NEW LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AS TOOLS FOR FOSTERING EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIC PLANNING IN MONTENEGRO

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ABSTRACT
Public Administration Reform (PAR) is one of the three pillars of European Union accession negotiations and it highlights the importance of well-functioning public institutions. Efficient and effective administration system is an enormous asset in achieving European standards, which is why the emphasis is put on this issue for the aspiring new member-states. Montenegro, as a Western Balkans (WB) front-runner in the European integration (EI) process, is no exception when it comes to the point of PAR, especially because the advanced stage of EU negotiations regarded more focus on this topic. A part of it – policy planning and co-ordination - was recognized as very important on the EU level in the period of creating the Cohesion policy when the alignment between national strategic documents and the EU policy framework became even more significant. The Government of Montenegro has taken decisive steps in order to achieve higher efficiency and impact of public policies which required the revision of the existing strategic framework. This approach was mostly based on establishing a coherent strategic planning system based on a strong legal and methodological grounds, but with understanding of the Montenegrin context, administrative capacity and development.

The process of transformation of the existing approach to policy and strategic planning began within the former Ministry of European Affairs (MEA) and was later transferred to the Secretariat-General of the Government (SGG). The Department for Government Strategies (DGS) was formed with purpose to give guidance and issue opinions on drafts and proposals of strategic documents and reports on their implementation in order to achieve better alignment, monitoring and evaluation of strategic documents. Before establishing the new legal and methodological framework, DGS conducted a number of analysis in order to identify the solutions that could be applied best in the Montenegrin context. Each and every step in the process, from establishment of the DGS to the implementation of the Decree on procedure of drafting, alignment and monitoring implementation of strategic documents will be described in this paper, thus indicating the direction that Montenegro decided to take as the most appropriate for a small country with small administration. Bearing in mind that Montenegro’s most important foreign policy strategic goal is the accession to the EU, but also given the 2025 perspective, it becomes more important to align national with EU policies that would help Montenegro’s development.

POINTS FOR PRACTITIONERS
The paper discusses a number topics focused on improving the practice of the public administration in Montenegro when it comes to strategic planning and policy making. Its main findings could be useful to practitioners in the manner that it will:

- Give an insight into the strategic planning system in Montenegro before and after the adoption of the relevant legal and methodological framework;
- Share good practices from the Montenegrin experience, especially regarding the preparation of the Decree and Methodology, establishment of Network of Civil Servants for Strategic Planning and launching of the Training Programme for Civil Servants for Strategic Planning;
- Identify the effect of the new strategic system on improved policy planning;
- Demonstrate how a pragmatic, “small-steps” approach can bring more tangible results than over-ambitious, complex legal solutions that are often too difficult to implement.

Key words: evidence-based policy, EU integration, policy co-ordination, strategic planning

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1. INTRODUCTION

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, socialist countries in Central, Eastern and South-East Europe have identified the accession to the European Union (EU) as the only way of adapting to the new environment in which the traces of liberal democracy have become more evident. The membership in the most prominent regional organization was perceived mostly in the light of the possible benefits arising from the process. This is the perception that current candidate-countries, amongst them Montenegro, promote, emphasizing the significance of membership, especially for smaller countries like Montenegro. The rise in support for the EU membership amongst Montenegrin citizens was recorded in March 2018, showing that 67.9% of Montenegrin citizens support the EU membership, which is 11.8% higher than in June 2017, when the support was the on its lowest level (56.1%). (CEDEM, 2018)

After re-gaining independence in 2006, Montenegro began its European journey and signing the Stabilization and Accession Agreement in 2007. In 2008, Montenegro submitted the request for membership, after which, in 2009 the European Commission Questionnaire was sent to the then Ministry of European Integration. Meanwhile, the Ministry was merged into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, becoming Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration. In 2010, Montenegro gained candidate-country status, and it opened its first negotiating chapters on 29 June 2012. (Đurović, 2012, Translation A.V.) Until now, Montenegro has opened 32 out of 33 negotiation chapters and conditionally closed three of them, with only chapter 8 – Competition policy remaining unopened.

Even though the European perspective of Montenegro is unquestionable, the initial enthusiasm has diminished after indicating that the next most ambitious and optimistic period for accepting new-member states to the EU is 2025. (European Commission, 2018) Constant changes on global scale, especially economic and migration crisis, affected the policies in the European Union, therefore the Enlargement Policy as well. Enlargement affects the EU’s institutional structure, often triggering changes in rules that influence politics and policy-making. (Sedelmeier, 2010: 402) Ever since the Copenhagen criteria were defined in 1993, the EU gave a clear direction in which the aspiring candidate countries should go. Enlargement Negotiations with the Western Balkans is mainly shaped by the EU Enlargement Strategy, that relies on “C” principles (Đurović, 2017: 64-65), amongst which is the principle of “Common priorities (“Fundamentals first”) – a principle that calls for returning to common priorities, i.e. the three pillars of the Enlargement Policy: Rule of Law, Economic Governance and Public Administration Reform (PAR).

As PAR became more important, a major task within it, policy co-ordination and development, also became one of the key components in reforming the Montenegrin public policy planning process, with special attention given to the reform of the strategic planning system. Public policies as such contain all the authoritative public decisions made by the government – they are the product of a political system. Policies, or products (outputs) are normally selected for a specific purpose: their goal is to give the final results, i.e. political outcomes. Public policies are intended to strengthen national identity and community (...) and government policies are increasingly focused on satisfying the needs and demands of its citizens. (Almond, Pauel, Rasel, Strom, 2009: 155-156) Addressing the issue of coherent, result-oriented and evidence-based policies required a thorough examination of the existing situation in planning system in Montenegro and serious review of the assessments given in the monitoring reports on PAR in Montenegro. (SIGMA, 2017; European Commission, 2018) What started as a pioneer approach within the former Ministry of European Affairs gradually turned itself into oversight of all the strategic documents of the Government and not only those related to the EU accession negotiations. A new role has been given to the Department for Government Strategies (DGS) with purpose to give guidance and issue opinions on drafts and proposals of strategic documents and reports on their implementation in order to achieve better alignment, monitoring and evaluation of strategic documents. Guided by the results of various analysis that DGS continuously

