Digital Agenda Observatory (DAO) research - DRAFT Concept for follow up methodology

1. Background

This document describes the methodology to assess the development of Digital Agenda (DA) in the Western Balkans (Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, as a **follow-up research** to the Baseline Study conducted by the ICEDA project partners between May-June 2020. It is called the Digital Agenda Observatory (DAO) research.

As already explained in the introduction of the Baseline Research: although the term Digital Agenda covers the development of the information society in the broadest sense, the activities and studies of the ICEDA project are mainly limited to **e-Government implementation, public awareness, digital literacy and civic engagement.**

The DAO research methodology has been developed bearing in mind three key aspects:
1) The main objective of the ICEDA project is to increase the engagement of the civil society organisations (CSOs) in shaping and implementing the DA in the Western Balkans (WB).
2) The follow up research should not repeat the Baseline Study but focus on the key aspects identified during the Baseline Research and go more in depth in these aspects.
Therefore, the focus is on topics where the role of CSOs has more impact.
3) The follow-up research should also identify key indicators (numbers) to enable regional comparison and to create positively motivating competition among the WB countries.

The main outputs – country reports, and the final consolidated report in the end of the ICEDA project – will provide stakeholders of the project with a good understanding of the current state of the DA developments and CSOs role in this and will be the foundation and inspiration for strategic national documents on digital transformation.

The methodologies for the Baseline Study, the DAO research and potential follow-ups - are performed by the e-Governance Academy Foundation (eGA), a non-governmental, non-profit organisation founded for the creation and transfer of knowledge concerning e-Governance and digital transformation. The research will be implemented, and reports completed by the ICEDA project partners in each target country.

The DAO research is carried out from 1 March 2021 until 31 May 2021.

2. Methodology concept

The DAO research provides an overview of the current status of digital development in the WB region and offers recommendations for future activities in thematic focus areas related to e-Government implementation, public awareness, digital literacy and civic engagement aspects. The DAO research should enable **more flexibility in selecting priority policy/e-service to be analysed as part of country case-studies**.

The DAO research includes the following **steps:**

1. **Review of the Baseline Study and additional desktop research**. The research will be based on already existing Baseline Study Report and existing policy documents, strategies, government political agenda, public reports, statistical sources, etc. to identify if there are any substantial developments, or amendments to the existing ones. In case there are, these will be analysed and described in more detail.

2. **Questionnaire.** The partners in charge in each WB country will fill in a questionnaire that maps the main e-Government indicators and based on the desktop research (see point 1 above) even if these were also reflected in Baseline Study Report. It enables to describe the additional documents, new strategies, changes in political agenda (if any), etc. in each target country of the DAO research report. The proposed focus areas of the research include (mostly focusing on updating the information gained

with the Baseline Research) *(see also proposed outline):*

- Political will and support (if there are any changes, new government, new agenda)
- E-government coordination (focusing on responsible bodies identified with baseline research)
- Legal framework (if there is new legislation adopted, new strategies approved, etc.)
- Digital databases, interoperability, secure data exchange (as part of e-services testing)
- Access to services, awareness-raising (as part of e-service testing)
- Digital skills (are there new programs/activities started to address this issue)
- Information security
- E-Democracy/e-participation

3. **Preparations for interviews/focus groups.** There will be several topics in the questionnaire that might need additional input. For that, eGA proposes to have small-scale interviews or focus groups. The list of people to be interviewed and the interview agendas are developed by country partners based on the results of the **Baseline Study** and **questionnaire results** (*see methodology guidelines below, chapter 6*) – eGA proposes to invite the sub-grantee CSOs and/or a few selected relevant ministries, media, other CSOs.

4. **Online interviews or focus groups** (to be discussed and confirmed, dependent on country specifics) with key stakeholders (sub-grantee CSOs, relevant ministries, media, other CSOs) to collect new and interpret existing data for a deeper understanding of the current state of the DA as well as their plans and challenges. During the interviews, the country partners could identify the list of potential policies and e-services to be tested and analysed (linked to challenges mentioned by the interviewees).

5. **Selection of policies (for information society)/e-services to be tested and analysed in each country.** Country partners will select independently or consulting stakeholders during the interviews (see point 4) what areas/policies/e-services could be analysed in-depth. Preferably, the policy to be analysed should be related to the e-service(s) under observation.

6. Development of **country specific descriptions/case studies of policies/e-services**. In each WB country, at least one policy and up to 3 e-services are tested and described from user experience view (*user cases, see Chapter 7*).

7. **Development of the DAO Research country reports.** The aim of the report is to assess and highlight the recent developments in each country's current state of e-Government implementation and to provide suggestions for next steps. *It needs to be noted that currently the e-Governance Academy is working on Digital Maturity Assessment Index which enables to place countries at a certain level of maturity – basic, useful or sustainable – in each category and provide recommendations for next steps. In this DAO research, we use some elements of this Index methodology. However, we propose to use the Digital Maturity Assessment methodology for conducting the final assessment of countries in the ICEDA project while completing the final consolidated report.*

8. **Online feedback seminar** – if needed - organised by country partners and sub-grantee CSOs to present to discuss and validate the results of the DAO research, get feedback to the draft version of the DAO Report and discuss possible next steps (Roadmap). The participants are sub-grantee CSOs, key decision makers, media representatives, and other CSOs.

9. **Presentation of the DAO Country report and Roadmap**. This is an **online discussion (webinar) among the ICEDA project partners aiming** to present the key findings and recommendations together with the best practice examples from each country and agree on the next steps of the ICEDA project.

3. Implementation Plan

- **March 1st - April 30th** - Research (desktop, surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc. - whatever is foreseen in the methodology)
- **May 1st - May 31st** - Country report and Roadmap (preparation of the analysis/policy paper, translation, design, preparation of visualizations, etc.)
- **1st week of June** - Presentation of the DAO Country reports and Roadmap

4. Proposed outline of the DAO research report

The following outline is proposed for the DAO report:

Executive summary

1. Introduction
    a. Objectives
    b. Methodology
2. Preconditions for the implementation of the e-governance (quantitative data- indicators listed in the ICEDA project LogFrame)
3. Political will and strategy
4. Coordination of e-government implementation
5. Legal framework
    a. description of concrete policies
6. State of the e-services (based on questionnaire and user cases)
    a. Digital databases, interoperability, secure data exchange
    b. Secure digital identity, digital signatures
    c. results of e-services testing – user case descriptions
7. Digital skills (literacy)
8. Access to services, awareness-raising
9. Cyber security
10. E-participation, e-democracy- is there unified structure for governmental websites?
11. ROADMAP for the DA advancement for ….. (country, timeframe?)

Glossary

Annex 1: List of interviewed stakeholders

Annex 2: Questionnaire responses

Annex 3: Summary of the DAO Country report and findings

5. DAO research Questionnaire (draft, TBD)

This survey is a part of the Digital Agenda Observatory (DAO) research methodology developed by the e-Governance Academy in the project *Increasing Civic Engagement in the Digital Agenda – ICEDA* and is designed to provide an updated overview of **e-Governance implementation, public awareness, digital literacy and civic engagement** aspects in the Western Balkan (WB) countries.

This information was collected partly during the Baseline Study and is now used with improved and specified methodology to monitor the progress.

The updated methodology enables:
a) to measure the level of implementation of different e-Governance/e-Participation aspects;
b) to compare the WB countries more easily; and
c) to repeat each year the same research to measure the progress more precisely.

Each country partner is responsible for filling in data for respective country, completing one questionnaire per country. Thereafter, the focus groups of sub-grantee CSOs and other key stakeholders will review and complement the questionnaire. Role of seminars at the end!

The responses will feed into the DAO Country Reports, which will place each WB country at a certain level of maturity – either basic, useful or sustainable – in each category and provide recommendations (Roadmap) for next steps.

Data provider

Name: Click or tap here to enter text.
Organisation: Click or tap here to enter text.
Position: Click or tap here to enter text.

1. Preconditions for the implementation of the e-Government

a)   Internet penetration
b)   Number of citizens using e-Government services (*in the previous report, user numbers of governmental portal were presented, but not the total number of e-service users*)
c)   Number of citizens using the e-Government services in the areas covered by the ICEDA project (*TBD – what is it exactly, selected 3 test e-services*)?

