisfied with the delivery of the public service, almost two thirds responded that they waited too long for the service, 20% complained about the impoliteness of the officers, and 17% complained about the overwhelming documentation they needed to collect in order to complete the public service.

According to the regional public opinion survey **Balkan Barometer 2018**,<sup>34</sup> the highest satisfaction in the country in relation to the rest of the region, is for administrative services at the central level of government (for example, issuing a passport or identity card), while for health services, in terms of other services that were the subject of research, the lowest satisfaction was expressed.

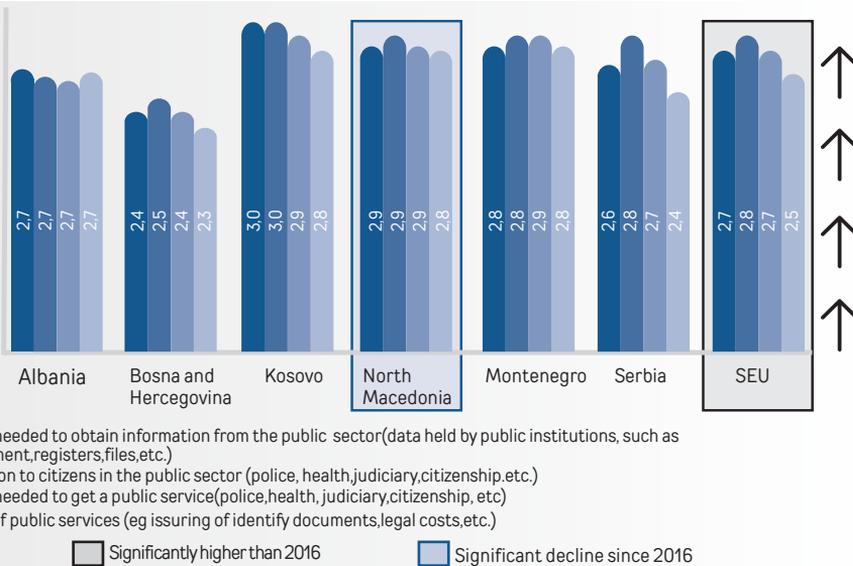
31 Law on Construction, published in the “Official Gazette” no. 130/2009, 124/2010, 18/2011, 36/2011, 54/2011, 13/2012, 144/2012, 25/2013, 79/2013, 137/2013, 163/2013, 27/2014, 28/2014, 42/2014, 115/2014, 149/2014, 187/2014 и 44/2015

32 The Public Administration Reform Strategy 2018–2022, MISA, 2018, <http://mioa.gov.mk/?q=mk/node/2086>

33 Draft-annual report on the implementation of the Action Plan of the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2018–2022, MISA, 2019.

34 <https://www.rcc.int/pubs/66/balkan-barometer-2018-public-opinion-survey>

# How to get better public services for citizens



On this issue, in comparison to the other countries from the region, the Republic of North Macedonia lags only behind Kosovo, but the given ratings for citizens' satisfaction are still very low – for all four aspects it is below 3, on a scale in which citizens could express the highest satisfaction with a score of 5.

Regarding the reasons for the dissatisfaction with the delivery of public service, the survey conducted by the project “Citizen-centric approach to delivery of public services” shows that more than 63% of the respondents answered they have waited too long to receive the service, 20% of them complained of the officials' impoliteness, while 17% complained about the overwhelming documentation they needed to collect in order to complete the public service.

In general, a very large percentage of respondents (over 75%) are fully or partially satisfied with **the time period during which the service has been delivered**. 20% of the respondents are dissatisfied. The survey conducted by the project “Citizen-centric approach to delivery of public services” shows that almost two-thirds of those who were not satisfied with the delivery of the public service, responded that they have waited too long for the service.

