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POLICY PAPER

PLANNING, MEASURING AND REPORTING LEVERAGING SUCCESS OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES

The aim of this policy paper is to increase accountability, transparency and democratic legitimacy of the Government of Montenegro, by improving the system of planning policies and measuring their outputs and outcomes. By analyzing national regulations and practice, scientific articles and comparative experiences, the **CDT** research team determined that main deficiencies of the Montenegrin model are as follows: under-developed planning of activities of the Government and the ministries, incomplete system of monitoring implementation of the outcomes of the Government and the ministries, as well as insufficient quality of reporting on the work of the Government and the ministries.

Recommendation of the **CDT** is to improve the quality of planning in the medium and short term by preparing planning documents that contain clearly defined strategic priorities, specific goals and implementation deadlines. Furthermore, it is necessary to change the manner of government outputs monitoring by developing and applying a new methodology based on performance indicators. Finally, it is proposed to change the manner in which the ministries are reporting to the Government, by introducing a report form measuring outputs and outcomes of the ministries work.

This policy paper is primarily addressed to the Government of Montenegro i.e. the Chief Cabinet of the Government, which is the key political body for making these types of decisions. It is also addressed to representatives of parliamentary political parties that will form the future government. The paper is also aligned with the current public administration reform, which is carried out as part of the EU accession process and could be interesting for representatives of the international community in Montenegro. Of course, our policy paper may be of use to representatives of the professional public, academia, media and NGOs as well.

In preparing this paper we analyzed the valid Montenegrin legislation, as well as program documents, annual plans and reports of the Government and the ministries. The **CDT** research team consulted also a series of relevant scientific papers, as well as studies and recommendations of expert bodies and advisory institutions. This comparative analysis of legislation and practice included also research of models of Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Ireland, Lithuania, Canada, Portugal, Northern Ireland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Scotland, Sweden and Great Britain. Academic experts and professional reviewers from Germany and NGO GONG from Croatia provided their advice and support to the **CDT** in drafting this policy papers.

MANAGING FOR RESULTS

Efficient and responsible executive power is based on the achieved results. It is not uncommon, due to the consistent implementation of administrative processes and procedures, to neglect or ignore the most important issues - focus of public administration on specific results that directly affect the lives of citizens.



Having to cope with these phenomena, in the last twenty years, a number of states¹ entered into a specific reform of the executive power functioning, with the aim to encompass the system: formulation of objectives - measurement and evaluation of outputs - decision-making based on timely and accurate information.

The approach to public governance known as “Managing for Results”² places the focus on achievements - results of public administration work, so the key question is not what we have done but what we have achieved with that work. All key government policies are analyzed, evaluated and critically reviewed primarily with a view to increase accountability and democratic legitimacy of government³. Experiences of countries that use this system show that with the mentioned activities they have achieved not just greater transparency in government functioning, but also an additional level of control of all important institutions within the system. No less important is communication with citizens, i.e. public relations,

¹ For the purposes of this policy paper we analyzed the following systems: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Ireland, Lithuania, Canada, Portugal, Northern Ireland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Scotland, Sweden and Great Britain

² Donald P. Moynihan, “Managing for results in State Government: Evaluating a Decade of Reform”, *Public Administration Review*, 2005, p. 76

³ Kulli Nomm, Tiina Randma-Liiv, „Performance measurement and performance information in new democracies – A study of the Estonian central government”, *Public Management Review*, vol. 14, 2012, p. 862

which in the countries that were analyzed is different, more specific and clear, i.e. oriented on providing information to the interested public on the outcomes of government activities. This has a positive effect on managing expectations of citizens which are the key to providing trust in the Government.

Main body responsible for providing support and managing the decision-making system in Montenegro is the General Secretariat of the Government (GSG). Since independence in 2006, the GSG has taken a conscious, step-by-step approach to reforming itself and the policy management system⁴. At the administrative level, these tasks are entrusted to the Sector for Planning, Coordination and Monitoring of Policies⁵ (SPCM), which is an organizational unit of the GSG. This Sector is responsible for coordination of strategic planning in public bodies, monitoring the level of implementation of strategic priorities, coordination of preparation of annual work programs and reports on government activities.

Although the role, place within the system and the scope of work of the SPCM are set in such a way that it can effectively perform the entrusted tasks, if we analyze individual commitments within the scope of work of the SPCM, we come to the conclusion that there is significant room for improvement, which can have a positive impact on the overall quality and efficiency of the Government and all its institutions. In other words, there are a few ‘weak points’ in its functioning in practice which can adversely affect the efficiency of the entire system.