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3 The first two opened negotiating chapters were 23 – Judiciary and Fundamental Rights and 24 – Justice, freedom and security, which introduced the future practice of opening these two chapters first for all the other WB countries. Information available on the official website of EU Integration of Montenegro, ME4EU EU4ME: http://www.eu.me/en/

4 Chapter 25 – Science and research, 26 – Education and culture and 30 – External Relations. Information available on the official website of EU Integration of Montenegro, ME4EU EU4ME: http://www.eu.me/en/

5 More information on European Neighbourhood Policy And Enlargement Negotiations can be found on the official website: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/node_en
carries out, emphasis is put on promoting a different approach in strategic planning, the one that is more evidence-based and result-oriented. To achieve it, DGS introduced a new Decree on procedure of drafting, alignment and monitoring implementation of strategic documents (onwards the Decree), on which the current system of strategic planning in Montenegro relies. The Decree stipulates new principles in this field, sectoral and inter-sectoral approach to strategic planning, structure and definition of strategic documents, setting better alignment between over-arching and sectoral strategic documents and alignment with EU policy framework as mandatory. Therefore, the DGS published first ever Methodology for Policy Development, Drafting and Monitoring of Strategic Planning Documents (onwards the Methodology), but it introduced additional mechanisms for promoting the new concept of policy planning. These new concepts are the Network of Public Servants for Strategic Planning (onwards the Network) and the Training Programme for Civil Servants for Strategic Planning (onwards the Training Programme) with the aim to enhance capacity building within the ministries. Expected outcomes of the implementation of the Decree are yet to be monitored, but all of the mentioned steps and mechanisms will be described in the following chapters, as well as the effects they have produced by now. Eventually, what is expected to become the major result and key benefit of a good planning system is the prosperity of the citizens and the country, whereas well–planned policies lead to the achievement of the main priorities.

2. METHODOLOGY

Crucial to the scope of this paper, that was mostly based as a case-study, were the research questions on which the paper is grounded: How did policy development and co-ordination, with regard to the EU integration process, become one of the major tasks of the Montenegrin administration? Which steps did Montenegro take in order to promote the new approach in policy and strategic planning?

The analysis was carried out on the example of Montenegrin case, while it focused primarily on identification of the effects of the newly established mechanisms in Montenegrin strategic framework – the Network for Civil Servants for Strategic Planning and the Training Programme for Civil Servants for Strategic Planning. Collected results are representative for the SGG and the members of the Network. Thus, samples that were used addressed primarily these elements and were not prepared for the public administration of Montenegro as a whole, which would have to be a part of a more comprehensive and thorough research. This kind of research could take place after a few years of implementation of the Decree and Methodology, when proper evaluation of effectiveness and sustainability of the new system could be done.

Qualitative methods, text and content analysis will be mainly used. In the period from May to September 2017, DGS, at that moment within the former Ministry of European Affairs (MEA) prepared an analysis of the existing strategies in force (their mapping, classification and main features). Conclusions from the analysis as well as conclusions from SIGMA Monitoring Report of the Principles of Public Administration in Montenegro (2017) and European Commission Progress Report (2016, 2018) will be used. Quality check opinions on the new strategic documents and reports that are issued by the SGG based on a specific assessment questionnaire will also be a part of the textual analysis, as well as the sources of statistical data. From September to December 2018 the SGG has issued 77 opinions on drafts and proposals of strategic documents and reports on the implementation of strategic documents. Statistical data deriving from the analysis of the opinions will be used especially in quantifying the alignment of new documents with the criteria set in the Decree on the Modalities and Procedures of Drafting, Alignment and Monitoring of the Implementation of Strategic Documents. Some of the statistical data, relevant for this paper, will be derived from the analysis of questionnaires that were carried with members of the Network, who are also the participants of the Training Programme.

Comparative analysis was used in identifying good practices examples in the new EU member states and the region, focusing on their legal and methodological solutions for strategic planning. Lithuania and Latvia were chosen as the two most successful new EU member states, while World Bank EU-8 Administrative Capacity in

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6 This period is relevant since the Decree on the Modalities and Procedures of Drafting, Alignment and Monitoring of the Implementation of Strategic Documents has entered into force in August 2018. Unfortunately, the data for the first quartal of 2019 haven’t been prepared in the time of writing of this article and are in the process of analysis.

7 The Decree on the Modalities and Procedures of Drafting, Alignment and Monitoring of the Implementation of Strategic Documents stipulates that the Secretariat – General of the Government of Montenegro issues opinions on drafts (article 17) and proposals of strategic documents (article 18), as well as on annual and final reports on the implementation of strategic documents (article 19).
**the New Member States: The Limits of Innovation?** Study was taken as relevant source. Findings on Croatia and Serbia were mostly made by reviewing the Law on the System of Strategic Planning and Development Management of the Republic of Croatia and Law on the Planning System of the Republic of Serbia.

### 3. SMALL STEPS, PRAGMATIC MEASURES

New Government in Montenegro began its term of office after Parliamentary elections held in October 2016. The Government established a separate Ministry of European Affairs (MEA), thus highlighting the significance of the European integration process. Devotion to the priorities of the accession negotiations was once again showed when the Government formed the already mentioned DGS, indicating that policy development and co-ordination will become the major task in the implementation of PAR. Taking into account the experience that the MEA had in coordinating European integration process, DGS was formed within this line ministry, with intention to link the responsibilities in EU accession negotiations with policy development on the national level. However, after the MEA seized to exist, in March 2018, the competences, as well as DGS, were transferred to the Secretariat-General of the Government (SGG). Even though DGS couldn’t formally obtain its mandate in policy co-ordination before the adoption of the above-mentioned Decree, the Decree, the Methodology, the Network and the Training Programme came as results of continuous work on finding the best solutions to promote and implement the new approach in strategic planning. Steps towards these implementing mechanisms are to be described separately.

