European Commission

Digital Public Administration Factsheet 2020
Republic of North Macedonia

Table of Contents

1 | Country Profile

1 Country Profile

1.1 Basic data

Population: 2 077 132 inhabitants (2019)
GDP at market prices: 10 698 million Euros (2018)
GDP per inhabitant in PPS (Purchasing Power Standard EU 27=100): 38 (2019)
GDP growth rate: 2.7% (2018)
Inflation rate: 0.7% (2019)
Unemployment rate: 17.3% (2019)
General government gross debt (Percentage of GDP): 72.2%* (2019)
General government deficit/surplus (Percentage of GDP): -1.76%** (2018)
Area: 26 km²
Capital city: Skopje
**Official EU language**: Macedonian
Currency: MKD

Source**:** Eurostat (last update: 24 April 2020), National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia*, Country Economy**

1.2 Digital Public Administration Indicators

The following graphs present data for the latest Generic Information Society Indicators for the Republic of North Macedonia compared to the EU average. Statistical indicators in this section reflect those of Eurostat at the time the Edition is being prepared.

Percentage of individuals using the internet for interacting with public authorities in North Macedonia
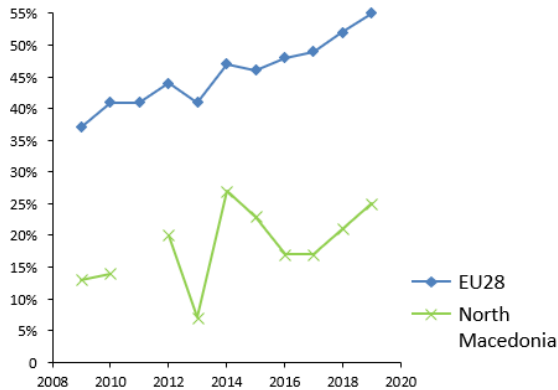
Source: Eurostat Information Society Indicators

Percentage of individuals using the internet for obtaining information from public authorities in North Macedonia
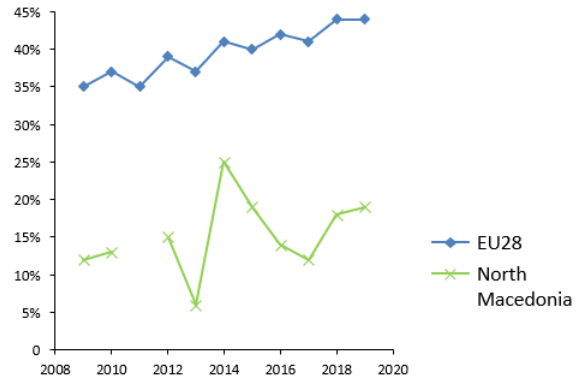
Source: Eurostat Information Society Indicators

Percentage of individuals using the internet for downloading official forms from public authorities in North Macedonia
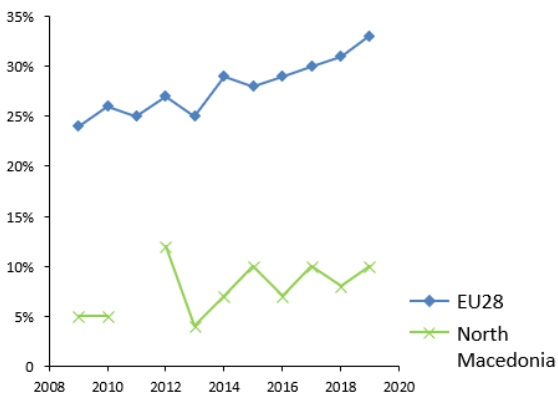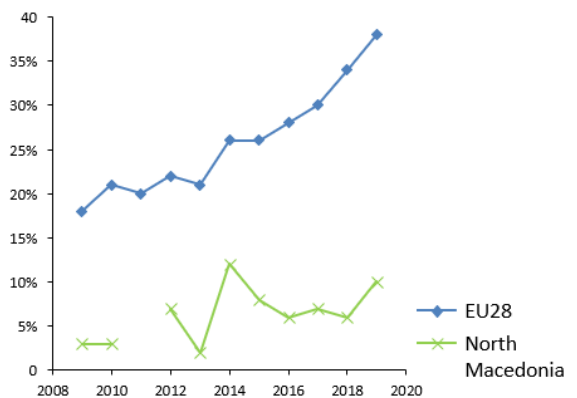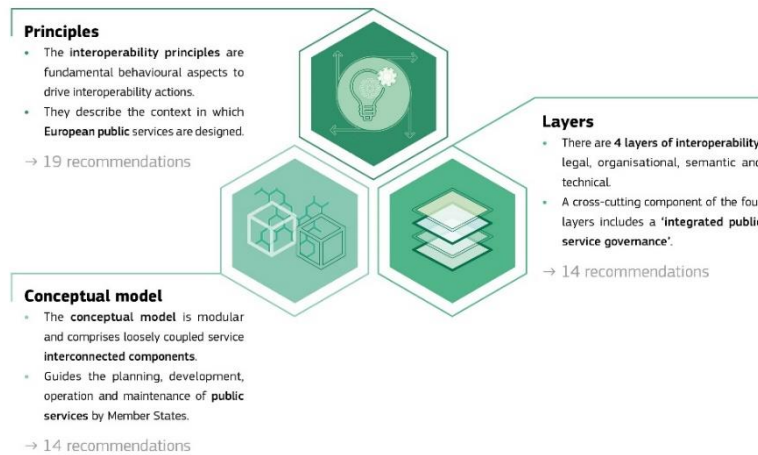

Source: Eurostat Information Society Indicators

Percentage of individuals using the internet for sending filled forms to public authorities in North Macedonia

Source: Eurostat Information Society Indicators

1.3 Interoperability State of Play

In 2017, the European Commission published the European Interoperability Framework (EIF) to give specific guidance on how to set up interoperable digital public services through a set of 47 recommendations. The picture below represents the three pillars of the EIF around which the EIF Monitoring Mechanism was built to evaluate the level of implementation of the EIF within the Member States. It is based on a set of 68 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) clustered within the three main pillars of the EIF (Principles, Layers and Conceptual model), outlined below.

Principles
- The **interoperability principles** are fundamental behavioural aspects to drive interoperability actions.
- They describe the context in which **European public** services are designed.

→ 19 recommendations

Layers
- There are **4 layers of interoperability**: legal, organisational, semantic and technical.
- A cross-cutting component of the four layers includes a '**integrated public service governance**'.

→ 14 recommendations

Conceptual model
- The **conceptual model** is modular and comprises loosely coupled service **interconnected components**.
- Guides the planning, development, operation and maintenance of **public services** by Member States.

→ 14 recommendations

Source: European Interoperability Framework Monitoring Mechanism 2019

For each of the three pillars, a different scoreboard was created to breakdown the results into their main components (i.e. the 12 principles of interoperability, the interoperability layers and the components of the conceptual model). The components are evaluated on a scale from one to four, where one means a lower level of implementation, while 4 means a higher level of implementation. The graph below shows the result of the first EIF Monitoring Mechanism data collection for North Macedonia in 2019. It is possible to notice an overall medium performance of the country. The main areas of improvement are distributed within the three scoreboards and are related to the layer of technical interoperability and to the principles of user-centricity and openness. Not enough data was collected to measure the principle of open data and multilingualism.
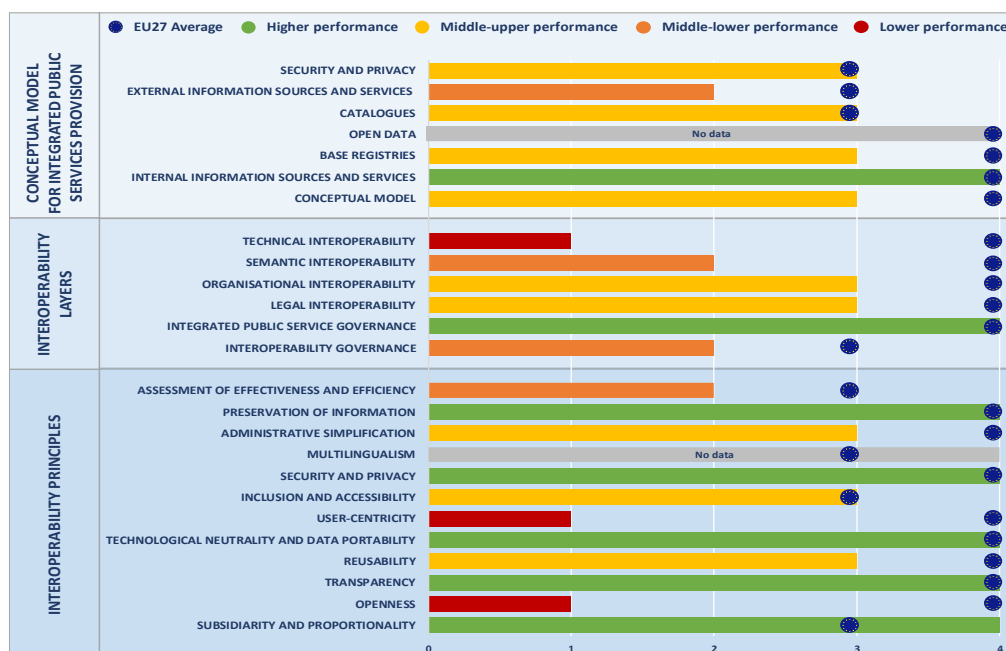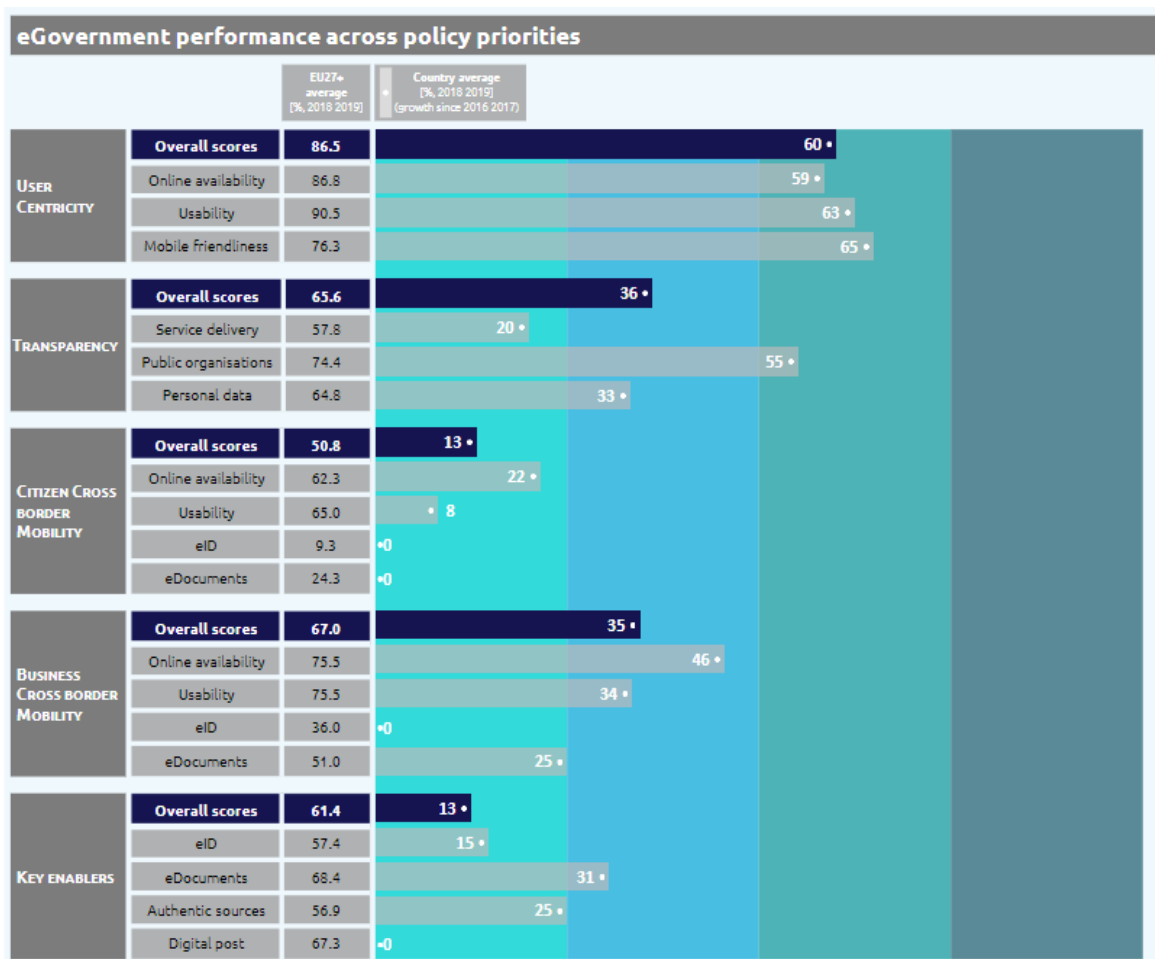

Source: European Interoperability Framework Monitoring Mechanism 2019

1.4 eGovernment State of Play

The graph below is the result of the latest eGovernment Benchmark report, which evaluates the priority areas of the eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020, based on specific indicators. These indicators are clustered within four main top-level benchmarks:

- **User Centricity** – indicates the extent to which a service is provided online, its mobile friendliness and usability of the service (in terms of available online support and feedback mechanisms).
- **Transparency** – indicates the extent to which governments are transparent about (i) the process of service delivery, (ii) the responsibilities and performance of public organisations and (iii) the personal data processed in public services.
- **Cross-Border Mobility** – indicates the extent to which users of public services from another European country can use the online services.
- **Key Enablers** – indicates the extent to which technical and organisational pre-conditions for eGovernment service provision are in place, such as electronic identification and authentic sources.

The 2020 report presents the biennial results, achieved over the past two years of measurement of all eight life events used to measure the above-mentioned top-level benchmarks. More specifically, these life events are divided between six 'Citizen life events' (Losing and finding a job, Studying, Family life, all measured in 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2018, and Starting a small claim procedure, Moving, Owning a car, all measured in 2013, 2015, 2017 and 2019) and two 'Business life events' (Business start-up, measured in 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2018, and Regular business operations, measured in 2013, 2015, 2017 and 2019).

eGovernment performance across policy priorities

		EU27+ average [%, 2018 2019]	Country average [%, 2018 2019] (growth since 2016 2017)
USER CENTRICITY	**Overall scores**	**86.5**	60
	Online availability	86.8	59
	Usability	90.5	63
	Mobile friendliness	76.3	65
TRANSPARENCY	**Overall scores**	**65.6**	36
	Service delivery	57.8	20
	Public organisations	74.4	55
	Personal data	64.8	33
CITIZEN CROSS BORDER MOBILITY	**Overall scores**	**50.8**	13
	Online availability	62.3	22
	Usability	65.0	8
	eID	9.3	0
	eDocuments	24.3	0
BUSINESS CROSS BORDER MOBILITY	**Overall scores**	**67.0**	35
	Online availability	75.5	46
	Usability	75.5	34
	eID	36.0	0
	eDocuments	51.0	25
KEY ENABLERS	**Overall scores**	**61.4**	13
	eID	57.4	15
	eDocuments	68.4	31
	Authentic sources	56.9	25
	Digital post	67.3	0

Source: eGovernment Benchmark Report 2020 Country Factsheets

2 Digital Public Administration Highlights

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Digital Public Administration Political Communications

The Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Information Society and Administration 2019-2021 includes the mission and the vision of the Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA), as well as MISA's competencies and structure, priorities and goals, achieved results, programme and operational plan.

Digital Public Administration Legislation

Three laws, together with the respective bylaws, have been adopted:
- Law on Central Population Register;
- Law on Electronic Management and Electronic Services;
- Law on Electronic Documents, Electronic Identification and Trust Services.

Digital Public Administration Governance

The National Cyber Security Council was established with a government decision. The Broadband Competence Office was established, according to the Law on Electronic Communications.

Digital Public Administration Infrastructure

North Macedonia launched a National Population Register. The implementation of the Register improves the accuracy, the quality and update process of the data used by the administrative authorities. Each individual is able to access and verify the personal data that is used to process administrative proceedings by the administration's authorities, thus enabling compliance with the GDPR Directive. Institutions have a restricted access to the Register on the basis of an authorisation policy per institution and linked to specific reason for processing of personal data. Access to data is also restricted to required subset of the Register data and required meta data. Simultaneously to the National Population Register, a unique electronic number for persons (EEBG) was established.

In December 2019, the Macedonian government launched the National eServices Portal, offering 128 eServices for natural persons. The portal, which offers Single-Sign-On access, allow Macedonians to use ePayment services for service fees and administrative taxes. On 31 December 2019, the portal counted already 707 administrative services and 1289 institutions which published data as well as 560 services pending verification.

A new portal offering pre-filled Annual Tax Returns by the Public Revenue Office was recently launched by the Macedonian administration, with 750 000 registered users. From 795 953 pre-filled Annual Tax Returns, 626 491 were submitted electronically and only 6420 were corrected by taxpayers.

"MYVAT" (MojDDV) application for scanning the bar code from the fiscal bills was launched in 2019 and is available on Google Play Store and Apple App store. By 31 December 2019, 213 055 citizens were registered and 52 191 539 codes from fiscal bills were submitted. On a quarterly basis, part of the VAT from the scanned codes is being refunded to the individuals.

The Open finance portal, launched in 2019, provides the public with an insight into data for budget transactions of all users of the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia.

3

Digital Public Administration Political Communications

3 Digital Public Administration Political Communications

3.1 Specific political communications on digital public administration

Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Information Society and Administration 2019–2021

The Strategic Plan was released in January 2019 by the Ministry of Information Society and Administration. The strategy defines the measures to be taken in the following three years to achieve the goals and objectives set in each of the two programme areas. The first programme area is Public administration reform, covering: 1.1. Capacity building and introduction of a modern system for human resource management; 1.2. Professional development of the administration; and 1.3. Regulatory reform. The second area is Information society, covering: 2.1. Infrastructure and support; 2.2. eServices, eCitizens, and Single-point-of-services; and 2.3. Open data.

Strategy and Action Plan for Public Administration Reform 2018–2022

The Public Administration Reform (PAR) is a continuous process of reorganisation of public sector institutions and improvement of their administrative capacity. PAR is 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. Initiatives for the modernisation and promotion of the administration remain ongoing. The state and the public administration are seen as the basis of the overall public sector, which depends on the processes and developments in any democratic society. Public sector work reflects the democratic values as a whole and in that sense all institutions have the responsibility to work towards achieving better value for citizens and businesses and thus ensure social and economic development, that is prosperity of the state as a whole.

In response to assessments from the European Union to improve the public administration, the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia (GRNM) Work Programme 2017–2020 set the following strategic target: 'The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia will work to create an expert and efficient, accountable and transparent administration that will provide quality services for the citizens and the business sector and will protect their rights. By applying the principles of fairness and professionalism in employment and objectivity in the promotion and rewarding of employees in the public administration, the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia will create an administration that will be free from party affiliations and will be committed to solving the problems of citizens and business entities, respecting the principles of legality and impartiality in the exercise of their duty.'

In light of the above, the Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA), together with relevant stakeholders, prepared the Public Administration Reform (PAR) Strategy and Action Plan 2018–2022. The relevant documents were adopted in February 2018. The Strategy defines the measures to be taken in the following five years to achieve the goals and objectives set in each of the priority areas. In the context of this Strategy, PAR means reform in the following priority areas:
1. policy creation and coordination;
2. public service and human resources management;
3. responsibility, accountability and transparency; and
4. service delivery and ICT support to the administration.

Consequently, the PAR Strategy 2018–2022 has four Specific Objectives (SO):

SO1: effective, efficient and inclusive policies;
SO2: expert, professional and depoliticized administration;
SO3: responsible, accountable and transparent operation of the institutions; and
SO4: service provision in a fast, simple and easily accessible way.

In November and December 2019, the relevant institutions, under the coordination of MISA, revised the Action Plan of the PAR Strategy to fit to the timeline of the ongoing Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) and other donor-funded projects in the PAR policy area. The scope of the revision was limited to the timeframe and the improvement of the indicators to address issues that had arisen during the measuring of progress for the 2018 annual Report on Implementation, as well as the rewording and fine-tuning of the activities. The strategic goals and priorities were not changed.

To achieve the goal defined in the priority area of Service delivery and ICT support to the administration, measures and activities are undertaken which will lead to investments in the development of the digital environment. The quality and availability of public services will be increased to give access to eServices. Measures and activities include the development of strategies, programmes and methodologies; analyses and projects based on the findings and recommendations from the analyses; research on introducing innovative solutions; simplifications and facilitation of processes; etc. One of the most important features is the active involvement of users in the process of defining and designing the services, which will be developed according to their needs.

Programme of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia

The Programme of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia (2017–2020) is broad and covers a variety of different domains, including a specific assessment for the IT sector and a plan to help the transition of public administrations towards new technologies. The goal of the government is the development of the IT sector as well as the simplification and acceleration of communication between citizens and public administrations. In this context, the government will give priority to the creation of electronic registers as the basis for all electronic government services provided to citizens and businesses.

National Long-Term ICT Strategy

During 2018, a roadmap was developed with directions to prepare a National Long-Term ICT Strategy, aligned with the Digital Agenda for Europe 2020. The roadmap was outlined in the PAR Report of 2018. With the aim of harmonising and introducing all strategies from the ICT field under its umbrella, the e-Government Strategy and Implementation Action Plan, as well as the development of the Policy for the use of the "Cloud" infrastructure, will be one of the main pillars in this long-term ICT Strategy. In September 2019, MISA, with the support of the European Union, contracted a team of experts to make all necessary analyses and prepare the National Long-Term ICT Strategy. The project is expected to last nine months.

3.2 Interoperability

No political communication has been adopted in this field to date.

3.3 Key enablers

3.3.1 Access to public information

Strategy and Action Plan for Open Data

The Strategy and Action Plan for Open Data 2018–2020 were adopted in July 2018. The Open Data Strategy sets forth measures to be undertaken for encouraging the release

and use of public data, and implementing them broadly to contribute to raising the transparency and accountability of state institutions. This will improve the quality of the services they offer and at the same time stimulate innovation, thus contributing to the development of North Macedonia's society and economy as a whole. In other words, the Open Data Strategy aims to encourage the promotion and use of open data with the understanding that data produced by governmental and public sector bodies are an asset for the citizens of North Macedonia.

More in detail, North Macedonia's Open Data Strategy aims to develop a dynamic open data ecosystem in which data are produced, opened, enriched and reused by multiple actors from the public and private sector, civil society and academia. As a result, the Strategy will lead to improved public service delivery and public sector efficiency, increase public engagement, support efforts to combat corruption and contribute to the creation of an innovative climate that delivers new economic opportunities for the business sector.

The Strategy defines the deployment of a central government Open Data Portal, as well as a methodology for data inventory and conducting an inventory in state institutions. In addition, the Strategy introduces a licensing model for data; establishes a management structure and guidelines to facilitate the release of datasets; and raises awareness and fosters the creation of public value through collaboration and partnerships with stakeholders from within and outside the public sector.

The Strategy also contributes to ensuring that North Macedonia meets the EU requirements on government transparency and accountability, and most specifically the goals set with the Reuse of Public Sector Information directive and other measures supporting the opening up of public sector information.

Third Action Plan for the Open Government Partnership of North Macedonia

In September 2018, the government of North Macedonia adopted a forth Action Plan for the Open Government Partnership 2018–2020. Just like under the previous Action Plans, for the following two years, the government of North Macedonia committed to increase efforts to make public institutions open, transparent, accountable and efficient. The Action Plan implementation involved undertaking a number of activities for building citizen and business partnerships in designing national policies and drafting national legislation, strategies, and initiatives. Additionally, interactive web portals were established to facilitate the consultation process, increase transparency and allow for participation in discussions.

The Open Government Partnership Action Plan focuses on seven priority areas: access to information; integrity and good governance; fiscal transparency; open data; transparency at local level; access to justice; and climate change. Having regard to the independence of the Assembly's work as a separate authority in the Republic of North Macedonia, the Action Plan contains a separate section relating to Open Parliament, defining five commitments in three priority areas: accountability; access to information; and participation of citizens. The Action Plan outlines the key developments the government pledged to realize in each of the thematic areas, the responsible institutions for each development, and the planned timeline for their achievement.

3.3.2 eID and Trust Services

Strategy for Public Administration Reform 2018–2022

The Strategy for Public Administration Reform 2018–2022, specifically its Specific Objective 4 on Service delivery and ICT support to the administration, contains dedicated measures regarding eID and trust services.

The digital transformation, the global trends for public sector reforms and the increased ICT application transformed the environment in which the public sector functions. During the last decade, significant attention was paid to reforms aimed at better providing

public services. Considering that competition in the private sector contributed to an increased quality of service provision for end users, Macedonian citizens expect the same from the public sector. In this context, the Strategy for Public Administration Reform 2018–2022 aims to develop digital settings that provide easy access to eServices. In particular, the third objective implies building a functional infrastructure for the delivery of eServices to clients through the digitisation of all required components. The measures to be taken for this priority are the following:

- introduction of an electronic identity for using eServices in accordance with good European practices and the conditions in the country; and
- digitisation of service registers, prioritising core registers that are not in a digital form, harmonising the legal provisions with the needs of the digitisation, and digitising registers in accordance with the adopted and existing standards, as well as maintaining, applying and updating the Population Register. When designing and implementing the application solutions that will use data from digital registers, technical, administrative and organisational measures will be applied to reduce the risk of unauthorised access to data in the registries.

3.3.3 Security aspects

National Cybersecurity Strategy and Action Plan 2018–2022

The National Cybersecurity Strategy 2018–2022 was first adopted in August 2018, while the Action Plan 2018–2022 was developed by the end of 2018. This strategic document fosters the development of a safe, secure, reliable and resilient digital environment, supported by high-quality capacities and based on cooperation and trust in the field of cybersecurity. The document is organised in seven parts.

The first section introduces the topic, focusing on the increased dependency on cyberspace services, the increased use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), and the negative influence of severe cyberthreats on the functioning of the public and private sectors.

In the second section, the Strategy examines the major trends, challenges and threats in relation to the cyberspace of North Macedonia.

Then, the third section lays down the cybersecurity principles that support the Strategy:
- effective and efficient cybersecurity capacities;
- protection and prevention;
- security for economic development;
- trust and availability; and
- legal security.

The fourth section defines the stakeholders active in the field of cybersecurity in the country, that is the public sector, the private sector, the academic community, the citizens and the civil society organisations.

The fifth section presents the vision and mission of the National Cybersecurity Strategy.

In the sixth section, the "5C" goals of the National Cybersecurity Strategy are established. The goals are as follows:
1. Cyber Resilience: building a cyberresilient ICT infrastructure, identifying and implementing adequate solutions to protect the national interests;
2. Cyber Capacities and Culture: promoting a cybersecurity culture to raise the public awareness and understanding of cyber threats, as well as building and advancing the necessary capacities for protection;
3. Combating Cyber Crime: strengthening the national capacities for the prevention, research on and adequate response to cybercrime;
4. Cyber Defence: strengthening the capacities for the defence of the national interests and reducing current and potential cyberspace risks; and
5. Cooperation and exchange of information: promoting cooperation and exchange of information at the national and international level.

Finally, the seventh section is devoted to the generalisation of the Action Plan for the implementation of the National Cybersecurity Strategy, along with the challenges for successful implementation. The document highlights the responsibilities of the authorities identified in the Strategy for the support of the goals and activities outlined in the document. In addition, the last section establishes the organisational structure for coordinating the development and implementation of the course of actions defined in the Strategy and the Action Plan.

3.3.4 Interconnection of base registries

No political communication has been adopted in this field to date.

3.3.5 eProcurement

No political communication has been adopted in this field to date.

3.4 Domain-specific political communications

Strategy on ICT Development of the Customs Administration of the Republic of North Macedonia 2019–2023

The Strategy on ICT Development of the Customs Administration (CA) 2019–2023 was adopted in March 2019 and provides a roadmap for the development of the information and communication technology at the Customs Administration of the Republic of North Macedonia during the following five years (2019-2023). The Strategy encompasses the mission, vision and strategic priorities and goals of the CA in ICT development, as well as the activities and the resources necessary for their realisation.
The Strategic Objectives which the CA aims to achieve in the ICT sector are:
- interconnectivity and interoperability with the EU ICT Systems;
- modernisation of the ICT environment;
- application of modern technologies and practices for implementing business requirements; and
- modernisation of the use of the Internet, Intranet and social networks in customs operations.

3.5 Emerging technologies

No political communication has been adopted in this field to date.

4 | Digital Public Administration Legislation

4 Digital Public Administration Legislation

4.1 Specific legislation on digital public administration

Law on Electronic Management and Electronic Services

The Law on Electronic Management and Electronic Services (Official Gazette No 98/2019) regulates the operations of ministries, other state administration bodies, governing organisations and local self-government units, legal entities entrusted to perform public competences, and legal entities delivering and providing public interest services, i.e. entities within the area of education, health, finances, banking, insurance, energy, water supply, electronic communications, postal services and utilities, during the electronic exchange of data and documents, and the provision of eServices, when stipulated by law. The Law also regulates the issues related to the establishment and functioning of the National eServices Portal, the Service Catalogue, the Single Point of Service and Interoperability.

4.2 Interoperability

Law on Services

The obstacles encountered when starting an economic activity and providing service activities necessitated the adoption of a general legal framework in the service sector, in line with the EU Internal Market Services Directive 2006/123/EC (Services Directive). The framework was intended to ensure the smooth movement of services through the removal of legal and administrative restrictions for performing service activities; the establishment of one place where service providers can submit requests for the necessary licensing procedures electronically; the promotion of cooperation among regulators from individual countries; and the improvement in the quality of services.

The Law on Services was adopted by Parliament on 21 May 2019 (Official Gazette No 98/2019) as horizontal framework law in the service sector. As a result, the Law provides the general legal framework for accessing the market of services and providing service activities by determining basic principles, including the principles of non-discrimination and simplification of the approval procedures. The activities to align the sector specific legislation with the Law are currently underway.

More in detail, the Law regulates the functioning of the Point of Single Contact (PSC), which will electronically provide the necessary information and assistance with regard to the procedures for market access and service provision. According to the Law, the National eServices Portal developed by the Ministry of Information Society and Administration will function as PSC. The Portal was launched in December 2019.

The National Interoperability Framework

The Interoperability Framework has been in force for several years, with the Law for Electronic Management and Electronic Services as legal basis. The Interoperability Framework consists of legal, organisational, semantic and technical aspects. Based on the European Interoperability Framework (EIF) 2.0, the Interoperability Framework is planned to be updated following the guidelines and recommendations stipulated in the latest iteration of the EIF.

4.3 Key enablers

4.3.1 Access to public information

Law on Public Sector Data Use

The Law on Public Sector Data Use was adopted in 2014, establishing the obligation for authorities and public sector institutions to publish the data created in the exercise of their responsibilities under the law. The Law also enables natural or legal persons to create new information, content, applications or services.

The purpose of this Law is the use of data from the public sector to foster innovation and the creation of new information; the creation of content and applications by combining or crossing data; the creation of new services; the creation of jobs and the promotion of social inclusion; an increased accountability and transparency of the public sector; an improved quality of the data from the public sector; the promotion of the economy and the development of competition; and the development of an information society in North Macedonia.

All data from the public sector are subject to the above-mentioned rules on use, except:
- data excluded by the Law on Free Access to Public Information;
- data with limited access by law;
- data whose creation is not subject to the authority or institution from the public sector;
- data for which third parties have a right to intellectual property;
- data belonging to the public broadcaster and its bureaus, and to the institutions responsible for public service broadcasting;
- data belonging to educational or research bodies and institutions, including organisations founded for research results exchange; and
- data belonging to institutions in the field of culture, except libraries, museums and archives.

Law on Free Access to Public Information

The new Law on Free Access to Public Information adopted in May 2019, is repealing the previous law, which was initially adopted in January 2006. The new law incorporates the basic principles of right to free access to public information, and additionally remediates the weaknesses due to inconsistent application of the previous law, limited transparency of institutions and incomplete exercise of the right to physical and legal entities for access to public information. The term 'public interest' is defined more closely in the new law, thus reducing the scope of information exceptions, while increasing the scope of information being published and shortening the deadline for the information holder to respond.

4.3.2 eID and Trust Services

Law on Electronic Documents, Electronic Identification and Trust Services

The Law on Electronic Documents, Electronic Identification and Trust Services (Official Gazette No 101/2019) regulates and prescribes the creation, preservation and processing of electronic documents, electronic identification and trust services. The Law also determines the manner of use of electronic documents, electronic signatures, electronic seals and electronic trust services in administrative and court proceedings. The subject of regulation of this Law are the conditions under which the electronic identification means issued to natural and legal persons falling under registered or recognised electronic identification schemes are recognised.

The purpose of the Law is to ensure an adequate level of security of the electronic identification means and an adequate level of security in the provision of trust services. Furthermore, the Law aims to establish the legal regime applicable to electronic

signatures, electronic seals, electronic time stamps, electronic documents, electronic registered delivery services, website authentication services, and the manner of keeping the electronic signature or seal and their validation.

The Law on Electronic Documents, Electronic Identification and Trust Services is fully harmonised with the eIDAS Regulation, which is transposed in the cited Law. With the enactment and entering into force of this Law, the acting Law on Data in Electronic Format and Electronic Signature will be repealed as of 1 September 2020.

The eIDAS Implementing acts were considered during the process of drafting the bylaws, namely:

- Commission implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/1501 of 8 September 2015 on the interoperability framework pursuant to Article 12(8) of Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market and Commission implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/1502 of 8 September 2015 on setting out minimum technical specifications and procedures for assurance levels for electronic identification means pursuant to Article 8(3) of Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market shall be transposed in the Bylaw for Procedures and Standards on the Compliance of the Technical, Physical and Organizational Safeguard Measures of the Schemes for Electronic Identification. This Bylaw is in phase of alignment by the State Secretariat for Legislation.

- Commission implementing Decision (EU) 2015/1505 of 8 September 2015 laying down technical specifications and formats relating to trusted lists pursuant to Article 22(5) of Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market shall be transposed in the Bylaw on the Form and Manner of Publishing the List of Qualified Trust Service Providers and the List of Qualified Trust Services. This Bylaw is in phase of alignment by the State Secretariat for Legislation.

- Commission implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/806 of 22 May 2015 laying down specifications relating to the form of the EU trust mark for qualified trust services has been transposed in the Bylaw on the Form, Structure, Size and Logo of the Trust Mark for Qualified Trust Services (Official Gazette No 4/2020) since 9 January 2020.

- Commission implementing Decision (EU) 2015/1506 of 8 September 2015 laying down specifications relating to formats of advanced electronic signatures and advanced seals to be recognised by public sector bodies pursuant to Articles 27(5) and 37(5) of Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market and Commission implementing Decision (EU) 2016/650 of 25 April 2016 laying down standards for the security assessment of qualified signature and seal creation devices pursuant to Articles 30(3) and 39(2) of Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market have been transposed in the Bylaw on the Standards to contain Qualified Certificates for Electronic Signatures and Electronic Seals, the Technical Standards, the Manner of Creation of Qualified Electronic Signatures or Qualified Electronic Seals, the Content of the Conformity Certificate of the Means for the Creation of Qualified Electronic Signatures or Electronic Seals and the Manner of its Issuing, the Standards for the Certificates of Validation of Qualified Electronic Signatures and Qualified Electronic Seals, and the Standards for Qualified Trust Services for the Preservation of Qualified Electronic Signatures or Qualified Electronic Seals (Official Gazette No 35/2020) since 11 February 2020.

4.3.3 Security aspects

Law on Personal Data Protection

The harmonisation of legislation in the area of personal data protection has been one of the government's priority activities since 2002. In this context, the Law on Personal Data Protection (Official Gazette No 7/2005, 103/2008, 124/2008, 124/2010, 135/2011, 43/2014, 153/2015, 99/2016 and 64/2018), amended to include recommendations by the European Commission, was drafted in 2004, adopted on 25 January 2005, and modified to fully comply with Directive 95/46/EC in 2008. The Law represents a *lex generalis* in the area of data protection in the country.
According to the Law, personal data shall be fairly and lawfully processed; collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes; processed in a manner which is consistent and proportionate with these purposes; accurate and complete; and kept for no longer than the necessary timeframe for fulfilling the abovementioned purposes.

The draft of the new Law on Personal Data Protection, aligned with the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 was published on ENER for public consultations. By the end of 2019, the final draft of the law entered the government adoption procedure and it is expected to be adopted by the Parliament in the beginning of 2020.

Law on the Central Population Register

The Law on the Central Population Register (Official Gazette No 98/2019) regulates the competent bodies, the structure and the content of the Central Population Register, the conditions applying to the Register, as well as the exchange of information between the competent bodies and entities. With the establishment of the Register, a unified and unique manner of database maintenance shall be determined, based on established standards and procedures, in accordance with the provisions of this Law. The Register's information is available to the competent bodies and other entities determined by this Law, and is used in accordance with the rules and conditions prescribed by this Law and the personal data protection regulation.

Law on the Security of Network and Information Systems

The legal text transposing the NIS Directive is the Law on the Security of Network and Information Systems, also deriving from the already adopted National Cybersecurity Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia. Pursuant to this Strategy, the transposition has been anticipated in 2020. In addition, the preparation of this Law also concerns the fourth conclusions by the Sub-Committee on Innovation and Technology Development. In this context, the national authorities will intensify the efforts to implement the activities and create the legal framework provided by the National Cybersecurity Strategy.
The Law on the Security of Network and Information Systems was published on ENER on 4 October 2019, with a consultation deadline of 50 days. Taking into consideration the commitments of the Republic of North Macedonia to undertake systemic measures for digitisation, the draft law was also delivered to the National Broadband Competence Office that submitted adequate remarks for the improvement of the proposed systemic solutions. Hence, a second version of the law has been already prepared and is in the final phases.
To ensure a consistent alignment of the current economic and social state-of-affairs in the Republic of North Macedonia with the transposition and implementation of the NIS Directive, a Digital Agency acting as single point of contact and CIRT Secretariat would need to be established, precisely pursuant to the NIS Directive.

4.3.4 Interconnection of base registries

Law on Electronic Management and Electronic Services

Under the Law on Electronic Management and Electronic Services, for the purpose of accomplishing the tasks determined by law state bodies shall exchange data and documents electronically and use unified nomenclatures in their mutual electronic communication. Moreover, the Law on the Central Population Register stipulates that the databases representing the Register's content shall be integrated through algorithms and logically associated processes enabling an automatically generated comparison of data from the individual databases of the competent bodies. The Register's information is available to the competent bodies and other entities determined by the Law on the Central Population Register, and is used in accordance with the rules and conditions prescribed by this Law and the personal data protection regulation.

4.3.5 eProcurement

Law on Public Procurement

The Law on Public Procurement (Official Gazette No 136/2007, 130/2008, 97/2010, 53/2011, 185/2011, 15/2013, 148/2013, 160/2013, 28/2014, 43/2014, 130/2014, 180/2014, 78/2015, 192/2015, 27/2016, 120/201 and 165/2017) initially entered into force on 1 January 2008, replacing previous legislation dating 2004 and 2005, and instituting the Public Procurement Bureau as a body within the Ministry of Finance to continuously monitor the implementation of public procurement legislation. The Law was adopted to enhance the integrity of the government's purchasing decisions, aiming to increase transparency in tendering procedures, provide consistency with other legislation and strengthen the legal protection of bidders.

This Law aligned the national legislation on public procurement with the EU Directives on public procurement (2004/17/EC and 2004/18/EC), including their eProcurement provisions. In this respect, the Law regulates the use of electronic means at various stages of the procurement process (eNoticing, eTendering, etc.) via the Electronic System for Public Procurement (ESPP), which was put in operation in January 2010. The Law was further amended in 2018.

In addition, a new Law on Public Procurement was adopted in January 2019, harmonising the national legislation with EU Directives 2014/24/EU, 2014/25/EU and 2007/66/EU.

4.4 Domain-specific legislation

Law on Electronic Commerce

The Law on Electronic Commerce was initially adopted by Parliament on 26 October 2007 (Official Gazette No 133/2007), transposing the European Directive on certain legal aspects of information society services, in particular electronic commerce, in the Internal Market ('Directive on electronic commerce').

The Law regulates information society services related to electronic commerce and commercial communication, along with the responsibilities of the providers of these services. In particular, the Law enables electronic documents to be treated as official contracts and defines their legibility as paper documents. In addition, the Law outlines the form and validity of contracts in electronic form, demanding that those contracts be concluded by electronic means.

In 2011 the Law was amended to include recommendations by the European Commission to fully comply with the Directive (Official Gazette No 17/2011). Further amendments to the Law (Official Gazette No 104/2015, 192/2015 and 31/2020) were made for the purpose of aligning with the Misdemeanour Law.

Law on Archive Material

Adopted in 2012 (Official Gazette No 95/2012), the Law on Archive Material regulates the protection, preservation, processing and use of archival material, inspections, and the responsibilities of the State Archive of the Republic of North Macedonia. For instance, the Law provides for electronic documents to be kept in their original format following specific criteria for accessibility and integrity. The Law was then amended in 2014 and 2015.

The Decree on Office and Archive Operation with Electronic Exchange, MISA and the State Archive was revised to reform the legal provisions regulating archival work to reflect the introduction of electronic documents. In December 2018, MISA began the preparations for a new law, the Law on Archive Activity, which should provide the basis for the proper implementation of the standards for processing archival materials and introducing digitisation into the archival activity.

4.5 Emerging technologies

No legislation has been adopted in this field to date.

5 Digital Public Administration Governance

5.1 National

5.1.1 Policy

Ministry of Information Society and Administration

The Ministry is responsible for all issues pertaining to information technologies, including the policy and strategy for eGovernment and the modernisation of the Macedonian public administration. To that end, the Ministry publishes reports and strategies, and is in charge of drafting and implementing eGovernment-related international agreements and policies.

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Government Ministries and State Bodies

Government ministries and state bodies are responsible for the development and monitoring of national and local/domain-specific strategies and policies.

5.1.2 Coordination

National ICT Council

The National ICT council was established in February 2018 to prepare and monitor the implementation of the National ICT Strategy, as well as to provide guidance on annual public procurement plans, and technical specifications applying to the tender documentation for public sector institutions and the procurement of ICT equipment and/or software. The National ICT Council consists of the relevant ministers, thereby ensuring the coherence of strategic-level decisions across state institutions.

National Cybersecurity Council

The National Cybersecurity Strategy and Action Plan envisaged the establishment of a high-level body for defining new strategic directions and recommendations related to the cybersecurity segment, as well as for coordinating and monitoring the activities defined in the Strategy and the accompanying Action Plan. At the end of 2019, the government of the Republic of North Macedonia established the National Cybersecurity Council, consisting of the Ministers of Defence (MoD), Interior (MoI), and Information Society and Administration.

Broadband Competence Office

The National Operational Broadband Plan envisaged the establishment of a national Broadband Competence Office (BCO) in the Republic of North Macedonia. The BCO was established in 2019 as an expert body supporting the investments in broadband infrastructure (especially in rural areas) by increasing their efficiency.

Digital Forum

The Digital Forum for Information and Communication Technologies was established in June 2018 (Official Gazette No 107/2018) as an expert and advisory body in the field of information society. The Digital Forum provides for the coordination and participation of the public, private, civil society and academic communities in the development of the information society.

5.1.3 Implementation

Government ministries and state bodies

Government ministries and state bodies at national and local level are responsible for the implementation of sectorial ICT and eGovernment projects.

5.1.4 Support

National ICT Council

The National ICT Council is supported by an Operational Body for Expert and Operational-logistical Support, with the following responsibilities:
- assist in the preparation of requests, strategic documents and proposals;
- prepare reports with proposals for further action;
- review good practices and propose measures to improve the situation;
- cooperate with other operational working bodies and ICT groups;
- if necessary, participate in the sessions of the Council and other ICT support bodies;
- review strategic documents and projects related to ICT; and
- review and give opinions, suggestions and advice on other matters, at the request of the Council, related to the scope of work of the Council.

National Cybersecurity Council

The National Cybersecurity Strategy and Action Plan envisions the establishment of a body with operational cybersecurity responsibilities to be charged with the operational implementation of the Action Plan. The establishment of this body and its competencies are provided for by the new draft Law on the Security of Network and Information Systems, which is expected to be adopted by the end of 2020. Until then, these activities will be conducted by an inter-ministerial working group consisting of representatives from MISA, the MoD, the MoI, and other relevant stakeholders.