CHALLENGES IN MONTENEGRO

Most definitions of planning⁶ include objectives, decision-making, management, and the road towards a desired future. In theory and in practice there is a general view that clear objectives and quality planning are essential preconditions for success in management.

There are two planning levels essential for successful planning and coordination of policies - strategic planning and planning for the calendar year.

⁴ “Policy Making Review Montenegro”, SIGMA – Paper no. 51, <http://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Policy-making-review-Montenegro-SIGMA-2014.pdf>, p.11 (accessed on: 01.07.2015)

⁵ Rules of Procedure of the Government of Montenegro, Article 31

⁶ Adil Kurtić, *Management Basics (Osnove menadžmenta)*, Tuzla, OFF SET, 2009, p. 56

- 4 The expected results i.e. achievements defined by the strategic plan must be developed in the annual work plans, at the level of specific objectives, important program sections, institutions responsible for implementation and key performance indicators. This relation is crucial for the budget process, i.e. program budgeting and the increase of coherence between budgeting, public policy development and financial reports⁷...



● **Underdeveloped planning of the Government and ministries**

When we talk about planning in our system it is easy to notice that, at the level of mandates (medium term), one important instrument is missing. There is no planning document in Montenegro that would sublimate, in one place, key priorities of the Government and the ministries. The coalition agreement, which in many countries is the basis for planning at the level of mandates, is not a public document in Montenegro, and it is not known whether it contains program priorities of the coalition at all. Exposé of the Prime Minister sets out the key directions and programs of the Government, but it does not give a more precise picture of the future outcomes of its work⁸.

Therefore, objectives of the Government can only indirectly be derived from the exposé of the Prime Minister and a few of strategic documents, which does not provide a clear picture of the strategy of the country in the medium term⁹.

⁷ Law on Budget and Fiscal Accountability, Article 3

⁸ Exposé of the Prime Minister of Montenegro Milo Đukanović, <http://www.gov.me/vijesti/118023/Ekspoze-mandata-za-sastav-Vlade-Crne-Gore-Mila-Đukanovica-na-sjednici-Skupstine.html> (accessed on: 02.07.2015)

⁹ National Development Plan 2013-16, Montenegro's Program of Accession to the EU 2014-2018, Guidelines of macroeconomic and fiscal policy 2014-2017, and numerous sectoral strategic documents. National Development Plan, as the most comprehensive strategic document treats the concept of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, but it has two main drawbacks: it predominantly treats "economic" aspects of development of the country, while objectives and measures are often imprecise, generally defined. For example, strategic objective and measure needed to achieve the objective of increasing employment are the same and read: "Increase in employment, reduction of unemployment". Having in mind such an objective the National Development Plan will be successfully implemented even if in the period from 2013-2016 only one person gets employed.

By analyzing work programs of the Government in several recent years we came to the conclusion that the problem of planning exists also in the short term (one year). Although meticulously prepared, these programs have one significant deficiency: they do not define expected achievements for the calendar year in terms of achieving the objective, but only list the key government policies to be implemented in that year.

● **Incomplete system of monitoring implementation of outcomes of the Government and the ministries**

Monitoring assumes collection of precise data in a precise period of time in order to gain insight into the degree of policy implementation, at a given moment, in relation to the target objectives and results. For the success of this process, the key precondition is a selection of indicators that are logically and essentially related to objectives and expected results. On the other hand, assessment (evaluation) is a result of monitoring, which provides information on whether the desired outcomes were achieved, and it is realized after a certain implementation cycle¹⁰.

Today, monitoring the progress of government work is focused on fulfilment of activities under the annual Government Work Program. However, wider analysis of government work performance is not done centrally, although reports on the implementation of the government conclusions and reports on the work of ministries are prepared¹¹.

If we have in mind that the form of annual work plans of the Government¹², in several recent years, does not include space for better formulation of annual objectives of the Government and the ministries, nor performance indicators¹³, it is clear that performance-based monitoring is of a limited effect. Performance-based monitoring set in such a manner significantly limits improvement of public administration efficiency in Montenegro.