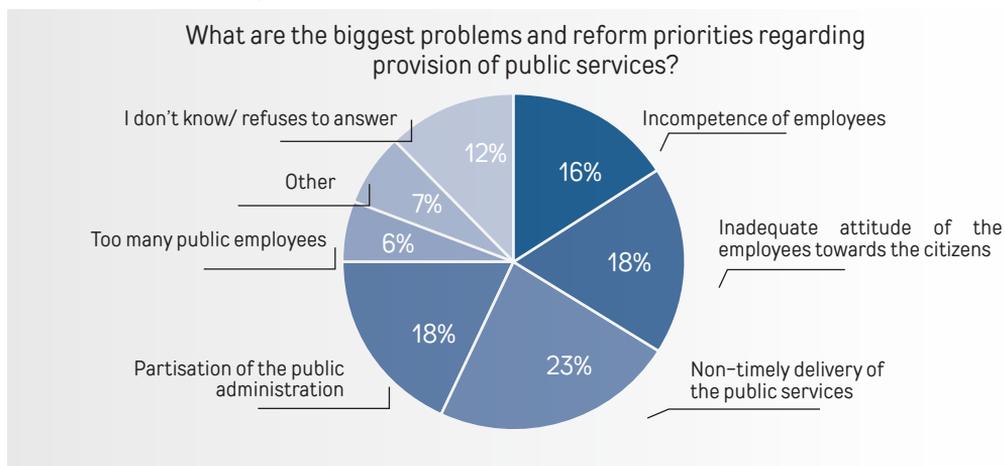
About **the price-quality ratio for the service received**, more than 60% of the respondents in the telephone survey are satisfied – 35% are completely satisfied, and 28% are somewhat satisfied. Only 18% of respondents are dissatisfied with this ratio. In the field survey, which is focused on public services provided by health institutions, social protection institutions and the units of local self-governments, 43% of respondents are satisfied with the service in terms of price, while 17% are not satisfied. When asked “Are you ready to pay more money for a service in order to get it faster and better – for example, if the service is delivered by a private company?” over three quarters of the respondents answered negatively. It can be noticed that citizens are sensitive to the price of services, hence it is important that the

introduction of electronic services and the provision of documents from other institutions ex officio by public service providers does not result in a significant increase in the price of services. Hence, to determine the amount of fees for e-services, with donor support from the European Union,<sup>35</sup> guidelines for a draft legal act on the prices of e-services are defined.<sup>36</sup>

If the situation is compared on regional level, the Republic of North Macedonia is in second place – after Kosovo – in terms of citizens' satisfaction with the time needed to obtain information from the public institution and the public institutions employees' attitude towards citizens. Regarding the satisfaction with the time needed to obtain a public service from the public institution and the public service price, it is at the same level with the satisfaction in Kosovo and Montenegro, while Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania have poorer results.<sup>37</sup>

## Biggest problems and reform priorities in the provision of services

As the chart shows, respondents in the field survey conducted by the project “Citizen-centric approach to delivery of public services” see the biggest problems in the delivery of public services in the untimely delivery, partitioning of the public administration, inadequate attitude of the employees towards citizens and the incompetence of the officers.



35 Within the project “Support to the Public Administration Reform and Capacity Building of the Ministry of Information Society and Administration”.

36 Draft-annual report on the implementation of the Action Plan of the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2018–2022, MISA, 2019, [http://mioa.gov.mk/sites/default/files/pbl\\_files/documents/rja/godishen\\_izvestaj\\_srja2018\\_finalen\\_17052019.pdf](http://mioa.gov.mk/sites/default/files/pbl_files/documents/rja/godishen_izvestaj_srja2018_finalen_17052019.pdf)

37 Balkan Barometer 2018, RCC, <https://www.rcc.int/pubs/66/balkan-barometer-2018-public-opinion-survey>

The respondents pointed out four priorities in the reform of the delivery of public services, which are of key importance to them:

- the time needed for service delivery to be reduced (31%)
- the politeness of the officials to improve (17%)
- to introduce electronic services (16%)
- availability of service information (15%).

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO DECISION MAKERS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICES

Recommendations for improvement of the situation are based on conducted surveys, the SIGMA reports, the European Union and the progress report on the implementation of the Public Administration Reform Strategy.

