Evaluation of the Public Administration Reform Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2022 in North Macedonia
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**Acronyms**

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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>Action Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEU</td>
<td>Delegation of the European Union to North Macedonia</td>
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<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
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<td>ECFIN</td>
<td>Economy &amp; Finance</td>
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<td>EM</td>
<td>Evaluation Matrix</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>EQ</td>
<td>Evaluation Question</td>
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<td>GMK</td>
<td>Government of the Republic of North Macedonia</td>
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<td>GSG</td>
<td>General Secretariat of the Government</td>
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<td>IFC</td>
<td>Internal Financial Control</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International monetary fund</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information-communication technologies</td>
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<td>IPA</td>
<td>Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance</td>
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<td>LGAP</td>
<td>Law on General Administrative Procedure</td>
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<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<td>MoF</td>
<td>Ministry of Finance</td>
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<td>MISA</td>
<td>Ministry of Information Society and Administration</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organization</td>
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<td>NIPAC</td>
<td>National IPA coordinator</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>DAC</td>
<td>OECD Development Assistance Committee</td>
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<td>PAR</td>
<td>Public Administration Reform</td>
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<td>PAR Council</td>
<td>Council for Public Administration Reform</td>
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<td>PAR Secretariat</td>
<td>Secretariat for Public Administration Reform</td>
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<td>PFM</td>
<td>Public Finance management</td>
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<td>PIU</td>
<td>Project Implementation Unit</td>
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<td>RIA</td>
<td>Regulation Impact Assessment</td>
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<td>ReSPA</td>
<td>Regional School of Public Administration</td>
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<td>SIGMA</td>
<td>Support for Improvement in Governance and Management</td>
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<td>SPAR</td>
<td>Strategy of Public Administration Reform of North Macedonia 2018-2022</td>
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<td>TOR</td>
<td>Terms of Reference</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations development program</td>
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<td>QA</td>
<td>Quality Assurance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>WB</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
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<td>WG</td>
<td>Working group for implementation of the measures from the Action Plan of the PAR Strategy</td>
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<td>ZELS</td>
<td>Community of local self-government units</td>
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1. Executive Summary

1.1. BACKGROUND

Public Administration Reform Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2022 represents the foundation for the reform and encompasses the entire public administration system which, in North Macedonia, includes public institutions at the central level. The vision of the reform activities by 2022 as stipulated in the Strategy is a depoliticized, efficient, effective and accountable public administration that provides quality and easily accessible services to the citizens and the business community throughout the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia. The work of the public administration is based on European principles and values and contributes to sustainable economic growth and welfare. The Strategy was intended to general and specific objectives, as well as the measures set out in each of the priority areas defined in the PAR Strategy 2018-2022 will contribute to substantial improvements and improvements in terms of the legal framework, organizational set-up and capacity of institutions, as and the capacity of human resources in public administration.

The strategy has four priority areas
- Policy making and coordination;
- Public service and human resource management;
- Accountability, accountability and transparency; and
- Public services and ICT administration support.

that were tackled through interventions to achieve relevant objectives. The Public Finance Management reform objectives were separately defined in the Public Financial Management Reform Program 2018-2020.

The Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA) is tasked with the implementation of the Strategy in close coordination with institutions of public administration at the national level.

1.2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The global objective of the evaluation was to assess the performance of the Public Administration Reform (PAR) Strategy of North Macedonia and its Action Plan 2018-2022 and to provide findings and recommendations that assist the Government of North Macedonia in the design and implementation of the upcoming PAR strategy for the period of 2022-2030 and new four-year Action plan. The specific objectives of the evaluation were to assess the performance of the Strategy particularly its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability and to draw out lessons learned and recommendations.

1.3. KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS

1 https://finance.gov.mk/%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B3%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BC%D0%B0-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%84%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BC%D0%B0-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D1%83%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B2%D1%83%D0%B2%D0%B0%D1%9A%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%BE-%D1%81-2/
**RELEVANCE**

1. The objectives of the PAR Strategy and activities presented in AP 2018-2022 are aligned with the overall national and EU accession priorities of North Macedonia, in particular towards ensuring governments' ability to provide public services and foster competitiveness and growth and meet prerequisites toward eventual EU accession.

2. The design of the PAR Strategy provided a mostly feasible set of actions and results, especially within their further elaboration in the AP. However, Priority area 2: Public Service and Human Resource Management and Priority area 3: Responsibility, Accountability and Transparency, had some unrealistic aspirations and indicators mostly in relation to change the existing legal framework.

3. The PAR Strategy is a result of an inclusive and consultative process, which assists relevance and ownership over strategy.

4. In the current AP, there are unrealized activities that are still very relevant to continue, but also there are unrealized activities that are of moderate or no relevance at all for the upcoming PAR Strategy and AP.

**EFFECTIVENESS**

5. The special role of LSG was lacking in the PAR Strategy and AP.

6. "E-services", improved IT systems, and interoperability contribute the most to the effectiveness of public administration reform.

7. A set of measures were aimed at amending key legal acts and regulations, but since those laws were not amended due to external objective factors (pandemic, political reconstruction) the measures were "stalled" and were not fully implemented as planned.

**EFFICIENCY**

8. The government's commitment to reform translated into clear leadership over the reform process through the establishment of organizational structure with the PAR Council, Secretariat for PAR, Ministry responsible for PAR (MISA), and Working group for implementation of the measures from the PAR Action
Plan and appointed Contact persons for PAR in the institutions which participate in the implementation of the PAR Strategy and AP 2018-2022.

9. In the activities carried out, the PAR Strategy and its AP generated timely results through the most efficient use of financial and human resources and partnerships.

COHERENCE

10. The scale of resources deployed for the PAR Strategy and AP has been appropriate for each strategic objective.

IMPACT

11. The implementing institutions acknowledge that the Strategy was influential in the reform process. Everything that has been realized from the AP has affected the achievement of the goals of the PAR Strategy, but these are mostly measures of an internal nature so this impact is not sufficiently visible outside the public administration.

SUSTAINABILITY

12. What has been implemented is sustainable and it is needed to ensure continued funding in areas that have been successfully implemented.

1.4. KEY CONCLUSIONS

RELEVANCE

1. The required level of transparency and inclusiveness was not maintained during the entire process of implementing the PAR Strategy and AP 2018-2022.

2. The goals of the PAR Strategy were largely relevant and can still be considered relevant for the upcoming PAR Strategy and AP.

3. The PAR Council and the PAR Secretariat did not used the full capacity for coordination and cohesion of the PAR Strategy with other sectoral strategies related to PAR.
4. Institutional responsibility for the implementation of certain measures/activities is not everywhere precise in the current AP.

5. Types of measures are not specified in the AP.

6. Monitoring and controlling institutional responsibility is not predicted in the AP.

7. There are unrealized activities from the current AP which are still relevant.

**EFFECTIVENESS**

8. The monitoring of execution of the AP is carried out at the technical level and in quantitative terms, but not in the sense of quality of produced documents, analysis, regulations, training etc.

9. Indicators were not all relevant.

10. Failure to perform one activity within the measure leads to blocking the implementation of the entire measure.

11. The successful cases and “reform champions” are noticeable but not promoted.

12. The local self-government is a part of the public sector and provider of public services, but not a part of the PAR Strategy and AP.

13. Unrealized measures are mostly of a legislative nature.

**EFFICIENCY**

14. There is a new methodological framework for preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and reporting of strategic documents.

15. The PAR Council made special contribution in the implementation of PAR Strategy, but its sessions are missing for more than a year.

16. The PAR Secretariat has played a significant operational and expert role in the process of implementing the PAR Strategy, but its sessions are missing for more than a year.
17. There are organizational capacities in MISA for coordination role in PAR, but not enough HR capacities.

18. The PAR Working ensured coordinative process.

19. There are coordinators appointed in each PAR working group and subgroup.

20. Support to coordinators and members of PAR working groups exist, but it can be further improved.

21. Civil servants who directly participate in PAR activities change frequently.

22. PAR Strategy and AP were implemented with maximum use of available resources. The Change Management Plan and Communication Plan were missing.

**COHERENCE**

23. The process of designing the PAR Strategy was very good, but the costing could have been better at the beginning.

24. Funding sources were not precisely predicted for all measures/activities.

**IMPACT**

25. The implemented measures are mostly internal, so they are not directly visible to citizens and the economy.

5.1. **SUSTAINABILITY**

26. There is certain fatigue with the PAR process and it may be better communicated.

1.5. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**RELEVANCE**

1. To apply a new methodological framework in the development of the new PAR Strategy and AP.
2. To improve the participation of the PAR Council and PAR Secretariat in coordinating other sectorial strategies with PAR.

3. To specify the individual institutional responsibility for the implementation of AP - in all measures/activities.

4. In the new AP, qualify measures according to their type.

5. To plan measures/activities that is of high relevance – with enough resources and with direct impact to citizens and economy (public sector as a provider of public services).

   **EFFECTIVENESS**

6. To determine the activities that is crucial to the implementation of the entire measure.

7. To include local self-government units in PAR.

8. To avoid changes to the normative framework if the PAR results can be achieved without it.

9. To ensure and improve application of the competence frameworks for employees in public administration.

   **EFFICIENCY**

10. To ensure the necessary transparency and inclusiveness in the PAR process.

11. To ensure regular holding of PAR Council sessions, twice a year, and PAR Secretariat sessions quarterly, four times a year.

12. To clarify the responsibilities of internal units in MISA for the PAR process.

13. To strengthen HR capacities within MISA for the PAR process.

14. To specify the powers and responsibilities of the coordinators of Working groups and subgroups.
15. To support the members of the Working group and “contact points” in the implementation of AP activities and strengthen their capacities for the PAR process.

16. To ensure the smooth implementation of the Action plan of the PAR Strategy, by preserving the "PAR institutional memory".

17. To provide information exchange and internal communication in implementing PAR Action plan trough one ICT tool (portal).

18. To improve the policy of retaining quality personnel in the administration - analyze the reasons for excessive fluctuation of HR.

19. To improve institutional responsibility for monitoring and controlling the implementation of PAR Action plan.

20. The PAR Change Management Plans and PAR Communication Plans are required as documents that follow the PAR Strategy and Action plan.

**COHERENCE**

21. To define prerequisites and institutional responsibility for cases when financial resources are not secure.

22. To apply the new Guidelines for determining standardized expenditures for government strategies.

23. Use the K-6 program for PAR budgeting and realistically plan activities for the first half of 2023.

**IMPACT**

24. To improve the qualitative monitoring and evaluation function of the PAR Action plan outputs.

25. In planning and implementing measures/activities, to start from the "key values" of PAR.
2. Introduction

This report presents the main findings, conclusions and recommendations of an evaluation of the Public Administration Reform Strategy of North Macedonia (hereinafter: the PAR Strategy) and its accompanying Action Plan 2018-2022 (AP), which was adopted by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia (GMK) in February 2018. The Action Plan has been revised in February 2019. The evaluation was conducted in the period of May-July 2022 by Mr. Aleksandar Panovski, an independent evaluation service provider engaged by the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA).

The overall aim of the evaluation is to critically assess the reform activities applied in the current PAR Strategy, identify their relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability in achieving planned results, and draw out lessons learned and recommendations. The evaluation demonstrates evaluative evidence of the Strategy’s contributions to the enhancement of the effectiveness and efficiency of the public administration in North Macedonia.

The scope of this evaluation is defined to cover the totality of the PAR Strategy portfolios of programs that were further elaborated in Action Plan 2018-2022. Taking into consideration the fact that the size of the funding invested by the government of North Macedonia, the European Union and other development partners in the implementation of the Strategy has been considerable, this evaluation aims to respond to accountability requirements and to provide an in-depth overview based on an independent assessment. The evaluation is also envisaged to be forward-looking, aiming to take stock and learn from the work done thus far to inform the preparation of the upcoming PAR Strategy and AP. The intended users of the evaluation include the Government of North Macedonia, the European Commission, partners from the civil society and academia and other development partners, donors, and the international and national community and beneficiaries.

2.1. Context, institutional background

Public administration reform (PAR) is considered to be one of the three fundamentals of the Enlargement Strategy, alongside the rule of law and economic reform. Similarly, the 2014-2020 Revised Indicative Country Strategy Paper
identifies the good governance and PAR are key elements in the accession process and priorities, which are reflected inter alia in the Pržino Agreement, the Urgent Reform Priorities and the High-Level Accession Dialogue (HLAD)²

The PAR is also in line with the objective of the South-East Europe Strategy 2020³, which recognizes that the establishment of a transparent, well-functioning and efficient public administration is a cross-cutting component and a prerequisite for the achievement of any other objective of the strategy.

In North Macedonia PAR is a continuous process of reorganization of institutions in the public sector and improvement of their administrative and human capacity, and also one of the key priorities in the accession partnership and an important precondition in the process of European integration of the Republic of North Macedonia (MK). The PAR Strategy 2018-2022 was prepared with the aim of continuing the public administration reform process after the implementation of the previous PAR strategies from 1999, and 2010⁴. The PAR Strategy encompasses the entire public administration system at the central level in MK. The Strategy 2018-2022 is not related to the broader public sector (local-self-government, public health, education, social welfare, culture, public utilities etc.).