In the Report, please point out, if possible, the developments since the Baseline Study.

2. Political will and strategy

Please select to which extent the following e-government activities and principles have been implemented.

	DAO Research 2021 March-April				Situation during Baseline Research (if applicable)	Comments/references
Statement	Not at all	In planning	Some implement-ation	Full implement-ation		
Agreement among political forces on the importance of e-governance is reached	☐	☐	☐	☐		
The government includes a spokesperson for e-governance	☐	☐	☐	☐		
General priority areas for e-governance are defined	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Political will is affirmed with a strategic document (e.g. national digital agenda)	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Strategic e-governance implementation plan is adopted and published	☐	☐	☐	☐		

| Public-private partnership and cooperation with academic institutions takes place in the field of e-governance | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | | |

Please provide links to the high-level policy documents and/or strategic implementation plans related to e-government. Click or tap here to enter text.

Please indicate the priority of the following e-government fields in your country.

	DAO Research 2021 March-April				Situation during Baseline Research (if applicable)	Comments/references
Field	Low	Rather low	Rather high	High		
E-government organisation	☐	☐	☐	☐		
E-government management	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Training of CIOs (Chief Information Officer) and ICT staff	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Interoperability framework	☐	☐	☐	☐		
E-government legislation	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Management of population data	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Digital identity	☐	☐	☐	☐		
ICT infrastructure elements (e.g. network)	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Digitalisation of registers	☐	☐	☐	☐		
E-democracy and e-participation	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Cyber security	☐	☐	☐	☐		
e-Health	☐	☐	☐	☐		
e-School	☐	☐	☐	☐		
other: Click or tap here to enter text.	☐	☐	☐	☐		
other: Click or tap here to enter text.	☐	☐	☐	☐		

other: Click or tap here to enter text.	☐	☐	☐	☐		

Please list any other development initiatives that focus on other sectors, but contribute to digital development (e.g. industry digital transformation, support for digital start-ups, attracting digital professionals, etc.). Click or tap here to enter text.

3. Coordination

a. Please select to which extent the following e-government and cyber security activities and principles have been implemented

	DAO Research 2021 March-April				Situation during Baseline Research (if applicable)	Comments/references
Statement	Not at all	In planning	Some implement-ation	Fully implement-ed		
A suitable organisation/person for e-government coordination and development is designated	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Tools for coordination are applied (policies, regulations, budgeting, monitoring, standards, data exchange, re-use of software solutions, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Ministries and larger public authorities have a designated CIO (Chief Information Officer / ICT Manager)	☐	☐	☐	☐		

Please name the **government authority** responsible for coordinating e-government development in your country. Click or tap here to enter text.
Please list the main government ICT projects implemented during the last five years, currently underway and planned.

				Comments/references
Project title	Implementation years	Responsible authority	Funded by	
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	
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Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	

4. Legal framework

Please select to which extent the following e-governance activities and principles have been implemented.

	DAO Research 2021 March-April				Situation during Baseline Research (if applicable)	Comments/references
Statement	Not at all	In planning	Some implement-ation	Fully implement-ed		
Legislation incompatible with e-governance is identified	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Legal acts take the details of e-governance solutions into account	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Legal environment is coordinated/harmonised with neighbouring countries	☐	☐	☐	☐		

Please name the main legal acts and strategies in force in the following areas and, if possible, provide a link.

Personal data protection	Click or tap here to enter text.
Access to public information (e.g. Freedom of Information Act)	Click or tap here to enter text.
Telecommunications	Click or tap here to enter text.
Interoperability framework	Click or tap here to enter text.
Digital identity	Click or tap here to enter text.
Digital signature	Click or tap here to enter text.
Cyber security	Click or tap here to enter text.
E-participation	Click or tap here to enter text.

Which organisation, if any, is responsible for personal data protection? Click or tap here to enter text.

Please select an information society policy (linked to e-services to be tested) which you are going to analyse in-depth.

5. Sate of development of e-Services

Digital databases, interoperability, secure data exchange

a. Please select to which extent the following e-government activities and principles have been implemented in your country.

Statement	DAO Research 2021 March-April				Situation during Baseline Research (if applicable)	Comments/references
	Not at all	In planning	Some implement-ation	Fully implement-ed		
Government institutions use electronic records and document management systems	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Digital databases are deployed at ministries and larger public authorities	☐	☐	☐	☐		
The Once Only Principle (i.e. public administrations should collect information from citizens and businesses only once, and then share and reuse this information) is a political priority	☐	☐	☐	☐		
A technical solution for secure exchange of data is deployed	☐	☐	☐	☐		
E-government architecture and interoperability framework is developed	☐	☐	☐	☐		
A catalogue of state databases and services exists	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Citizens can see what data the government holds about them	☐	☐	☐	☐		
With the consent of the user, all digitised data is reused within the public sector	☐	☐	☐	☐		

Secure digital identity and digital signature

Please select to which extent the following e-government activities and principles have been implemented in your country.

	DAO Research 2021 March-April				Situation during Baseline Research (if applicable)	Comments/references
Statement	Not at all	In planning	Some implement-ation	Fully implement-ed		
A population register is established	☐	☐	☐	☐		
A unique persistent identifier of persons is implemented in the country	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Digital signature is recognised by law	☐	☐	☐	☐		
A technical solution for digital signature is deployed	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Trust services exist	☐	☐	☐	☐		
A significant amount of citizens have access to digital identity tokens	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Digital identity and digital signatures are used by citizens	☐	☐	☐	☐		

b. Please arrange the following digital identification methods in use in your country to consume public e-services from the most used to the least used.

- User name and password
- Smart card with a chip
- Mobile app
- Biometrics
- Other (please specify)

c. Please name the authority responsible for digital identity management. Click or tap here to enter text.
d. Please name the authority responsible for the provision of trust services. Click or tap here to enter text.
e. Please describe how the awareness-raising of the population on e-ID has been conducted. Click or tap here to enter text.
f. Has the country been involved in cross-border cooperation for the mutual recognition of identities and provision of trust services? Click or tap here to enter text.

6. Digital skills

Please describe if there are any mayor national projects/activities to address digital skills of people on any citizens groups in particular Click or tap here to enter text.

Is ICT training regularly provided for the following target groups?

	DAO Research 2021 March-April			Situation during Baseline Research (if applicable)	Comments/references
Target group	Yes	Uncertain	No		
ICT staff of ministries and larger public authorities	☐	☐	☐		
Non-ICT staff of ministries and larger public authorities	☐	☐	☐		
General public	☐	☐	☐		

Please specify what kind of ICT training is regularly provided for the target groups you selected. Click or tap here to enter text.

Please briefly describe any other skills development mechanisms in place, if any. Click or tap here to enter text.

7. Access to services, awareness-raising

Please select to which extent the following e-government activities and principles have been implemented in your country

	DAO Research 2021 March-April				Situation during Baseline Research (if applicable)	Comments/references
Statement	Not at all	In planning	Some implement-ation	Fully implement-ed		
E-government services are available and accessible to most citizens	☐	☐	☐	☐		
A government portal provides access to e-services	☐	☐	☐	☐		
E-services are securely available on various e-channels and accessible with any device	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Citizens can see the data that the government holds about them	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Campaigns are held to ensure all citizens can use digital solutions	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Private sector is interested in developing e-government	☐	☐	☐	☐		

CSOs are involved in service provision and design	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Please provide a link to the portal website. Click or tap here to enter text.

Please describe the most popular e-services offered to individuals and/or businesses.

Name of service	Target group (citizens/ businesses)	Responsible authority	Registers used to draw data
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Please provide examples of the main communication initiatives that have been implemented to promote e-government and e-services among government officials and/or the general public during the last five years. Click or tap here to enter text.

Please describe how developed and used internet banking and/or mobile banking are Click or tap here to enter text.

Please describe the interest and role of the private sector in developing e-government and advancing digital transformation in your country. Click or tap here to enter text.

How are the CSOs involved in e-service provision and design? Click or tap here to enter text.

In the report, this part will be followed by user cases of e-services – please see Chapter 7.

8. Information security/Cyber security

Please select to which extent the following e-government activities and principles have been implemented in your country.

	DAO Research 2021 March-April				Situation during Baseline Research (if applicable)	Comments/references
Statement	Not at all	In planning	Some implement-ation	Full implement-ed		
An institution responsible for cyber security issues in general is designated	☐	☐	☐	☐		
A national level cyber security strategy and related implementation are adopted	☐	☐	☐	☐		
There are minimum cyber security requirements in place for government institutions	☐	☐	☐	☐		

Please name the responsible organisation for cyber security. Click or tap here to enter text.

Does this entity also have the mandate for cyber security policy development? Click or tap here to enter text.

9. E-participation, e-democracy

Please select to which extent the following e-government activities and principles have been implemented in your country.

	DAO Research 2021 March-April				Situation during Baseline Research (if applicable)	Comments/references
Statement	Not at all	In planning	Some implement-ation	Full implement-ed		
Legal acts are in place to coordinate citizen participation in decision-making and access to public information	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Continuous efforts are made to raise the e-literacy level of citizens and public officials	☐	☐	☐	☐		

Online tools are available that allow citizens to provide feedback to the government (incl. to report unethical behaviour, file complaints, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Citizens and CSOs or civil society actors take an active role in proposing policy options and shaping the policy dialogue, citizens are involved throughout the full policy making process	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Open government data is made available for creating new services and providing input to public policy making	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Please list the government's main strategies/priorities in the area of civic engagement and transparency. Copy and paste from previous Click or tap here to enter text.

Are there online public feedback and grievance mechanisms in place to report unethical behaviour, report violations of law, file complaints about access to public services and justice? If yes, please describe briefly. Click or tap here to enter text.

Please provide links to the main open data portal(s). Click or tap here to enter text.

Please describe the most prominent cases of e-participation (tools, projects, etc.) over the last three years and provide links, if available. Click or tap here to enter text.

What do you think are the main barriers to e-participation and e-democracy in your country? Click or tap here to enter text.

6. Guidelines for interviews/focus groups

Interviews/focus groups (the form will be discussed and decided by the ICEDA project partners).

The main aim is to get insights from local DA key-persons to collect the new data/knowledge and interpret the existing for a deeper understanding of the current state of digital development as well as their plans and challenges.

1. Please review the Baseline Study country report and the results from the Questionnaire of this current DAO research and specify discussion topics (see guiding questions below):
   a. Political will and support (only if there are any changes, new government, new agenda)
   b. E-government coordination (focusing on responsible bodies identified with baseline research)
   c. Legal framework (if there is new legislation adopted, new strategies approved, etc.)
   d. Digital databases, interoperability, secure data exchange (as part of e-services testing)
   e. Access to services, awareness-raising (as part of e-service testing)
   f. Digital skills (are there new programs/activities started to address this issue?)
   g. Information security
   h. E-Democracy/e-participation

2. Invite only a few key persons identified with both studies.
3. Engage sub-grantee CSOs in conducting interviews/focus groups and final seminar.
4. In addition to collecting missing information, etc. during the interviews, the country partners could identify potential policies and e-services to be tested and analysed (linked to challenges mentioned by interviewees).

7. Guidelines for e-service testing

Steps done by each country partner:
1. Selection of e-services to be tested and described from user experience perspective (3 e-services)
2. Analysis of relevant policies addressing those e-services should be also part of this analysis
3. Each case description should include the description of the e-service (name, target group, responsible authority)
4. Each e-service should be tested and assessed from user perspective using the template below.
5. Please add also relevant screenshots, etc. to illustrate the case study

Accessibility	Yes	No	Comments

A government portal provides access to e-service	☐	☐	
E-service is securely available on various e-channels and accessible with any device	☐	☐	
Citizens can see the data that the government holds about them while using this e-service	☐	☐	
Civil society is involved in service provision and design			
Backoffice			
The service is provided by a private company (if information available)	☐	☐	
The service is provided by a state authority (if information available)	☐	☐	
General			
CSOs or civil society actors are involved in e-service provision and designing this service (if information is available)	☐	☐	
There have been any mayor campaigns to introduce and promote this e-service	☐	☐	
e-services are organised around the life events (see Estonian example https://www.eesti.ee/en/)	☐	☐	
User-friendliness			
Instructions for using the e-service are available and easy to follow	☐	☐	
Every next step to use the e-service is logical	☐	☐	
There is possibility to rank the e-service after using it	☐	☐	