#### 3.1. Step 1 – Review of the current Montenegrin strategic framework

After establishment, DGS carried out an analysis aimed at discovering the number and structure of strategic documents in Montenegro, the ones that are in effect from May to July 2017. Part of it was the identification of legal solutions for strategic planning in Montenegrin legislation. This analysis showed that Montenegro, ending with July 2017, had a number of 95 strategies, 20 programmes, 20 plans and 69 action plans, but the precise number couldn’t be given since the drafters didn’t make clear difference between these categories of strategic documents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>July 2017</th>
<th>December 2017</th>
<th>October 2018</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of strategies</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Table 1: Number of strategies in effect in Montenegrin strategic framework*

The results concerning the structure and quality of the strategic documents that were the subject of the analysis, the results weren’t very optimistic and they showed that 71% of the existing strategies had a plan for implementation, 62% included reporting, 45% of them were costed, but only 30% of the strategies have foreseen mid-term evaluation. The quality of the plans for implementation of strategic documents and the quality of reporting indicated to uneven structure, no unification in their drafting and no identification of modalities of enhancing a certain public policy. This ended in adopting many reports that don’t contain reporting on the outcome level and don’t highlight the main issues that the state institutions are facing during the implementation of strategic documents. When the analysis was reviewed, in the end of 2017, it identified 120 strategies in effect, while their number in October 2018 fell just slightly to 118.

When it comes to legislation, 25 laws and legal acts in Montenegro contained definitions on strategic documents that are to be adopted in specific areas or sectors. For example, Law on Budget and Fiscal Responsibility of Montenegro (2014) defines the way of preparing and adopting the Fiscal Strategy, Fiscal Policy Guidelines and Debt Management Strategy, as well as their structure, while we also have laws that stipulate the principles that need to be respected when drafting strategic documents in a specific area, such as Law on Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment (2016). While there were many laws, their implementation was counter-productive since it required many strategic documents to be adopted which led to incoherent and overburdened strategic planning system in Montenegro. Additionally, EU integration process has led to the situation in which many documents are prepared as obligations stemming from negotiating chapters, rather than reactions to issues that require strategic problem solving. However, internal analysis wasn’t enough to give clear conclusions on what should be

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done, so the DGS continued analyzing other experiences, primarily the examples of successful new EU member states, as well as regional practices, with focus on Croatia, the last EU member-state, and Serbia.

3.2. Step 2 – Reviewing international and regional practices

Not so many countries have achieved to establish an efficient system for policy development and co-ordination because this process requires strong support on administrative, but most of all on the political level. It also requires a strong relation between strategic planning, i.e. planning public policies and planning the budget. In Europe, Western European countries, such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Ireland and Scandinavian countries, like Finland, were usually identified as good practice examples in this field, with New Zealand and Canada as non-European “policy-planning leaders”.

After the Big Wave of Enlargement in 2004, Baltic countries have stood out as the most prominent examples in policy development and co-ordination, keeping up with common EU practice and standards in this area. According to the World Bank report on administrative capacities of the new EU member states (2006), Lithuania has established the most efficient system of coordination and development of policies, which it started implementing four years before becoming EU member with primary goal of faster European integrations. Besides Lithuania, Latvia stands out as a good example for establishing functional policy management system, starting primarily from strategic planning processes, combined with reform in the State Chancellery. Both states have achieved great success choosing different approaches. While Lithuania choose “a top-down approach, led by the State Chancellery in close cooperation with the Ministry of Finance and rolled out throughout the central administration. Latvia has used a bottom- up approach, whereby ministries and agencies were stimulated to use policy planning tools designed by the State Chancellery, initially on a voluntary basis but from 2006 onward as an obligatory process.” (World Bank, 2006) It should be noted that two years were needed for elaborating appropriate methodology in Lithuania based on Canadian model, on which Ernst & Young Baltic and Institute for public policy was also engaged. (Government of the Republic of Lithuania, 2002)

These processes, as it already mentioned, took place in other candidate countries and for Montenegro the most relevant experience in the neighborhood was Croatian, since it is territorially close and the last country that became an EU member state. Croatian experience tells us that sometimes adopting an extensive legal solution that would entail all the strategic documents and define all the overarching national strategic documents might not be the best one for a small administration. Croatian Law on the System of Strategic Planning and Development Management of the Republic of Croatia (2017) in its article 2 stipulated the need for preparing the Decree on guidelines for drafting strategic planning acts of national importance and of importance for local and regional self-government units, which was adopted in October 2018 which implied that additional legal solutions had to be found in order to implement the new approach in strategic planning.

In Serbian case, Republic Secretariat for Public Policies of Serbia pointed out that establishing the coherent strategic planning system in Serbia is ongoing for 15 years, but that there was no adequate political support. Serbia has also taken similar approach to Croatian, adopting the Law on the Planning System of the Republic of Serbia in April 2018, after which, in February this year, the Regulation of the Methodology of public policy management, impact assessment of public policies and regulations, and the content of individual public policy documents was adopted (2019).

This brief comparative analysis led to thinking about the direction that would be most appropriate and useful in Montenegro and it was an important incentive for emphasizing the importance of strategic planning. The assessment of the World Bank (2006) for the new member states indicated that “arguably the most important single factor is continuity and quality in the top levels of the administration and a relatively smooth pattern of politico-administrative relations”, which the cases of the Baltic states have shown. Therefore, a strong political support for the process must exist in order to ensure soundly performing systems across the whole of government.

