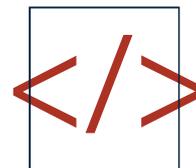


Policy brief

Provision of digital services at the local level in Kosovo:

Municipality of Podujeva, Lipjan and Drenas



The project is co-funded by the European Union



The "Increasing Civic Engagement in the Digital Agenda – ICEDA" project is implemented by Metamorphosis Foundation (North Macedonia), Open Data Kosovo (Kosovo), e-Government Academy (Estonia), Partners for Democratic Change Serbia (Serbia), NGO 35 MM (Montenegro) and Lëvizja MJAFI (Albania).

Policy brief

Provision of digital services at the local level in Kosovo:

Municipality of Podujeva, Lipjan and Drenas

Prepared by:

Democracy for Development Institute

Prishtina, March 2022

Copyright © 2022. **Democracy for Development (D4D).**

All rights reserved. Except for the quotation of short passages for the purposes of criticism and review, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of D4D.

This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of Democracy for Development and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.

Table of Content

Introduction.....	4
Citizens’ satisfaction with public services	5
Digital Services at the municipal level	7
<i>Municipality of Podujeva.....</i>	8
<i>Municipality of Lipjan</i>	8
<i>Municipality of Drenas</i>	9
Recommendations	10
Annex A: List of digital services	11
Annex B: Survey questions	12

Introduction

States and municipalities are pursuing increasingly digital governance strategies. Some of the new approaches that governments are pursuing in the transformation of digital governance include the integration of multichannel online and offline service delivery, the development of digital services (based on the integration of all government and society), the expansion of e-participation, the adoption of data-driven approaches, strengthening digital capacities to deliver people-centred services, and the innovative use of new technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and blockchain, particularly in the development of smart cities.

Although countries around the world are moving forward with e-government, many governments continue to face numerous challenges such as limited financial resources, lack of digital infrastructure and insufficient capacity or capabilities, especially in developing countries. Some countries face specific barriers regarding issues such as digital inclusion, data privacy, and cyber security.

Despite the challenges, the provision of digital government services has significantly improved. According to a United Nations report, more than 84 percent of countries now provided at least one online transaction service, and the global average is 14.¹ The number of countries providing at least one online transaction service has increased from 140 in 2018 to 162 in 2020, or by 16 percent (See Annex A for the list of digital services). The most common digital services provided worldwide are new business registration, birth certificate applications and public utility payments.²

The development of e-government is a growing priority on political agendas, but much attention is being paid to the transformation of digital governance at the local level. Local e-government is justly receiving increasing attention as municipalities have more direct interaction with citizens and are responsible for addressing the daily concerns of citizens.

In Kosovo, the digitalization of public-administrative services is still at an early stage of development. The government has launched the eKosova state portal, which still provides a very limited number of services. The Strategy on Modernization of Public Administration 2015-2020 has been approved, which has identified many challenges, such as the lack of integrated electronic system, or the lack of full inventory of public-administrative services provided by public institutions.³ At that time, 534 administrative procedures were identified which are issued by 23 central institutions and their subordinated entities in Kosovo. According to an estimate, the total direct cost for administrative procedures issued in a calendar year by about 75% of central institutions in Kosovo turns out to be around 130 million Euro for the

business and the waiting time to receive these procedures was 218,400 days or 593 years.⁴ At the local level, the provision of digital services remains largely limited to obtaining documents from the civil registry through eKiosks established by municipalities.

To assess the experiences of citizens in receiving digital services at the local level and identify their needs, D4D has analyzed three municipalities in Kosovo, which are the municipalities of Podujeva,

¹ UN EGovernment Survey 2020, accessed on 10 March 2022 at: [https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/Portals/egovkb/Documents/un/2020-Survey/2020 UN E-Government Survey \(Full Report\).pdf](https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/Portals/egovkb/Documents/un/2020-Survey/2020%20UN%20E-Government%20Survey%20(Full%20Report).pdf)

² Ibid.