### 1. Citizen oriented delivery of services

It is surprising that more than half of the respondents (55%) in the survey of the project “Citizen–centric approach to delivery of public services” had to contact the public institution at least twice only to obtain information about the service. Hence, one of the main recommendations in this area is that citizens should be informed in a timely, accurate and comprehensible manner about the availability of public services. MISA and competent public institutions need to finalize the entry of data for all public services in the Catalogue of Public Services, and after they are verified, the Catalogue should be made available for the citizens online. Since during the time procedures and data related to various public services can be changed, MISA and the competent public institutions need to identify persons in the institutions–service providers who will take care of the comprehensiveness, accuracy, correctness and updating of the data published in the Catalogue of public services, as well as its comprehension for the general public. The Catalogue will serve the public institutions to identify and overcome possible problems and discrepancies between the legally prescribed requirements for provision of public services and the practice established in the institutions, as well as to harmonize the practice of providing public services in different areas in the country. As part of the administrative simplification process, MISA and public service providers need to invest in continuous modernization of public service delivery in order to reduce the time and costs for citizens and the administration.

In addition to the Catalogue, informing citizens about public services should also be carried out via other channels and with different instruments, for example, other websites, social networks, TV channels, radio channels, posters, information points and telephone.

## 2. Fair and efficient administrative procedures

The survey conducted by the project “Citizen-centric approach to delivery of public services” indicates that between 21% and 33% of the respondents may have witnessed corruption in the provision of public services. Closely related to this or more precisely 52% of the respondents think that institutions do not treat the citizens equally, i.e. they discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, party affiliations or another basis. Such findings indicate that more work is necessary on **suppression of the discrimination and corruption phenomena** in the provision of public services. Hence, we recommended measures for reducing the participation of the subjective factor in the delivery of public services, wherever possible and feasible, i.e. greater automation of the process for providing services. Additionally, MISA, in cooperation with the Ombudsman and the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, can run a campaign to encourage reporting cases of corruption and discrimination in the provision of public services.

In this context, attention should be paid to the specifics of the target groups and their habits in obtaining public services, because the principles of the Law on General Administrative Procedure guarantee equal access to public services and, according to them, all elimination or discriminatory elements in the realization of civil rights should be excluded. For this reason, attention should be paid to introduction of electronic public services and take into account the characteristics and needs of different categories of citizens, among which there are those who prefer personal contact with the institutions. It would be good for users to always be able to choose the manner in which they will receive the public service, for example, on the counter or online.

Almost one third of respondents consider that service providers do not have a system of collecting acclamations and complaints from the users. Of those who believed that such system exists, almost three-quarters do not use it, and those who do often do not receive feedback. This finding resulted in a recommendation for improvement of such systems, by the competent institutions, as well as mandatory feedback – as one of the first steps in restoring confidence in the institutions. MISA, public service providers and the Ombudsman should conduct a communication campaign to better inform citizens about the right to an appeal and lawsuit, including the procedure, the relevant services and institutions, the available legal assistance they can request, the deadlines for using the right and for carrying out the procedure. MISA and public service providers should keep and publish statistics on received complaints and appeals for different services, reasons for their submission, average time of their handling, and the outcome of the procedure.

### 3. Mechanisms for ensuring the quality of public services

The quality of the public service is the essence of the SIGMA principles, and one of the indicators through which the interconnection of the institutions for providing documents ex officio is assessed. In this segment, it is necessary to emphasize the need for functional interoperability and cooperation of institutions for providing documents and data ex officio. The collection of documents from other institutions, except from the one where the service is requested, often causes delays in delivery, decreasing the quality of the service and additional costs for the citizens. The interconnection of institutions and provision of documents ex officio is a field in which institutions need to work on their improvement, since it is one of the conditions for simplifying procedures and speeding up the provision of the services. In this regard, Chapter five of the Law on General Administrative Procedure, which regulates administrative cooperation, can be pointed out, and the practice shows that it is not applied sufficiently and the need to promote the interoperability of registers from different institutions remains.

When it comes to the quality of the public service, there are no universal instruments that enable citizens to express their satisfaction with the public services they used in a simple and quick manner, and to identify ways in which the provision of those services can be improved. It is necessary for service providers to conduct regular systematic monitoring of customer service satisfaction through instruments that citizens can use in a fast, simple and reliable way.

The Catalogue of Public Services, which is in process of preparation, systematizes public services in citizens' lifetime (eg. birth, education, employment, marriage, etc.). This allows mapping of services related to each life event, as well as services regarding to interrelated life events, and examining ways of improving reorganization of provision of services in order to create an optimal path and the most satisfying experience for the user.