In the Work Program of the Government (2017-2020), one of the main strategic priorities which refers to the public administration, the GMK⁵ determined:

"The Government of the Republic of Macedonia will work to create a professional and efficient, accountable and transparent administration that will provide quality services to citizens and the business sector and will protect their rights. By applying the principles of fairness and expertise in employment and objectivity in the promotion and rewarding of public administration employees, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia will create an administration that will get rid of party affiliations and will be dedicated to solving the problems of citizens and businesses, respecting the principles of legality and impartiality in the performance of duty”.

Preparation of PAR Strategy 2018-2022 started at the beginning of 2016. A working group and thematic subgroups were formed, which provided guidance from SIGMA for the preparation of the Strategy, for the manner of its structuring, as well as for the key reform areas. The process began with a consultative working meeting on democratic public administration reform between representatives of the Ministry of Information Society and

⁵ The Macedonian Parliament (Assembly) on October 19, 2018, officially adopted the decision on the beginning of constitutional changes that ended on January 11, 2019, and entered into force on February 12, after the official constitutional name was changed to the Republic of North Macedonia.
Administration (MISA), civil society organizations and experts, representatives of the international community, trade unions and media, held in June 2017. This working meeting was an announcement for opening a comprehensive, inclusive dialogue and cooperation between MISA and stakeholders regarding the priorities and the PAR plan. The starting point for the preparation of the PAR Strategy was the draft Strategy for Public Administration Reform and the Action Plan for 2016, which together with the SIGMA comments were published on the MISA website, with a call for submission of opinions to civil society organizations and all stakeholders. MISA formed a working group with subgroups for the preparation of the PAR Strategy, which included representatives of the civil sector and chambers of commerce. The main sources were the various SIGMA reports, the European Commission (EC) MK reports and other relevant documents. This PAR Strategy reflects the situation and challenges of public administration in MK as of December 31, 2017.

The GMK adopted the current PAR Strategy in February 2018 along with its Action Plan (AP) 2018-2022, which was revised in February 2019. The PAR Strategy sets out the following strategic vision

“Depoliticized, efficient, effective and accountable public administration that provides quality and easily accessible services to citizens and the business community throughout the MK. The work of public administration is based on European principles and values and contributes to sustainable economic growth, rule of law, social cohesion and prosperity”.

The following principles were the basis for achieving the goals of the PAR Strategy and for the transformation of the public administration:

- Commitment to achieving the vision,
- Legality,
- Inclusion,
- Digitalization,
- Consistency in implementation.

According to the set goals, the PAR Strategy foresees the following results:

- Depoliticized public administration and restoration of citizens' trust in the institutions;
- Functional rule of law and rule of law;
- Improved policies that will ensure development in all spheres of society;
- Built structures and administrative capacities ready for the negotiation process with the EU;
- Institutionally reorganized and optimized public administration;
- Created new and retained professional and competent administrative staff;
- Simplified and more efficient application of modern information technologies;
- Responsible, accountable and transparent institutions, managers and employees; and
- Delivered quality services to citizens and businesses.
The structure of the PAR Strategy corresponds to the reform areas laid down in the SIGMAs\textsuperscript{6} “Principles of Public Administration” represent the standards of the so-called soft “acquis” and serve as a framework for assessing the state of play and the progress made in the area of public administration. These priority areas are:

- Policy making and coordination;
- Public service and human resources management;
- Accountability, accountability and transparency;
- Public services and ICT support of the administration.

Each of the four areas is elaborated on in detail in a separate chapter of the PAR Strategy 2018 – 2022 and accompanying Action plan. Consequently, the PAR Strategy has four general objectives (GO). Within each general objective, specific objectives (SO) and measures (M) are envisaged, which are necessary to achieve the general objective of the priority area.

- GO1: Effective, efficient and inclusive policies created;
  - SO 1.1 Strengthened medium-term and sectoral planning to achieve the Government's priorities,
    - M 1.1.1. Strengthen the planning system by providing a mechanism for harmonizing long-term with medium-term and annual planning,
    - M 1.1.2. Improving the processes and capacities for medium-term, sectoral and annual planning in the ministries and other state administration bodies
  - SO 1.2. Improved quality of policies and laws and ensuring transparency and stakeholder participation,
    - M 1.2.1. Improving the quality of RIA and the legislative process,
    - M 1.2.2. Introduction of a mechanism for building an analytical basis,
    - M 1.2.3. Strengthen policy monitoring, reporting and evaluation,
    - M 1.2.4. Improving the work of the sectoral working groups Strengthening the capacity to implement a sectoral approach,
    - M 1.2.5. Increase stakeholder involvement in the policy-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation process,
  - SO 1.3. Enhanced efficiency of processes, structures and control mechanisms for horizontal coordination and monitoring of policies, as well as enhanced efficiency of GMK decision-making process,
    - M 1.3.1. Strengthening the capacity for policy coordination in the GSG,
    - M 1.3.2. Establishment of coordination mechanisms between the state administration bodies that perform the functions of the "Centre of the Government",
    - M 1.3.3. Strengthening the efficiency of the GMK decision-making system,
    - M 1.3.4. Strengthening the cooperation of the Government with the Assembly of the MK,
  - SO 1.4. Improved quality and availability of statistical data for quality policy-making,
    - M 1.4.1. Strengthening the production capacity of macroeconomic statistics,

\textsuperscript{6} Support for Improvement in Governance and Management (SIGMA) is a joint initiative of the OECD and the EU, principally financed by the EU.
M 1.4.2. Strengthening the production capacity of sectorial statistics

GO2: Professional, professional and departmental administration;

SO 2.1. De-politicization of the administration, through enhanced application of the principles of merit, equal opportunities and adequate and equitable representation and professionalization of senior management positions,

- M 2.1.1. Reducing the risks of politicization by introducing clear criteria and transparency in the selection of the best candidate for employment and promotion,
- M 2.1.2. Professionalization of senior management positions in the administration,
- M 2.1.3. Improving the content and access to job advertisements and protection of candidates’ rights,
- M 2.1.4. Strengthening the capacities of the selection commissions,
- M 2.1.5. Improving the role of the HRM Network, strengthening coordination mechanisms and improving HRM tools,
- M 2.1.6. Improving the evaluation system of administrative staff,
- M 2.1.7. Improving the implementation of the principle of adequate and equitable representation,

SO 2.2. Defined and regulated a unified and coherent salary system for public sector employees.

- M 2.2.1. Preparation of regulations for the new wage system,

SO 2.3. Established system for professional development of civil servants, implemented by the Academy for professional development of administrative civil servants,

- M 2.3.1. Defining the status of the Academy for professional development of administrative employees,
- M 2.3.2. Capacity building of the categories of administrative employees,
- M 2.3.3. Improving e-learning platforms,
- M 2.3.4. Creating a database of competent trainers for generic training,

GO3: Responsible, accountable and transparent operation of the institutions;

SO 3.1. The developed coherent institutional set-up of state administration bodies, agencies and inspection services of the central government with clearly defined accountability structures

- M 3.1.1. Mapping of institutions in the MK,
- M 3.1.2. Reorganization/optimization of state administration bodies, agencies and central government inspection services,

SO 3.2. Established effective and efficient mechanisms that ensure accountability in state administration bodies, agencies and inspection services of the central government,

- M 3.2.1. Increasing efficiency in the public service

SO 3.3. Strengthened integrity of institutions,

- M 3.3.1. Strengthening integrity and ethics at the political and professional level

SO 3.4. Strengthened transparency of institutions and improved communication between institutions and citizens and the business community,

- M 3.4.1. Strengthening the mechanisms for accessibility of public information and control mechanisms,
- M 3.4.2. Establishment of mechanisms for planning, implementation and monitoring of open data principles and strengthening awareness of citizens and business community,
- **SO 3.5.** Improved efficiency of administrative procedures and consistent application of the law on General Administrative Procedure (LGAP),
  - M 3.5.1. Improving the application of LGAP,
  - M 3.5.2. Improving the decision-making system in administrative procedure,
  - M 3.5.3. Improving the capacities for conducting administrative procedures
- **GO4:** Providing services in a fast, simple and easily accessible way,
- **SO 4.1.** Rational investment in the development of the digital environment,
  - M 4.1.1. Strategic approach in the process of digital transformation,
  - M 4.1.2. Centrally coordinated project management in the area is - Government and Information-communication technologies (ICT),
  - M 4.1.3. Improving the channels of electronic communication in the administration,
  - M 4.1.4. Introduction of environmental standards in the work of the administration,
- **SO 4.2.** Increased quality and availability of public services,
  - M 4.2.1. Improved accessibility of institutions for all citizens,
  - M 4.2.2. Improving the quality system,
  - M 4.2.3. Standardization of data in public registers and unification of service provision,
  - M 4.2.4. Simplification of services,
  - M 4.2.5. Introduction of "One point Service" centres,
  - M 4.2.6. Reporting to the administration and the public about the services,
  - M 4.2.7. Measuring customer satisfaction with services,
- **SO 4.3.** A digital environment that gives access to and the opportunity to use e-services,
  - M 4.3.1. Increasing the number of highly sophisticated e-services available in one place,
  - M 4.3.2. Introduction of electronic identity for using e-services,
  - M 4.3.3. Digitization of service registers

To successfully coordinate and manage the PAR process, the following organizational structure has been established:

- **Public Administration Reform Council**
- **Secretariat for PAR**
- **Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA)**

1. Working group for implementation of the measures from the Action Plan of the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2018-2022 in the Ministry of Information Society and Administration and
2. Contact persons for PAR in the institutions which participate in the implementation of the PAR strategy 2018-2020.

### 2.2. Related programs and other donor activities and financing of PAR
The PAR Strategy 2018-2022 is in direct correlation with the strategic documents from various areas that in a broader sense are included in the scope of public sector reforms, such as:

- Public Financial Management Reform Program 2018-2020\(^7\);
- Action plan for implementation of the Public Financial Management Reform Program for 2018\(^8\);
- Policy for the internal financial control in the public sector (with an Action plan for the period from 2019 to 2021)\(^9\);
- Justice sector reform Strategy for the period 2017-2022 with an Action plan\(^10\);
- State Program for Prevention and Repression of Corruption and Reduction of Conflict Interests with Action Plan 2016-2019\(^11\);
- National Strategy for Development of the Concept of a Society and Interculturalism 2020-2022 with an Action plan\(^12\)

All these strategic documents and action plans are published on the official internet presentation of the Government and the competent ministries and other institutions. They are not published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Northern Macedonia because they are not determined to be regulations that have the character of a general legal action.

### 3. Objectives and design of the evaluation

The overall objective of the evaluation was to contribute to an informed elaboration of the upcoming PAR Strategy 2023-2030 and new AP, to the relevance of its objectives and its strategic focus. As such, the purpose of the evaluation was to identify the main achievements, lessons learned and recommendations for the finalization of this cycle of the strategy and the design of the next cycle of PAR. Evaluation places focus on the following aspects:

- Assessment of performance, achievements and lessons learned in the implementation of the PAR Strategy and its AP;

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\(^13\) [https://vlada.mk/sites/default/files/dokumenti/strategii/strategija.za_transparentnost.mk.pdf](https://vlada.mk/sites/default/files/dokumenti/strategii/strategija.za_transparentnost.mk.pdf)
- Information on effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of the PAR Strategy and APs, as well as internal and external coherence of the Strategy and its AP components;
- Assessment of the Strategy implementation modalities and their “fitness for purpose”, in terms of the coordination and implementation structure and skills mix, to deliver the results;
- Assessment of the role of donors and development partners in the implementation of the strategy;
- Provision of recommendations for adjustments to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities and the design of the interventions through advising on main areas and actions of intervention in the next years to achieve the objectives of the Strategy that will also feed into the preparation of the new PAR Strategy and AP.

In such a manner, the evaluation purpose is to contribute to accountability, transparency and visibility of PAR in North Macedonia, enabling the dissemination of information to the public, stakeholders and civil society.

### 3.1. Scope of the evaluation and methodology

The scope of the evaluation is broad and encompasses several interventions within the sector that is horizontal and by nature all-encompassing. The scope of the evaluation encompasses the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2018-2022 and AP. The evaluation took stock of the results and contributions of the four (4) PAR priority areas and its objectives defined for the period 2018-2022.

The assessment was done in the context of the specific EU policy interventions related to the PAR sector, but also of the overall contribution of enhanced public administration to the enlargement process. The assessment of the policy relevance of the actions specifically assessed whether the actions: i) supported the negotiation; and ii) contributed effectively to developing the overall capacities of public administration to respond to EU accession requirements.
The evaluation methodology applied a **mixed-method approach** and had both summative and formative characteristics. In line with the mixed-method approach, the evaluation applied both qualitative and quantitative research methods as presented in Table 1 below to identify the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and estimated impact of the Strategy, its fitness for purpose and coherence, and also to bring a set of conclusions and recommendations to help strategically plan next cycle of PAR 2023-2030.

The detail Evaluation Methodology applied in preparation of this project is presented in the Annexe 10.

6. Key findings
This chapter presents the review of the overall performance of the PAR Strategy and PAR Action plan for the period of 2018–2022. The design of the report presents key findings according to the DAC criteria:

- Relevance,
- Effectiveness,
- Efficiency,
- Coherence,
- Impact and
- Sustainability.

