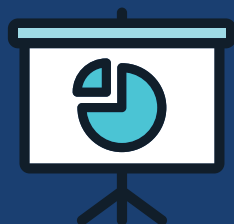
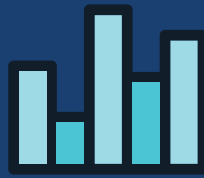
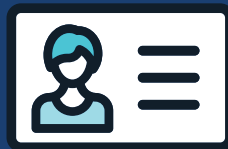




Transparency of Ministries through Official Websites



Introduction

This policy brief evaluates the transparency of ministries and the extent to which they publish essential data for citizens and businesses (natural and legal persons) through their official websites. For this purpose, nine indicators were applied for the evaluation of websites of 14 ministries.¹ These indicators are defined in the sublegal act² on websites of public institutions, adopted in accordance with the Law on Access to Public Documents.³ Although the administrative instruction includes all public institutions, the focus of this paper is only on the ministries, excluding the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and executive agencies under the OPM.

The nine indicators measuring the transparency of ministries in the publication of information for citizens, through official websites, are:


- 1** Duties and responsibilities of ministry;
- 2** Organizational structure of ministries;
- 3** Names and contact information of directors of departments and divisions;
- 4** Contact information of the ministry (postal address, email and phone number);
- 5** List of administrative services provided by the ministry to citizens and businesses;
- 6** The annual budget allocated for the ministry, broken down by categories;
- 7** Periodic reports on the expenses of the ministry;
- 8** Annual (performance) report of the ministry for the previous year;
- 9** Annual (performance) plan of the ministry for the current year.


¹ The Ministry of Communities and Returns (MCR) does not have an active official website, thus was excluded from the evaluation in this paper.

² Ministry of Public Administration, 2015, Administrative Instruction (MAP) No. 01/2015 on Websites of Public Institutions, (last accessed on 06.10.2022). Available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=11007>

³ Republic of Kosovo Official Gazette, 2019, Law No. 06/L-081 on Access to Public Documents, last accessed on 05.10.2022). Available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=20505>

To evaluate if the indicator has been fulfilled by the ministry, two symbols have been used:

 means that the indicator is fulfilled

 means that the indicator is not fulfilled

The other 14 ministries are presented with abbreviations in the indicator tables (list of abbreviations at the beginning of this paper refers to the ministry being evaluated).

The assessment of the fulfillment of indicators was completed through research of the official websites of 14 ministries for information according to the nine indicators, in the period between October 7 - 10, 2022.

Abbreviations used for ministries

MFAD	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora
MFPT	Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers
MJ	Ministry of Justice
MD	Ministry of Defense
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MH	Ministry of Health
MESTI	Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation
MCYS	Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports
MLGA	Ministry of Local Governance Administration
MESPI	Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure
MAFRD	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development
ME	Ministry of Economy
MIET	Ministry of Industry, Entrepreneurship and Trade
MRD	Ministry of Regional Development

Indicators and their fulfillment by ministries according to the evaluation of official websites

1 Duties and responsibilities of ministries

Duties and responsibilities of ministries are important to be published on the official website, as they show their mission and areas of responsibility. The fact that the areas of responsibility of the ministries are defined in a sublegal act,⁴ it is not a reason not to publish them on the official website.

Indicator 1	Ministries													
	MFAD	MFLT	EC	MD	MIA	MH	MESTI	MCYS	MLGA	MESPI	MAFRD	OF	MIET	MRD
Duties and responsibilities of the ministries														

As seen from the table, eight (8) of 14 ministries do not have a description on their homepage of the duties and responsibilities of the ministry.

2 Organizational structure of ministries

The organizational structure of the ministry means the breakdown of the ministry into departments and other subordinate units, namely the organizational chart of the ministry. Although a rather technical indicator, it is nevertheless considered necessary to show the public the construction and structure of the relevant ministry.