³ Government of the Republic of Kosovo. "Strategy on Modernization of Public Administration 2015-2020", accessible at: <https://mpb.rks-gov.net/ap/page.aspx?id=1.127>

⁴ International Financial Corporation (IFC) REPORT, Inventory of Administrative Procedures at Central Level September 2014 p. 12.

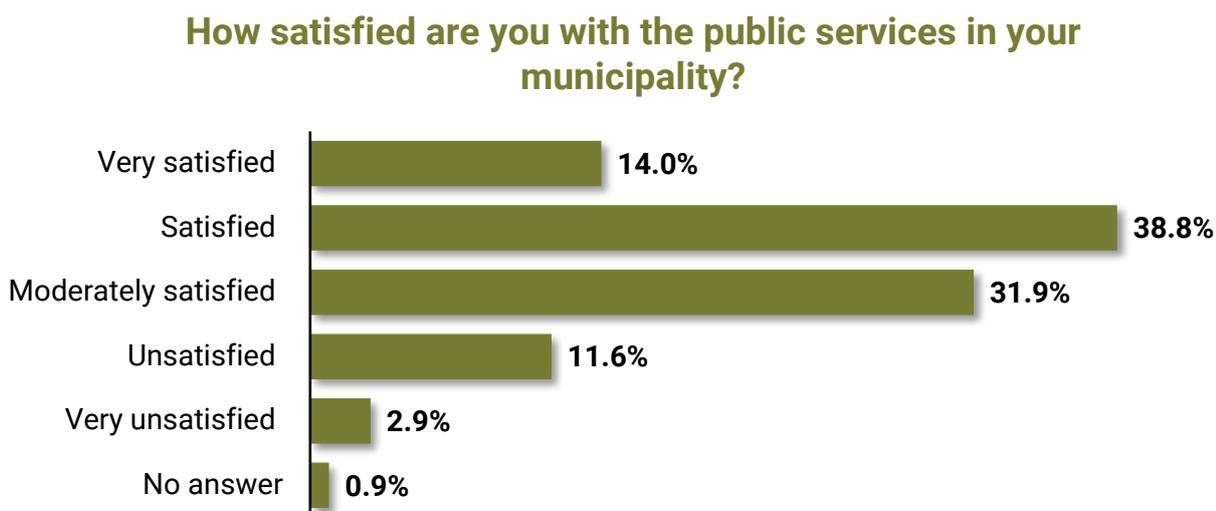
Lipjan and Drenas. Initially, public opinion was measured for satisfaction with the digital services provided in the municipalities. The measurement was made through a representative sample with about 1,200 respondents nationwide. Then, to further analyze the opinions of the citizens and identify the needs, D4D has organized three focus groups with the citizens in the selected municipalities. To get a broader perspective, three public discussions were organized between the citizens and the local representative in the format of D4D “Tuesday Salons”.

In addition to identifying needs and assessing citizen satisfaction with digital public services at the local level, the purpose of this brief analysis is to trigger local discussion on the need to address the digital agenda, as well as to involve citizens in discussions with decision-makers to accelerate the processes of digitalization of administrative services. By providing as many digital services as possible, it directly affects the shortening of the time of receiving services, the simplification of receiving services, the elimination of corrupt practices.

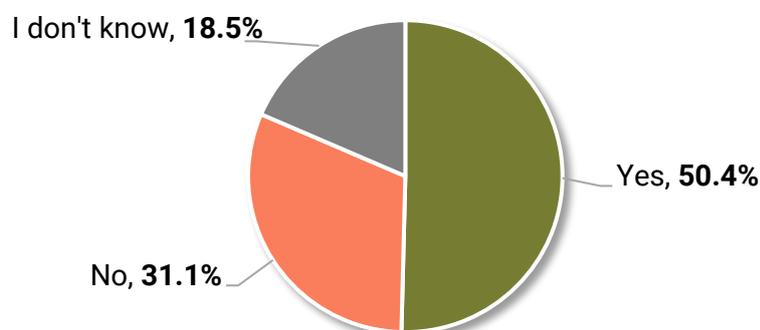
Citizens’ satisfaction with public services

D4D conducted a survey with citizens through a representative sample nationwide from 11 to 23 December 2021, to obtain their opinion on satisfaction with public services at the municipal level, as well as the provision of digital services.

