

EUSDR Priority Area 10 “Institutional Capacity and Cooperation”

## Extended Steering Group Meeting – Digitalisation of Public Sector

09 October 2024 | 10.30-12.00 CET | Online

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# Summary

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## State of Play & Expertise

Under Action 1: Improving institutional capacities to deliver high-quality public services within Priority Area 10, the topic of digitalization was addressed in previous Steering Group meetings. The key question posed was how digitalisation and digital services can be designed, implemented, and enhanced across the countries of the Danube Region, and efforts were made to explore possible answers and suggestions.

To address this issue, it is essential to examine the current state of affairs as outlined by the Steering Group, experts and practitioners. A study conducted by NALAS and KDZ under the BACID initiative, titled *Empowering Progress with Digital Transition*, provides a detailed overview and analysis of the advancements in digitalisation across the Western Balkans and Moldova. Additionally, it was identified that digital services cater to two main groups: citizens and public servants. Several **services catering to citizens** were presented, including an online tool within the Digital Citizen Programme in Hungary that allows individuals to present their ID via mobile phone.

Moreover, the presentation on Digital Public Administration in the Czech Republic offered valuable insights into the implementation, application, and development of eGovernment. Emphasis was placed on data sharing and reuse as key measures to prevent duplication and data loss. The importance of secure service channels was highlighted as a critical factor for the successful implementation of eGovernment. Given the increasing demand for digitalisation from citizens, their input must be taken into account to ensure that services meet their needs adequately.

The issue of how to empower citizens who feel insecure about using eServices was raised, with the current solution being to offer the eService in person as well. In discussions on interoperability, it was noted that in the Czech Republic, municipalities serve as the providers of all services through a centralized system managed by the state.

Conversely, **services aimed at public servants** were presented by the State Ministry of Baden-Württemberg, which introduced an in-house generative AI tool as a testing ground for the application of AI in public administration. When considering the use of AI tools, key questions arise regarding how accountability for AI-generated outcomes can be ensured and how the security of data can be maintained.

## Focused Discussion

### Aspects of digitalisation in public services – common themes and topics

Legal Framework	Process (Re)Design	Interoperability	Funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Data Protection and Privacy Laws</li> <li>⇒ Legislation for e-Government</li> <li>⇒ Digital inclusion</li> <li>⇒ Changing legislation</li> <li>⇒ Different Administrations responsible for different processes</li> <li>⇒ Lack of multi-level governance</li> <li>⇒ Lack of local government consultation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Citizen-Centric Approach: focus on user-friendly experiences</li> <li>⇒ Automation (e.g., tax filling)</li> <li>⇒ End-to-end Digital Processes (from application to delivery – no paper)</li> <li>⇒ Skills and competences training</li> <li>⇒ Coordination with business and academia (public-private partnerships)</li> <li>⇒ Training of social workers</li> <li>⇒ Public servants accountability of results in the case of AI</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Cross-Agency collaboration</li> <li>⇒ National and Local Government Alignment (ensuring they operate together efficiently)</li> <li>⇒ International Cooperation</li> <li>⇒ European Interoperability Framework</li> <li>⇒ Decentralised Access Point towards One Access Point</li> <li>⇒ Cross-border collaboration addressed through citizen activation</li> <li>⇒ Test proposals on cross-border interoperability (guidelines provided by EC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Grants and Subsidies</li> <li>⇒ Sustainability of funding</li> <li>⇒ Prioritise when resources are lacking</li> </ul>

During the discussion the aforementioned aspects of digitalisation were identified. Furthermore, the Steering Group together with experts and practitioners also identified that many of the aspects correlate to each other, for examples in order to change a process, as it is sometimes required when implementing a digitalised option, it is imperative to change legislation. Additionally, it was mentioned that it is necessary to know what already exists in terms of digital process and also now what one expects from the services. Furthermore, it was mentioned that cooperation between the private and public sector would be beneficial in advancing digitalisation efforts.

## Next steps

- Clear identification of Stakeholders.
- Further concrete steps to be defined at the 27<sup>th</sup> Steering Group Meeting in Stuttgart.

## Further readings/sources

New European Interoperability Framework (2017):

[https://ec.europa.eu/isa2/sites/default/files/eif\\_brochure\\_final.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/isa2/sites/default/files/eif_brochure_final.pdf)

Empowering Progress: Unveiling the Digitalization Maturity in Western Balkan and Moldova Local Governments with Best Practices and Potentials (2023): NALAS and KDZ Report on digitalisation in the West Balkans and Moldova: BACID III Report “Empowering Progress: Unveiling the Digitalization Maturity in Western Balkan and Moldova Local Governments with Best Practices and Potentials” – Nalas