



United Nations Development Programme

Public Pulse Project

Final Report

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1. Executive Summary

The Public Pulse Project (PPP) is a continuation of Kosovo Early Warning System (KEWS), in this regard continued to work on research and analysis of pertinent issues as well as to serve as a watchdog initiative that would constructively engage the Government of Kosovo and public institutions in Kosovo. The PPP is co-financed by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The PPP has started in September 2010 and produced a total of six Public Pulse Reports, six Fast Facts documents and five Action Paper documents. All products were published in three languages Albanian, Serbian, and English.

The Reports and Action Papers were intended as strategic planning, response, and policy tools for development as well as advancement of democratization related processes in Kosovo, by deriving recommendations for preventative measures from trend analysis and monitoring of key sector indicators on democratization and economic development. The main objective of the project was to increase the communication between public and democratic institutions regarding important issues highlighted by biannual research. The project aim was to build up the visibility and the credibility of the Public Pulse products through coordinated dissemination and communication strategy. This process was also facilitated by the promotion of new indexes on democratization, economic confidence, public participation, education, corruption issues, interethnic social acceptance and social distance. Additionally, PPP aimed at strengthening the capacity of local leadership by cooperating in designing and researching Action Papers in different topics with various institutions.

1.1 Overall Objective:

PPP's core objective was to increase dialogue between governmental institutions and citizens. Perceptions of citizens on pertinent issues were highlighted by biannual opinion polls and respective reports; these served as the bases for dialogue with Kosovo Government line-ministries and institutions in order to develop capacities for informed decision-making process. The opinion polls, targeted polls and focus groups provided first hand evidence on the perceptions and opinions of public related to pertinent issues facing Kosovo. The data from the research served for targeted analysis and in cooperation with Kosovo authority's follow-up actions for addressing the specific issues. The process supported informed decisions-making in targeted institutions. These results were achieved through the provision of following outputs: (a) six (6) biannual "Public Pulse" Reports prepared and published, and (b) five (5) Action Papers addressing important issues prepared in cooperation with Kosovo institutions.

The development objective of the Project is also to build the capacity of local analysts to monitor and evaluate the development of democratic processes in Kosovo, and based on the findings of the Public Pulse products, to advise development policies. The project worked on development of capacities of local analysts to foresee potential crisis, to advise crisis prevention policies, and to support the establishment of sustainable development in Kosovo. The project provided regular and updated information to decision makers on key socio-economic and political indicators, enabling strategic policy decisions.

1.2 Changes in the ground

The PPP as a continuation of Early Warning System is a decade long project and it owes its credibility partly to its endurance, becoming the only source of information in Kosovo that could project decade long trends in political, economic, inter-ethnic relations and security issues. Thus, in terms of sustainability, the project is closing its three-year implementation period successfully, leaving space for an upcoming phase.

Additionally the aim of the Public Pulse was to open wider evidence based public debates on the relevant issues highlighted by Public Pulse products. With this regard all the Fast Fact documents as well as Action Papers were launched with press conference and after the publication of each product, TV debates were held in most of the of the national and local TV stations. The project also contributed in developing the capacities of the local think-tanks, which were engaged in the implementation of the surveys and focus group activities. While opinion polling part and focus group research was open for competition among research institutions the engagement of local experts for the preparation of thematic chapters for Reports and Action Papers was implemented based on recommendations on expertise of local analysis. Additionally more than 150 experts, teacher and doctors participated in different focus groups discussions related to the preparations of Action Papers and Reports.

1.3 Overall achievements of outputs

Since 2010,

- Six Fast Facts documents produced and published
- Six Public Pulse Reports produced and published
- Five Action Paper documents prepared and published
- More than 9,100 people interviewed
- More than 130 people participated in focus groups discussions
- More than 100 experts contributed to the reports

- More than 15 public meetings and press conferences were held
- More than 15 targeted trainings for governmental institutions
- Wide media coverage and attention

2 The Project

Based on carefully selected indicators, objective analysis, verified data, and UNDP/Kosovo supervision, Public Pulse products are expected to be politically objective and unbiased analysis of development situation. Indicators were monitored on a bi-annual basis, thus allowing trend analysis throughout the covered period. The trend analyses also build up predictive capacities and policy recommendations.