Also, specific key lessons learned and recommendations are given for the new PAR Strategy 2023-2020 and the PAR Action Plan and they are arranged by:

- Its relation to the entire PAR Strategy and AP;
- Policy making and coordination;
- Public service and human resource management;
- Accountability, accountability and transparency; and
- Public services and ICT administration support.

Key findings are organized concerning the main EQs and related judgement indicators that were endorsed by MISA within the Inception phase. The evaluation findings related to judgement criteria are noted in parentheses (e.g., JC 1.1) for easier reference. Evaluation findings, and thus what is referred to as ‘evidence’ throughout the report, derive from a thorough review of documents made available by the MISA team, secondary sources gathered by the evaluator throughout the process, and interviews and Focus groups with key informants, as well as workshops discussions and exercises. Within the process of analysis of interviews, a quantitative analysis of key informants’ views concerning each evaluation finding was conducted through examination of questionaries, and an overview is presented in Annex 8.

6.1. RELEVANCE

EQ1. To what extent was and are the objectives of the PAR Strategy and the activities foreseen in AP PAR 2018-2022 still relevant to priority needs, inclusive of cross-cutting needs, and to what extent have these corresponded to implementation capacities in North Macedonia?

**Finding 1.** The objectives of the PAR Strategy and activities presented in AP 2018-2022 are aligned with the overall national and EU accession priorities of North Macedonia, in particular towards ensuring governments’ ability to provide public services and foster competitiveness and growth and meet prerequisites toward eventual EU accession. (JC1.1. and JC1.2.)

In line with the overall developmental direction and EU accession process, the PAR Strategy was developed based on and now represents a part of a compendium of relevant national-level strategic documents which create a strategic framework for reform for the country, i.e.

- Public Financial Management Reform Program 2018-2020;
- Policy for the internal financial control in the public sector (with an Action plan for the period from 2019 to 2021);
- State Program for Prevention and Repression of Corruption and Reduction of Conflict Interests with Action Plan 2016-2019;

The evaluation found that the public administration reform has been considered one of the key priorities of the Public Finance Management (PFM) Reform Program 2018-2020 since the Program recognizes that
“Given that public financial management is directly related to and of paramount importance for effective and efficient public administration reform, during the preparation and implementation of the PFM and the PAR Strategy, full coherence and compliance will be ensured for both strategic documents. Special attention will be paid to human resource capacity, policy planning capacity, e-services, service delivery and results-oriented coordination when it comes to strengthening leadership accountability, internal control environment and enhancing transparency. Also, the link between these two strategic documents will further strengthen with the participation of the Minister of Information Society and Administration in the process of management and coordination of the Program for reform of the PRO for the period 2018-2021, as a member of the Council for the PRO, thus strengthening the consistency in the implementation of both strategies”.

The Public Sector Internal Financial Control Policy (IFC) states that

“Overall, this document combines and upgrades the PIFC measures related to the activities contained in the PAR Strategy 2018-2022 and the Public Financial Management Reform Program 2018-2021” as well as “The successful implementation of the measures and activities envisaged in this document relies especially on the results of the PAR Strategy”.

State Program for Prevention and Repression of Corruption and Conflict Reduction Interests provides that

“The framework of the integrity system, which as a whole contributes to strengthening the personal and institutional integrity in the public sector, contains the elements of full respect and utilization of the existing mechanisms in public administration organizations such as internal audit and control mechanisms, as well as quality management systems”.


“...transparency has a positive impact on the economic development of the country, but also on its Euro-Atlantic aspirations. It is complementary to the reform of the public administration and the achievement of the service orientation of the public bodies”.

In line with this, the 2018-2022 PAR Strategy aimed to work on the enhancement of its public administration-related legislative framework, but also on the substantial changes in the everyday administrative practice. The contextual analysis performed within the scope of the evaluation and stakeholder interviews showed that the PAR Strategy recognised important challenges and gaps in efficiency and effectiveness of the public administration processes and service provision, designing relevant measures to enable the national public administration to pursue principles of good administration and effectively transpose and implement the “acquis
communautaire”. In particular, selecting the tasks as outlined within the strategy has been assessed by interviewed stakeholders as relevant, and in particular the following:

- Improved policy-making and coordination capacity;
- Merit-based civil service system with adequate human resources management in place;
- Improved IT interconnectivity and interoperability, administrative capacity and
- Alignment with EU standards in ensuring transparent and inclusive policy-making processes with the participation of CSOs and other non-state actors.

Within the AP, the following have been prepared and adopted:

- Methodology for the manner of preparation, monitoring of the implementation, evaluation and reporting of the sector strategies as strategic planning documents and
- Guidance for the necessary elements and structure that the sector strategies should contain, the manner of monitoring the implementation, assessment and reporting\(^\text{14}\).

These two strategic documents are part of the contribution of the General Secretariat of the Government (GSG) arising from the PAR Strategy and AP 2018-2022 and imply providing a mechanism for harmonization of long-term with medium-term planning and annual planning of the Strategy. The adoption of the Methodology enables the logical elaboration of the related processes and procedures in the development of the sector strategies and provision of the necessary compact structure and content of the planning documents, with quality developed key elements, which contain the necessary features. The guideline, on the other hand, enables the logical elaboration of the related processes and procedures in the development of sectoral strategies and appropriate steps for preparation, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of sectoral and multi-sectoral strategies by ministries, other state administration bodies and administrative organizations. By establishing the methodological and normative framework in the field of sectoral planning, a basis for building internal capacities in the state administration for the preparation of sectoral strategies has been created as an extremely important activity, because in the current practice the sectoral strategies were mostly developed through donor assistance, and consulting services.

So the research concludes that the goals of the PAR Strategy were largely relevant and can still be considered relevant for the upcoming PAR Strategy and AP. The monitoring of execution is carried out very well, but mostly at the technical level and in quantitative terms. In this regard it will be recommended in next chapter that qualitative monitoring and evaluation function should be developed and support for the upcoming PAR Strategy and AP.

\(^{14}\) Activity numbers A 1.1.1.2. and A1.1.1.3. [https://vlada.mk/node/28960](https://vlada.mk/node/28960)
According to the minutes of the PAR Council and the PAR Secretariat, it may not be indicated that these bodies considered related strategic documents and plans to ensure coherence and consistency during the implementation of PAR Strategy and AP in the period 2018-2022. The only strategic document that was discussed and debated at these two bodies was PAR Strategy and AP. Thus, it is recommended that all strategic and planning documents that have an impact and significance on the PAR process be submitted to the PAR Secretariat for consideration before adoption (during the preparation of these documents). This includes reports about their implementation, as well. It will ensure the coherence and coordination of strategic and planning documents relevant to the PAR promptly and prevent their overlap and opposition. In this regard, it is useful for the PAR Secretariat to identify and publish topics or areas that are of particular importance for the PAR process, within which it should be mandatory to consider proposals and drafts of strategic and planning documents.

Finding 2. The design of the PAR Strategy provided a mostly feasible set of actions and results, especially within their further elaboration in the AP. However, Priority area 2: Public Service and Human Resource Management and Priority area 3: Responsibility, Accountability and Transparency, had some unrealistic aspirations and indicators mostly in relation to change the existing legal framework (JC1.3)

Review shows that the PAR Strategy was based on lessons learned and downfalls of previous efforts within the sector and in particular the previous PAR Strategies, which indicates learning on the side of the government from previous processes. Stakeholder interviews indicate that this was an important driver of the success of the current Strategy, particularly as supported by SIGMA, EU and other development partners which were consulted extensively in designing the strategic directions.

The AP envisages a massive change in the legal framework in the areas of “Expert, professional and departmental administration” and “Responsible, accountable and transparent operation of the institutions”. This meant passing a set of new regulations: the law on Senior Management Service, the law on Administrative Officers, the law on Public Sector Employees, the law on salaries of budget users, the law on the Organization of Public Administration Bodies and the law on Ministries. According to the AP, the amendment of these regulations entailed several accompanying activities - the adoption of laws, manuals, training of officials to implement new regulations, etc. However, because the key activities - the adoption of new laws - were not carried out, then all these accompanying activities could not be implemented.

In the current AP, in a total of 12 activities as institutions responsible for enforcement, it is vaguely stated that they are "all state bodies" or "state administration bodies, agencies and inspection services of the central

15 Priority areas 2 and 3.
government”. Such a determination could make it difficult to coordinate and execute the AP, as it is not planned precisely enough which institution is responsible for carrying out such activities. Such uncertainty is observed in the AP under Priority Area 3: Accountability, Accountability and Transparency and Priority Area 4: Service Delivery and ICT Support to Administration.

The review of the text of the AP shows following
- individual institutional responsibility was not foreseen everywhere; in many places (under activities) "all state bodies" were listed as responsible institutions.
- the current AP does not specify the types of measures which may make it difficult to assess the relevance of the measures and their impact;
- the AP lists the implementing institution and the implementing partner for each activity; however, the institutions that should have been responsible for monitoring and controlling the implementation of the measure/activity are not listed.

Strong recommendation is for the new AP to specify individual institutional responsibility in each specific activity in the new AP. For better coordination and relevance it is useful to avoid the wording "all state authorities", where possible. It is also needed to assess the relevance, it is recommended in the new AP to determine the type of a measure: regulatory, incentive, information-educational, organizational-managerial-institutional, measure for provision of goods, provision of services, etc.

Finding 3. The PAR Strategy is a result of an inclusive and consultative process, which assists relevance and ownership over strategy (JC1.2).

Document review and stakeholder interviews confirm that the strategy design was inclusive and ensured multiple consultations and input-sharing mechanisms were in place during the design process. The drafting of the Strategy 2018-2022 began at the end of 2017 and the main actor responsible for the preparation of the initial list of possible public administration reform priorities and objectives was the MISA, in charge of public administration. The Ministry organised several working groups with the participation of representatives from relevant ministries and other state institutions and a representative of the NGO sector. Actors such as SIGMA, EU and donors as well as other civil society actors were also included in consultations and iterations of the strategy. Taking into account the complexity, scope and significance of this strategic document, the MISA, through a public call, invited and included the interested public to give their initiatives, proposals and suggestions. Stakeholder interviews emphasised the importance and value of such an inclusive process, which contributed to increased ownership and understanding of the purpose of the strategy and its utility. In particular, investment by SIGMA was recognised as relevant to ensure more realistic and evidence-based strategic directions would be taken.
According to the PAR Strategy 2018 - 2022, the monitoring and reporting on the reform process are carried out by MISA, which every six months to the PAR Council and once a year submits to the Government a report on the implementation of the Action Plan. To ensure transparency in this process, the strategy envisages the reports to be published on the MISA website and a public call is made to the NGO sector to give their comments, questions and remarks to the MISA by e-mail.

One weakness was seen in terms of "costing" in the first version of the AP and poorer transparency during the audit of the AP in December 2019. Namely, the audit of the AP was performed before the preparation of the annual report on the implementation of the AP for 2019 and without the full involvement of the NGO sector in this process. Although the assessment of financial costs has been improved by the AP audit since December 2019, the fact remains that this process was insufficiently transparent and should have been carried out based on the evaluation of the annual report on the implementation of the AP for 2019.

Finding 4. In the current AP, there are unrealized activities that are still very relevant to continue, but also there are unrealized activities that are of moderate or no relevance at all for the upcoming PAR Strategy and AP.

During the research, the evaluator checked the relevance of the measures and activities from the current AP that were not implemented as planned. Within each priority area, it was checked whether and to what extent all the necessary resources are available for their implementation - human, material, financial, ie whether the necessary political support has been provided. In addition, the impact of these activities on citizens and/or the economy (direct or indirect) has been examined. Concerning these variables, the relevance of unrealized activities for the new Action Plan was assessed. The assessment was performed by the members of the working groups in each priority area individually, taking into account the experience so far and the expected circumstances. A special Relevance Matrix was used - given in the Annexe 2. The results are as follows:

Priority area number 1 Policy making and coordination

- The most relevant unrealized activities are
  - A 1.2.1.4 - Preparation of a manual for analysis of the Acquis, their quality transposition in the national legislation and achieving an appropriate degree of compliance” and
  - A 1.2.1.8 - Conducting training for managers and employees in the relevant sectors in the ministries and other state administration bodies”.

- Insufficiently relevant unrealized activity is
- A 1.2.1.6 - Establish an effective system for coordinating the preparation of the national version of the Acquis and terminology. Application of nontechnical rules by finding appropriate language solutions in the preparation of laws/regulations in the process of harmonization of legislation.