3.3. Step 3 – Reviewing SIGMA and European Commission Assessments in Good Governance in Montenegro

Since establishment of tighter cooperation with SIGMA, the principles of public administration have become one of the crucial components of changes on the level of the overall political system, including, of course, strategic planning. Principles of public administration which are relevant for the SGG mandate in policy development and

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co-ordination are mostly focused on coherent policy planning, aligned with the government’s financial circumstances and ensuring that the government is able to achieve its objectives; medium-term policy planning that should be in place; and regular monitoring of government’s performance that should enable public scrutiny and support the government in achieving its objectives.11

According to SIGMA 2017 Monitoring Report, key challenges in Montenegrin policy planning remain with
ensuring the quality of policy proposals. Policy planning was primarily annual and there was no medium-term
government programme,12 the links between policy and fiscal plans are limited, the central planning documents
do not establish clear outcome-level objectives for the Government. This led to the limited quality of analysis
supporting the proposals, inconsistent implementation of the procedures for evidence-based policy making and consultation and no clear information on the costs of the implementation. In the end, the reports on the implementation are mainly output-oriented and they don’t provide information on the achievements on the outcome level. On the other hand, the reports are publicly available, as all material discussed at the Government sessions is published online. When it comes to the number of strategies, the Report states that their number in 2017 decreased considerably by comparison with 2016,13 but the strategic planning system remains fragmented, illustrated by the fact that separate strategies are planned for areas that should be covered by a single sector strategy. (SIGMA, 2017: 33)

Remarks given by the European Commission in their country reports for Montenegro in the area of policy
development and co-ordination are more or less in the same line as the ones mentioned in SIGMA Monitoring Report. Both Progress Reports for 201614 and 201815 conclude that Montenegro is moderately ready in the area of public administration reform and when it comes to policy development and co-ordination some changes were achieved. While the 2016 Report states that medium-term policy planning is not given priority by the Government, in the moment of preparing the 2018 Report the Government of Montenegro adopted its first Medium-term Government Working Programme. On the other hand, both reports identify the problem with alignment between policy and fiscal planning, especially in sectoral strategic documents that don’t have proper costing. Compared to the 2016 Progress Report that doesn’t single out a specific recommendation in policy development and co-ordination, the 2018 Progress Report states that the quality of policy planning should be “substantially upgraded, by introducing a medium-term planning framework, including fiscal planning, and by ensuring the consistency and coordination of sector strategies.” (pg. 10) It also mentions that the government is legally obliged to monitor and report on implementation of the central planning documents, but there is no legal requirement for ministries to report on implementation of sector strategies.

3.4. Step 4 – Choosing the model for enhancing policy and strategic planning in Montenegro

Simultaneously with analyzing Montenegrin strategic and legal framework, good practice and regional examples and monitoring reports which contained information about PAR and good governance in Montenegro, DGS was devoted to suggesting specific options for regulating the strategic framework. Two models emerged as the possible ones:

1. Model 1 – Establishing a legal obligation through Rules of Procedure of the Government of Montenegro that the MEA should issue opinions on the quality of strategic documents and reports and devise a special Instruction that would define the type of strategic documents and minimum criteria for their structure.

Model 1 represented the fastest way for establishing the basics of the strategic planning system and in this way the MEA would, relatively quickly, establish a legal basis and define the minimum criteria for further development of strategic documents. To begin with, this model would ensure a higher quality of strategies through clear obligations of defining priorities, objectives, action plans for implementation, performance indicators, etc. it would also allow MEA to gradually develop the planning system while defining the mandatory content of planning documents.

2. Model 2 – Defining the planning system with a special Decree, adopted by the Government.

12 Government Annual Working Programme (GAWP) was Government’s principal planning document.
13 Total number of strategies in the end of 2017 was 120, while in the end of 2018 a total of 118 strategies were in effect, according to the analysis of the Department of Government Strategies.
This model would provide stronger legal support for the establishment of the new strategic planning system, since the Decree has a higher legal hierarchy than the mentioned special Instruction that would be issued by the MEA. This model, based on strong inter-ministerial approach and mutual action of the MEA, Ministry of Finance and SGG would allow a clear categorization of national strategic documents and their relation with the budgetary framework. It would also enable introducing principles for strategic planning, sectoral approach and a clear distinction between strategies, programmes and action plans.

One of the key concerns while choosing the right solution was which of the two models would be better received in the Montenegrin state administration. Both cases surely required work on raising awareness about this issue and providing adequate training for civil servants who are the implementors of planning documents.

Unlike regional practices, as was the case in the mentioned legislations of Croatia and Serbia in which every overarching strategic document has its separate definition and is positioned as hierarchically higher than the sectoral strategic documents, Montenegro opted for a Decree, in which it would just stipulate the need for alignment of sectoral strategic documents with the overarching ones, that define strategic development directions. Even though the approach described in model 2 was questioned because a Decree would be more legally obliging, a strong legalistic culture in Montenegrin public administration, inherited from the period of former socialist rule, suggested that this would be a more decisive, legally and politically significant move. The DGS started devising the Decree on procedure of drafting, alignment and monitoring implementation of strategic documents and together with it the accompanying Methodology, that would describe in detail all of the aspects of the Decree and each part of the mandatory content of strategic documents.

While the Decree and Methodology were still in the process of drafting, DGS had prepared two additional mechanisms that would help in the implementation of the Decree, after it enters into force and the promotion of the new approach in policy planning.

First of them, the Training Programme, was accredited in March 2018, by the National Education Council of Montenegro. The Training Programme was prepared in order to help capacity building for strategic planning in Montenegrin public administration and it came as a result of cooperation with the Montenegrin Human Resources Management Agency (HRMA). The final outline of the Training Programme are six different modules that treat all the segments contained in the strategic document:

1. Public policies development, Planning system in Montenegro;
2. State analysis and problem identification;
3. Setting the goals and identifying outcome indicators for measuring the improvement;
4. Planning reform activities, consultations and communication of the reforms;
5. Costing of reform activities and understanding fiscal reality;

The Training Programme was accredited with 6 ECTS, meaning that the participants could use this benefit if they wish to pursue further specialization in this field. It was decided that the first participants of the Training Programme should be the members of the Network.

The Network is the second mechanisms that would help in the implementation of the Decree, that was established in February 2018. Members of the Network are public servants from all the line ministries and the SGG. For the first time in Montenegrin practice a forum of strategic planners was founded as a place for exchanging opinions, experiences, and as a means for enhancing cooperation between civil servants engaged in strategic planning. The idea was for the activities of the Network to be equally focused on raising the level of quality of strategic documents in Montenegro and on the comprehensive preparation of civil servants in the field. Besides that, the Network can be observed as a forum for sharing useful information and knowledge, issues civil servant face in drafting and the implementation of strategic documents, as well as monitoring and reporting, while contributing to the strengthening of the strategic planning system at the same time.