2.1 How the project fits into overall development agenda

UNDP is the lead agency on democratic governance in the UN system. Democratic governance is essential to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). UNDP aims to build effective and capable institutions that are accountable and transparent, inclusive and responsive. Locally, UNDP supports efforts to improve local capacity to deliver basic services, and to ensure society's voices are included in political decision-making processes. The goal of UNDP is to strengthen the democratic process in countries and help public institutions become efficient and accountable, based on the principles of human rights, gender equality, the rule of law, and therefore contribute to an environment where the people and their institutions can interact in a vibrant, participatory and transparent manner.

2.2 Strategic approach of the Project

PPP worked on research and analysis of pertinent issues and served as a watchdog initiative that constructively engaged the Government of Kosovo and Public Institutions. In cooperation with the Kosovo institutions it developed and advocated for preventive measures to assure stability, through increased dialogue between governmental institutions and citizens. Specifically, the Public Pulse Report cycle started with a 1,300 person survey (conducted by the contracted institution) which captured the public opinion on key developments and the performance of various institutions in Kosovo. The results of the survey's and other PP products were then launched in a media event and made public through email distribution and publication on the UNDP website. In an effort to increase participation and feedback of key-actors, the research products of PP were presented to relevant stakeholders (ie, representatives of the institutions whose performance is assessed in the survey) in a roundtable setting where the results of the survey and the trends in opinion could be discussed by the stakeholders and the Public Pulse Report Team in an effort to inform the analysis and

policy recommendations. Through the discussion of data from the research with the officials from Kosovo institutions, the project aimed to develop confidence and communication between public and Kosovo institutions. This process allowed the perceptions of citizens on pertinent issues to be highlighted by biannual opinion polls and respective Public Pulse Reports; which served as basis for dialogue with different Kosovo Government line-ministries and institutions, and the creation of complementary mechanisms for informed decision-making process. Concurrently, the PPP generates an independent indigenous analytical and forecasting capacity of the socio-economic, political, and security factors that determine the near future of Kosovo's development. The project developed such capacity whilst also providing an essential analytical tool for international reconstruction and the development of democratization policies efforts in Kosovo.

The major benefits the Public Pulse products are:

- Periodicity and consistency in monitoring qualitative and quantitative information;
- Predictive capacities developed on the basis of measurable indicators and trend monitoring;
- Presentation of indigenous views on development of democratically related developments;
- Wealth of information collected from a variety of sources and analyzed to the best of local capacities;
- An indigenous conflict prevention capacity to forecast and non-violently manage crises.

The PP research products didn't aim to be a comprehensive study of developments for each particular period of time, but rather attempted to catch the "hot spots" in each area addressed. PP analyzed trends, building on the previous Report's information and tracked the dynamics of political developments. The Reports examines four sectors: 1) political and institutional instability 2) socio-economic stability (incomes, employment, and social security system); 3) ethnic relations; and, 4) personal and public security. Each of these sections is further broken down into indicators, serving as clear signals of stalls.

2.3 Changes made in the Project

According to the Project Document, three months after the publication of each Report, project was supposed to initiate the Action Paper documents, thus six of them for the period of three years. Instead, for the duration of the Project we managed to accomplish only five Action Papers, however the Action Paper with the Ministry of Health is much broader, and took the efforts, time and financial resources needed for two Action Papers. This paper will be used by

Ministry of Health as a baseline report for indicators on the performance and corruption in Regional Hospitals and University Clinical Centre of Kosovo and the Ministry will conduct similar research in the future to check for the trends and developments. In an initial agreement with the Donor, we decided to sacrifice the quantity for quality. Based on this experience during the second phase of the project, only three Action Paper documents will be conducted.

3 Factors Affecting Implementation and Outputs

Selection of the beneficiary institutions for cooperation on Action Paper activity was one of the factors that affected mostly the implementation of the Project. Even though some institutions approached, asking for Project's help in researching different trends that had to do with particular interests of different governmental and public institutions, there were cases when we were not able to offer support for them. The reason was that their requests were supposed to be forwarded to Peer Review Committees for initial approval to start cooperation, and all these correspondences (several meetings, e-mail exchanges, phone conversations) were time consuming, especially when we had to reject their requests. For example we had to reject KEK because this request came before the privatization of this Company, Kosovo Police etc.