¹⁰ Sena Marić et al., *How to reach results in public policies? (Kako do rezultata u javnim politikama?)*, Belgrade, FREN and CEP, 2014, p. 17

¹¹ SIGMA – Paper no. 51, *op.cit.*, p. 6

¹² The conclusions of the research team based on direct insight in the form of annual work plans

¹³ The GSG's quarterly and annual monitoring reports of the implementation of the Government Work Program do not distinguish between the process implementation and implementation and reality. On the contrary, they are quantitative, listing the number of documents whose adoption was planned in the time period and the number of documents which were actually adopted. (SIGMA – Paper no. 51, *op.cit.*, p. 22)

● *Insufficient quality reporting on work of the Government and the ministries*

Quality reporting on the performed work and achieved effects represents a key basis for making quality decisions.

There are no prescribed forms of reports which the ministries would use to report to the Government, which leads to the reports vary considerably both in content and in scope¹⁴. Dominantly, reports are confined to listing of the performed work, and only exceptionally contain analysis of quality of the work performed. The ministries report on problems and challenges that are beyond their control, without reference to any failure or delay of a subjective character. In addition, the deadlines for the ministries to submit their reports to the Government are not precise enough, which is why reports are adopted in an untimely manner.

Information obtained in this way is difficult to integrate into the decision-making process. This continues to cause the arbitrary approach to decision-making, when managers substitute the lack of adequate information with “personal feeling”, which can produce bad decisions or various excuses for the failure to reach a decision. At the same time, plenty of existing information on the work and results is “wasted” as it is not systematically analyzed with respect to defined issues and indicators in the course of reporting¹⁵.

In addition, reports conceived in such a manner do not contribute to transparency, nor to better quality of control of the government. External control, i.e. discussion on performance of the Government, which primarily involves the Parliament and the public (media, NGOs, international community) is significantly biased, because it is based on incomplete information. Relationship between Government and Parliament, on the symbolic level, is reflected in discussions on “parliamentary dictatorship” on the one hand or adoption of unconstitutional laws on the other hand.

¹⁴ The CDT team analyzed for the purpose of this research the reports of nine ministries, report on work and conditions in the administrative field for 2014. The conclusion is that the reports are not sufficiently result-oriented, and they tend to enumerate activities. Namely, since objectives are not clearly and unambiguously defined it is difficult to conclude to what extent they have been achieved. The reports also do not include an explanation and information about what wasn't done well and how it can be fixed in the future. To illustrate this, we emphasize that the report of the Ministry of Interior was made on 159 pages, and the report of the Ministry of Science on 15 pages.

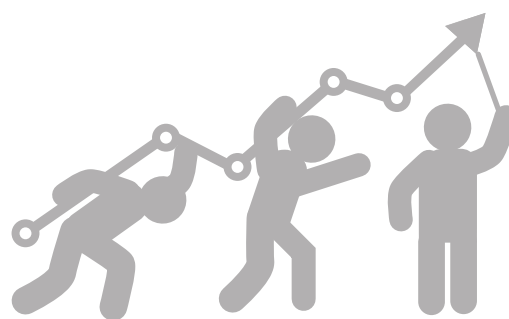
¹⁵ In the first half of the year (to July 2, 2015) reports of only 56% ministries were adopted for the previous year

Objective and clearer reports, based on the analysis of concrete achievements, would significantly contribute to improved political debate on work of the Government in the previous period, and would provide to the public more realistic information about the success or failure of certain government measures. With a small shift towards analytical reporting which aims to recognize achievements but also problems in implementation of policies, civil servants could be using the same amount of time more effectively.

Indicated shortcomings of the system are directly or indirectly confirmed also by the Prime Minister who in his public appearances talks about “delays in implementation of the program tasks”¹⁶, “firm determination ... to measure outputs exclusively with the results achieved”¹⁷, “lack of commitment, professionalism, loyalty and morality of individuals or parts of the civil service”¹⁸, but also about “irresponsibility and fear of decision-making.”¹⁹

TOWARDS PERFORMANCE BASED MANAGEMENT

Having in mind the mentioned problems and challenges, the CDT research team has prepared information on how the system planning/measurement/decision-making operates in countries with a more developed culture of monitoring and evaluation.