**Priority Area 2 Public Service and Human Resource Management**

- The most relevant unrealized activities are

- A 2.1.2.1 Adoption of law on Senior Management Service to delineate the scope and established merit-based procedures for the category of senior civil servants and draft bylaws;
- A 2.1.3.1 Amendments to the regulations due to more clearly defined conditions and criteria for new employment;
- A 2.1.5.2. Establishment of a Coordinating Body of the HRM Network;
- A 2.1.5.4 - Job Catalogue Analysis;
- A 2.1.6.2. Amendments to the regulation on the evaluation of administrative staff;
- A 2.2.1.3. Develop a methodology for determining the amount of salary according to the job description;
- A 2.2.1.4. Job evaluation based on the methodology for determining the amount of salary according to the job descriptions, determined in the Job Catalogue (see A.2.1.5.5);
- A 2.2.1.5. Preparation of proposal elements of the new salary system with reward components according to the achieved results of the employees in the public sector;
- A 2.2.1.6. Preparation of payment models and implementation of simulations for calculation of fiscal implications and preparation of a report on fiscal impacts;
- A 2.2.1.7. Preparation of proposed elements of the new salary system according to the achieved results of the employees with the budget users and preparation of a law on salaries of budget users and guidelines for non-budget users;
- A 2.2.1.8. Submission for determining the law on salaries of budget users;
- A 2.2.1.9. Submitting guidelines for payroll models for non-budget users;
- A.2.2.1.10 Harmonization of the collective agreements with the law on salaries of budget users with the new payment models for non-budget users;
- A 2.3.1.3 Adoption of regulations for the formalization of the status of the Academy for training and development is up to the administration, according to the selected modality;
- A 2.3.1.4 Establishment of the Academy for training and development of the administration and provision of conditions for smooth functioning of human resources, equipment, space and trainers);
- A 2.3.4.2. Amendments to the regulations for the introduction of modalities for hiring and motivating trainers as well as for standards and gaining the status of trainer;
- **Moderately relevant unrealized activities are**

- A 2.1.1.3 - Preparation of reports on the recruitment/promotion procedure with an explanation of the commission for the selection of a candidate for the administrative officer, based on evidence;
- A 2.1.2.2 Preparation of manuals and other tools for the members of the Senior Management Service Commission (SMC) Committee;
- A 2.1.2.3 Preparation of manuals and other tools for the members of the SMC Boards;
- A 2.1.2.4 Prepare guidelines and other tools for candidates in the senior management selection process;
- A 2.1.2.5 Training for members of the SMC Committee and SMC Boards;
- A 2.1.3.2 Preparation of guidelines for the candidates participating in the employment procedures regarding the mechanisms for the protection and sanctioning of illegal actions during the selection procedure;
- A 2.1.4.2. Development of manuals, guides and other tools with templates and practical examples for conducting selection procedures for employment/promotion;
- A 2.1.4.4 Prepare and implement a training program on innovations in selection procedures for employment and promotion (see A 2.1.1.2 above) for members of selection committees and HRM staff from public sector institutions;
- A 2.1.5.3 Preparation of programs and implementation of training for the members of the HRM Network for all the novelties in the regulation (employment, promotion, evaluation, strengthening of the responsibility of the commissions, etc.);
- A 2.1.6.3 Prepare and implement a training program for the new system for evaluating administrative staff (see A 2.1.5.3. Above);
- A 2.3.2.1 - Analysis of current training programs and analysis of training needs of a sample of each of the special categories of administrative staff, with special emphasis on senior management positions (senior civil service).
- A 2.3.2.2. Based on the analysis, preparation of appropriate training programs for each of the categories of administrative staff, with special emphasis on training to develop management skills for senior management positions (senior civil service).
- A 2.3.4.1. Defining criteria and conditions for selection of trainers (from the academic community and the ranks of administrative staff-practitioners) and developing modalities for their engagement and motivation;
- A 2.3.4.4. Development of a special budget training program (See A 2.3.1.4.).

- **Insufficiently unrealized relevant activity is**
- A 2.3.1.5. Establishment of an electronic system for registration of participants in the training, as well as procurement of software/application for keeping records;
- A 2.3.2.3 Conduct training for each of the categories of administrative staff;
- A 2.3.4.3. Training for acquiring the status of trainer from the ranks of administrative officers – practitioners.

**Priority area number 3: Responsibility, accountability and transparency**

- **The most relevant unrealized activities from priority area 3 are**
  - A 3.1.2.6. Implementation of reorganization of state administration bodies, agencies and inspection services of the central government; and
  - A 3.5.2.3. Establishment and staffing of organizational forms for decision-making in the administrative procedure by defining job descriptions, to enable the delegation of decision-making powers by managers in public bodies and reduce discretion in decision-making.

- **Moderately relevant activities in priority area 3 are**
  - A 3.1.2.2. Preparation of amendments to the regulations governing the organizational set-up and distribution of functions between state administration bodies, agencies and inspection services (competencies, functions, lines of accountability, management, coordination, etc.) and its adoption; and
  - A 3.1.2.3. Harmonization of the existing regulation refers to the organization and work of the institutions with the regulation from A 3.1.2.2 and its adoption.

- Respondents assess that there are no irrelevant unrealized measures in Priority Area 3 in the existing AP.

**Priority area number 4 Provision of services and ICT support**

- **The most relevant unrealized activities from priority area 4 are**
  - A 4.1.2.1. Analysis of the situation of the IT staff with recommendations and measures for retention and motivation of the IT staff in the administration;
  - A 4.1.3.1. Introduce policies for the use of e-mail by employees in the administration;
  - A 4.1.3.4. Adoption of a Law on Archival Activity;
- **A 4.1.3.7.** Introduction of a system for electronic identification and authentication in the administration; and
- **A 4.2.2.3.** Implementation of the National Framework for Quality Management in Institutions.

- **Moderately relevant activities in priority area 4 are**
  - **A 4.1.1.2.** Develop a Policy for the use of "Cloud" infrastructure; and
  - **A 4.1.4.1.** Cost-effectiveness study for the introduction of eco standards.

- **Insufficiently relevant activities from priority area 4 that are not realized by the permanent PA are**
  - **A 4.2.1.1.** Development and adoption of Web Presence Standards; and
  - **A 4.2.1.3.** Development of a plan for the reorganization of state websites.

The research showed that 12 unrealized activities from the current AP are still relevant, ie. it has enough resources and their impact on citizens and the economy is direct. Also, for 28 unrealized activities, there are not enough necessary resources (financial, human or material). The 11 unrealized activities are estimated to have no direct impact on citizens and the economy and certainly, the necessary resources cannot be provided, so these activities are not relevant. Thus, in preparation for the new PAR Strategy and AP, it is recommended to use a matrix for the relevance of the measures/activities. The focus should be on those activities for whom there is a direct impact on citizens and the economy and with sufficient resources. Priority in the new AP should be given to measures/activities that will improve service delivery, digitalization and interoperability.

For activities that are not implemented by the permanent AP, and for which it is estimated that there is a lack of resources, donor support should be considered. In this regard, in the process of planning a new PAR Strategy and AP, units for international cooperation and IPA units in the affected institutions should be included in advance. It is recommended to consider appropriate ways of performing the activity, given the realistically available resources. If resources are unreliable, it is recommended to state that the activity will be performed only if resources are provided. Specifically, to consider and state in advance in the AP what resources are in question and who should provide them and by when. Consider alternatives to these activities, for which resources may be available - whether these alternatives can achieve specific goals of the PAR Strategy.

**6.2. EFFECTIVENESS**

EQ 2. To what extent were the Objectives for PAR Strategy achieved? Did and how well each intervention/ action contribute to the achievement of results?
This section presents an evaluative assessment of the achievement of the PAR Strategy planned results and is organized per pillars of the strategy. Reference to JCs from the Evaluation matrix is made across all findings to show interlinkages with the evaluation reference framework.

**Finding 5. The special role of LSG was lacking in the PAR Strategy and AP (JC2.6).**

The PAR Strategy and accompanying AP is focused exclusively on central (state) bodies and improving their work. Although certain activities in all priority areas have an impact on the bodies of local self-government, it was not planned to carry out any activities at the local level. The evaluation concludes that the role of LSGs in public administration reform is very relevant and responds to the needs and challenges that LSGs face in terms of providing efficient and effective service delivery to citizens and the economy. However, the use of the role of the LSG level is not expressed in this PAR Strategy and AP. Thus, where the achievement of the objectives of the measure includes the role of local self-government, they needed to be included in the AP. Consider the vertical implementation of each measure individually – Who should be included to achieve the specific goal? Considering that a representative of the organization of local self-government (LSG) also participates in the work of the PAR Council, there is a coordinating basis for the role of LSG in the new PAR Strategy and AP.

**Finding 6. “E-services”, improved IT systems, and interoperability contribute the most to the effectiveness of public administration reform (JC2.5 and JC2.6)**

The evaluation shows that the most effectiveness is observed in measures and activities that are directly aimed at E-services, improved IT systems, and interoperability. In those topics, the results were the most visible and the most "manifestly effective". Users noticed them quickly and positive responses were towards implementers.

To support such a positive trend and the expectations of the users of the reform, it is useful to note certain "values" that will be respected in the reform. It is useful for the PAR Strategy to promote those values for defining measures and activities and for their implementation. During the research, from interviews and focus group discussions and workshops, it was concluded that certain values can be considered as principles of PAR like:

- Digitalization of public services - This may mean that everything that does not have to be on paper or executed directly needs to be digitized, and further executed only in digital form. To apply such a principle, it is most important to map and standardize the affairs of public administration. It is already part of the internal financial management and control system.
- Involvement of the private sector whenever possible - It is necessary to assess key administrative services to citizens and the economy, must they be provided only by the public sector? If not, the principle may be to consider involving the private sector, as far as possible.
- Improvement of IT systems and interoperability - The conclusion of the research through the Questionnaire is to improve IT systems and interoperability in public administration, which leads to improving the work of public administration, i.e. providing public services. Research participants noted that any improvement in these areas, in the implementation of AP measures and activities, was "manifestly effective" - positive effects on public service users were immediately noted.
- Continuous measurement of the quality and availability of public services - The current PAR Strategy and AP did not have a constant activity measuring the satisfaction of the users of public service - citizens and the economy. Such an approach could not contribute to a successful self-assessment of the true effects of the implemented measures and activities. Therefore, it is useful for the new PAR Strategy and AP to anticipate the activities in that direction and to constantly measure the quality and availability of public services. From such research, a feedback evaluation of the success of PAR can be obtained. Professional and scientific organizations and NGOs should be involved in those activities.

The research shows that indicators were not all relevant. For a total of 13 indicators, out of 73 (18%), there was no data or the indicator could not be measured. Therefore, it could not be determined to what extent the activity was carried out and whether its relevance was achieved.

The informants stressed that certain activities in the current AP were the key to the implementation of the whole measure. Due to their non-implementation, the implementation of the whole measure was blocked, and since they were not recognized as crucial, it was not possible to react in time and adjust or revise the measure.

Finding 7. A set of measures were aimed at amending key legal acts and regulations, but since those laws were not amended due to external objective factors (pandemic, political reconstruction) the measures were "stalled" and were not fully implemented as planned (JC2.1, JC2.3, JC2.4, JC2.8 and JC2.9).

A total of 13 measures from the current AP were aimed at amending key public administration laws. In these measures, in addition to the change of the laws, activities related to such changes were planned, to ensure their consistent and full implementation in practice. Therefore, the effects of such measures were completely absent. Research shows that in planning such measures it was not taken into account that external objective circumstances would hinder their implementation. It simply could not have been predicted, based on the responses of the survey participants. On the other hand, the participants in the research note that in the planning process, the analysis of the application of the current legal framework was not performed everywhere. With
such an approach, it was not possible to get an answer as to the specific reasons for an existing law so a specific goal of the PAR Strategy could not be achieved. This, the implementation of much of the current AP depended on legislative activity, which was absent due to the pandemic and government reshuffle. Regulatory change has been a key activity in 13 measures from the current AP. As these key activities were not implemented, all other activities within these measures could not be implemented.

It’s recommended when planning a change in the legal framework, it must be based on a full and detailed assessment of the application of the current one. In that way, a precise conclusion will be obtained – What is a reason in the current law for a specific goal of the PAR Strategy can not be achieved? Also, it is important to ensure consistent application of existing competency framework in all cases. All WG’s members should have competencies that correspond with knowledge of PAR process, strategic management and change management. It is recommended that in the new AP an analysis should be planned that will test the competencies (required knowledge, abilities, skills, attitudes) of existing employees in the state administration bodies. Are the right people in the right place? This is related to the development of the Human Resource Management Information System.

Under informants statements it is recommended that when the provision of funds is uncertain, it is recommended to state in the new AP that the measure/activity is conditionally enforceable. Indicate which institution is responsible for initiating the receipt of donor support for such an activity. Also, if an activity is crucial for the implementation of the whole measure, it is necessary to state. This will enable a simpler analysis and revision of the implementation of the measure - if the key activity is not realized according to the plan, it will be possible to react in time and adjust or revise the measure.

6.3. EFFICIENCY

EQ 3. Were the capacities to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the PAR Strategy and its APs been adequate? To what extent have stakeholder institutions designed and built into their plans and systems the necessary feedback and monitoring mechanisms that will ensure self-renewal (adaptation) to achieve objectives?

Finding 8. The government’s commitment to reform translated into clear leadership over the reform process through the establishment of organizational structure with the PAR Council, Secretariat for PAR, Ministry responsible for PAR (MISA), and Working group for implementation of the measures from the PAR Action Plan and appointed Contact persons for PAR in the institutions which participate in the implementation of the PAR Strategy and AP 2018-2022 (JC3.1).

Evidence collected through document review and stakeholder interviews as well as survey data indicates that there is a shared understanding among North Macedonia government officials that a well-functioning public administration is a prerequisite for the functioning of the state, in particular from the perspective of the government’s ability to provide public services and foster the country’s competitiveness and growth. Hence,
there is a general commitment to the PAR across the most senior decision-makers in the country. This commitment was translated into the establishment of an organizational structure for PAR, which includes:

1) Public Administration Reform Council,
2) Secretariat for PAR,
3) Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA),
4) Working group for implementation of the measures from the Action Plan of the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2018-2022 in the Ministry of Information Society and Administration, and
5) Appointed Contact persons for PAR in the institutions which participate in the implementation of the PAR strategy 2018-2020

Figure 1 PAR organizational structure

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The public Administration reform Council (PAR Council) was established by the Decision the of formation the council for public administration reform\(^\text{16}\) to monitor the achievement of the goals set in the PAR Strategy, as well as to coordinate the overall process of public administration reform. The PAR Council consists of the Prime Minister, two Deputy Prime Ministers, six ministers, the Secretary-General of the Government, the Secretary of the Secretariat for Legislation, the Director of the Administration Agency and a representative of the Association of Local Self-Government Units (ZELS). Due to the changes in the composition of the Government, the composition of the PAR council has been changed three more times.

\(^{16}\) Official Gazette of RM, no. 192 from 26.12.2017
during the implementation of the PAR Strategy 2018-2022\(^\text{17}\). In November 2020 it was decided that representatives of the civil society or other relevant and affected actors may be present at the work of the PAR Council, upon the proposal of the President of the Council. In that capacity, experts working on the project for the reorganization of public administration and a representative of the EU delegation participated in the work of the PAR Council at the eighth and ninth sessions\(^\text{18}\). It is not recorded from the minutes of the PAR Council that representatives of the civil sector participated in its work.

According to minutes published on the MISA website, the most common topics at the sessions of the Council from February 2018 to July 2021 were reviews and discussions on:

- Guidelines for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the PAR Strategy and Action Plan and System for monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the PAR Strategy,
- Semi-annual and Annual reports from the Action Plan of the PAR Strategy and Proposals and recommendations received from the Secretariat for PAR and the civil sector for the continuation of PAR,
- Budget for the Action Plan of the PAR Strategy (2018-2022)\(^\text{19}\),
- Draft laws and Amendments to laws planned in the Action Plan\(^\text{20}\)
- Consideration of reports on the implementation of projects of key importance for the reorganization of public administration\(^\text{21}\).

In the period from 2018 to July 2021, the PAR Council met a total of 9 times. Since July 2021, the PAR Council has not held sessions.

The evaluation is concluding that the work of the PAR Council was both political and professional, so it made a special contribution to the implementation of the PAR Strategy and AP. However, the current composition of the PAR Council, which was formed in March 2022, has not held any sessions so far. Representatives of


\(^{18}\) Minutes from the meetings of the PAR Council are published on the MISA website https://mioa.gov.mk/?q=mk/node/2103

\(^{19}\) Only for 2019.

\(^{20}\) Draft Law on Amendments to the Law on Public Employees, Draft Law on Amendments to the Law on Administrative Servants and Draft Law on Senior Management Service.

\(^{21}\) Institutional Mapping Reports, prepared by UNDP and Reorganization and optimization of state administration bodies, agencies and inspection services at the central level (IPA 2017).
the civil sector or the professional public have not participated in the work of the PAR Council so far, except for experts engaged in projects for the reorganization of public administration.

To improve its efficiency it is recommended that the PAR Council meet at least twice a year - in the third quarter of the year to review and adopt the six-monthly report on the implementation of the PAR and in the first quarter of the year to review and adopt the annual report. Holding regular sessions of the PAR Council provides the necessary political support and commitment to the PAR process. In addition to these reports, it is useful to propose to the Council recommendations for possible revisions or changes to the Action Plan and the like. Also, to improve transparency and inclusiveness of the PAR process it is recommended that a public announcement be made of the PAR Council meetings, with a proposed agenda, for all interested parties from civil society and the expert public to apply for participation in the PAR Council session.

The Secretariat for Public Administration Reform (PAR Secretariat) was established in February 2018 by the decision of the Minister of Information Society and Administration. The PAR Secretariat provides expert and technical support to the PAR Council. Decisions on the establishment and composition of the PAR Secretariat do not envisage that representatives of civil society or other stakeholders may participate in its work. However, it was found that the sessions where the project reports on the reorganization of public administration were discussed were attended by experts engaged in the project and that they presented the results of their research and recommendations.

The most common topics that Secretariat debated were:
- Status of realization of the activities from the Action Plan of the Strategy for Public Administration Reform 2018 – 2022
- Budget for the Action Plan of the PAR Strategy (2018-2022)
- Inter-ministerial coordination in the process of public administration reform draft versions of the draft law on Organization and Work of the State Administration Bodies,
- Consideration of reports on the implementation of projects of key importance for the reorganization of public administration.

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23 Only for 2019.

24 Institutional Mapping Reports, prepared by UNDP and Reorganization and optimization of state administration bodies, agencies and inspection services at the central level (IPA 2017).
In June 2019 the PAR Secretariat discussed the need for an Operational Plan for the PAR Strategy implementation and concluded that a workshop would be held to make a template for the Operational Plan for the implementation of the PAR Strategy. However, it was not noticed that such templates were made so that the Operational Plans for the implementation of the PAR Strategy were adopted and implemented.

The PAR Secretariat has the authority to give an opinion on the interconnectedness and harmonization of the strategic documents (strategies, programs, plans, policies, etc.) relevant to the PAR process. However, the Minutes of the PAR Secretariat does not show that in the period from February 2018 to June 2021, the PAR Secretariat considered any other strategic document related to PAR, apart from the PAR Strategy and Action Plan.

The PAR Secretariat had meetings from February 2018 to June 2021. From then until the day of making this report (one year) the Secretariat had no meetings.

The PAR Secretariat has played a significant operational and expert role in the process of implementing the PAR Strategy. Representatives of the most important stakeholders participated in its work and the opportunity was used to establish inter-institutional cooperation and coordination. The PAR Secretariat regularly reviewed and adopted reports on the implementation of the PAR Strategy and AP and key results within the most important public administration reorganization projects. However, the opportunity for this Secretariat to perform its coordinating function concerning other strategic documents has not been used. Also, the PAR Secretariat did not meet for a year. In its current composition, the PAR Secretariat had only one session. Representatives of the civil sector or the professional public have not participated in the work of the PAR Secretariat so far, except for experts engaged in projects for the reorganization of public administration.

It is recommended that the PAR Secretariat meet at least 4 times a year – after the end of each quarter - and certainly before the PAR Council meetings (the first and second quarter of the year). Also, a public

25 In the period 2018-2022, several strategic documents that have or may have significance for the par process have been implemented, adopted or drafted, such as the National operational broadband plan, and the National plan for quality management in the public sector (2018-2020), Open data strategy and action plan 2018-2020, draft Program for public financial management reform 2022-2025 and draft Action plan for 2022 - for public financial management reform, Economic reform program 2022 - 2024, Sustainable local development and decentralization program 2021 - 2026, Strategy for regional development of the Republic of North Macedonia 2021-2031 with the Program for the implementation of the strategy for regional development of the Republic of North Macedonia 2021-2024, Strategy for transparency of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia (2019-2021), National Strategy for development of the concept of society and interculturalism 2020-2022.

announcement should be made of the PAR Secretariat meetings, with a proposed agenda, for all interested parties from civil society and the expert public to apply for participation in the PAR Secretariats’ session.

**The Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MIOA)** is responsible for performing the activities related to the public administration reform. It is a key institution responsible for managing and monitoring the implementation of the PAR process in the MK. At the same time, all other institutions involved as holders or participants in activities have a responsibility to implement them. Monitoring and reporting on the PAR process are carried out by the MISA. Every six months to the PAR Council, and once a year to the Government of the MK MISA submits a Report on the implementation of the PAR Strategy and AP 2018-2022. The reports are published on the website of MISA and GMK. Within the MISA, the Sector for Administration has been formed, which includes the Department for Policy Making and Analysis in PAR and the Department for coordination of the PAR Strategy.

The Department for Policy Making and Analysis in PAR is responsible for:
- developing policies and strategies related to PAR, as well as conducting analyses on the impact of policies in the field of public administration on other processes in the country;
- coordinating and monitoring the implementation of policies, regulations, strategies, programs and action plans in the field of PAR;
- coordination and harmonization with the programs and priorities of the Government, ensuring consistency and coherence with the strategic documents in the field of PAR;
- assessment of the impact of the reforms in the public sector institutions on the strategic priorities of the Government regarding the PAR;
- proposing concepts of amending laws, by-laws and other systemic issues and initiating the solution of certain problems in the field of PAR.

The Department for coordination of the PAR Strategy is responsible for:
- coordination and monitoring of PAR Strategy;
- providing expert and logistical support to the PAR coordination mechanism, including the PAR Council, the PAR Secretariat, the Working Group and the PAR Contact Network from leading and other participating institutions;
- Improving the cooperation of MISA with the bodies responsible for the implementation of the PAR Strategy and with civil society organizations in the process of monitoring the implementation of the PAR Strategy;
- preparation of semi-annual and annual reports for implementation of PAR Strategy;
- preparation of documents and pieces of training to more efficiently perform the tasks related to the implementation of the PAR Strategy;
- ensuring successful implementation of the PAR process by strengthening coordination mechanisms that will include the organization of consultations, coordination meetings, pieces of training, guidelines and other tools that will contribute to more effective coordination;
- following the recommendations contained in the reports of international organizations regarding the PAR Strategy.

In addition to these two, some other organizational units in the MISA are responsible for PAR-related affairs. The Department for Consent of Internal Organization and Job Systematization Acts and Annual Employment Plans of State and Local Government Bodies are responsible (inter alia) for coordinating and supporting the implementation of PAR-related policies in the public sector. The Department for Consent of the acts for internal organization and systematization of jobs and annual plans of the institutions from the activities and the public enterprises is also responsible for the same work. The Department for Strategic Planning also performs the activities for the preparation of opinions, information, and annual and quarterly reports on the implementation and achievements of the strategic plans.

The filling of vacancies in the key departments of the Sector for Administration indicates the capacity of the MISA to successfully coordinate and monitor the implementation of the PAR Strategy. At the moment of preparing this Report, there are a total of 19 vacancies in the Sector, of which 8 are filled and 11 are unfilled. The structure is as follows:

- **Sector for Administration:**
  - Head of the sector - one unfilled,
  - Assistant Head of Department - one filled;
- **Department for Policy Making and Analysis in PAR:**
  - Head - one unfilled,
  - Advisor - two unfilled,
  - Senior Associate - one filled,
  - Junior Associate - one filled;
- **Department for coordination of the PAR Strategy:**
  - Head - one filled
  - Advisor - one filled,
  - Collaborator - one unfilled,
  - Junior associate – three positions, two of which filled one unfilled.

The research shows that the MISA is responsible for coordinating the development and implementation of the PAR Strategy. Within MISA, there are organizational capacities and such competence is envisaged and organizational units and jobs have been formed. However, it is noted that several different internal organizational units have the same or very similar responsibilities concerning the PAR coordination process.
Also, positions in these departments are not all filled. First of all, the head of the Administration Sector is missing - a key internal organizational unit for PAR-related affairs.

The evaluation is recommending to MISA to define precisely the internal acts of the organization and systematization the division of PAR-related tasks among organizational units. All systematized positions in Sector for Administration (with both key departments for PAR Strategy) should be filled with adequate personnel. It is especially important to fill the position of the head of the sector, which brings together and organizes all activities related to the planning of the PAR Strategy, its implementation and monitoring.

The Working group for implementation of the measures from the Action Plan of the PAR Strategy (hereinafter: the WG) was established in September 2018 and revised in December 2020\(^{27}\). The State Secretary for Information Society and Administration was in charge of implementing the vertical coordination of the measures from the AP. The WG consisted of priority area coordinators, coordinators and members of the working subgroups, and a secretary and deputy secretary for implementation of the measures from the AP. Four coordinators were appointed for each priority area of the PAR Strategy. For each specific goal within the priority area, a separate subgroup was formed. They consist of civil servants in charge of the activities within which it is planned to implement the activities and measures from the Action Plan. Individual members are appointed in several subgroups, given their responsibilities and the responsibilities of the position to which they are assigned. A total of 73 civil servants participated in the work of the WG from September 2018 till today. In the first composition from September 2018 to December 2020, the WG consisted of a total of 41 civil servants. In the second composition, from December 2020 until today, 57 civil servants participate in the WG. From the previous (the first one) composition, 25 civil servants continued to participate in the second composition of the WG, while 32 new ones joined. From the first composition of the WG, 16 civil servants do not participate in the implementation of the Action Plan through its second composition.

### Figure 2 The number of civil servants engaged in the WG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>WG of September 2018</th>
<th>41</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>WG of December 2020</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The difference in absolute numbers</td>
<td>+16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Percentage difference</td>
<td>+39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Number of members no longer in the WG</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Percentage of members no longer in the WG</td>
<td>39%</td>
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</table>

\(^{27}\) Decision on establishing a Working Group for implementation of the measures from the Action Plan of the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2018-2022 in the Ministry of Information Society and Administration
The Secretary and Deputy Secretary of the WG are appointed by MISA to perform the following tasks: collecting, processing and updating data on the level of realization and achieved results from the AP and providing administrative and technical support to the WG. To provide timely information on the level of implementation of the measures of the AP, for which MISA is the bearer, a system for the early warning was planned to be established, with a digital table for monitoring activities every month. The Secretary / Deputy Secretary of the WG collects information from the coordinators of the working subgroups on the activities envisaged for the next month with an assessment of the probability of timely fulfilment of the envisaged activities, the risks that may occur in meeting the deadlines and explanation if there is a delay in the implementation of the measures and activities. Based on the information gathered, the secretary of the WG prepares an early warning report which is submitted to the Secretary of State for Information Society and Administration, the coordinators of the priority areas and the Coordination Unit of the PAR Strategy. The report consists of two parts - the first part, which contains information on the status of implemented activities and the second part, which contains information on planned activities and implementation risks. Based on a solution is possible for certain specific issues related to the measures of the Action Plan, the Secretary of State, at the proposal of each of the coordinators of the priority areas may include employees of the Department of Financial issues, the Department for IT support, the Department for IPA funds, as well as other employees of MISA.²⁸

The research shows that coordinative process was ensured through WG. It was organized by the decision of MISA, as a unique team for the implementation and enforcement of the PAR Strategy and Action Plan. Within WG the work was organized in subgroups by priority areas and specific objectives within those areas. Coordinators for each priority area, coordinators and members of subgroups have been precisely identified. No special powers and tasks of the coordinator or team members have been established - neither in general nor in subgroups. The WG members are appointed primarily based on their assignment to appropriate job positions in their institutions - positions in whose competence is the performance of certain tasks relevant to the implementation of the specific objective of the PAR Strategy and AP. However, it is noted that according to the current internal acts of the MISA (and other involved institutions), knowledge of the entire strategic PAR process or change management skills is not necessary for an assignment to these positions. Also, there

²⁸ This competence of the Secretary of State ceased with the new Decision on the establishment of the Working Group from December 2020.

²⁹ Rulebook on job systematization in the Ministry of Information Society and Administration

is a large fluctuation of working group members. Over a period of just over two years, over 56% of WG members have changed (dismissed or newly appointed).

To improve efficiency of the WG members it is recommended to determine the specific powers, responsibilities and tasks of the coordinators by priority areas, as well as the coordinators of individual subgroups (by specific objectives). All WG members should also receive special training program on "PAR Process" and "Change Management and Communication" before or immediately after their appointment and direct involvement in the PAR process. Continuous training of coordinators - "contact points" - in areas relevant to PAR and change management is recommended. For that, MISA should build capacities for conducting such "horizontal trainings" and seek coordination and synergy in the sectoral training initiatives of the line ministries and agencies.

"Contact points" are coordinators of PAR activities from institutions outside the MISA who are directly involved in the execution of the Action Plan. The appointment of coordinators (contact persons) in the bodies involved in the PAR is envisaged by the PAR Strategy, in response to the risks related to the coordination of cooperation between institutions. This "network" of civil servants was established in 2019 and was revised a year later in 2020. Since then (according to data from the official website of MISA) has not changed. Contact persons for PAR from the institutions holding and participating in activities receive instructions from the PAR Secretariat and the PAR WG. For reporting purposes, the PAR WG collects data electronically from PAR contact persons, and the accuracy and timeliness of the data are confirmed by an official letter from institutions.

According to the list of nominated contact persons from 2019, 39 institutions (not including MISA) were supposed to appoint their PAR coordinators. This was done by 30 institutions, which appointed a total of 42 contact persons. In 2020, 36 institutions were to appoint their contact persons for PAR. This was done by 30 institutions, which appointed a total of 47 contact persons. In total, 25 contact persons from 2019 to 2020 were changed, and an additional 5 were appointed. The percentage of fluctuation was almost 60%.

### Figure 3 Fluctuation of “Contact points”

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Contact points in 2019</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Number of institutions that appointed “contact point” in 2019</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Number of institutions that did not name a &quot;contact point&quot; in 2019</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Contact points in 2020</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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30 [https://mioa.gov.mk/?q=mk/node/2103](https://mioa.gov.mk/?q=mk/node/2103)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Number of institutions that appointed “contact points” in 2020</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Number of institutions that did not name a &quot;contact point&quot; in 2020</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Percentage difference (2020-2019)</td>
<td>+12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Complete change of &quot;contact points&quot; - in absolute numbers (2020-2019)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Complete change of &quot;contact points&quot; - in per cent (2020-2019)</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The research shows that between 2019 and 2020 the difference in the appointed contact persons is large. 71% of "contact points" nominated in 2019 are changed after one year. This can harm the practice and mechanisms for coordination and cooperation between institutions - coordination between institutions can become weak and insufficient.

Thus, continuity and "institutional memory" need to be ensured in a situation where key PAR coordinators are changing. It is recommended to ensure the takeover of staff changes, according to relevant rules and regulations that are in power in public administration institutions. A common portal for coordination and reporting (led by MISA) is also needed and helpful in coordinative process so that all information regarding the implementation of the PAR Action Plan is in one place.

Monitoring the outflow of staff should be a constant activity. It is proposed that a new activity for a new AP should be a separate analysis: Why do civil servants leave ministries and other PA bodies and where do they most often go? What can attract or keep them in the state administration? A human resource management information system should be developed as a tool for strategic planning and human resource management, enabling MISA and the Human Resources Sectors to analyze human resource data, produce analytical reports, consistently plan measures and to monitor their impact. If possible within the new methodological frame, in addition to the implementing institution and the partner-implementing institution, put in the new AP the institution responsible for monitoring and controlling the implementation of the measure/activity.

Main analytical efforts were provided by SIGMA through their Assessments of PAR, which served as important inputs in the preparation of the Strategy. The evaluation showed that certain limitations and weaknesses proved to be extremely relevant and, in some cases, important obstacles to achieving results in all strategic pillars - priority areas. In particular, weak institutional capacities and overburdened systems remained problematic to achieve some results, as explained in the section on efficiency below.

The research showed that the goals of the PAR strategy were largely relevant and can still be considered relevant. The conclusion of most of the interviews and the results of the Questionnaire show that the more these goals are achieved, the more the capacity of the administration will be developed. What is necessary for the new cycle of the PAR Strategy is to provide qualitative evaluation and monitoring of the realized deliveries.
planned by the action plan (documents, analyses, regulations, pieces of training, etc.) in a qualitative sense. Namely, it was pointed out that the monitoring of execution is carried out at the technical level and in quantitative terms, but that it is necessary that the monitoring of delivered "products" includes checking their quality. Thus, it is necessary to provide evaluation and monitoring of the achieved deliveries that are planned in the action plan (documents, analyses, regulations, training, etc.) in a qualitative sense. The evaluation and monitoring of the delivered "products" should include their quality. A gap analysis for the function of qualitative monitoring and evaluation of products from PAR Strategy and AP should check: Who within the system monitors the quality of delivered documents (draft regulations, analysis, training, etc.), what methodology is applied, whether there is a response system If the products do not meet the needs of the PAR Strategy, what is the reporting on the quality of delivered products? Based on a gap analysis, the specific recommendations for strengthening the function of qualitative monitoring and evaluation in the implementation of the PAR Strategy will be determined. So, it is necessary to improve the function of qualitative evaluation and monitoring of projects within PAR, to determine how much is produced by the specific and general objectives of the strategy, whether it is quality and appropriate, and whether it is what was needed.

**Finding 9.** In the activities carried out, the PAR Strategy and its AP generated timely results through the most efficient use of financial and human resources and partnerships (JC3.1).

The research confirms that inter-institutional cooperation and coordination in the implementation of the AP were satisfactory. When considering those activities that have been implemented, the PAR Strategy and its AP have generated timely results through the most efficient possible use of financial and human resources and partnerships. Inter-institutional coordination has helped reduce transaction costs.

The partnership with the civil society sector was generally satisfactory. The civil sector has been involved in the development of the PAR Strategy and AP from the very beginning. During the implementation process, AP MISA regularly informed the professional public about the achieved results, reports were published, and the civil sector was invited to contribute its comments and suggestions. However, the fact is that in the revision phase of the AP (December 2019) the civil sector was not involved. Also, during the period of implementation of the PAR Strategy and the AP, no periodic measurements of user (public) satisfaction with the achieved results were performed.

The Change Management Plan with the communication plan was missing. The PAR Secretariat initiated the development of such a plan, but it was not implemented. So, it is recommended that the new PAR Strategy and AP be accompanied by an appropriate plan for their implementation and accompanied Communication plan. It is necessary to ensure the PAR is "manifestly efficient". It is recommended to promote "champions of
reform” and all positive examples. Also, it is helpful to announce certain changes in advance to reduce resistance.

6.4. COHERENCE

EQ 4. Were financial resources efficiently used in support of the implementation of the PAR Strategy? Have these led to the improvement of the PAR Strategy indicators?

Finding 10. The scale of resources deployed for the PAR Strategy and AP has been appropriate for each strategic objective (JC4.1).

At the beginning, of February 2018 total planned funds for implementation of the measures and realization of the activities envisaged in the PAR Action Plan 2018 - 2022 amount to 2,364,683,700.00\(^3\) denars (MKD) or individually by areas:
- Area 1, Policy-Making and Coordination - 791,252,500.00 MKD;
- Area 2, Public Service and Human Resources Management - 24,319,000.00 MKD;
- Area 3, Accountability, accountability and transparency - 384,327,300.00 MKD;
- Area 4, Provision of services and ICT support to the administration - 1,164,784,900.00 MKD.

Of the total funds, it was planned at the beginning to finance
- 807,589,500.00 MKD from the budget of the MK,
- 1,332,750,000.00 MKD through funds and instruments of the European Union and
- 224,644,200.00 MKD from other donations.

Certain activities that were included in the calculation did not have a confirmation of secured funds included and are potential assets, which represent a financial gap in the total amount of 841,348,833.00 MKD or 35.6% of total planned funds.

This estimate of required costs was revised in 2019. The total amount of funds has been reduced to 1,802,139,304.00\(^3\) denars or individually by areas:
- Area 1, Policy-Making and Coordination – 791,297,500.00 MKD or 43.91% of total needed funds;
- Area 2, Public Service and Human Resources Management – 37,674,000.00 MKD or 2.09% of total needed funds.

\(^3\) PAR Strategy.

\(^3\) Annual report on the implementation of the action plan of the strategy for public administration reform 2018-2022 for the period January-December 2021.
- Area 3, Accountability, accountability and transparency – 172,080,190.00 MKD or 9.55% of total needed funds;
- Area 4, Provision of services and ICT support to the administration – 801,087,614.00 MKD or 44.45% of total needed funds.

After revision in December 2019, of the total funds, it was planned to finance
- 425,160,404.00 MKD from the budget of the MK,
- 783,205,400.00 MKD through funds and instruments of the European Union and
- 63,238,500.00 MKD from other donations.
- 530,535,000.00 MKD from different sources like potential donors, the budget of the MK, OSCE Mission in MK etc.

For 38 out of 208 activities from the AP (18% of all activities or 34,988,500 NMD), it was stated that they will be financed from "potential donor support". It is not specified from which donor or who should initiate such support. At the same time, in the interviews and through the focus groups, it was noted that there was a problem with funding for some activities and that they could not be implemented because of that.

The current PAR Strategy and AP can serve as an example of a quality design approach. However, the assessment of the required financial resources (costing) could have been better at the beginning. A Guideline for setting standardized expenditures for Government strategies has been prepared under the current AP; it’s adopted and published on the website of the Ministry of Finance. Thus, a consistent implementation of the new Costing Guidelines for Strategies, laws and policies, adopted by the Ministry of Finance, should be ensured.

The necessary financial resources in the AP are too often provided by the so-called "Potential donor support", without specifying from which donor and who should initiate the process for obtaining these funds. It is recommended that the activities be elaborated on in detail and to include the Ministry of Finance in the costing process from the beginning. Special programming of funds for PAR, through the K-6 program, should be used

33 Guidelines for determining the costs of strategies, laws and policies https://finance.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/%D0%A3%D0%9F%D0%90%D0%A2%D0%A1%D0%A2%D0%92%D0%9E-%D0%97%D0%90-%D0%A3%D0%A2%D0%92%D0%A0%D0%94%D0%A3%D0%92%D0%90%D0%8A%D0%95-%D0%9D%D0%90-%D0%A2%D0%A0%D0%9E%D0%A8%D0%9E%D0%A6%D0%98%D0%A2%D0%95-%D0%97%D0%90-%D0%A1%D0%A2%D0%A0%D0%90%D0%A2%D0%95%D0%93%D0%98%D0%A2%D0%95-%D0%97%D0%90-%D0%9A%D0%9E%D0%9D%D0%98%D0%A2%D0%95-%D0%98-%D0%9F%D0%9E%D0%9B%D0%98%D0%A2%D0%98%D0%9A%D0%98%D0%A2%D0%95.pdf
for planning funds from the state budget. As it is planned to adopt a new PAR Strategy and Action Plan after the adoption of the budget for 2023, it is necessary to take into account activities funded by the budget in the first half of 2023. These activities will not be able or can be conditionally financed from the budget. For that, the activities that already have or will be able to receive donor support or the activities that are already continuously funded in the institutions should be planned.

6.5. IMPACT

**EQ 5.** To what extent the General objective of the PAR Strategy has been reached? What real difference has the Strategy made to the beneficiaries (administration, business, and citizens)?

**Finding 11.** The implementing institutions acknowledge that the Strategy was influential in the reform process. Everything that has been realized from the AP has affected the achievement of the goals of the PAR Strategy, but these are mostly measures of an internal nature so this impact is not sufficiently visible outside the public administration (JC5.1).

The general objective of the PAR Strategy was set to be the creation of efficient and service-oriented public administration, characterized by the increase of citizens' trust in its performance. Out of a total of 205 planned activities, 106 were implemented according to the plan, 19 activities are in progress, and 80 activities are late in implementation or their implementation has not started as planned. It is 61% of the planned activities were successfully realized. This is a partial success in the implementation of the PAR Strategy. However, the respondents assess that everything that was realized had a real impact on the work of public administration. And it is expected that after the final activities by the end of 2022, this impact will be even greater. The implemented measures are mostly internal, so they are not directly visible to citizens and the economy.

A set of new "key values" for the new PAR Strategy is necessary for the activities to be maximally effective. Thus, it is recommended in the process of preparation of the new PAR Strategy and AP to promote the key values for defining measures and activities and for their implementation. Such values are recommended: digitalization of public services, involvement of the private sector whenever possible, and improvement of IT systems and interoperability, and continuous measurement of the quality and availability of public services. This is also connected with the communication of PAR.

Furthermore, the research found that most effects were expected from those measures and activities that directly affect: the legality of work, free access to information, consultative processes with civil society, and
EU accession. Not all of them were implemented, due to unchanged laws, but what was implemented, primarily within the openness of the administration, had positive effects.

Thus, it is recommended for the new PAR Strategy and AP to continue with those measures and activities that directly affect: the legality of work, free access to information, consultative processes with civil society, EU accession, strengthening managerial responsibility, meritocracy, professionalism, human resource management, citizens' trust in public administration.

6.6. SUSTAINABILITY

**EQ 6. To what extent are future PAR interventions sustainable in terms of funding and to what extent are the AP PAR stakeholder capacities sustainable?**

**Finding 12.** What has been implemented is sustainable and it is needed to ensure continued funding in areas that have been successfully implemented (JC6.1.).

It was emphasized in the interviews that what has been done is sustainable. At the same time, however, it is noted that in the activities where support was provided through IPA, the implementation and sustainability were higher. But, in interviews and Focus group discussions it is noticed that there is certain fatigue with the PAR process; especially since the wording “reform” shows that it is a process that has no end. This is discouraging and creates additional resistance to change. Thus, it is recommended to plan communication activities that will reduce that and that will indicate the ongoing process of improving the work of the public administration. This would encourage PAR participants and give an extra positive impact and help overcome resistance to change. It is connected with the communication of the PAR process, as well.

Also, where political support is needed to implement activities/measures, prior consultation with political leadership is required in the process of planning a new PAR Strategy and AP. With political leadership it should be checked: How likely is it that necessary political support will be permanent? If not - it is recommended to adapt the activity/measure to such circumstances and to plan what is possible to realize it.

The informants also stressed that sustainability depended too much on donor support. Thus, it is recommended where donor support is planned, it is necessary to anticipate specific tasks, responsibilities and deadlines to receive it. It is recommended in that direction to involve in advance (in the planning phase) all interested parties, and especially employed in the IPA unit in the interested institution.

7. Key conclusions
7.1. **RELEVANCE**

27. **The required level of transparency and inclusiveness was not maintained during the entire process of implementing the PAR Strategy and AP 2018-2022.**

The required level of transparency and inclusiveness was noted at the very beginning, when planning the PAR Strategy and AP. However, he was not retained during the entire 2018-2022 process. The Civil Sector was involved in the preparation of the current PAR Strategy and AP, and public calls were issued for comments on periodical reports on implementation. However, in the process of revision of the AP, transparency was not at the same level.

28. **The goals of the PAR Strategy were largely relevant and can still be considered relevant for the upcoming PAR Strategy and AP.**

It was assessed during the investigation that the objectives of the PAR Strategy were well set. The guidelines of SIGMA were followed in this respect, so that they were largely relevant all the time, and that for the upcoming PAR Strategy and AP they can be considered as a solid basis for their definition.

29. **The PAR Council and the PAR Secretariat did not use the full capacity for coordination and cohesion of the PAR Strategy with other sectoral strategies related to PAR.**

According to the minutes of the PAR Council and the PAR Secretariat, it is not indicated that these bodies considered related strategic documents and plans to ensure coherence and consistency during the implementation of PAR Strategy and AP in the period 2018-2022.

30. **Institutional responsibility for the implementation of certain measures/activities is not everywhere precise in the current AP.**

Individual institutional responsibility was not foreseen everywhere, in many places (in the activities) "all state bodies" were listed as responsible institutions.

31. **Types of measures are not specified in the AP.**

The current AP does not specify the types of measures which may make it difficult to assess the relevance of the measures and their impact.

32. **Monitoring and controlling institutional responsibility is not predicted in the AP.**

The current AP lists the implementing institution and the implementing partner for each activity. However, the institutions that should have been responsible for monitoring and controlling the implementation of the measure/activity are not listed.

33. **There are unrealized activities from the current AP which are still relevant.**

For 12 unrealized activities from the current AP the relevance matrix research showed they are still relevant, i.e. there are enough resources for their implementation and their impact on citizens and the economy is direct. Also, for 28 unrealized activities, there are not enough necessary resources (financial, human or material). The 11 unrealized activities are estimated to have no direct impact on citizens and the economy and certainly, the necessary resources cannot be provided, so these activities are not relevant.
7.2. EFFECTIVENESS

34. The monitoring of execution of the AP is carried out at the technical level and in quantitative terms, but not in the sense of quality of produced documents, analysis, regulations, training etc.

Qualitative evaluation and monitoring of the realized deliveries planned by the AP (documents, analyses, regulations, pieces of training, etc.) is missing. The monitoring of execution is carried out at the technical level and in quantitative terms, but that it is necessary that the monitoring of delivered "products" includes checking their quality.

35. Indicators were not all relevant.

Indicators were not all relevant. For a total of 13 indicators, out of 73 (18%), there was no data or the indicator could not be measured. Therefore, it could not be determined to what extent the activity was carried out and whether its relevance was achieved.

36. Failure to perform one activity within the measure leads to blocking the implementation of the entire measure.

Certain activities in the current AP were the key to the implementation of the whole measure. Due to their non-implementation, the implementation of the whole measure was blocked, and since they were not recognized as crucial, it was not possible to react in time and adjust or revise the measure.

37. The successful cases and “reform champions” are noticeable but not promoted.

Measures and activities that directly affect: the legality of work, free access to information, consultative processes with civil society, and EU accession have direct and noticeable effects. With them, the PAR process becomes directly manifested towards the citizens and the economy. Reform champions in these areas can be spotted and promoted.

38. The local self-government is a part of the public sector and provider of public services, but not a part of the PAR Strategy and AP.

The role of LSGs in public administration reform is very relevant and responds to the needs and challenges that LSGs face in terms of providing efficient and effective service delivery to citizens and the economy. However, the use of the role of the LSG level is not expressed in this PAR Strategy and AP.

39. Unrealized measures are mostly of a legislative nature.

The implementation of much of the current AP depended on legislative activity, which was absent due to the pandemic and government reshuffle. Regulatory change has been a key activity in 13 measures from the current AP. As these key activities were not implemented, all other activities within these measures could not be implemented.

7.3. EFFICIENCY

40. There is a new methodological framework for preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and reporting of strategic documents.
Trogh realization of the current AP a methodological framework for preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and reporting of future strategic documents in the public administration has been established

41. The PAR Council made special contribution in the implementation of PAR Strategy, but its sessions are missing for more than a year.

The work of the PAR Council was both political and professional, so it made a special contribution to the implementation of the PAR Strategy and AP. However, the current composition of the PAR Council, which was formed in March 2022, has not held any sessions so far. Representatives of the civil sector or the professional public have not participated in the work of the PAR Council so far, except for experts engaged in projects for the reorganization of public administration.

42. The PAR Secretariat has played a significant operational and expert role in the process of implementing the PAR Strategy, but its sessions are missing for more than a year.

The PAR Secretariat has played a significant operational and expert role in the process of implementing the PAR Strategy. Representatives of the most important stakeholders participated in its work and the opportunity was used to establish inter-institutional cooperation and coordination. The PAR Secretariat regularly reviewed and adopted reports on the implementation of the PAR Strategy and AP and key results within the most important public administration reorganization projects. However, the opportunity for this Secretariat to perform its coordinating function concerning other strategic documents has not been used. Also, the PAR Secretariat did not meet for a year. In its current composition, the PAR Secretariat had only one session. Representatives of the civil sector or the professional public have not participated in the work of the PAR Secretariat so far, except for experts engaged in projects for the reorganization of public administration.

43. There are organizational capacities in MISA for coordination role in PAR, but not enough HR capacities.

MISA is responsible for coordinating the development and implementation of the PAR Strategy. Within MISA, there are organizational capacities and such competence is envisaged and organizational units and jobs have been formed. However, it is noted that several different internal organizational units have the same or very similar responsibilities concerning the PAR coordination process. Also, positions in these departments are not all filled. First of all, the head of the Administration Sector is missing - a key internal organizational unit for PAR-related affairs.

44. The PAR Working ensured coordinative process.

The coordinative process was ensured through WG. It was organized by the decision of MISA, as a unique team for the implementation and enforcement of the PAR Strategy and Action Plan. Within WG the work was organized in subgroups by priority areas and specific objectives within those areas.

45. There are coordinators appointed in each PAR working group and subgroup.
Coordinators for each priority area, coordinators and members of subgroups have been precisely identified. No special powers and tasks of the coordinator or team members have been established - neither in general nor in subgroups

**46. Support for coordinators and members of PAR working groups exists, but it can be further improved.**

The WG members are appointed primarily based on their assignment to appropriate job positions in their institutions - positions in whose competence is the performance of certain tasks relevant to the implementation of the specific objective of the PAR Strategy and AP. However, it is noted that according to the current internal acts of the MISA (and other involved institutions), knowledge of the entire strategic PAR process or change management skills are not necessary for an assignment to these positions

**47. Civil servants who directly participate in PAR activities change frequently.**

There is a large fluctuation of working group members. Over a period of just over two years, over 56% of WG members have changed (dismissed or newly appointed). Between 2019 and 2020 the difference in the appointed contact persons is large. 71% of "contact points" nominated in 2019 are changed after one year. This can harm the practice and mechanisms for coordination and cooperation between institutions - coordination between institutions can become weak and insufficient.

**48. PAR Strategy and AP were implemented with maximum use of available resources. The Change Management Plan and Communication Plan were missing**

Research has shown that the Strategy of the RJU and AP have been implemented with the maximum use of available resources (financial, human and material), however, although it was planned, the Change Management Plan and the Communication Plan for communicating PAR activities were not completed.

### 7.4. COHERENCE

**49. The process of designing the PAR Strategy was very good, but the costing could have been better at the beginning.**

The current PAR Strategy and AP can serve as an example of a quality design approach. However, the assessment of the required financial resources (costing) could have been better at the beginning. A Guideline for setting standardized expenditures for Government strategies has been prepared under the current AP, it’s adopted and published on the website of the Ministry of Finance

**50. Funding sources were not precisely predicted for all measures/activities.**

The necessary financial resources in the AP are too often provided by the so-called "Potential donor support", without specifying from which donor and who should initiate the process for obtaining these funds

### 7.5. IMPACT
51. The implemented measures are mostly internal, so they are not directly visible to citizens and the economy.

The implemented measures are mostly internal, so they are not directly visible to citizens and the economy. A set of "key values" for the new PAR Strategy is necessary to be used for the activities to be with maximum impact.

7.6. SUSTAINABILITY

52. There is certain fatigue with the PAR process and it may be better communicated.

There is certain fatigue with the PAR process; especially since the wording "reform" shows that it is a process that has no end. This is discouraging and creates additional resistance to change.

8. Recommendations

8.1. RELEVANCE

28. To apply a new methodological framework in the development of the new PAR Strategy and AP.

General Secretariat of the Government should ensure the consistent application of the new methodological framework for preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and reporting for the new PAR Strategy and AP: the Methodology for the manner of preparation, monitoring of the implementation, evaluation and reporting of the sector strategies as strategic planning documents and the Guidance for the necessary elements and structure that the sector strategies should contain, the manner of monitoring the implementation, assessment and reporting. In this regard, it is necessary to organize training for employees who work on strategic planning, members of the new WG for the development of the new PAR Strategy and AP. Also, advisory support for the application of new methodological framework is necessary.

29. To improve the participation of the PAR Council and PAR Secretariat in coordinating other sectoral strategies with PAR.

It is recommended that all strategic and planning documents that have an impact and significance on the PAR process be submitted to the PAR Council and PAR Secretariat for consideration before adoption (during the preparation of these documents). This includes reports about their implementation, as well. It will ensure the coherence and coordination of strategic and planning documents relevant to the PAR promptly and prevent their overlap and opposition. In this regard, it is useful for the PAR Secretariat to identify and publish topics or areas that are of particular importance for the PAR process, within which it should be mandatory to consider proposals and drafts of strategic and planning documents.

30. To specify the individual institutional responsibility for the implementation of AP - in all measures/activities.
To avoid possible ambiguities and further improve the coordination and responsibilities of institutions in the implementation of AP it is needed to specify individual institutional responsibility in each specific activity in the new AP. For better coordination and relevance, it is useful to avoid the wording "all state authorities", where possible. Of course, it is possible that in the case of certain activities, the objects of change are all state bodies, in which case it is sufficient for the AP to specify those institutions that are responsible for initiating and monitoring the execution of the activity. This is linked to the need to have Change Management Plans for each PA measure.

31. **In the new AP, qualify measures according to their type.**

To assess the relevance, it is recommended in the new AP to determine the type of a measure: regulatory, incentive, information-educational, organizational-managerial-institutional, measure for provision of goods, provision of services, etc.

32. **To plan measures/activities that are of high relevance – with enough resources and with direct impact to citizens and economy (public sector as a provider of public services).**

In preparation for the new PAR Strategy and AP, it is recommended to use a matrix for the relevance of the measures/activities. The focus should be on those activities for which there is a direct impact on citizens and the economy and with sufficient resources. Priority in the new AP should be given to measures/activities that will improve service delivery, digitalization and interoperability.

8.2. **EFFECTIVNESS**

33. **To determine the activities that are crucial to the implementation of the entire measure.**

If an activity is crucial for the implementation of the whole measure, it is necessary to state. This will enable a simpler analysis and revision of the implementation of the measure - if the key activity is not realized according to the plan, it will be possible to react in time and adjust or revise the measure. Institutions and members of working groups will be able to focus on these activities. If there is a delay in their implementation, it will be possible to react in time.

34. **To include local self-government units in PAR.**

Where the achievement of the objectives of the measure includes the role of local self-government, they must be included in the AP. Consider the vertical implementation of each measure individually – Who should be included to achieve the specific goal? Considering that a representative of the organization of local self-government (LSG) also participates in the work of the PAR Council, there is a coordinating basis for the role of LSG in the new PAR Strategy and AP.

35. **To avoid changes to the normative framework if the PAR results can be achieved without it.**
When planning a change in the legal framework, it must be based on a full and detailed assessment of the application of the current one. In that way, a precise conclusion will be obtained – What is a reason in the current law for a specific goal of the PAR Strategy cannot be achieved?

Changes in the norms should be a "means" for achieving the PAR result, but not the result itself. In all cases when, based on the analysis, it is determined that even with the existing normative framework, one of the goals of PAR can be achieved, it is recommended that such a possibility be used. That's why it is necessary to involve the experts for norms in advance in the planning of measures/activities.

36. **To ensure and improve application of the competence frameworks for employees in public administration.**

Ensure their consistent application of existing competency framework in all cases. All WG’s members should have competencies that correspond with knowledge of PAR process, strategic management and change management. It is recommended that in the new AP an analysis should be planned that will test the competencies (required knowledge, abilities, skills, attitudes) of existing employees in the state administration bodies. Are the right people in the right place? This is related to the development of the Human Resource Management Information System.

8.3. **EFFICIENCY**

37. **To ensure the necessary transparency and inclusiveness in the PAR process.**

It is recommended to promote and strengthen the participation of all stakeholders in the process of drafting the new PAR Strategy and AP, especially the representatives of civil society organizations. This is related to the communication on the implementation of the measures and activities of the AP, as well as the entire PAR process.

It is recommended that a public announcement be made of the PAR Council and PAR Secretariat meetings, with a proposed agenda, for all interested parties from civil society and the expert public to apply for participation in the PAR Council session.

It is connected with the Plan for communication in the implementation of the PAR Strategy, which should exist. It is useful to have a separate portal with all relevant information relevant to the PAR process. Also, in order to promote all social activities or announce events, it is useful to periodically publish a newsletter with articles on topics related to PAR, which will be delivered electronically to all state administration and local self-government bodies.

38. **To ensure regular holding of PAR Council sessions, twice a year, and PAR Secretariat sessions quarterly, four times a year.**

It is recommended that the PAR Council meet at least twice a year - in July to review and adopt the six-monthly report on the implementation of the PAR and in January/February to review and adopt the annual
report. Holding regular sessions of the PAR Council provides the necessary political support and commitment to the PAR process. In addition to these reports, it is useful to propose to the Council recommendations for possible revisions or changes to the Action Plan and the like. It is recommended that the PAR Secretariat meet at least 4 times a year – after the end of each quarter - and certainly before the PAR Council meetings (June and January). This will ensure consistent monitoring at the technical level and the ability to respond to risks and unplanned events in a timely manner.

39. **To clarify the responsibilities of internal units in MISA for the PAR process.**
The MISA should precisely define the internal acts of the organization and systematization division of PAR-related tasks among organizational units. Clarifying the responsibilities of the internal units in MISA for the PAR process will avoid possible ambiguity and prevent overlapping or excessive synergy in the responsibilities for the implementation of activities related to the PAR Strategy and AP.

40. **To strengthen HR capacities within MISA for the PAR process.**
All systematized positions in Sector for Administration (with both key departments for PAR Strategy) should be filled with adequate personnel. It is especially important to fill the position of the head of the sector, which brings together and organizes all activities related to the planning of the PAR Strategy, its implementation and monitoring.
Staff should receive adequate and continuous training and advisory support on PAR-related topics.

41. **To specify the powers and responsibilities of the coordinators of Working groups and subgroups.**
It is recommended to determine the specific powers, responsibilities and tasks of the coordinators by priority areas, as well as the coordinators of individual subgroups (by specific objectives). Jobs within the WG are permanent and are part of the regular activities of the employees who are members of the WG. Accordingly, these jobs should be part of the regular business plans of internal units and employees in the institutions where they are carried out.

42. **To support the members of the Working group and “contact points” in the implementation of AP activities and strengthen their capacities for the PAR process.**
It is recommended that all WG members receive training on "PAR Process” and "Change Management and Communication" before or immediately after their appointment and direct involvement in the PAR process. Continuous training of coordinators - "contact points” - in areas relevant to PAR and change management is recommended. For that, MISA should build capacities for conducting such "horizontal trainings” and seek coordination and synergy in the sectoral training initiatives of the line ministries and agencies.
In order to maintain the necessary continuity in work, it is recommended to avoid appointing cabinet officials to operational working groups and subgroups for the implementation of the PAR Strategy and AP.

43. **To ensure the smooth implementation of the Action plan of the PAR Strategy, by preserving the "PAR institutional memory".**

Continuity and "institutional memory" need to be ensured in a situation where key PAR coordinators are changing. It is recommended to ensure the takeover of staff changes, according to relevant rules and regulations that are in power in public administration institutions.

44. **To provide information exchange and internal communication in implementing PAR Action plan through one ICT tool (portal).**

A common portal for coordination and reporting (led by MISA) is needed so that all information regarding the implementation of the PAR Action Plan is in one place. This will facilitate the exchange of information and improve internal communication regarding AP. Monitoring of execution and status of individual activities, as well as reporting will be facilitated. At the same time, individual responsibility for the implementation of AP activities will be improved. This should not require too much investment if one of the existing ICT tools could be used.

45. **To improve the policy of retaining quality personnel in the administration - analyze the reasons for excessive fluctuation of HR.**

Monitoring the outflow of staff should be a constant activity. It is proposed that a new activity for a new AP should be a separate analysis: Why do civil servants leave ministries and other PA bodies and where do they most often leave? What can attract or keep them in the state administration? A human resource management information system should be developed as a tool for strategic planning and human resource management, enabling MISA and the Human Resources Sectors to analyse human resource data, produce analytical reports, and consistently plan measures and to monitor their impact.

46. **To improve institutional responsibility for monitoring and controlling the implementation of PAR Action plan.**

If possible, within the new methodological frame, in addition to the implementing institution and the partner-implementing institution, to put in the new AP the institution responsible for monitoring and controlling the implementation of the measure/activity. At the sessions of the PAR Council and the PAR Secretariat, consider cases of delays or delays in the implementation of certain activities from AP. The institutions that are designated to control the implementation of individual measures/activities from the AP should have the possibility to give precise instructions or support to the institutions responsible for
implementation in cases of deviation from the AP. This will improve the implementation of the AP, but will also enable a timely response to unplanned events.

47. **The PAR Change Management Plans and PAR Communication Plans are required as documents that follow the PAR Strategy and Action plan.**

It is recommended that the new PAR Strategy and AP be accompanied by an appropriate plan for their implementation and accompanied Communication plan. It is necessary to ensure the PAR is "manifestly efficient". To promote "champions of reform" and all positive examples. Also, it is helpful to announce certain changes in advance to reduce resistance. Use the document “Monitoring, evaluation and reporting system for the public administration reform strategy and the action plan of the reform strategy of the public administration 2018 – 2022”.

8.4. **COHERENCE**

48. **To define prerequisites and institutional responsibility for cases when financial resources are not secure.**

If the provision of funds is uncertain, it is recommended to state in the new AP that the measure/activity is conditionally enforceable. Indicate which institution is responsible for initiating the receipt of donor support for such an activity.

Also, where donor support is planned, it is necessary to anticipate specific tasks, responsibilities and deadlines to receive it. It is recommended in that direction to involve in advance (in the planning phase) all interested parties, and especially employed in the IPA unit in the interested institution.

For activities that are not implemented by the permanent AP, and for which it is estimated that there is a lack of resources, donor support should be considered. In this regard, in the process of planning a new PAR Strategy and AP, units for international cooperation and IPA units in the affected institutions should be included in advance. It is recommended to consider appropriate ways of performing the activity, given the realistically available resources. If resources are unreliable, it is recommended to state that the activity will be performed only if resources are provided. Specifically, to consider and state in advance in the AP what resources are in question and who should provide them and by when. Consider alternatives to these activities, for which resources may be available - whether these alternatives can achieve specific goals of the PAR Strategy.

49. **To apply the new Guidelines for determining standardized expenditures for government strategies**

Consistent implementation of the new Guidelines for determining standardized expenditures for government strategies adopted by the Ministry of Finance should be ensured. For that, it is necessary for the Guidelines to be available to everyone, to provide the necessary training and advisory support for their application.
50. **Use the K-6 program for PAR budgeting and realistically plan activities for the first half of 2023.**

It is recommended that the activities be elaborated on in detail and to include the Ministry of Finance in the costing process from the beginning. Special programming of funds for PAR, through the K-6 program, should be used for planning funds from the state budget. As it is planned to adopt a new PAR Strategy and Action Plan after the adoption of the budget for 2023, it is necessary to take into account activities funded by the budget in the first half of 2023. These activities will not be able or can be conditionally financed from the budget. For that, the activities that already have or will be able to receive donor support or the activities that are already continuously funded in the institutions should be planned.

8.5. **IMPACT**

51. **To improve the qualitative monitoring and evaluation function of the PAR Action plan outputs.**

It is necessary to provide evaluation and monitoring of the achieved deliveries that are planned in the action plan (documents, analyses, regulations, training, etc.) in a qualitative sense. The evaluation and monitoring of the delivered "products" should include their quality. A gap analysis for the function of qualitative monitoring and evaluation of products from PAR Strategy and AP should check: Who within the system monitors the quality of delivered documents (draft regulations, analysis, training, etc.), what methodology is applied, whether there is a response system If the products do not meet the needs of the PAR Strategy, what is the reporting on the quality of delivered products? Based on a gap analysis, the specific recommendations for strengthening the function of qualitative monitoring and evaluation in the implementation of the PAR Strategy will be determined.

52. **In planning and implementing measures/activities, to start from the "key values" of PAR.**

It is recommended to promote the key values for defining measures and activities and for their implementation. Such values are recommended: digitalization of public services, involvement of the private sector whenever possible, and improvement of IT systems and interoperability, and continuous measurement of the quality and availability of public services. This is also connected with the change management and communication in implementing new PAR Strategy and AP.

It is recommended for the new PAR Strategy and AP to continue with those measures and activities that directly affect: the legality of work, free access to information, consultative processes with civil society, EU accession, strengthening managerial responsibility, meritocracy, professionalism, human resource management, citizens' trust in public administration.
8.6. **SUSTAINABILITY**

53. To strengthen support for PAR - reduce "reform fatigue".

Thus, it is recommended to plan communication activities that will reduce that and that will indicate the ongoing process of improving the work of the public administration. This would encourage PAR participants and give an extra positive impact and help overcome resistance to change. It is connected with the communication of the PAR process, as well.

54. In planning phase to check the existence of political support for individual measures/activities.

Where political support is needed to implement activities/measures, prior consultation with political leadership is required in the process of planning a new PAR Strategy and AP. With political leadership it should be checked: How likely is it that necessary political support will be permanent? If not - it is recommended to adapt the activity/measure to such circumstances and to plan what is possible to realize it.

In the reports on the implementation of the AP, single out those measures/activities for which the necessary political support/commitment is lacking and clearly indicate to the PAR Council and the PAR Secretariat what the consequences are. Allow sufficient flexibility of measures/activities so that they can be revised in cases of changes in political circumstances, without jeopardizing the achievement of the objectives of the PAR Strategy.

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9. **Annexes**

9.1. Annexe 1 Evaluation matrix
9.2. Annexe 2 Relevance matrix
9.3. Annexe 3 Map of key stakeholders
9.4. Annexe 4 Key dates
9.5. Annexe 5 Key informants
9.6. Annexe 6 Interview Guide
9.7. Annexe 7 Survey questionnaire
9.8. Annexe 8 Aggregated responses to the survey questionnaires
9.9. Annexe 9 List of consulted documents
9.10. Annexe 10 Methodology for evaluation
9.11. Annexe 11 Action plan for the preparation of the new strategy
9.12. Annexe 12 Recommendations for capacity building of the strategic and technical operational framework for PAR
9.13. Annexe 13 Workshop reports