### 4. Availability of public services

Although the satisfaction of the received public service prevails, a high 24% of the respondents in the survey of the project "Citizen-centric approach to delivery of public services" are completely or partially dissatisfied. About 20% expressed dissatisfaction with the time needed for delivery of the public service, while 18% expressed dissatisfaction with the price of the services for which they additionally paid.

**Availability of electronic services** and their use is low. Only 18% of respondents in the poll of the project "Citizen-centric approach to delivery of public services" used some public service electronically, and those who use them express great satisfaction from them. The small percentage of electronic services utilization can be due to the citizens' technical capabilities (having Internet access, computer), then digital literacy (the knowledge to find the necessary websites, navigate through them, to recognize the actual information),

but probably the key obstacle to the use of public e-services is precisely their existence on a very limited scale. Hence, it is necessary to introduce more electronic services for citizens, without neglecting the needs of the elderly who often prefer direct contact with an officer on the counter. Along with this, it should be invested in digital literacy of citizens in order to improve their ability to access new emerging electronic public services. Such educational support should especially focus on vulnerable and marginalized groups. Digital literacy should facilitate the acceptance of information on the Internet, navigating through websites etc. In that direction, besides these targeted improvement measures, one general recommendation is that finding information about e-services and digital literacy should be included in the educational process itself. One of the more advanced methods for internet education that is increasingly being used is educational animated videos that can be used as a format for providing instructions for using e-services.

**Public institutions should implement** the standards for accessibility of web content (WCGA)<sup>38</sup>, to reorganize and standardize websites, but also to apply standards for physical accessibility to institutions that would ensure the right of citizens to equal access to public services, determined by the LGAP. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>39</sup> was signed in 2007 and ratified by the country in December 2011. However, the Strategy for Public Administration Reform 2018–2022 states that out of 144 state bodies, only 40 have prepared action plans for availability that are monitored at central level.

Regarding the **attitude of those delivering the service**, results of the conducted survey show that it is necessary to improve the attitude of the employees towards the citizens who are looking for services, at all stages, from obtaining information to the document collection phase and delivery of the service

31% of respondents in the survey of the project “Citizen-centric approach to delivery of public services” stated that **the time needed for delivery of the service should be reduced**. To this end, it is necessary to improve technical and spatial conditions for faster and more efficient delivery in terms of more modern information and communication technology and associated infrastructure that will enable continuous operation of the systems without interruption caused by interference in the power supply, problems with telecommunication systems and software. Spatial conditions can affect the duration of delivery in terms of accessibility of public institutions facilities, parking facilities, proximity to public transport, spatial organization of the counter system, physical accessibility for persons with disabilities. If all of this is organized in an easy-to-use manner, the time needed for delivery of public services would be significantly reduced.

An alternative way to provide fast, efficient, cheap and easily accessible public service is

<sup>38</sup> <http://wcag.mioa.gov.mk/>; [http://ec.europa.eu/ipg/standards/accessibility/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/ipg/standards/accessibility/index_en.htm)

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/Konvencija%20za%20pravata%20na%20licata%20so%20invalidnost.pdf>

to share, delegate or transfer the delivery of public services to third parties. In addition to the traditional way of delivering public services by the state authorities, innovations in the delivery of public services on the basis of partnership with the private and civil sector are introduced in the world. This reduces the workload of public officials, involves the private sector and civil society in the provision of services – and consequently it is financed for certain public money services. Under certain conditions, such models can lead to provision of services in a better and more efficient way. Hereinafter, we suggest three models that are most commonly used in the European Union countries, and which decisionmakers in the country should think about:

- Shared public services between the private and public sectors;
- Public-private partnership in the delivery of public services;
- Outsourcing of public services to third parties.