Meanwhile, the DGS was merged to the SGG, by which the SGG gained a new role when it comes to policy development and co-ordination. The new role of the SGG can be observed through the lens of reconciliation of the two opposing forces - the strong legalistic culture and the progressing process of EU accession negotiations to which the institutions are adapting. The fact that policy co-ordination represents an important part of the public administration reform, which is one of the three pillars of the EU enlargement policy and from which the commitments of candidate countries arise, led to dedication to quality of strategic documents and improvement of the relevant legal framework with the accompanying principles of policy development and planning.
Obligations of the SGG regarding the coordination of policies and improvement of the strategic planning system are defined in the responsibilities of the DGS, but also in the Department for Coordination and Monitoring of Implementation of Government Policies, which is responsible for the monitoring of implementation of the Medium-Term Work Programme of the Government 2018-2020, preparation of the Government Annual Work Programme and work programmes of the ministries, introduction of a new system of mid-term working programmes of the ministries, new system of reporting of the ministries and Government, as well as on a different approach when it comes to the monitoring and assessment of successfulness of implementation of policies. (Pešić, 2018: 13-14) DGS, on the other hand, is the body responsible for coordinating the strategic system in Montenegro and after the adoption of the Decree, the Department has a specific role in implementing the new legal and methodological system in Montenegro because it monitors the harmonization of new strategic documents and reports, issues opinions on their alignment with the methodological criteria, while at the same time giving advice on how to incorporate the new criteria into the existing system. This other role is mainly conducted through the Network and the Training Programme, but also through consultative meetings held with civil servants from line ministries that were involved in drafting new strategic documents. Since the DGS is aiming to raise awareness on the implementation of the Decree and Methodology, it is quite clear that these roles must be obtained professionally.

3.5. Step 5 – New legal and methodological framework are in place

Legal framework that would help harmonizing strategic planning and establish a hierarchy between strategic documents that has long been the subject of reports on Montenegro is now in place, with the adoption of the Decree, that entered into force in August 2018\(^1\) and upon which the Montenegrin strategic planning system is grounded. The Decree introduces the key principles,\(^2\) as a guiding mechanism for the creation of public policies, thoroughly described in the Methodology. These are the principle of alignment, principle of financial sustainability, principle of responsibility, principle of cooperation, principle of transparency, principle of continuity and the principles of efficiency and rational planning. Each of them represents an equally important basis for ensuring quality in the strategic planning of public policies. An additional novelty introduced by the Decree is a sector-based approach\(^3\) to the strategic planning of policies, with intention to rationalize not just the number, but also the process of developing new strategic documents.

The Decree, as well as the Methodology, set the minimum criteria for the mandatory content of a strategy, programme and action plan\(^4\) and their implementation is oriented toward new policy development that requires the respecting of the agreed policy planning principles. At the same time, a higher level of mutual alignment between strategic documents is achieved, as well as the uniformity of procedures and structure of strategic documents. Further, the Decree doesn’t regulate the relation between strategies and programmes as hierarchical, but the programme elaborates a specific topic of an existing sectoral strategy. This possibility given in the Decree enables the line ministries to define key strategies within the ministry and within the sector they belong to, establishing “smaller hierarchies” for the area they regulate, while the programmes will be used to answer to more specific topics. Definitions of overarching strategic documents in Montenegro are given in the Methodology (2018: 17-18), and they are divided into strategic and planning documents forseen by the Constitution of Montenegro, documents defining key government priorities, key strategic and planning documents defining general development directions of Montenegro and financial strategic documents.

The Methodology was published in September 2018, as a guidance for fully understanding and implementing the Decree. It provides practical guidance on the development, drafting and monitoring of the implementation of strategic documents, aimed at improving their quality. Since its use is mandatory from the date of entry into force of the Decree, and the legally binding opinions of the SGG are grounded on compliance with it, the Methodology explains in detail the main requirements set by the Decree. The Methodology provides a detailed explanation of all components of the Decree, thus facilitating the work of the line ministries in the preparation, monitoring and implementation of strategy documents.

\(^{16}\) The Official Gazette of Montenegro, number 54/2018 (available only in Montenegrin, link: https://bit.ly/2Vtv1hd)

\(^{17}\) Articles 5-12 of the Decree, pg. 15-16 of the Methodology

\(^{18}\) The following seven sectors, within whose scope strategy documents are developed are determined: Democracy and Good Governance, Financial and Fiscal Policy, Transport, Energy and Information Infrastructure, Economic Development and Environment, Science, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Employment, Social Policy and Health and Foreign and Security Policy and Defence (article 13 of the Decree, pg. 18-19 of the Methodology)

\(^{19}\) Articles 2 and 3 of the Decree, pg. 9, 20-21 of the Methodology
implementation of strategy documents, providing a broader picture on the key principles of policy development and a basic outline of the planning system in Montenegro, and functioning as a manual for the Training Programme.

The main goal of this new framework is to emphasize the importance of public policy development based on verifiable data that would lead to realistic objectives. The focus is thus shifted towards result-oriented policy planning that would enable better monitoring of the strategic documents in every phase of their implementation. Promoting the key principles of strategic planning is a constant task in this process. Montenegrin institutions, which are the key creators of public policies and implementers of the development priorities of Montenegro, including its perspective as a credible future member of the European Union, are the ones to gradually embrace and apply the given guidelines. Because of that, DSG has established the two above-mentioned fora to fully implement and promote the concepts laid in the Decree and Methodology: the Network, where all the line ministries are represented by two civil servants and the Training Programme, that is currently attended by the members of the Network.