¹⁶ Statement from the 115th session of the Government of Montenegro, <http://www.gov.me/vijesti/149922/Saopstenje-sa-115-sjednice-Vlade-Crne-Gore.html> (accessed on: 24.06.2015)

¹⁷ Portal Analitika, <http://portalanalitika.me/clanak/102758/dukanovic-otkazao-danasnju-sjednicu-vlade-nezadovoljan-radom-ministara> (accessed on: 24.06.2015)

¹⁸ Vijesti online, <http://www.vijesti.me/vijesti/djukanovic-istrijeti-nemoralne-i-nelojalne-iz-drzavne-sluzbe-115849> (accessed on: 24.06.2015)

¹⁹ Exposé of the Prime Minister of Montenegro Milo Đukanović presented to the Parliament, <http://www.gov.me/vijesti/118023/Ekspoz-emandatara-za-sastav-Vlade-Crne-Gore-Mila-dukunovic-na-sjednici-Skupstine.html> (accessed on: 24.06.2015)

6 In the following policy papers we give concrete recommendations for overcoming the current situation, which are based on good practices of these countries, but also on possibilities for their introduction into our system, without changing the rules or causing significant additional costs.

Improve the quality of planning in the medium and short term by developing planning documents that contain clearly defined strategic priorities, specific objectives and implementation deadlines

Governments of the countries analyzed adopt a strategic document which specifies the priorities, work objectives and measures for achieving these objectives. This strategic document is adopted for a period of three to six years depending on the country, and most often for four years i.e. during the mandate. These strategic plans contain 5-10 key strategic priorities of the country in the observed period, resulting in 60-120 priority objectives to be realized.

RECOMMENDATION: Maximum 6 months after election of the Government, the SPCM should, in the consultative process, prepare a document “The policy priorities of the Government of Montenegro 2016 -2020”, which would then be adopted by the Government. The political basis for this document is a coalition agreement or program of the party that won power and the exposé of the Prime Minister presented to the Parliament. It, of course, must take into account the valid strategic documents of the country.

For the purpose of easier understanding of this recommendation, we give an example of Northern Ireland. In its Work Program for 2011-2015, the Government of Northern Ireland has defined five main priorities emphasizing that they were identified by recognizing the needs of its citizens. These priorities are translated into a total of 82 tasks that the Government of Northern Ireland has set.

The Work Program for the period 2011 - 2015:

1. Growing a sustainable economy and investing in the future;
2. Creating opportunities, tackling disadvantage and improving health and well-being;
3. Protecting our people, environment and creating safer communities;
4. Building a strong and shared community;
5. Delivering high quality and efficient public services.

One of the main (strategic) priorities in the Program of Northern Ireland is “growing a sustainable economy and investing in the future”. After defining this priority, its meaning is precisely explained and key performance indicators are indicated: “more people in work”, “a better educated and more highly skilled workforce”, “stimulate innovation and foreign investment”... Then there is a list of strategic documents from which this priority is derived. After that, the objectives are defined that will lead to the fulfillment of this priority. One of them is “contribute to rising levels of employment by supporting the promotion of over 25,000 new jobs”, and then it is precisely indicated how many jobs will be promoted in each year of the mandate.

Since this is a cross-sectoral objective, in this case, it would be necessary to appoint ministries responsible for its fulfillment (e.g. Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Transport...).

After the strategic document defined in such a manner, objectives are specified and adjusted to the period of one year. In our example, the objective that reads “contribute to rising levels of employment by supporting the promotion of over 25,000 new jobs” would be specified for the first year of mandate and it would read “In the course of 2016, as a result of the announced investments, the promotion of for example 5,000 to 7,000 new jobs will be promoted.” After that, all the activities (measures) would be listed that individual departments or related other public administration bodies must realize for the objective to be achieved. Similarly, every government department should define its objectives for the year 2016. By adopting this approach, the focus of the government work program would be shifted from acts to be adopted on the results to be achieved during the year.

RECOMMENDATION: Change form of the current Annual work program of the Government in a way to leave space for defining specific objectives and measures (activities) of certain departments in accordance with the previously approved strategic document. Structure of the work program must make a significant place for objective indicators for measuring and monitoring fulfillment of the objectives, which are based on specific information about the initial state, trends and anticipated changes. This will increase the transparency of public administration work but also the accountability of ministers and other employees for achieving these objectives.

Change the method of monitoring outputs of the Government by developing and applying a methodology based on performance indicators.

Without measurable indicators it is difficult to imagine a quality monitoring of government performance. An indispensable part of the system that we propose is also development of performance indicators. This approach would not only increase accountability within the public administration system, but would also encourage better internal controls at the level of other public administration bodies, ministries and government.

We collect and monitor data in order to create a documentation basis for evaluation of outputs and outcomes. In the analyzed countries outputs make 40% (Great Britain) to 92% (Sweden)²⁰ of total number of performance measures of public administration. Most countries prefer measures of what has been done in relation to what has been achieved, since their systems are still under development, but also because it is easier to measure the effects and establish a causal connection.