## REFERENCES

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## Annex 1. Evaluation questions in the survey

Topic	Questions in the telephone survey	Questions in the field survey
1. AREA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Which area was the public service from?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Which public service did you come to this institution for?</li></ul>
2. GENERAL SATISFACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ How satisfied are you generally with the delivery of the public service you received?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Are you satisfied the public service delivery you received/are in the process of obtaining?</li></ul>
3. QUALITY OF THE SERVICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Were the information and guidance on the procedure for obtaining the service, documents you needed to provide and other necessary information sufficiently detailed, clear and correct?</li><li>○ Was it necessary to obtain/submit documents issued by another public institution other than the institution-provider in order to receive the service?</li><li>○ How satisfied are you with the quality of the service delivery process (clarification: officials were competent, there were no mistakes in the documents, etc.)?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>E Were the information and guidance on the procedure for obtaining the service, documents you need to provide and other necessary information sufficiently detailed, clear and accurate (received electronically, on the counter or on a web page ...)?</li><li>E Was it necessary to obtain/submit documents issued by another public institution other than the institution-provider in order to receive the service?</li><li>E Are you satisfied with the quality of the service delivery process (clarification: the officials were competent, there were no mistakes in the documents, etc.)?</li></ul>

Topic

Questions in the telephone survey

Questions in the field survey

- In what way you contacted the public institution to obtain a public service?
- Which way to contact institutions you prefer?
- Do you use e-banking or online payments on a regular basis?
- Have you received any public service electronically?
- In general, how satisfied are you with the electronic delivery of the public service?
- How satisfied are you with the time period for the service to be delivered?

**4. MANNER OF DELIVERY AND DURATION**

- How did you get the first details/directions for obtaining the public service?
- How many times have you contacted the institution to get sufficient information (clarification: how many times have you been on the counter, how many times did you call, visited the web site, etc.)?
- Which way of contact with institutions do you prefer?
- In general, how satisfied are you with the electronic delivery of the public service?
- Which service would be most useful for you to receive it electronically?
- Are you satisfied with the time needed for the service to be delivered?

- How satisfied are you with the attitude and/or politeness of the authorized persons you had contact with in the delivery of the service?
- Do you consider that when receiving certain public service, all citizens are equally treated by the institutions?

**5. ATTITUDE OF EMPLOYEES DELIVERING THE SERVICE**

- Are you satisfied with the attitude and/or politeness of the authorized persons whom you had contact with in the delivery of the service?
- Do you consider that when receiving certain public service, all citizens are equally treated by the institutions?

Questions in the telephone  
survey

Questions in the field survey

Topic

- If you had to pay a certain amount of money in order to get the service, how satisfied are you with the service received related to the price you paid for it?
- Are you ready to pay more for a service to get it faster and with better quality? For example, if the service will be delivered by a private company?

6. THE PRICE

- If you had to pay a certain amount of money in order to get the service, how satisfied are you with the service received related to the price you paid for it?
- Are you ready to pay more for a service to get it faster and with better quality? For example, if the service will be delivered by a private company?
- What kind of public service is it?

- Does the service provider institution have a system for collecting acclamations and complaints from users?
- Have you given your opinion on the delivery of the service (acclamation or complaint)?
- Have you received feedback from the institution?
- If you had a problem obtaining the service, did you formally turn to a higher instance (second instance complaint committee, Administrative court, etc.) about the service delivery?
- Has the problem been solved after the appeal at higher instance?
- Why didn't you address a higher instance?

- Does the service provider have a system for collecting acclamations and complaints from users?
- Have you given your opinion on the delivery of the service (acclamation or complaint)?
- Have you received feedback from the institution?
- If you had a problem obtaining the service, did you turn to a higher instance (second instance complaint committee, Administrative court, etc.) about the service delivery?
- Has the problem been solved you filed the appeal in a higher instance, and in whose favour was the solution?
- Why did not you turn to a higher instance?

7. COMPLAINT SYSTEM  
AND FEEDBACK

Topic	Questions in the telephone survey	Questions in the field survey
<b>8. CORRUPTION IN PUBLIC SERVICES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Have you ever offered a gift for obtaining a public service?</li><li>○ Do you know someone who offered a gift for obtaining a public service?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Have you ever offered a gift for obtaining a public service?</li><li>○ Do you know someone who offered a gift for obtaining a public service?</li></ul>
<b>9. RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE USERS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ What, in your opinion, are the biggest problems in the public service delivery reform?</li><li>○ What, in your opinion, is the next highest priority in the public service delivery reform?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ What, in your opinion, are the biggest problems in the delivery of public services generally?</li><li>○ What, in your opinion, is the next highest priority in the public service delivery reform?</li><li>○ Other</li></ul>



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