3.6. Step 6 - Training Programme and the Network as mechanisms for implementing the Decree

3.6.1. Training programme

The long-expected beginning of the Training Programme had finally happened on 1 October 2018, starting with the first module the same day. Modules have been organized from October 2018 to April 2019, in the first week of each month, except January. Civil Servants from most of the line ministries have attended the Training Programme, precisely, 25 of them. Since the structure of the Training Programme is based on the Decree and the Methodology, lectures give a theoretical as well as practical approach in order to enable participants to implement the acquired knowledge through concrete examples of the strategic documents which they are developing. An analysis of the implementation of the Education Program so far indicates the high level of engagement of the participants, who estimated that participation in the Program significantly contributed to their better understanding of the strategic planning system, the need for defining uniform rules regarding the basic elements of a strategic document, as well as having the opportunity to work on concrete examples of strategic documents.

For the purpose of quantifying the satisfaction of the participants concerning the quality of the Training Programme, a questionnaire prepared for the overall quality analysis of the existing mechanisms through which DGS is implementing the Decree and Methodology, contained questions regarding the questions on participants’ satisfaction with the Training Programme. Even though the total number of members of the Network is 34, of which 25 attend the Training Programme, only 22 members responded to the questionnaire, which is still a representative sample for this group. Two of the questions that addressed the Training Programme were:

1. To what extent has the Training Programme for Civil Servants for Strategic Planning contributed to better understanding of the requirements for drafting strategic documents and the accompanying reports set in the Decree and Methodology?

The respondents had the possibility to rate the Training Programme in this sense with rating 1-5, where 1 would mean “it hasn’t contributed at all” and 5 “it has contributed greatly”. The results have shown that the average rating of the Training Programme, when it comes to bringing closer the requirements set in the Decree and the Methodology, is 4.4.

2. How would you rate practical guidelines given during the Training Programme (homework, group work) that would be useful in preparing strategic documents?

This question also contained the possibility of responding with ratings ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 meant “not useful”, while 5 meant “very useful”. The average rating of the practical guidelines gained through the Training Programme that the participants would use in their everyday work was 4.2.

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21 January was intentionally avoided because of New Year and Christmas holidays in Montenegro.
22 The analysis of the questionnaire was prepared in February, 2019
3.6.2. The Network

From the moment of launching, in February 2018, the Network held three more meetings (July and November 2018, January 2019) in order to discuss relevant issues in the strategic planning framework in Montenegro. Although not all the line ministries have specialized departments for strategic planning\(^{23}\), the Network represents the place that gathers ministries’ “strategic contact points” and it has 34 active members from the line ministries. The SGG has its representatives in the Network, although they are members and coordinators of this forum.

One of the first steps when the Network was established was the first questionnaire conducted within this group, with purpose to identify the experience of the members in strategic planning. The first questionnaire was prepared for the first meeting of the Network, in February 2018, so all of the members (34) have answered the given questions. There were two questions relevant for their experience:

1. What is the number of strategic documents that you have worked on by now?
2. How do you evaluate your knowledge and skills in the areas relevant for strategic planning?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Average rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the process and difference between monitoring and evaluation of strategic documents</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of legal regulation for conducting public consultations</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining goals (developing strategic goals and operational objectives)</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing performance indicators (output, outcome, impact) for measuring the improvements</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steps and components of public policy development cycle</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{23}\) Out of 17 ministries, only 4 of them have departments for strategic planning, while only 2 ministries have specialized departments – the Ministry of the Interior, within the Directorate for Strategic and Development Affairs and the Ministry of Public Administration, within the Directory for Strategic, Development and Analytical Affairs of Local Self-Governments.
State analysis and problem identification (SWOT, PESTLE, problem tree) | 2,9
Costing of reform activities | 2,9

| Table 2: Results of self-evaluation of civil servants’ knowledge in strategic planning (February, 2018) |

Additional to this questionnaire, another one was prepared for the latest meeting of the Network, in January 2019. The structure of the 22 respondents that answered the questions indicated that the respondents had different levels of experience in public administration, ranging from 5 to more than 20 years – half of the respondents work in public administration for 5 years, 7 of them have worked in public administration from 5-15 years, while only 4 of them work for more than 20 years in public administration. The structure of the respondents when it comes to their positions in the ministries showed that 14 of them work as independent advisors, 5 of them are Heads of Directories, while 1 respondent covers the position of the Director-General and 1 is the Secretary of the Ministry. All of the respondents consider their membership in the Network useful and 73% of respondents have been contacted by their fellow colleagues for helping with drafting of strategic documents and/or preparing reports in the last 4 months (October 2018 – January 2019). They do, however, believe that they should get more “visibility” within their line ministries and that the number of the Network members should be expanded. Namely, 73% of the respondents considers some of their colleagues should also be Network members.

3.7. Step 7 – Quality-check of the strategic documents and reports as a means for the implementation of the Decree and Methodology

From the moment when the Decree entered into force, it has become obligatory for the ministries to send their drafts and proposal of strategic documents, as well as reports on their implementation for the opinion of the SGG. These opinions are one of the mechanisms for quality check for new strategies, programmes, action plans and reports, but also a useful tool for cooperation between the line ministries and the SGG. The opinions on drafts and proposals of new strategic documents have the same structure and they check the quality of new strategic documents against three key criteria:

a) Alignment with national strategic framework – overarching and existing sectoral strategies;
b) Alignment with the obligations stemming from EU integration and other international obligations;
c) Alignment with the Decree, i.e. the criteria and the structure of the strategic documents stipulated in the Decree.

This quality check covers the review of state analysis, problem identification, setting goals, defining outcome indicators, defining activities in the action plan, costing and sources of financing for the implementation of the strategic documents and mechanisms for monitoring, reporting and evaluation. When it comes to checking actions plans, it is necessary that they contain the activities, output indicators, the period for the implementation of the activities, competent institutions, costing and sources of financing the implementation of individual activities.

The analysis of the opinions issued by the SGG shows the changes in the alignment between the drafts and proposals of the new strategic documents that were prepared from September to the end of December 2018 (graph 1). Subject of the analysis were 59 opinions on drafts (32) and proposals (27) of strategic documents, including strategies, programmes and action plans. There is, however, a number of documents to which these criteria couldn’t be fully applied, such as action plans from strategies that were in effect before September 2018. These are valued with “N/A”, as non-applicable and are not represented in the graph. The graphs contains the information regarding full alignment only.