Outputs represent the work we have performed, and outcomes represent results, effects of the performed work...For example: output - through programs for encouraging entrepreneurship and employment for example EUR 20 million was spent on direct support to increasing employment; outcome: a total of e.g. 5,000 new jobs were promoted during 2016 in Montenegro.

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt a methodology for establishing strategic priorities, objectives, measures and performance indicators, which would rely on the logical framework model and include the risk analysis. In the initial phase of implementation of this methodology, it is expected that the Government gives priority to measuring outputs in relation to outcomes, but it is necessary to start measuring the outcomes to some extent as well.

Change the manner of reporting to the Government by introducing report forms that measure outputs and outcomes of ministries work

Such a system of planning and measuring outputs requires, of course, an adequate reporting system as well.

RECOMMENDATION: Change the existing reporting practice.

- A. Prepare a unique report form for ministries to report to the Government that will allow the reports to be of consistent quality, scope and content, and oblige ministries to, in addition to listing the work done, analyze the quality of the work.
- B. It is necessary to create a separate database for collecting and entering data at the level of ministries, which should be the basis for drafting reports. Such a database would speed up and facilitate the process of data collection and processing, and it would make reporting and evaluation faster and more efficient.

In Lithuania ministries submit information on achievements of government priorities that are used for preparation of annual reports on the achieved results. Data monitoring is based on a set of indicators that are specified in planning documents. The Office of the Prime Minister has access to the IT system, which collects all the data and represents a link between the political priorities of the Government and the ministries.

- C. Considering all enumerated mechanisms of internal reporting and reporting to the public, we believe that in Montenegro it is necessary to introduce the obligation of preparation and adoption of annual reports on work of the Government and the practice of holding discussions on this document in the Parliament.

The practices of the countries analyzed differentiate internal and external reports of ministries. Internal reports are subject to internal control, review of accuracy performed by other public administration bodies, ministries and government at various stages of report drafting.

Ministries prepare external reports usually twice a year. They are available to the public, i.e. to all stakeholders. Based on semi-annual reports of the ministries an annual report on work the Government is prepared. In addition to external control performed by the Parliament, the media, NGOs, it is not rare that the Government engages external (independent) evaluators to assess the quality of the report. It is often done also by the State Audit Institution, and not only through the control of legality, but also through the control of expenditure justification in relation to the activities implemented.

²⁰ Lithuania Performance Monitoring - Overview of the best practices of foreign and Lithuanian institutions in setting up performance monitoring systems

8 CHANGES THAT LEAD TO SUCCESS

The Government of Montenegro should as soon as possible begin to create the preconditions for implementation of this system, or a system that works on similar principles. In the first period of implementation it should be a pilot project.



Below is a proposal of first steps that we believe can start immediately and be gradually upgraded according to the needs of public administration.

- **MAKE USE** of existing procedures for coordinating preparation of government work plan and reports on work as a basis for introducing the proposed changes, and eventually they need to be upgraded and specified in order for these processes to have a greater effect on the quality of analytics and policies themselves.
 - **DEVELOP** a comprehensive methodology that will theoretically and practically define the method of determining the goals and performance indicators, but also a new approach to reporting.
 - **IDENTIFY** persons in all ministries and other public administration bodies that will be responsible for preparing plans, data collection and data entry and reporting (coordinators for planning and reporting).
 - **COMMENCE** work on building capacity of the SPCM for coordination and control of all these activities by completely filling all systematized job positions and preparing training programs for employees.
 - **ENTER INTO** (upon making preparations) elaboration of a strategic document that will define the priorities of the Government for the duration of the mandate. Furthermore, prepare the annual work program of the Government according to the new methodology and on a modified form, with emphasis on determination of clear objectives and performance indicators.
- **PREPARE** (at the government level) uniform guidelines for reporting on the work and implementation of regulations and public policies with recommended reporting forms, and conduct a brief training.
 - After the first cycle of annual reporting (spring 2017) it is useful to **CONDUCT THE ANALYSIS** on a sample of reports, in order to see whether there has been the expected improvements. Furthermore, it is necessary to collect information on the reporting process from civil servants as well as report users. This evaluation would serve as a basis for finalizing guidelines and reporting forms, which the Government would adopt as its executive document.
 - **CREATE** a database (using possibilities of the eGovernment system) for consolidating all data necessary for evaluation of work performance, through appropriate entry forms.

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