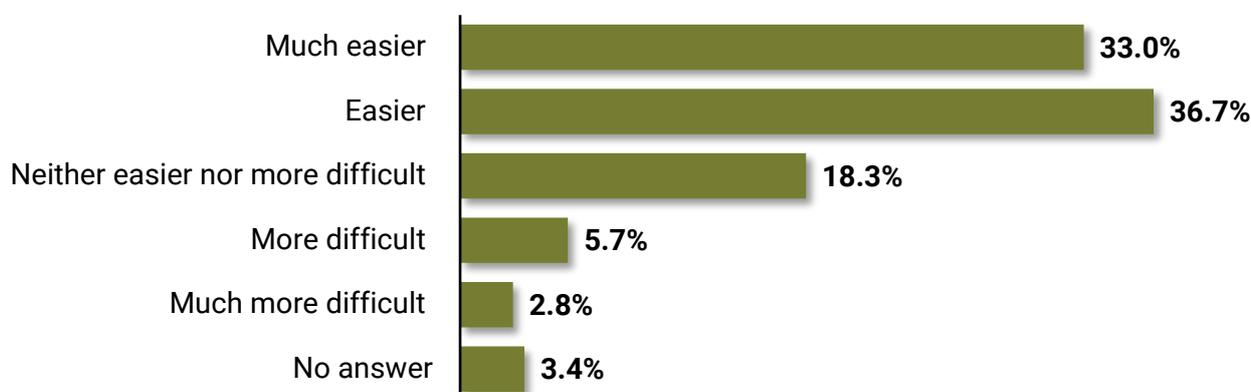
Chart 1. Satisfaction with public services in municipalities



In general, citizens are satisfied with the services they receive from their municipalities. 52.8% of surveyed citizens stated that they are satisfied or very much satisfied with the public services they receive in their municipality. From the breakdown by settlement, there is no difference in the level of satisfaction between rural and urban areas. On average, 31.9% of the surveyed citizens are satisfied with public services, while 14.5% are dissatisfied or very much dissatisfied, whereas in rural areas the level of dissatisfaction is higher by about 2% compared to urban areas.

Chart 2. Possession of digital services by the administration in municipalities**Do you have digital administrative services in your municipality?**

The provision of digital services in the municipality is a growing demand. Half of the surveyed citizens stated that their administration in the municipality provides digital services, respectively 50.4%, while 31.1% stated that digital services are not provided in their municipality. A relatively high number of 18.5% are not aware at all if the administration of their municipality provides digital services to its citizens. Over half of those who are not aware if digital services are provided in the municipality are in the age group over 65, and those with a low level of education.

Chart 3. Easiness in receiving services through digital services**In your view, how easier it would be to receive your services digitally?**

About two-thirds of the surveyed citizens or 69.7% stated that they would find it easier or much easier to receive services through digital services. 70% of respondents in rural areas stated that they would find it easier to receive digital services. For 18.3%, the form of service provision would not matter, while 8.5% stated that they would find it more difficult or much more difficult to receive digital services. The age groups that would find it most difficult to receive digital services are mostly over 55, and those who have only attended a few years of elementary school.

Digital Services at the municipal level

To further break down the public opinion data on citizens' satisfaction with public services in municipalities, but also to understand the need and services that are currently provided digitally, during the period December 2021 - February 2022 D4D held three separate focus groups with young people in the municipalities of Podujeva, Lipjan and Drenas. Also, in all three municipalities, D4D held debates between citizens and local institutions within the "Tuesday Salon".

Currently, there is no public list of public services provided by the municipal and central level, which of them are enabled digitally, to whom these services are provided (citizens or businesses), where they can be received, the payment system and others. According to OECD, in Kosovo there is a complete list of all digital services provided in the public sector, but which is not public online. On the eKosova platform⁵, which is a state platform providing public-administrative services electronically, citizens are provided with only two such services, traffic fines and property tax payment. Electronic payments can also be made for both of these services. Through this portal, under the health module, citizens had the opportunity to make appointments for vaccines against COVID-19.

In the three municipalities where focus group discussions with young people were organized, the need was expressed for more public services to be digitized, in addition to the provision of civil status documents currently provided by the three municipalities through eKiosks. The Municipality of Podujeva also provides applications for grants and vacancies digitally. Citizens participating in these discussions have called for the digitalization of services that enable easier

access to property documents, then making all online payments through online applications, applying for agricultural subsidies, applying for student scholarships, scheduling appointments online at Family Medicine Centers, as well as digitizing city libraries enabling them to know in real-time about the books that are available to be borrowed.

Table 1. Provision of digital services in municipalities

Digital services	Municipality of Podujeva	Municipality of Lipjan	Municipality of Rahovec
Civil status documents (Birth Extract; Birth Certificate; Marriage Certificate; Citizenship Certificate; and Residence Certificate)	x	x	x
Application for grants and vacancies	x		

⁵ State platform "eKosova", accessible at: <https://ekosova.rks-gov.net>

Municipality of Podujeva

The municipality of Podujeva has 88,499 inhabitants⁶ and 77 villages.

The municipality has installed four digital devices through which citizens can be provided with civil status documents. Two of these eKiosks are in the city, and two others are in the villages, one in Merdare and the other one in Lluzhan. Schools are equipped with laptops and cameras. To receive services in person in the municipal administration, citizens are provided with a queuing number which indicates the number of people in front of them waiting in line and then oriented to which counter to receive services. The Municipality of Podujeva has also digitized grant applications and vacancy announcements for recruitment.

In addition to the already digitalized services, the citizens participating in the discussion groups have also submitted many requests for further digitalization of the services. It was requested to enable access to property documentation, then automatic generation of receipts for various utilities, application for agricultural subsidies and student scholarships in education. In the area of education, it is also required that schools be equipped with a projector and that students be assessed online. In the area of health, digitalization was also required, which should be done through the patient card where each patient would have a history of diseases in the system. Digitalization is also required in the area of tourism, through the creation of applications that present hiking trails in the Municipality of Podujeva and the specific characteristics of those trails.

Municipality of Lipjan

In the last census, the total number of inhabitants in the Municipality of Lipjan was 57,605.

The Municipality of Lipjan provides services to its citizens through eKiosk, from where civil status documents can be obtained. Citizens also mention the live broadcast on social networks of the Municipal Assembly sessions.

Without going to the municipality in person, it is difficult to get any digital services. Citizens mention the difficulties they face in receiving services even in person as a result of the municipal administration staff that is old. Among the numerous requests and needs for digitalization of services, Lipjan citizens who have participated in the focus discussion groups organized by D4D, have mentioned as important the digitalization of bus schedules, city library, application for student scholarships, which would enable the submission of copies of documents electronically, digitalization in health for appointments and description of therapy as MFMCs are only equipped with computers, as well as the payment of all municipal liabilities to be done online.

Citizens' demands for the digitalization of services are still low. Citizens are more inclined towards projects to improve road infrastructure. In addition to having difficulty using e-Kiosk, older citizens have also had confidence if they receive the document they need from the municipality in person. One complaint that was filed for the e-Kiosk was that only 1 and 2 Euro coins are accepted. To have a better experience of receiving digital services, citizens recommend that there should be a training of municipal staff to provide digital services, as well as provide technical assistance.

⁶ Kosovo Agency of Statistics, data from the 2011 Census. Data accessible at: https://askdata.rks-gov.net/pxweb/sq/ASKdata/ASKdata_Census%20population_Census%202011_3%20By%20Municipalities/Pop%20by%20marital%20status%20sex%20and%20municipality.px/

Municipality of Drenas

According to the latest census, the Municipality of Drenas has a population of 58,531 inhabitants. The Municipality of Drenas consists of 42 settlements.

The Municipality of Drenas has also placed an e-Kiosk at the entrance of the municipal building to enable its citizens to be provided with civil status documents without the need to be served at the counters of the municipality. Training sessions of the municipal administration staff were also held in order to improve the provision of services and the citizens participating in the focus groups said that the time of receiving the service has been significantly reduced.

The citizens of Drenas request that the possibility of applying for scholarships be provided completely electronically. Another service required to be provided digitally is that of scheduling online appointments at FMC.

Recommendations

- Complete list of public services at both central and local levels to be published. Also, each of the municipalities should have its own list of public services which are provided to citizens. Such lists should contain the type of service, cost and method of payment, method of service provided, in person and/or digital, groups served (citizens/businesses).
- All electronic systems must be integrated into a central system according to the interoperability framework. The government should draft a law on interoperability that enables the integration and exchange of data between different institutions, thus increasing the efficiency of public administration and facilitating the receipt of administrative services by citizens.
- Technical assistance to citizens who have difficulty accessing digital services to be provided. Municipalities may provide a toll-free number available to citizens in need.
- Citizens' satisfaction with digital services they receive to be measured in order to further enhance and facilitate the provision of services.
- Professional training sessions for municipal administration staff providing digital services to citizens to be conducted. These training sessions will increase the efficiency of services and at the same time, the citizens' satisfaction with services received.
- Information campaigns for different groups of society to be organized to inform them of the digital services provided by the municipality, but also to promote their use.
- Public opinion on the digital services needed by citizens to be measured in order to prioritize their digitalization, facilitate access, and adapt the system depending on the citizens' interests.
- Municipalities need to continue with the digitalization of public services. From the discussions with citizens organized by D4D, priority should be given to online application for student scholarships; scheduling appointments at Family Medicine Centers; digitalization of receipt of documents in the cadastre.
- Municipalities need to plan more budgets for the development of systems that enable the provision of administrative services digitally.

Annex A: List of digital services

No.	Digital services
1	Application for birth certificate
2	Application for building permit
3	Application for business license
4	Application for death certificate
5	Application for driving license
6	Application for environmental permit
7	Online application for vacancies in public administration
8	Application for registration of land title
9	Application for marriage certificate
10	Application for personal ID card
11	Application for social protection programs
12	Application for visa
13	Report to the police
14	Payment of fines
15	Payment for utility services (water, gas, electricity)
16	Business registration
17	Motor vehicle registration
18	Reporting the change of address
19	Reporting income tax
20	Reporting Value Added Tax

Annex B: Survey questions

1	How satisfied are you with the public services in your municipality?
a)	Very satisfied
b)	Satisfied
c)	Moderately satisfied
d)	Unsatisfied
f)	Very unsatisfied
e)	No answer

2	Do you have digital administrative services in your municipality?
a)	Yes
b)	No
c)	I don't know

3	In your view, how easier it would be to receive your services digitally?
a)	Much easier
b)	Easier
c)	Neither easier nor more difficult
d)	More difficult
f)	Much more difficult
e)	No answer

Katalogimi në botim – (CIP)

Biblioteka Kombëtare e Kosovës “Pjetër Bogdani”

362:044(496.51)

Provision of digital services at the local level in Kosovo : municipality of Podujeva, Lipjan and Drenas : policy brief / prepared by Democracy for Development Institute. - Prishtinë : Demokraci për zhvillim (D4D), 2022. - 13 f. : ilustr. ; 29 cm.

Shërbimet lokale -- Kosovë -- Dixhitalizimi

Kompjuterat -- Përpunimi elektronik i të dhënave

ISBN 978-9951-823-25-8

Aleph [000101350]



The Democracy for Development (D4D) Institute was established in April 2010 by a group of analysts who were increasingly worried that the state-building exercise had neglected democracy.

D4D's vision is to promote an active and educated citizenry that participates fully in the public space and utilizes the public arena of representation and decision-making to deliberate and build consensus over resource allocation that is efficient, smart, long-term, and that brings about equitable development.

D4D influences specific policy, promotes a cross-sectorial approach to problem solving, and tackles the institutional routine of decision making by recommending incremental improvements and operates with maximum effectiveness in order to fully promote Kosovo's stabilization and democratic development.

For more information about D4D's activities please visit our website: www.d4d-ks.org