Additionally, the Action Papers were conducted in cooperation with the Public & Governmental Institutions, and our partner's in this activity didn't always manage to respect their part of responsibilities as agreed in our initially signed MoUs. As a result, all of the Action Paper activities consumed much more time than foreseen in our annual work-plans. However, it is important that even with some delays, the Project managed to prepare and publish Action Paper documents as requested with the Project Document.

4 Risk Management

There are three different kinds of risks to be expected during the implementation of the Kosovo PP Project, namely, data, human resources, and political risks.

6.1. Data risks the analysis of the socio-economic section of PP was highly dependent on the nature of the surveys. To minimize data risks, the following strategies will be pursued:

- UNDP/Kosovo will participate in the designing of the surveys and ensure that all the Public Pulse requirements will be met in the questionnaire;
- UNDP/Kosovo and analysts will seek the assistance of qualified consultants (statisticians) when analyzing the results of the survey, and;

Another data risk is to collect information on minorities. Several organizations, which conducted various surveys in Kosovo in the past, expressed difficulties in conducting their

surveys throughout the provinces and especially in the North Mitrovica. To ensure the province-wide collection of information including minorities, UNDP/Kosovo will contract an Institution, which is fully capable of meeting the Terms of Reference.

6.2. Human Resources Risks – the project is heavily dependent on the skills of local analysts. To avoid any human-resources risks, the following strategies will be adopted:

- The assigned UNDP/Kosovo Officers will provide guidance to the PP Team in terms of UNDP methodology and practices, oversight in PP Team assemblage, access to translation, editorial, and printing services;
- UNDP/Kosovo and the UNDP/RBEC/Bratislava will provide additional training sessions for local analysts from the whole region, targeting writing and analytical skills;
- Close methodological and bias supervision will be provided by the international Consultant.

6.3. Political Risks - as the situation in Kosovo is highly politicized, some political bias might be reflected in the PP analysis. To avoid such bias, UNDP/Kosovo will provide a measure of quality control over final products.

5 Assessment of Outputs

The Public Pulse team contracted one professional Evaluator to evaluate the overall implementation of the PPP 2010-2013. According to this report, the project undoubtedly contributed to the evidence based public debate on relevant policy issues in Kosovo. The reports were a necessary tool to permanently measure the performance of public institutions and provide the media, civil society and general public with a credible instrument of public advocacy and pressure. In specific terms, the reports and other PP research products fed the intellectual, academic and professional debate and argumentation regarding specific public policy issues in Kosovo. In addition, it helped state institutions develop a sense of responsiveness towards public demand.

The Public Pulse reports gained a considerable reputation among different stakeholders. The reports and their findings are used and quoted in academic papers, published in international journals. In addition, many school thesis (MA and PhD) of international students researching about a specific issue in Kosovo refer to Public Pulse findings, especially when providing background information about the political, economic and security situation in Kosovo. Regarding media, the reports are quoted both by Kosovar media (electronic and print) and international news agencies. Several Kosovo think-tanks use Public Pulse reports in their policy papers, either as background information to their analysis or to back certain positions and policy options that they advocate for. There is an increasing use of Public Pulse reports and

findings by international organizations as well, among which: International Crisis Groups, International Policy and Leadership Institute, Freedom House, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, IKV PAX Christi, European Center for Minority Issues and others. There are evidences that Kosovo state institutions do also refer to Public Pulse reports, an example being the Annual Report of the Ombudsperson. ¹

6 Overall impact of the Project

With regards to meeting its main objectives and two sub-objectives, the project has had an impact on increasing communication between public and institutions. It is evident that state institutions do follow the reports as a credible source of information regarding their public rating and support. Although the overall impact of this project is difficult to be measured, it is believed that the Public Pulse products, drawing also on the legacy of Early Warning System previously, is considered that the project undoubtedly contributed to the evidence based public debate on relevant policy issues in Kosovo. The reports were a necessary tool to permanently measure the performance of public institutions and provide the media, civil society and general public with a credible instrument of public advocacy and pressure. In specific terms, the reports fed the intellectual, academic and professional debate and argumentation regarding specific public policy issues in Kosovo. In addition, it helped state institutions develop a sense of responsiveness towards public demand.

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A clear evidence that comes out from the interviews is that project's findings influences and are used in the government's plans and policy making processes. Thus, the reports are considered to be a source for the general information and they enjoy a considerable level of credibility; general indicators suggest that the reports are used by: media, think-tanks, non-governmental

¹ Detailed Report of PP Project Performance – is also available for the donor and other interested to read it.

organizations, state institutions, international organizations, students and scholars; reports offer a credible picture on the political, economic and security situation; reports that are considered similar to Public Pulse are not considered replications, but rather an opportunity to compare data; methodology of reports is generally considered a credible one.

One of the important impacts is also the fact that local NGO's and think-tanks replicated Public Pulse methodology for producing different reports and research products. Additionally, Public Pulse products are used regarding the monitoring and evaluation of UNDP's programme and projects, for drafting of the Common Development Plan of UN Kosovo Team, development of new Projects within UNDP etc. Also it is considered that the PPP contributed to increase of accountability and evaluation culture, participatory democratic process as well as bridging the gap between the governing structures and citizens.

Whereas since 2010 PP produced and published

- Six Fast Facts documents produced and published
- Six Public Pulse Reports produced and published
- Five Action Paper documents prepared and published
- More than 9,100 people interviewed
- More than 250 people participated in focus groups discussions
- About 100 experts contributed to the PP research products
- More than 15 public meetings and press conferences were held
- Targeted trainings for governmental institutions

7 Unforeseen/Unpredicted Results/Impacts

It is important to note that during past years the project was approached by different public institutions to provide capacity development in research, analysis and follow-up actions based on statistical data. In this regard, although not planned the project team has worked substantially with different stakeholders in Kosovo to develop their capacities for informed decision making processes. Additionally, experience of our project is used as bases for establishment of similar projects in other countries. Presentations on methodology, approach and lessons learned provided to Tajikistan, Georgia, Macedonia, Latin America, East Timor etc. Use of data by Academia and scholars for development of thesis on institution building, democratization and sustainable development. Use of data and indicators by international organizations for the assessment of the situation in Kosovo and for the evaluation of international presence in Kosovo, for example presentations on the perceptions on the role of EULEX in Kosovo and satisfaction with the work of EULEX in pre-deployment training for EULEX staff.

8 Lessons Learned

Project provided an essential analytical tool for development of democratic policies in Kosovo. During this phase the project also worked on building up the visibility and the credibility of the reports as well as Action Paper documents through coordinated dissemination and communication strategy. This process was also facilitated through a set of meetings with government authorities to sensitize them to different issues through direct presentations of the Report's findings and recommendations to ministry and other public institutions officials. They also gained information about usefulness of PP Reports and Action Paper documents. An evaluation conducted during this phase showed that our Reports were highly valued products and useful to the work of ministries, NGOs and the media. Direct presentations proved to be a good advocacy tool. The project also introduced new ways of presenting data to stakeholders in the form of direct presentations to government ministries as well as through info-graphics, inter-active charts etc.

The project contributed to strengthen the capacities of local leadership in using the PP in policy design and implementation. The Action Papers contained follow-up actions for addressing the specific issues. The project organized follow-up discussions to review progress of actions identified in the action paper by the selected institution. The PPP cooperated in the preparation of the Action Paper documents with the following institutions:

1. Kosovo Judicial Council
2. Association of Professional Journalists of Kosovo,
3. Municipality of Prizren
4. Ministry of European Integration
5. Ministry of Health

The process ensured complementary analytical capacity development of targeted institutions for informed decisions-making process. Through the discussion of data from the research with the officials from Kosovo institutions, the project aimed to develop confidence and communication between public and Kosovo institutions. Based on the experience in last three years (respectively 11 years) the project has developed a user-friendly presentation of both data and indicators from opinion as well as conclusions and recommendations from the focus group meetings. In this regard the project will continue with this practice in the future. It important to note that during past years the project was approached by different public institutions to provide capacity development in research, analysis and follow-up actions based on statistical data. In this regard although not planned the project team has worked substantially with different stakeholders in Kosovo to develop their capacities for informed decision making processes.

9 Conclusions, recommendations and opportunities for follow up

According to the Project's evaluation report, Public Pulse is a unique project in Kosovo. In addition, it derives from a previous permanent tool for measuring public opinion, making the project a story of permanence and sustainability. Public Pulse reports are credible sources of information in regards to the public satisfaction with the work of state institutions. The reports and their findings receive certain media attention, and at the same time become references of the think-tanks. By measuring permanently the performance of public institutions, Public Pulse triggered greater public advocacy and pressure, as the reports fed the intellectual, academic and professional debate and argumentation regarding specific public policy issues in the country.

The project so far has produced six Public Pulse reports and three Action Paper documents (two AP documents are due to be published by the second half of 2013). The project activities were carried out in timely manner and respecting the Project Document and annual work plans of the project. Local experts were regularly consulted and asked for feedback on the survey findings. The process of selection of target institutions for Action Papers was careful, professional and deliberate. The project products were launched in public events, receiving wide media attention and coverage, which helped in maintaining project's visibility and credibility. From a project management perspective, Public Pulse is considered a positive example.

There are clear indicators that the Public Pulse reports and their findings have equipped different institutions and reports with credible and systematic data on the pertinent issues over the last decade. Considering its credibility deriving from the professional research work and the high profile of its institutional authorship, Public Pulse has a potential of moving to another stage of operation and impact. The project has all necessary preconditions and resources to move from a source that feeds other reports and analysis, to the triggering force of new research and analysis. In parallel, and in accordance with the project rationale, Public Pulse should move from the early warning to a more responsive approach to current developments. Both new approaches will improve the actuality of Public Pulse reports, a permanent tool for increasing impact.

Although the project itself makes a story of sustainability, there are few adjustments and modifications suggested by the independent Project Evaluator, as well as considered as necessary for a greater impact in the upcoming phases of the project. Public Pulse products are valuable source of information and there is a general consensus on the relevance and necessity of the project. However, there is also a need to address certain aspects of the project. The following recommendations are thought to provide a path to overcoming current challenges:

- Continue with the practice of adding new questions/issues in the questionnaire that would deepen the understanding of the situation in the areas covered and include areas and issues that are left out. The following issues were mentioned during the interviews

for this evaluation report: Media, Education, Health, Environment, Foreign policy, Workers' rights, dialogue and agreement between Kosovo and Serbia, privatization of public enterprises (PTK), north and escalation of security situation,

- A reactive tool to current developments, either by including new questions to the regular biannual survey or designing ad-hoc surveys in between reporting periods for the specific political, economic and security developments. A greater public and institutional attention could be attracted by making Public Pulse speak reactively to current developments. Such a reactive tool could build on the regular reports, the early warning tool, and would suggest concrete options for overcoming a respective challenge,
- Continuing the production and publication of materials that would keep reports actual during the period between two reports (op-eds, comparative visualized data, policy briefs, etc.), which are to be published through public discussion events. Public Pulse reports receive occasional publicity by the media and public. The period in between should be filled with alternative publication tools (such as the info graphics and op-eds that were published so far) and will maintain project's publicity and consequently raise the opportunities for impact,
- A new PR and dissemination strategy (existing reports and new products) that will target the stakeholders more effectively, as well as engage them permanently in the research, analysis and publication of project products. The strategy should include tools of reaching out to the public (several of interviewed claimed not receiving reports timely and regularly) and a clear frame of implementing them (social media channels). The strategy would foster the recognition of the project by the public at large, in addition to the conventional stakeholders, who are already familiar with the project and use its products,
- Production of a retrospective report of the PP surveys (formerly EWS) that would encompass the ten years of permanent data collection and assessment of public opinion on the pertinent issues in the country. The report would look at the dynamics, trends and fluctuations of public perceptions during a decade and could be followed by a numerous publication products: the comprehensive retrospective report, sectoral reports, policy analysis, data visualization, etc,²

² Detailed Public Pulse Project Evaluation Report – is also available for the donor and other interested to read it