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24 The same questionnaire on which the results regarding the Training Programme were obtained.
25 Articles 17, 18 and 19 of the Decree
26 The template of the opinion on draft and/or proposal of strategic documents can be found in Annex 1 to the paper.
27 DGS issued additional 7 opinions which were consultative and didn’t enter into this analysis.
After issuing opinion on drafts, DGS held consultative meetings with the drafters of new strategic documents, which helped in changing the situation in proposals of new strategic documents significantly.

However, many gaps were identified during the process of preparing opinions on drafts and consultations with the line ministries. Most of them are related to defining performance indicators, monitoring, reporting and evaluation, costing and sources of financing or the planned costs for the implementation of the activities or the whole strategic document.

The opinions on reports that the SGG issues also check the alignment with the Decree in a sense of containing the criteria and the structure set in it and the Methodology\(^\text{28}\) and they are divided in a different manner – opinions given on annual and opinions given on final reports. Both opinions check whether a report contains an introductory outline, information on outcome indicators, table for reporting on implementation of the action plan and recommendations, except that opinions on annual reports check if the reports have recommendations for the future more efficient implementation of the action plan, while the opinion on final reports focuses on recommendations for the next policy cycle. Opinions on final reports also check whether reports contain information on the status of performance indicators, evaluation findings and an overview of the planned and spent financial resources for the overall implementation period of the strategy document.

The analysis with regard to the opinions on the reports was conducted on a sample of 11 opinions issued on reports by the SGG, also from September to the end of December 2018. This analysis showed that 75% of these reports contains recommendations in the final document that was adopted by the Government, after informal consultations with the SGG. The situation with reporting on the outcomes is yet to be followed, since it is tightly related to defining outcome level indicators in the strategic documents in the first place, which is something to be further insisted on.

### 4. CONCLUSION

In a period of two years, Montenegro has been committed to raising the level of accomplishment in PAR and good governance, thereby achieving the obligations stemming from EU accession negotiation process. Montenegro has identified the need for substantial reforms in the area of policy development and co-ordination and, just like some other administrations, started from its strategic planning system. Good practice examples from the Baltic countries, especially Lithuania and Latvia, have demonstrated that these changes can be achieved only through continuous work and strong political support for the process. Taking small, but decisive and pragmatic steps turned out to be productive and useful in Montenegrin context by now. Gradual changes in the legislation, combined with trainings, workshops, conferences, meeting and consultations on strategic planning have by now become useful mechanisms for achieving implementation of the Decree. An even better, but still not measurable effect that the SGG is aimed to achieve is a changed mindset towards strategic planning in the Montenegrin public administration, that is result-oriented and guided by the principles of alignment, financial sustainability, responsibility, cooperation, transparency, continuity and the principles of efficiency and rational planning, all in order to come to wide-spread evidence-based policy making.

On the other hand, challenges remain in all of the areas in which initial success was recorded. First of all, the visibility of the SGG, the Decree and Methodology have to be raised, as well as the visibility of the members of the first Network of Civil Servants for Strategic Planning in order to raise the awareness of policymakers regarding

\(^{28}\) The template of the opinion on annual and final reports can be found in Annexes 2 and 3 to this paper.
the new legal and methodological framework in strategic planning. The Training Programme has given its first generation of strategic planners, but its continuity must be obtained and the modalities for it must be examined. Both the Network and the Training Programme are not just mechanisms for implementing the Decree, they are more a means for capacity building within the whole Montenegrin public administration, line ministries, as well as the SGG. For this process to be successful, putting it in the high position of political agenda needs to be the first step and insisting on it will eventually lead to prosperity for everyone – the citizens and the government.

REFERENCES


Opinion on draft strategy document

1. General overview of draft/proposal strategy document

Comment:

2. Check of alignment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE OF ALIGNMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elements of the strategy document that are checked for alignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Alignment with existing strategy documents
   1.1. Overarching strategy documents
   1.2. Sector-based strategy documents
   1.3. International obligations

2. Alignment with European integration and key EU policies
   2.1. National level (Programme of Accession of Montenegro to the EU, closing benchmarks, negotiating position, IPA II)
   2.2. EU level (EU policies, EU 2020, EU Enlargement Strategy, etc.)

3. Alignment of the structure and content with the Decree on the procedure of drafting, alignment and monitoring of the implementation of strategy documents and the accompanying Methodology
   3.1. Does the strategy document contain the mandatory content set out by the Decree?
   3.2. Situation and problem analysis
      3.2.1. Does the situation analysis contain the performance analysis (including drawbacks, if there are any) of the previous strategy document?
      3.2.2. Is the situation analysis based on measurable results that may indicate issues in the implementation?
      3.2.3. Does the situation analysis contain any references to the roles of domestic and international stakeholders?
      3.2.4. Does the situation analysis contain an overview of all national and international documents relevant for the adoption of the strategy document?