5.1.5 Interoperability coordination

Ministry of Information Society and Administration

The Ministry is responsible for all issues pertaining to information technologies, including interoperability activities. More in general, the Ministry is responsible for the policy and strategy for eGovernment and the modernisation of the Macedonian public administration. To that end, the Ministry publishes reports and strategies, and is in charge of drafting and implementing eGovernment-related international agreements and policies.

5.1.6 Base registry coordination

No responsible organisations has been reported to date.

5.1.7 Audit

State Audit Office

The State Audit Office (SAO) was established in 1997 by the Parliament under the State Audit Law (SAL). Each year, planned audits appear in the Annual Programme of the State Audit Office. The following entities are mandatorily included in the annual audits: central government, local government units and funds, state-owned enterprises and political parties.

5.1.8 Data Protection

Directorate for Personal Data Protection

The establishment of the Directorate for Personal Data Protection resulted from the Law on Personal Data Protection of 2005, implementing Directive 95/46/EC on data protection. The Directorate became an independent state body on 22 June 2005, ensuring, among other functions, the respect of personal data protection principles and the legality of personal data processing.

5.2 Subnational (federal, regional and local)

Association of Local Government Units of the Republic of North Macedonia (ZELS)

The Association of Local Government Units of the Republic of North Macedonia (ZELS) is a non-profit organisation and unique national association, including, on a voluntary basis, all 80 municipalities, with the City of Skopje as a separate unit of local self-government. The Association was founded on 26 April 1972. The president of ZELS is a member of the National ICT Council.

5.2.1 Policy

No responsible organisations have been reported to date.

5.2.2 Coordination

No responsible organisations have been reported to date.

5.2.3 Implementation

No responsible organisations have been reported to date.

5.2.4 Support

No responsible organisations have been reported to date.

5.2.5 Interoperability coordination

No responsible organisations have been reported to date.

5.2.6 Base registry coordination

No responsible organisations have been reported to date.

5.2.7 Audit

No responsible organisations have been reported to date.

5.2.8 Data Protection

No responsible organisations have been reported to date.

6 | Digital Public Administration Infrastructure

6 Digital Public Administration Infrastructure

6.1 Portals

6.1.1 National portals

eServices Portal

The first eServices Portal was established in 2003, as the single point of access to information on government services. The Portal was the result of the government's efforts to create a more efficient and transparent administration by presenting to the public all available services for both citizens and business entities.

In December 2019, a new national portal was launched, offering, besides information on 707 services, the complete provision of 128 eServices for citizens, including payment and eDocument issuing. The new Portal will closely relate with the National Central Population Register and offer Single-Sign-On for citizens. The link to the Portal stayed unchanged.

One key component of the Portal is the Catalogue of Public Services, whose data is published on the Portal in three languages, and categorised by life-events, categories and sub-categories, institutions responsible for the service (1 289 in total) and other tags. The Catalogue is accessible only to authorised public servants.

The Portal was developed with the funds from the IPA programme. The development of new eServices, as well as the integration of the existing ones into the Portal and the introduction of legal entities (businesses) as Portal users are underway.

Catalogue of Public Services

The Catalogue of Public Services is an electronic database serving for the structured entry and management of data for all public services, such as basic data, deadlines, payments, competent authorities, legal grounds, legal remedies, category, life event, etc. The Catalogue is a tool available to authorised public authorities' personnel only.

707 out of the 1 267 service data entered into the Catalogue of Public Services are published on the Portal's public section. Prior to publication, data are entered, verified and approved by the competent authorities and MISA.

Service Delivery Platform (eSDP)

The Service Delivery Platform (eSDP) is a web-based solution enabling institutions to electronically manage administrative procedures by establishing internal business processes and resolving them within the system. The system is configurable with a multi-purpose architecture and can be used by a number of institutions by adapting it to the Law on the General Administrative Procedure (GAP) or the specific laws governing administrative procedures. The system would be particularly useful for institutions that want to digitize business processes without having an IT capacity. The eSDP was launched in 2019 and is ready to be integrated at institutional level with the National e-Services Portal.

Unique National Electronic Registry of Regulations

The Unique National Electronic Registry of Regulations of the Republic of North Macedonia (ENER) is a portal where each draft of a law or bylaw must be published for public comments before being adopted by government and Parliament. To increase stakeholder inclusion in the process of policy making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) templates are also published together with the draft documents. A technical upgrade of ENER was carried out in 2019,

with ENER now enabling the electronical submission of initiatives and proposals by stakeholders, as well as consultations on other acts and documents (policies, strategies, action plans, standards, guidelines, etc.).

Upgrading and maintaining IT systems in the Tax Administration

The 'Development and Reengineering of Business Processes for the New Tax Integrated IT System IPA2/EUIF' project was completed on 31 January 2019, together with the Modelled Business Processes (BPM2) showing that the global business process chart needs to be re-engineered and integrated into the new IT system.

The Delegation of the European Union has engaged an expert to analyse the technical specifications for software and hardware (including for the Disaster Recovery Centre), carry out a market analysis, and prepare the tender documentation for the new Tax Integrated IT System in accordance with EU PRAG procedures. On the basis of the market analysis, a decision should be made on the financing of the new Tax Integrated IT System. The technical support to ensure quality control is foreseen in the twin project 'Improving Tax Collection and Tax and Customs Policy'. Based on the redesigned business processes resulting from this project, the Public Revenue Office (PRO) started the realisation of several projects:

- the upgrade of the electronic personal income tax system (ePDD in Macedonian or ePIT) Portal has started with the integration of the MPIN payroll reporting system and the PDD-DB application. The public administration is in the process of implementing the contract for upgrading and maintaining the eTax System, which is an external portal for taxpayers;
- the upgrade of tax accounting and registry records applications, which are central to the main processes in the tax administration, has begun, providing inter alia:
  o improvement of services for taxpayers;
  o enhancement of the security of the information system of the PRO and improvement of the technical and organisational measures for the protection of personal data;
  o improvement of the exchange of data with third parties in the country (Central Registry, Clearing House KIBS Ad Skopje, National Bank, Credit Bureau, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Information Society and Administration, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Health Insurance Fund, Customs Administration, Pension and Disability Insurance Fund, Real Estate Cadastre, Employment Agency, Ministry of the Interior, Office for the Management of Registers of Births, Marriages and Deaths, State Statistical Office, State Labour Inspectorate, Directorate for Technological Industrial Development Zones, Association of Protective Companies, Civil Aviation Agency, Captains of Ports - Ohrid and others); and
  o establishment of data exchange with third parties abroad (tax administrations and international organisations).

ePersonal Income Tax Portal

The ePersonal Income Tax Portal was introduced to support changes in the Law on the Personal Income Tax (Official Gazette No 190/2017). Starting from 1 January 2018, a new procedure for calculating and paying the personal income tax liabilities was introduced. The tax is now calculated by submitting an Electronic Calculation for Income and Tax to the PRO through the new ePDD system.

With the introduction of new user-oriented services for the personal income tax, in addition to a number of other benefits, the administrative burden was reduced and the obligation to submit some returns and reports to the PRO was abolished.

Open Data Portal

The new Open Data Portal of North Macedonia was launched in December 2018. The Portal created a dynamic ecosystem of open data in which data is produced, opened,

enriched and reused by various stakeholders from the public, private, academic and civil sectors. This led to an improved delivery of services and efficiency of the public sector, increasing citizen participation, supporting efforts to fight corruption and contributing to the creation of an innovative climate with new economic opportunities for the business sector. In addition, the establishment of the Portal had a positive impact on the European integration process of the Republic of North Macedonia regarding the transparency and accountability of the government. In particular, the Directive on the re-use of public sector information and other measures aimed precisely at opening up information from the public sector.

The Open Data Portal facilitates the distribution of open data, providing users with a single access point to the open datasets of all institutions where users can search, retrieve and visualise datasets. More in detail, the Open Data Portal provides/enables:

- an open data platform based on the best world practices;
- the opening of datasets in computer readable formats;
- a decentralised data management by institutions producing datasets in their day-to-day operations;
- the possibility of automatically collect ('harvest') datasets published by other open data portals;
- a statement of metadata for datasets; and
- an increased involvement of users in data re-use.

Each institution is responsible for the data published on the Open Data Portal, including complying with open data policies, removing sensitive elements from data before publishing, converting data to open formats, providing metadata of high quality, and regularly checking and updating data after publication.

Open Finance Portal

The Open Finance Portal provides the public with insight into data on the budget transactions by all users of the budget of the Republic of North Macedonia, which are disbursed by the Treasury of the Ministry of Finance. During the first phase of implementation, all transactions are published. During the second phase, the transactions by the units of local self–government and their institutions' budget will be published.

The public will have access to information about the name of the budget user making the payment, the type of expenditure according to the economic classification, the assets received, the date of the executed payment, etc. This data will be updated twice per month, and users will be able to download it in an open format.

ePersonal Tax Portal

The ePersonal Tax Portal was implemented in 2019 by the Public Revenue Office (PRO) on the basis of the amendments to the Law on the Personal Income Tax (Official Gazette No 190/2017) and the implementation of the IPA 2012 PPF project titled 'Simplification of procedures for reporting and payment of personal income tax for taxpayers - individuals', developing the business processes and software.

The Portal allows citizens to access a pre-filled annual tax return document. The Public Revenue Office prepares a pre-filled annual tax return on the basis of the data from the electronic calculations of the payers submitted through the ePersonal Tax Portal, the calculations for the salary submitted through the MPIN, as well as the data received from third parties. Citizens only need to confirm or correct the completed annual tax return.

The ePersonal Tax Portal counts 697,513 registered and approved user profiles of natural persons on the e-PIT system. Out of 795 953 pre-filled annual tax returns, 626 491 were submitted electronically and only 6 420 were corrected by taxpayers.

Refund of VAT on individuals

The Law on Returning a Part of the Value Added Tax on Individuals (Official Gazette No 133/2019) regulates the conditions and procedure for exercising the right to get a refund of part of the value added tax expressed in the fiscal accounts of individuals. This legal solution gives the citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia the opportunity to obtain a 15 % refund of the total amount of VAT expressed in the fiscal accounts for each quarter. The purpose of the Law on Returning Part of the Value Added Tax on Individuals is to reduce tax evasion in the country.

A "MYVAT" (MojDDV) application for submitting fiscal accounts by citizens, which citizens can download from the Playstore and Appstore since 1 July 2019, was developed to scan the bar code from the fiscal bills. The user profile of the ePersonal Tax Portal is used for registering in this system and as of 31 December 2019 the number of citizens registered was 213 055. Until then, 52 191 539 codes from fiscal bills had been submitted.

Refund of VAT on business

To speed up the administrative procedures for executing the VAT refund and offset procedure, a module for automatic refund and offsetting has been developed. Through an automation process, the system enables to process VAT refund requests in a shorter period.

Customs Declaration and Excise Processing System (CDEPS)

The Customs Declaration and Excise Processing System (CDEPS) was officially launched in June 2019. The introduction of the CDEPS marked the start of a new, digital era for customs operations in the country. In particular, the CDEPS provides a safe, interoperable electronic solution in line with the World Customs Organisation and EU standards, a completely paperless environment for customs (import and export) and excise procedures through the exchange of electronic data with economic operators and other government agencies, faster customs and excise procedures for economic operators, and full compatibility with the EU systems. From the release of the CDEPS in June to the end of 2019, more than 2,100 users registered with the System, and more than 390,000 declarations were processed.

Single Window System for Import, Export and Transit Licenses

The Single Window System for Import, Export and Transit Licences (EXIM) includes all requirements by other government agencies (i.e. 60 licenses/certificates from 11 other government agencies) related to the cross-border movement of goods. EXIM was implemented in 2008 and is becoming more sophisticated each year, providing for greater efficiency and faster customs procedures. The number of registered users has been continuously growing, totalling around 7,000 at the end of 2019, with more than 97,000 licenses issued.

The system was upgraded in 2019, when it was integrated in the new Customs Declaration and Excise Processing System (CDEPS) and the Integrated Tariff Environment (ITE).

Integrated Tariff Environment (ITE)

The Integrated Tariff Environment (ITE) is a centralized IT solution for managing customs tariffs, tariff and non-tariff measures, binding tariff information, customs quotas, samples and the customs duties calculator (TARIC, Quota2, Surveillance, EBTI, ISPP and ECICS). Even before the accession to the European Union, the ITE provides the following advantages for economic operators in North Macedonia:

- online (electronic) access through the TARIM module to information previously available in paper form (customs duties, VAT, excise and national non-tariff measures, and import and export restrictions);
- access to information even after expiry;
- access to the calculation module, allowing to accurately calculate customs and other duties, as well as obtain information about the documents required for import and export;
- faster, cheaper, easier and more transparent access to the information destined to economic operators; and
- improved prevention and recognition of frauds.

The system was upgraded in 2019, when it was integrated in the new Customs Declaration and Excise Processing System (CDEPS) and the Single Window System for Import, Export and Transit Licences (EXIM).

eEmployment

The Employment Service Agency is a portal for checking personal employment history data.

Portal for Health Insurance Services

The Portal for Health Insurance Services is meant for citizens, as well as medical institutions and businesses (pharmacists and general practitioner doctors).

ePension Portal

The ePension Portal allows citizens to check data from the pension insurance register and submit a request for a decision on the use of the right to pension and disability insurance.

eGovernment Sessions

The upgraded portal for eGovernment Sessions is used by all Ministries and a great number of state bodies. The portal allows to prepare and submit materials, and offers several collaborative functionalities.

UVMK Portal

The UVMK Portal allows to order and pay online birth, marriage and death certificates. Citizens then receive the official (paper) documents by registered mail.

eCadastre Portal

The eCadastre Portal contains geospatial data and status of services. The Portal was launched in 2010, and since then it has been upgraded every year with new functionalities, new data and new eServices.

eRegistration for businesses

The eRegistration (part of One-Stop-Shop system) is a portal for registering businesses and other legal entities, making amendments and deletions, paying registration fees online, and obtaining certificates in electronic or paper format. In the process of registering a business, the portal also provides an option for automatic registration of authorized persons as first employees in compulsory social insurance (registration in Employment agency, and hence in Pension and Health Funds) through the One-Stop-Shop system and national interoperability platform.

6.1.2 Subnational portals

No particular infrastructure in this field has been reported to date.

6.2 Networks

Government IT Network

The IT Network is designed to be the backbone communication infrastructure connecting all departments in a secure and interoperable environment. The aim of this project is to create a solid infrastructure among all government institutions. At the end of October 2008, a fibre optic connection was established bringing about the following benefits:
- allow for a high degree of security in communications between institutions;
- facilitate communication between institutions; and
- reduce call costs.

According to the National Operational Broadband Plan (NOBP), by the end of 2029 all public institutions (schools, universities, research centres and other education institutions, healthcare facilities, ministries, courts, local self-governments, and other state authorities and bodies) should have symmetrical Internet access with a speed of at least 1Gbps. To achieve this national broadband target, PE MRD will build and develop a National Backhaul Optical Infrastructure/Network connecting public institutions.

The construction of this network will use the free capacities of the existing optical infrastructure (optical cables, fibres, ducts) built with public funds. Such optical infrastructure is managed by MEPSO (state-owned company for electricity transmission via the high voltage network), Macedonian Railways, GAMA (company for natural gas transmission), MER (state-owned company for the construction of natural gas pipeline systems), ZELS and PE State Roads.

Under the coordination of MISA, and in cooperation with the World Bank, an application for technical assistance was prepared for a feasibility study for the construction and development of the National Backhaul Optical Infrastructure/Network as part of the NOBP, within the framework of the Western Balkans Investment Framework programme.

6.3 Data Exchange

Portal for Electronic Communication (PEC)

The Portal for Electronic Communication (PEC) is an online system for the electronic exchange of documents with the Customs Administration of North Macedonia. The system enables external users to submit different types of requests to the Customs Administration in electronic form and to monitor the status of their requests in real time.

Web services in the area of Justice and Home Affairs

40 new web services were developed for the needs of the institutions in the area of Justice and Home Affairs, thereby establishing new data exchanges between institutions.

National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI)

A National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) is not limited to distributing data and services, but includes the policy, management, technology, standards, financial and human resources necessary to achieve this goal.

Lidar Portal

In 2019, the laser scanning of part of the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia was carried out in the context of the Lidar Project. The data processing, the production of appropriate products (DTM, DSM and pints cloud) and the quality control of the Lidar

products are ongoing. A distribution Lidar Portal was also developed for users to view, select and download Lidar data.

6.4 eID and Trust Services

Digital Certificates

The government promotes the benefits of using the Digital Certificates accredited by the commercial Certificate Authority (CA) for all employers having a legal obligation to report and pay taxes. In particular, the government aims to allow electronic documents to be submitted to state institutions, thereby minimising the need for physical presence at their offices. In addition, the above-mentioned approach will facilitate and promote the use of current and future electronic services, such as electronic publication of social contributions and personal income tax, electronic tax returns, electronic publication of annual accounts, electronic banking, electronic procurement, etc.

eID

When a citizen registers on the Single Sign-On System (SSO) on the National e-Services Portal, an eID is created after a successful identity verification. The eID is a non-material tool for electronic identification for eServices provided by competent authorities and other entities providing services via the National e-Services Portal.
Different eID levels exist, depending on the reliability of the electronic identification verification in the registration and login process. The SSO supports the following eID levels: basic user profile, low level eID and high level eID.

Single Sign-On System (SSO)

The Single Sign-On System (SSO) allows users to register and login to the National eServices Portal. At present, only natural persons can register on the SSO. Details on the SSO registration process are available here.
When logging in to the Portal, the user is automatically redirected to the SSO to identify with his/her username and password or qualified electronic signature certificate. After a successful identification, the SSO sends an authentication token to the Portal, which, in turn, enables access to the Portal's private section.
At the moment, the SSO is being integrated with the identification and authentication system of the Public Revenue Office. In the future, the SSO will be integrated with the systems of other institutions, serving as login also for these systems and thereby allowing users to use the same login data. The SSO supports the Open ID 2.0, SAML 2.0, WS Federation, OAuth 2.0 protocols.

6.5 eProcurement

eProcurement System

Supported by the eGovernment Project, the latest version of the old eProcurement system (EPPS) was launched on 10 February 2018, integrating a software solution for publishing contract notices and notifications developed by the Public Procurement Bureau. The new system provides a one-stop-shop for the public, thereby improving efficiency and transparency, streamlines complex procedures, and facilitates the interaction between businesses and government institutions. Moreover, the system is compliant with EU directives and supports all forms of public procurement, including electronic auctions (since January 2008). All public institutions and businesses can register with the system and obtain the obligatory digital certificates for posting tenders or sending bids. Thanks to the system, approximately EUR 1.2 million government funds were saved in 2009.
Previously, an upgraded version was launched on 1 June 2014, featuring more functionalities and several improvements to ensure easier access and more efficient

operations in the awarding procedures. The PPB had worked on the development of new modules and the enhancement of the existing ones, significantly simplifying and facilitating the use of the application. Of all implemented updates, the most significant ones for users were the following: complete redesign of the panel and module for participation in auctions; functionality for submitting a response to the questions raised by economic operators for a specific procedure before the public opening of the procedure carried out in paper form; improvements in the module 'Electronic mailbox - automatic announcement in the Official Gazette', and others.

6.6 ePayment

One-Stop-Shop for Legal Entities

The One-Stop-Shop is a portal for registering legal entities, making amendments and deletions, paying registration fees online, and obtaining certificates in electronic or paper format. The eRegistration portal (part of One-Stop-Shop system for registering businesses and other legal entities) enables paying prescribed registration fees online.

ePayment for eServices

The National eServices Portal offers an ePayment feature for the fees and administrative taxes due, in total, for the eServices requested on the Portal, regardless of the institution issuing/delivering the service. The Portal sends a package of data for each different payment to the bank chosen for payment transactions and clears each individual payment order to the Treasury or commercial banks. The necessary data for the payment form part of the data relating to each service in the Catalogue of Public Services. The procedure for ePayment when applying for eServices is described in a bylaw of the Law for Electronic Management and Electronic Services.

6.7 Knowledge Management

Learning Management System

The Learning Management System (LMS) Portal, offering eLearning for administrative servants, enables SCORM packages to be uploaded and made available to all public servants. eCourses include a test, with a certificate generated for the participant if passed. A modernisation of the LMS, with a transition to a Cloud infrastructure, is currently foreseen.

Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS)

The existing Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS) includes, besides the register of public sector employees and organizational structures, a module for salary calculation.
In 2019, the Macedonian administration proceeded with the modernisation of the HRMIS after the successful completion of a procurement process. The activities to implement the modernisation have already begun, covering inter-institutional electronic exchange of documents with electronic signing, Single-Sign-On authentication of users, improvement and streamlining of business processes by introducing a dedicated business process management module, quick and accurate search for information and report generation, integration with other systems, increased operational efficiency by introducing new functionalities and improving the existing ones, and risk reduction and management through increased security and control of information access, reliability and data integrity.
At the end of 2019 the existing HRMIS system was still used, with the transition to the new system planned for the end of 2020 or the beginning of 2021.

6.8 Cross-border platforms

TESTA-ng Network

The government signed a memorandum of understanding with the EU on the quality and security requirements related to the connection to the TESTA-ng network for data exchange between EU member states and candidates. In 2018, TESTA-ng was used by the Ministry of Transport and Communications for the Tachonet application.

New Computerised Transit System (NCTS)

The New Computerised Transit System (NCTS) is a modern tool using advanced technologies and electronic data processing for managing and controlling transit procedures in an efficient way through the exchange of electronic messages between economic operators and customs offices, as well as only between customs offices.

System of Electronic Exchange of Data (SEED)

The System of Electronic Exchange of Data involves the Customs Administrations in the Western Balkan Region (Systematic Electronic Exchange of Data).

6.9 Base registries

National Population Register

The newly established National Population Register was published in October 2019 as key enabler and one of the main cornerstones in the digitisation effort in North Macedonia. The Register provides a unified and unique way of managing individual databases based on established standards and procedures. In particular, the National Population Register represents a single integrated data register for all citizens aggregating data on the entire population and thus enabling the implementation and monitoring of public policies in the domain of population management and planning. In addition, the National Population Register provides access to personal data for the purpose of public services provided by the competent authorities. Moreover, this initiative is a key stepstone in the establishment of the national eID, as well as the provision of digital services to Macedonian citizens. With the National Population Register, a unique electronic number for persons (EEBG) was also introduced as mandatory information to access given personal data from the Register. The key data providers are the Ministry of the Interior (MOI), the Ministry of Justice - Office for the Management of Registers of Births, Marriages and Deaths (UVMK) and the Central Register of the Republic of Macedonia (CRM).

As a result, Macedonian authorities have access to a single official and reliable data source for population related data, where each person is able to access and verify the personal data that is used for administrative proceedings by administration authorities. Importantly, this ensures compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). To establish an appropriate legal framework, the Law on the Central Population Register was published on 21 May 2019. The provisions of this Law establish the legal competences of the state administration bodies, the bodies within the ministries, the administrative organizations and the independent bodies in providing services for the exercise of rights and obligations of interest to the population in the Republic of North Macedonia.

Register of Rare Diseases

The Register of Rare Diseases records and monitors patients with rare diseases as well as data on therapy/medicines for rare diseases. The Register is part of the national system for electronic evidence in health. The Register is not a public website and data

cannot be accessed by the patient or unauthorised users, but only by authorised users with privileges.

Register of Diabetes

This Register of Diabetes records and monitors patients with diabetes and is also part of the national system for electronic evidence in health. The Register is not a public website and data cannot be accessed by the patient or unauthorised users, but only by authorised users with privileges.

Register of Repossessed Real Estate Intended for Sale

The Register of Repossessed Real Estate Intended for Sale was established in December 2019. The legal conditions for the establishment and running of this Register were created with the adoption of the Law on Modifications and Amendments to the Law on the Real Estate Cadastre.
Real estate intended for sale is real estate acquired within a procedure for collection of receivables or on other grounds. The Register contains spatial and descriptive data for such real estate, as well as data on the entity possessing the real estate.

7 | Cross-border Digital Public Administration Services

7 Cross border Digital Public Administration Services for Citizens and Businesses

Further to the information on national digital public services provided in the previous chapters, this final chapter presents an overview of the basic cross-border public services provided to citizens and businesses in other European countries. Your Europe is taken as reference, as it is the EU one-stop shop which aims to simplify the life of both citizens and businesses by avoiding unnecessary inconvenience and red tape in regard to 'life and travel', as well as 'doing business' abroad. In order to do so, Your Europe offers information on basic rights under EU law, but also on how these rights are implemented in each individual country (where information has been provided by the national authorities). Free email or telephone contact with EU assistance services, to get more personalised or detailed help and advice is also available.

Please note that, in most cases, the EU rights described in Your Europe apply to all EU member countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, and sometimes to Switzerland. Information on Your Europe is provided by the relevant departments of the European Commission and complemented by content provided by the authorities of every country it covers. As the website consists of two sections - one for citizens and one for businesses, both managed by DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW) - below the main groups of services for each section are listed.

7.1 Life and Travel

For citizens, the following groups of services can be found on the website:
- Travel (e.g. Documents needed for travelling in Europe);
- Work and retirement (e.g. Unemployment and Benefits);
- Vehicles (e.g. Registration);
- Residence formalities (e.g. Elections abroad);
- Education and youth (e.g. Researchers);
- Health (e.g. Medical Treatment abroad);
- Family (e.g. Couples);
- Consumers (e.g. Shopping).

7.2 Doing Business

Regarding businesses, the groups of services on the website concern:
- Running a business (e.g. Developing a business);
- Taxation (e.g. Business tax);
- Selling in the EU (e.g. Public contracts);
- Human Resources (e.g. Employment contracts);
- Product requirements (e.g. Standards);
- Financing and Funding (e.g. Accounting);
- Dealing with Customers (e.g. Data protection).

The Digital Public Administration Factsheets

The factsheets present an overview of the state and progress of Digital Public Administration and Interoperability within European countries.

The factsheets are published on the Joinup platform, which is a joint initiative by the Directorate General for Informatics (DG DIGIT) and the Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content & Technology (DG CONNECT). This factsheet received valuable contribution from Rozalinda Stojova (Ministry of Information Society and Administration).

The Digital Public Administration Factsheets are prepared for the European Commission by Wavestone

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ISA² is a EUR 131 million programme of the European Commission which develops digital solutions that enable interoperable cross-border and cross-sector public services, for the benefit of public administrations, businesses and citizens across the EU.

ISA² supports a wide range of activities and solutions, among which is the National Interoperability Framework Observatory (NIFO) action.

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