Indicator 2	Ministries													
	MFAD	MFLT	EC	MD	MIA	MH	MESTI	MCYS	MLGA	MESPI	MAFRD	OF	MIET	MRD
Organizational structure of ministries														

Unlike the first indicator, a larger number of ministries have fulfilled this indicator. As seen from the table, 11 ministries published their organigrams on their official websites, while three (3) others did not.

3 Names and contact information of the heads of departments and divisions

Publication of names of department directors and heads of divisions, who indeed comprise the core of the ministry, should be made public to citizens to understand “who is who” in the ministry. In addition, publication of contact information and emails of heads of departments and

⁴ Republic of Kosovo Official Gazette, 2021, Regulation No. 01/2021 on the Areas of Administrative Responsibility of the Office of the Prime Minister and Ministries, (last accessed on 07.10.2022). Available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=39317>

divisions of ministries gives the public, civil society, research organizations and other stakeholders the opportunity to establish direct communication, as they really are service providers to citizens.

Indicator 3	Ministries													
Names and contact information of the heads of dep./div.	MFAD	MFLT	EC	MD	MIA	MH	MESTI	MCYS	MLGA	MESPI	MAFRD	OF	MIET	MRD

As can be seen from the table as above, 13 ministries have fulfilled this indicator, by publishing the names and contact information (phone and email) of the heads of departments and divisions. The one ministry that fails to fulfill this indicator is MESTI⁵ as it only publishes the name and contact information of the head of the division for public communication. In the group of 13 ministries that have fulfilled this indicator, the MJ has not published the name and contact information of the Head of the Department for International Legal Cooperation. MESPI has also failed to publish the same information for the Head of the Inspectorate Department, whereas MH has not published this information for two of its four departments. However, as these ministries have published the contact information for most of the departments and divisions, this indicator has been evaluated as fulfilled.

4 Contact information of the Ministry (postal address, email and phone)

This indicator consists of three elements: postal address of the ministry, the general email of the ministry (not of a specific person) and the phone number for the ministry. These three elements are important if the party (citizens or businesses, domestically or abroad) wishes to contact the ministry. If the party has a meeting in the relevant ministry, it must first know the address of the ministry; if the party has a request/notice for the ministry as a whole, it should know the email of the ministry as well as the phone number.

Indicator 4	Ministries													
Contact information of the ministry (address, email, phone)	MFAD	MFLT	EC	MD	MIA	MH	MESTI	MCYS	MLGA	MESPI	MAFRD	OF	MIET	MRD

As can be seen from the table, three (3) out of 14 ministries do not publish complete contact information of the ministry, i.e., the three elements mentioned above. For example, MESTI has only published the address of the ministry but not the email and phone number. If a ministry has failed to publish two of the three elements, it is considered that the indicator is not fulfilled. However, if it has published two of the three, it is considered fulfilled.

⁵ Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, Public Communication Division, (last accessed on 10.10.2022). Available at <https://masht.rks-gov.net/divizioni-per-komunikim-publik/>

5 List of administrative services provided by the ministry to citizens and businesses

Administrative services mean the granting of permits and licenses for businesses, e.g., work permits, license to businesses to meet hygienic and sanitary conditions issued by MIET and MH, as well as the civil status certificates and documents issued by the MIA, etc. Thus, the list of administrative services that the ministry offers to citizens and businesses should be published as a separate category on their official website. This tool facilitates the receiving of information by citizens and directs them to relevant ministry and clarifies the procedure for obtaining the required service.

Indicator 5	Ministries													
List of services provided by the ministry	MFAD	MFLT	EC	MD	MIA	MH	MESTI	MCYS	MLGA	MESPI	MAFRD	OF	MIET	MRD
				N/A					N/A					

Out of 14 ministries, the Ministry of Defense (MD) and the Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA) are excluded from the evaluation in this indicator as they do not provide administrative services to citizens and businesses due to the nature of their work. As for the other 12 ministries, three (3) have fulfilled this indicator, whereas nine (9) others have not published a list of administrative services they offer to citizens and businesses.

6 The annual budget for the ministry, broken down by categories

This indicator means the publication of the budget of the relevant ministry, as a budget organization, on the official website of the ministry, broken down according to the main economic categories. The annual law on budget allocations is published on the official website of the MFLT.⁶ However, this is insufficient for this indicator, as it is not easy for citizens to locate the law, read the tables with all budget organizations, and find the ministry of their interest. Hence, to increase the level of public accountability and transparency, each ministry should post the budget allocation for the ministry on its official website.

Indicator 6	Ministries													
The annual budget allocated for the ministry, broken down by categories	MFAD	MFLT	EC	MD	MIA	MH	MESTI	MCYS	MLGA	MESPI	MAFRD	OF	MIET	MRD

As seen in the table, 11 ministries have not published their annual budgets, while three (3) have published it, divided by category.

⁶ Republic of Kosovo Official Gazette, 2021, Law No. 08/L-066 on Budget Allocations for 2022 (last accessed on 05.10.2022). Available at: <https://mf.rks-gov.net/desk/inc/media/1F77FA35-E121-43D3-9683-791B0ADE3337.pdf>

7 Periodic reports on the expenses of the ministry

This indicator is related to the period publication of expenses of the ministry, on weekly, monthly, quarterly or biannual basis. However, expenses must not only be published according to the four main economic categories, but rather divided by real expenditures, e.g. how much was spent on fuel for a month within the category of goods and services, how much was spent on phone bills from the same category, how much was spent on capital investments, etc. This allows for better accountability and transparency towards taxpayers and citizens in general.

As in the case of indicator six (6) above, only three (3) out of 14 ministries have published their expenses (MFLT, MLGA and MRD) and thus fulfilled indicator seven (7).

Indicator 7	Ministries													
Periodic reports on the expenses of the ministry	MFAD	MFLT	EC	MD	MIA	MH	MESTI	MCYS	MLGA	MESPI	MAFRD	OF	MIET	MRD

8 Annual (performance) report of the ministry for the previous year;

The annual report of the ministry for the previous year is about the ministry's reporting on the achievements and performance in the previous year. The annual report is not a list of activities, but rather an explanation whether the activities have led to the fulfillment of the Ministry's objectives and results. Ideally, ministries should have annual (performance) plans and annual (performance) reports based on such plans. The annual performance of ministries is thus presented to the public through annual report on the fulfillment of objectives. This serves as a tool evaluating the fulfillment of objectives within the year and informs the public about the progress achieved as a result of the ministry's performance.

Only three (3) of 14 ministries fulfill this indicator (MIA, MLGA and MRD).

Indicator 8	Ministries													
Annual report for the previous year	MFAD	MFLT	EC	MD	MIA	MH	MESTI	MCYS	MLGA	MESPI	MAFRD	OF	MIET	MRD

9 Annual (work) plan of the ministry for the current year.

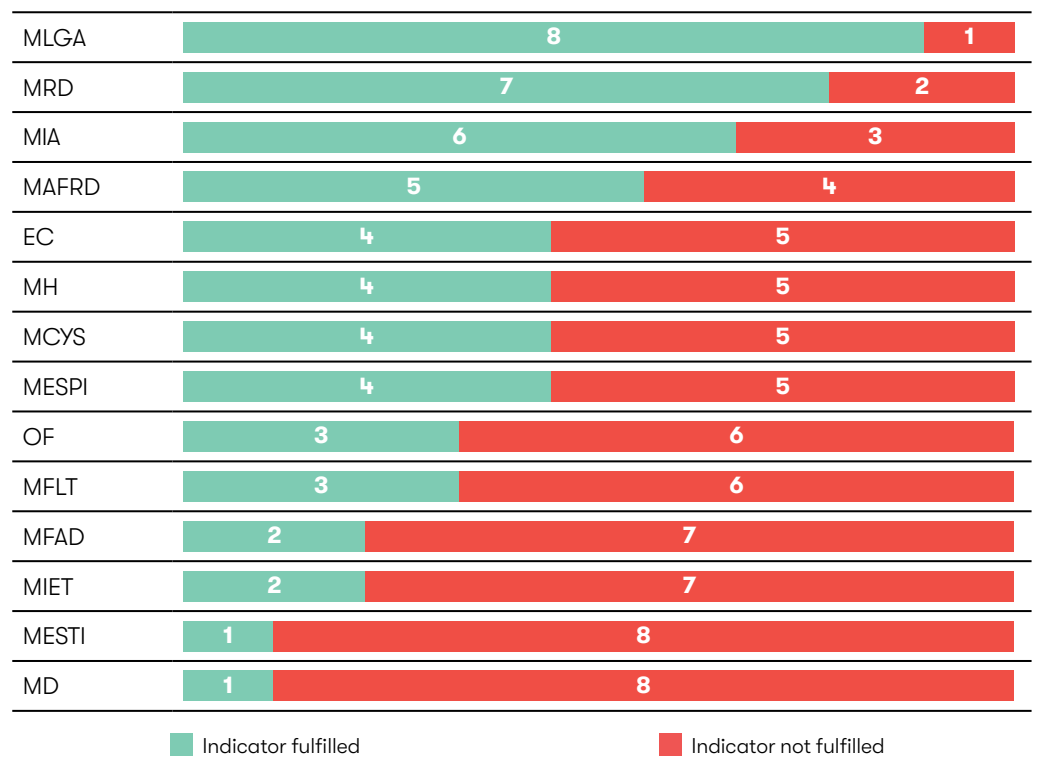
The annual plan for the current year defines the duties of the ministry as a whole, as well as other departments and units, according to the objectives, defined under the strategic objectives of the Government. Hence, the annual plan of the ministry (ministries) is a breakdown of the annual plan of the Government into strategic and specific objectives of the ministry. Then, agencies/departments develop their plans in line with the annual plan or annual objectives of the ministry. This allows for a top-down flow (cascade) of objectives: government – ministry – agency – department. Annual work plans must be published at the beginning of the year, in order to inform the public on the work that the ministry plans to perform within the year, and its agenda.

Indicator 9	Ministries													
	MFAD	MFLT	EC	MD	MIA	MH	MESTI	MCYS	MLGA	MESPI	MAFRD	OF	MIET	MRD
Annual plan for the current year	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗

As seen from the table, only two (2) of the 14 ministries have fulfilled this indicator in 2022, specifically MIA and MLGA, while the other 12 ministries have no annual work plans for 2022.

The chart below indicates the extent of the fulfillment of the nine indicators by the ministries. For example, if the relevant ministry has published all documents according to nine indicators, it will receive a score of nine, if it has published eight, it will be scored with eight points, and so on.

CHART 1: Overall fulfillment of indicators by ministries



CONCLUSIONS

Out of nine indicators in total, two most fulfilled are the ones on the organizational structure of the ministry and publication of contact information of departments and divisions. Indicator four (Ministry contact information) is currently fulfilled by 10 of the ministries. The least fulfilled indicator, in terms of the number of ministries that have currently fulfilled it, is indicator nine or the annual (work) plan of the ministry, where only two of the 14 ministries have published it. Indicators five, six, seven and eight are rated a little higher, though only three of 14 ministries having fulfilled it.

Regarding the publication of information related to budget planning and expenditures, indicators six and seven are equally fulfilled by ministries. For example, both indicators have not been fulfilled by 11 out of 14 ministries. It is also worth noting that the same ministries that failed to fulfill indicator six, on the publication of the annual budget, have also failed to fulfill indicator seven, on the publication of the periodic expenditures of the ministry.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- All ministries to appoint a focal point with the responsibility to update and maintain the content of official websites of respective ministries, in cooperation with the Agency for Information Society (AIS), under the MIA;
- The Agency for Information and Privacy (AIP), according to its mandate under the Law on Access to Public Documents, to communicate with relevant officials in ministries and identify the issues and the reasons for not publishing the data according to the nine indicators in this paper and the administrative instructions on websites of public institutions;
- Ministries to publish data according to the nine indicators, as they are the minimum criteria for public transparency and accountability;
- The Ministry for Communities and Return, in cooperation with AIS, to ensure the functioning of its official website, and host it in the National Data Center of the Republic of Kosovo.