1 Comments are given after each section that is checked for alignment
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.2.5.</td>
<td>Do the situation and problem analyses identify the causes and effects, i.e. the issues that the relevant line ministry is facing and needs to solve in a certain area?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.3. Strategic goal and operative objectives</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1.</td>
<td>Are the strategy’s goals in accordance with the Methodology for policy development, drafting and monitoring of the strategic planning documents?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2.</td>
<td>Are the operative objectives that reflect and elaborate the strategy’s goal also defined?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.3.</td>
<td>Do the operative objectives correspond to the identified issues?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.4.</td>
<td>Are the operative objectives SMART (specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic and time-bound)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.4. Performance indicators</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.1.</td>
<td>Does each operative objective have at least one defined outcome indicator?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.2.</td>
<td>Are the outcome indicators relevant for the measurement of success in the achievement of the set operative objectives?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.3.</td>
<td>Are the outcome indicators clear and measurable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.4.</td>
<td>Are baseline and target values set for the outcome indicators (with mid-term and target values)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.5. Action plan</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.1.</td>
<td>Are the activities in the Action Plan defined so as to reflect the defined operative objectives and contribute to their achievement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.2.</td>
<td>Is there an institution designated to implement the defined activities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.3.</td>
<td>Are deadlines set for the implementation of the defined activities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.4.</td>
<td>Are there any output indicators set for the respective activities or groups of activities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.5.</td>
<td>Are the financial resources needed for the implementation of activities, as well as the sources of funding, indicated in the Action Plan?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.6. Financial estimate</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.1.</td>
<td>Does the strategy document contain a breakdown of the financial resources that will be used during the strategy’s implementation period or, at least, during the Action Plan implementation period?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.2.</td>
<td>Are the sources of funding indicated?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.3.</td>
<td>Are the planned financial resources approved or not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.7. Monitoring, reporting and evaluation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7.1.</td>
<td>Are monitoring, reporting and evaluation foreseen by the strategy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7.2.</td>
<td>Is there an authorized entity designated for monitoring?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7.3.</td>
<td>Are the deadlines and frequency of reporting set?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7.4.</td>
<td>Are the modalities of reporting defined – the addressee and eventual publication of reports?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7.5.</td>
<td>Is evaluation foreseen by the strategy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7.6.</td>
<td>If evaluation is carried out by an external entity (an independent evaluator), are there financial resources estimated for that purpose?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX 2 – TEMPLATE FOR OPINION ON THE ANNUAL REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGY DOCUMENTS, SECRETARIAT - GENERAL OF THE GOVERNMENT

Opinion on the Annual Report on implementation of strategy documents

General comments on annual report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report submitted to:</th>
<th>Regular Annual Report at the end of the 1st year of implementation</th>
<th>Regular Annual Report at the end of the 2nd year of implementation</th>
<th>Regular Annual Report at the end of the 3rd year of implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the report fulfil the minimum quality criteria as set out by the Methodology for policy development, drafting and monitoring of the strategic planning documents?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GENERAL ESTIMATION OF THE QUALITY OF THE REPORT:

Comments:

Template for the check of the quality criteria related to reporting

Elements for verification of the Annual Report on implementation of the Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Check against the quality criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. DOES THE REPORT CONTAIN AN INTRODUCTORY OUTLINE?

1.1. Does the introductory outline contain information on implementation of the AP?  
(Percentage of implemented activities vs. percentage of activities that were not implemented, percentage of partially implemented activities, etc.)

1.2. Does the introductory outline contain a brief description of the key achievements, by operative objectives with reference to the challenges in achieving the target values of the outcome indicators? *(Obligatory only for reports after the second year of implementation of the AP)*

1.3. Does the introductory outline offer a short explanation of the reasons why activities were not implemented in time?

1.4. Does the introductory outline contain a reference to the planned and spent financial resources?  
(Optional for annual reports: obligatory for reporting after the second year of implementation of the AP)

2. DOES THE REPORT CONTAIN INFORMATION ON OUTCOME INDICATORS?

2 Comments are given after each section that is checked for alignment
2.1. Does the report contain the baseline, target and current values of the outcome indicators (for each operative objective)?

2.2. Does the report contain an analysis of the causes and reasons why the target values of the outcome indicators were not achieved?

3. DOES THE REPORT CONTAIN A TABLE FOR REPORTING ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome indicators (*only after the 2nd year of implementation of the AP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status of output indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation status (traffic-light approach)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for the delay in the implementation of activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New deadline for implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of the planned and spent resources for each activity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EXPLANATION:

4. DOES THE REPORT CONTAIN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE MORE EFFICIENT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN?

Comment:
ANNEX 3 – TEMPLATE FOR OPINION ON THE FINAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGY DOCUMENTS, SECRETARIAT - GENERAL OF THE GOVERNMENT

Opinion on the Final Report on implementation of a Strategy or Programme

General comments on final report

Does the report fulfil the minimum quality criteria as set out by the Methodology for policy development, drafting and monitoring of the strategic planning documents? | YES | NO

GENERAL ESTIMATION OF THE QUALITY OF THE REPORT:

Comments:

TEMPLATE FOR THE CHECK OF THE QUALITY CRITERIA RELATED TO REPORTING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements for verification of the Final Report on implementation of the strategy document</th>
<th>Check against the quality criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DOES THE REPORT CONTAIN AN INTRODUCTORY OUTLINE?</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Does the introductory outline contain a brief description of the key achievements, according to the strategy’s goals and operative objectives with reference to the challenges in achieving the target values?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Does the introductory outline contain information on the implementation of the activities during the final year of implementation of the strategy document?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Does the introductory outline offer a short explanation of the reasons why activities were not implemented and what the key challenges were in the implementation of the activities?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOES THE REPORT CONTAIN INFORMATION ON THE STATUS OF PERFORMANCE INDICATORS?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Does the report contain baseline, target and current values of the impact indicators and outcome indicators (for each strategic goal and operative objective)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Does the report contain an analysis of the causes and reasons for not reaching the target values of the impact indicators and outcome indicators?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Comments are given after each section that is checked for alignment
c. Does the report contain an analysis of the results and how they were achieved?

3. **DOES THE REPORT CONTAIN A TABLE FOR REPORTING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION FOR THE FINAL YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY DOCUMENT?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does the table contain the key information set out by the Methodology:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operative objectives with baseline, target and current values of indicators at the end of the implementation period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status of result indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation status (traffic-light approach)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for delay in the implementation of activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of the planned and spent resources for each activity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EXPLANATION:**

4. **DOES THE REPORT CONTAIN THE EVALUATION FINDINGS?**

Comment:

5. **DOES THE REPORT CONTAIN AN OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNED AND SPENT FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR THE OVERALL IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD OF THE STRATEGY DOCUMENT? (Summary of expenditures with correlation to the allocated amounts, by sources of funding)**

Comment:

6. **DOES THE REPORT CONTAIN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEXT PUBLIC POLICY CYCLE?**

Comment: