Leveraging technology and innovation to advance accountability and public services delivery during Covid-19 in Europe and Central Asia

Beyond Recovery: Towards 2030
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By the time of this publication more than nine months have passed since Covid-19 has been declared as a global pandemic by the WHO and 67 million people worldwide already tested positive for this virus. It is estimated that coronavirus will cause first ever increase in global poverty since 1998 as millions of people are losing their jobs. Governments across the world were put to the test to cope with the devastating consequences of the pandemic. Covid-19 is not only a public healthcare crisis, but it is also a governance crisis. The pandemic had negatively affected public services delivery, transparency in emergency procurements, including medical supplies, access to vital public information, effective communication between public institutions, administration of justice, prevention of gender-based violence and social protection of the most vulnerable population, amongst many other state functions.

During the Covid-19 pandemic the importance of digital platforms have gained a totally new dimension as they are being transformed from an “add-on” in to a “new normal” and a must in almost every segment of state apparatus. With “stay-home, stay-safe” requirement and social distancing rules, governments have been forced to re-think the ways in which services are safely delivered to the citizens and at the same time ensure transparency and credibility of its actions. Governments that have invested in the development of digital ecosystems in the pre-pandemic period, have been advancing on digital transformation journey relatively easier. In hindsight, 2019 was the year when for the first time in the history more than a half of the world went online. Moreover, the pandemic has accelerated this process even faster with 2 years’ worth of digital transformation happening in just 2 months.

Coronavirus pandemic has weakened the government’s core functions particularly in two ways. Firstly, it has challenged a proper functioning of the state machinery and the delivery of public services; new human resources policies in order to manage civil servants working remotely; dis-
bursement of salaries to the public servants vis-a-vis the decrease in the overall economic growth and prioritization of social protection measures; and most importantly, limited space and capacity for the delivery of public services during the lockdowns and curfew regimes. The pandemic has made it apparent that the governments must invest much more in the development of e-governance in order to be prepared for any similar scenarios in the future. Secondly, the pandemic has made public administration even more vulnerable to corruption. Coronavirus pandemic has opened new doors for corruption as lockdowns and the absence of business contingency plans, has resulted in the weakening of state’s financial monitoring and investigation role. Corruption has manifested itself in various segments, such as, in public procurement, granting various permits during curfew regimes, distribution of economic stimulus packages to the private companies and allocation of cash transfers to the citizens, securing proper medical care/hospital beds for the patients with Covid-19 infection. Also, with the decrease in economic development, women are more likely to lose their jobs and become more vulnerable to corruption than men.

In Europe and Central Asia region, which traditionally has a high e-governance development track record, UNDP COs have assisted host governments and civil society organizations to quickly set-up various digital platforms ranging from Covid-19 related public expenditure transparency portals, e-learning websites for civil servants, Covid-19 hackathons (“Coronathons”), mobile one-stop-shops, chat-bots for responding to citizens’ requests, doctor-whistleblower channels, empowering civil society, including young women to build regional youth networks, supporting anti-corruption investigations, and many others. Below we have put together some of the good practices, which we believe can further facilitate knowledge-sharing across the region and beyond and spark new ideas on how to prevent corruption and ensure effective delivery of public services during the pandemic.
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GEORGIA

Advancing public services during Covid-19

Rustavi City Hall launched AI (artificial intelligence) powered civil servant - C Bot - Rustavi Chatbot for Municipal Services giving access to information on municipal services to citizens remotely 24/7. The chatbot was developed by the Rustavi Municipality and Rustavi Innovations Hub with UNDP support to respond to the new needs brought by Covid-19 pandemic including the latest updates on the spread of the virus, connecting volunteers with the vulnerable groups, listing delivery, medical and other services set up to meet the immediate needs of people. Citizens can receive frequently sought information on the other municipal services, like municipal social programs and the documents required to obtain them, information on local fees and municipal ownership, military conscription, procedures for obtaining construction permits, now consolidated into a single database.
UNDP, in partnership with the Data Exchange Agency, the National Public Registry Agency and the Public Service Development Agency has supported the integration of 36 new electronic services into the Unified Service Portal, www.my.gov.ge, enabling citizens to receive critical services without having to leave their homes. These services include online applications for IDs and passports, birth certificates, change of name, registering new businesses and land titles, etc.

With UNDP support, contactless sensor buttons in the elevators of the Public Service Hall (one-stop-shop public services delivery agency) and NCDC were installed to help prevent the spread of the virus and will serve as a useful preventive mechanism during the current epidemic and beyond the Covid-19 to avoid contraction of other possible viruses.

UNDP is providing the Parliament of Georgia with annual access to the Cisco WebEx platform to enable parliamentary work to continue remotely on issues requiring broad consultation and participation by different stakeholders, including on electoral and other legislative reforms. Despite the lifting of the State of Emergency and related restrictions, the Parliament continues to collaborate with partners and stakeholders online to minimize Covid-19 risks. The online platform is also used by the Parliament’s Training Centre to facilitate distance learning courses and internship programs.
Outbreak of Covid-19 revealed that public institutions are not immune from experiencing a disruption to their usual business during crisis situations. This was also relevant for the Parliament of Georgia where strict lockdown measures and social distancing rules had an immense impact on parliamentary work. To minimize risks in future, and based on the lessons learnt, UNDP is supporting the Parliament of Georgia in developing Business Continuity Management (BCM) system and capacities to ensure the Parliament is able to respond more effectively to similar challenges in future and continue to exercise its powers.
E-learning platforms

UNDP Georgia supports the Civil Service Bureau to develop an online e-learning platform for civil servants to serve as a ‘one-stop-shop’ for civil servants’ professional development, coupled with enhancing the existing electronic HR Management System in response to the current needs arisen due to the Covid-19 situation. Additionally, UNDP Georgia has been supporting its key Government partners in enhancing their telecommuting tools by supplying them with Zoom licenses. UNDP supports Georgia Red Cross Society (GRCS) to develop an online learning platform for teams in professional home care as well as for informal caregivers in community-based home care. The training delivered through the online platform will ensure effective delivery of home care services to people in need during the health crisis and beyond. UNDP also supported the adaptation of the mobile application for GRCS home care program management and monitoring to ensure live tracking of services required and delivered to the people in need.

UNDP has also supported development of a new e-learning platform on cyber-security www.elearning.gov.ge, which enables teachers and students to be better equipped with knowledge related to cyber-hygiene. It is also crucial to also leave no one behind and that is why UNDP has trained Public Service Hall personnel on the sensitivity issues related to delivery of public services to people with disabilities.

UNDP supports National Center for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC) in establishing an e-learning platform to provide doctors, nurses and administrative staff with an opportunity to attend training courses and certification programmes, communicate, exchange experience and receive practical advice from NCDC experts. The e-learning platform will operate through desktop and mobile applications, with a built-in chatbot and search engine, allowing for real-time consultations and exchange.
Empowering civic activism

As a result of cooperation between UNDP and civil society sector, information platform was created for four high mountainous municipalities. The platform currently updates citizens/farmers/entrepreneurs with Covid-19 related prevention measures via text messages. It serves the purpose of apprizing the same interest groups of their rights to engage in participatory policymaking at the local level and providing guidance and useful information to foster local economic development, including entrepreneurial and agricultural services.
Covid-19 related M&E platform

For an uninterrupted and effective operations during the Covid-19 pandemic, UNDP Georgia in partnership with the Data Exchange Agency has been assisting the Government of Georgia to develop and launch an electronic M&E platform to integrate the whole-of-government approach to national level policy making into the routines of the line ministries. The system will serve as a unified coordination platform for policy monitoring and evaluation and will be linked with the existing e-platform on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Dispute resolution initiatives

UNDP Georgia has supported the launch of two online dispute resolution initiatives for disputes triggered by the complications of Covid-19. The initiative carried out in cooperation with Mediators Association of Georgia will focus on labor disputes, while another - implemented by Georgian International Arbitration Center and mediation organization Resolve - will handle disputes arising out of commercial dealings. Online mediation and facilitation services are available to eligible companies/individuals. As the provided support is almost fully subsidized the eligible parties can access those services free of charge.
KAZAKHSTAN

Supporting public services

Kazakhstan has been assisting to strengthen the Government’s capacity to deliver public services while telecommuting in these extraordinary circumstances. The initiative has three major outcomes which are (1) Socio-economic impact analysis (SEIA) to assess the direct socio-economic impact of the crisis and its spillover effects on the most vulnerable groups of Kazakhstan population; (2) Employment generation measures for vulnerable groups with the proposed employment toolkit as a complex solution including psycho-social support, mentoring and orientation in consultation with local authorities and employment centers; and (3) Government business continuity support to ensure effective and efficient public service delivery for the most vulnerable groups through enhancing capacity of public servants to work in telecommuting mode and ensure uninterrupted delivery of services to people and timely react on emerging needs and requests. The main national partner is the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection (MLSP) as beneficiary of the results with other line institutions included for sector work. For technical implementation, UNDP has partnered with national experts and will tap into its global policy network including regional advisors. Digital tools have been deployed for data collection purposes.
Building capacity of civil society

To increase the transparency and accountability in the work of government agencies, during 2 months of quarantine UNDP CO enhanced capacity of 200 civil society representatives in assessing the quality of public services based on methodology developed by UNDP. The methodology allows for the complex assessment of services delivered through different means including one-stop shops, central and local government bodies and E-Government platform. As pandemic put on agenda the immediate need for use of digital services it also detected a low digital literacy among population. With having had over 80% digitalized public services in Kazakhstan the E-gov call center has received 12 500 000 calls during 2 months of quarantine. UNDP has enrolled 450 volunteers that will work in the regions and assist to increase the digital literacy of the users of public services and decrease the workload of one-stop shops during the next 6 months.

Corruption risk assessment in the health sector

In Kazakhstan UNDP supported external analysis of corruption risks in the health sector organizations to prevent from fraud and unfair distribution of medical supplies, conducted sociological research with Transparency Kazakhstan on corruption perception to also study public perception during the pandemic.
Supporting anti-corruption investigation

Database for Intelligence Based Investigations of Corruption, Organized Crime and Financial Crime: investigations require in person contact and securing physical evidence from various institutions, which given the restrictions in place because of the pandemic, risks significantly slowing down cases. As part of our efforts to help Kosovo’s investigative authorities to combat corruption and recover stolen assets at a time when human contact is limited and the police’s resources are extremely extended, **UNDP Kosovo has developed an online platform to track from their desks any discrepancies between declared income and expenditures made by Kosovo’s citizens and generate red flags for amounts above 30,000 EUR for movable property and 60,000 EUR for immovable property.** This tool was only introduced two months ago and it has already identified hundreds of cases of immense discrepancies in declared wealth and ownership of high value assets. It is built as a standalone tool within the Tax Administration system that gathers and analyzes data from the civil registry, business registry, vehicle registry, and customs. UNDP is now working with the authorities to also include the cadastral registry, banks and transactions occurred through notary services.
Enabling Court translation in times of pandemic

Accurate interpretation and translation are vital to ensure a fair trial. It is essential that courts remain functional and accessible to all communities especially in times of pandemic. UNDP Kosovo, through UN programmatic funds, seized the Covid-19 crisis as an opportunity to innovate in its rule of law work. The organization shifted its capacity development support initiatives from “physical” to online trainings thereby successfully adopting to new circumstances. The online training contributed in advancing and harmonizing the legal translation and interpretation throughout Kosovo courts. Specifically, the training benefited 30 translators from all Courts to develop their skills and competences on areas, such as: translation impartiality and confidentiality; legal terminology; as well as translation and interpretation techniques in court hearings. The court translators, whilst working remotely, enhanced their interpretation skills through tailored mock trials where each participant took a different role, that of a judge, prosecutor, attorney, defendant, and translator. Other participants acted as jury members and shared opinions on the quality of translation. Read more here.
Young women go digital to build regional youth networks

The drive of innovative and tech-savvy youth during Covid-19 has been a blessing in disguise for Kosovo with its youth-dominated population. Hundreds of young men and women turned their heads to an outstanding idea brought forward by 3 young women, who were part of the 9-month mentorship program of the joint project in Kosovo funded by Secretary General’s Peacebuilding Fund. Together, they launched a virtual series of discussions on a regional level titled “Walking Through the Western Balkans” with a youth group gathered to tackle topics of shared interests and concerns, such as, family relations, youth engagement, the education-employment conundrum etc. The initiative aimed at responding to Covid-19 lockdown by fostering togetherness and transcended it by resulting in the establishment of a solid network of youth from the Western Balkans. It goes without saying that these young women have proven their leadership skills in that they managed to cultivate a sense of sameness in diversity and shared responsibility among youth from the region: “We’re talking about multiple places, but it sounds like we’re talking about the same place,” said Gent Beqiri from North Macedonia. Investing in young women’s agency and leadership by including them in the design and implementation of youth-focused projects, has been one of the priorities of the joint UN project in Kosovo “Empowering Youth for a Peaceful, Prosperous and Sustainable Future in Kosovo”, implemented jointly by UNDP-UNV, UN Women and UNICEF.
Empowering doctors to blow a whistle

UNDP Moldova supported the Ombudsman Office in setting up a system of protection of the whistleblowers reporting on the irregularities affecting the public interest in the health system in the Covid-19 context. The online portal on the Ombudsman’s official website where the requests for protection could be submitted by the whistleblowers was updated, and an e-learning module on whistleblowing and the protection of whistleblowers by the Ombudsman is being developed. On May 6 a public awareness campaign on social media to encourage medical staff to act as whistleblowers, to inform that reports on irregularities can be considered as the whistleblowing and that the protection from the Ombudsman could be requested in line with the 2018 Law on whistleblowers, was launched. The campaign also aims to discourage any revenge actions on medical staff from their employers. Video can be viewed here.

UNDP also supported development of an e-learning module on whistleblowing and the protection of whistleblowers as part of the official website of the People’s Advocate Office. The platform is equally meant for employees from public and private sectors. The users will learn how to disclose illegal practices and the peculiarities of whistleblowing in private and public sectors, what illegalities may be disclosed, as well as the protection guarantees for those warning about corruption and irregularities in the institutions in which they work. At the same time, the application provides guidance to employers from public and private institutions, offering them information about the duties and competences of institutions involved in the whistleblowing mechanism operation. Alongside the entire content of the www.ombudsman.md portal, the respective module is adjusted to the needs of persons with visual impairments.
Hackathon on Covid-19

Amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, UNDP Montenegro organized an online Hackathon (www.coronathon.me), aimed to offer solutions to help the country to quickly adapt, respond and recover. To fast-track this process, it relied on tech-savvy geeks and collective intelligence to come to the fore – and join hands in solidarity to hack the crisis. The Hackathon aimed to catalyze solutions in the following categories: Protect lives and public health, Accelerate recovery, Ensure sustainable future. From over 100 registered/proposed ideas, 15 best ideas/teams were identified and currently several initiatives in education, faster recovery of SMEs, unemployment, medical and healthcare services are being implemented with UNDP support.

OVER 100 REGISTERED/PROPOSED IDEAS
**Blood Donations platform for Blood Transfusion Institute of Montenegro**

This web-based platform, with mobile applications aims to connect blood donors with the transfusion system, providing easily accessible data and exchange of information about which blood type is in demand and where the donors can provide it. It helps ensuring minimal personal interactions among donors and medical staff during Covid-19 risks. The app also includes an emergency alert to donors and could help bridge the gap and tackle the shortage of certain blood types.

**You Learn**

The dream team (engineers and university professors) created an online platform (YouTube for Learning) for interactive educational content and developmental games, as well as online testing. It could be used as addtion to regular school education program, or simply to entertain kids.

**Trguj.me (Buy.me)**

http://youlearn.dlabac.com

This online shop and virtual marketplace are described by the authors as “Montenegrin Amazon”. Its allure lies in promotion of domestic brands and local produce, linking supply with demand, with the potential to boost the economy during and after the pandemic. Plus, it has a feature of automated digital marketing.
E-services for citizens – Online enrolment of children to kindergartens and elementary schools

UNDP has supported Ministry of Public Administration and Ministry of Education on the journey to complete digitalization of the enrolment of children into schools and kindergartens. According to the data over 85% of children were enrolled via this e-service in the first week of system deployment. The backbone of this service is the Interoperability platform (IP), which enables reliance on standardized data from administrative registers and exchange of that data among state institutions. Due to automated exchange of data via IP between Ministry of Education, Ministry of interior and Ministry of social welfare, parents did not have to go to counters of these institutions to get paper documents, but they enrolled their kids in schools and kindergartens from the comfort of their home.

Medical equipment and supplies inventory platform

Ministry of Health in coordination with UNDP developed a web-based centralized ERP system for monitoring the movement/distribution of consumables and equipment throughout health care facilities in Montenegro with reporting utilizing AI components.
“Be Safe” application

UNDP has also supported the Ministry of the Interior to develop a mobile phone app “Be Safe”, which enables victims of violence to reach help at just one click. A message with the phone number and geolocation is received by the National SOS Helpline for victims of domestic violence. Their activists will immediately contact the person who tapped the help button. Professional staff are well trained and educated for acting in emergency situations related to violence, while all the data are safe and confidential. Application is available for Android users and can be downloaded from Google PlayStore and AppStore. Application also provides user with additional option to insert any other number (other women’s organization working in Montenegro on GVB or someone else) that she would like to alert about her exposure to violence/it does not have to be National SOS line for women victims of violence. This is also to assure women’s autonomy. Application is simple digital solution that operates at the lower level of data exchange than WhatsApp or Viber. The data as of June 2020 shows following user statistics: 5,160 Android users downloaded the app; 240 iOS users user downloaded the app; 68 direct SOS alerts.

NUMBER OF DOWNLOADS

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<th>Operating System</th>
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SOS ALERTS

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<td>68</td>
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NORTH MACEDONIA

Municipal Councils closer to citizens through Facebook and YouTube

UNDP works to increase the accountability, transparency, and inclusivity of North Macedonia’s 81 municipalities, including empowering citizen participation in municipal council sessions. However, the Covid-19 pandemic made it difficult to hold such sessions in person, especially with a large audience. UNDP helped 13 municipalities overcome this challenge by installing livestreaming equipment, which enables citizens to follow and participate in regular council sessions through Facebook and YouTube without any of the public health risks associated with in-person participation. In the upcoming period, three additional municipalities will be equipped with this capability.
E-learning tool for municipal councils

UNDP North Macedonia supports municipal councils in building their capabilities through continuous learning, skills development, and networking. One digital tool developed for this purpose was essential to the continuation of this process under the limitations for in-person learning brought on by Covid-19. Namely, UNDP developed e-learning platform, which is available to all 1,347 municipal councillors in the country, allowing them to remotely access relevant trainings and share documents between municipalities. Since the peak of the pandemic, more than 20% of all municipal councillors in the country are actively using the platform to access learning materials and information the latest pandemic response measures enacted by the central government. The platform includes 11 training modules on topics related to finance management, transparency and accountability, as well as a training module on crisis management and leadership during the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as other disasters at the local level.
SERBIA

Platform “Be a Volunteer”

UNDP Serbia developed a new government platform Be a volunteer, in partnership with the Office for IT and eGovernment. Individuals who wish to assist their local communities can register through this platform. Within the first three days of its launch, over 1,600 volunteers were approved and ready to serve. Today, there are over 7,000 thousand of them. Local administrations and emergency councils are now matching them with existing calls for assistance from the elderly through the government’s dedicated phone number. A unique Call Centre responds to all citizen COVID-19-related enquiries and is linked to the volunteer platform.
UNDP Serbia helped the Government of Serbia to consolidate over 90 tools and services on a platform called Digital solidarity. This platform offers entertainment, educational materials, plays, exhibitions and concerts free online from companies and cultural institutions.

UNDP Serbia helped Office from IT and eGovernment to launch the open data sets regarding the daily number of citizens in self-isolation, infected citizens, no of tested citizens, hospitalized and number of people who died from Covid-19. www.covid19.data.gov.rs
In Ukraine, UNDP in coordination with WHO developed a web-based dashboard for the Prime-Minister’s Office to coordinate and map all public procurement needs related to Covid-19 and analyse their coverage by development partners. This platform currently is not in a public domain but in the near future it will be released widely.
E-learning platform for the Parliament

UNDP supports key government institutions and the Parliament to improve their telecommuting capacities. For example, UNDP has developed a course with the National Agency on Civil Service on the specificities of work of the public institutions under the quarantine and assisted the local authorities with procurement of Zoom licences.

The online learning platform is being developed for the Secretariat of the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) of Ukraine aiming at providing capacity development courses as a part of implementation of the Human Resources Management Strategy of the Secretariat.
Mobile public service centers

Women and men are facing problems in receiving quality public services, especially in remote settlements along the line of armed contact. UNDP has already delivered 4 mobile administrative service centers to target communities; 12 more to go in the following 1.5 years. These mobile centers will also provide services to the most vulnerable groups of people, including those who reside in NGCA. Also, 130 remote workplaces for better provision of administrative services are planned to be established in target communities of Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts (53 of them are already installed).

Free legal aid

As representatives of vulnerable groups are at greater risk of being left behind in the COVID-19 response, UNDP will be supporting a provision of online and offline legal support to the representatives of vulnerable groups and hard to reach population.
Civil society and public procurement monitoring

To mitigate corruption risks, UNDP is supporting NGOs to monitor ProZorro public procurement online portal during Covid-19 crisis. This is relevant to the Eastern Ukraine only; such monitoring is supported by the Recovery and Peacebuilding Programme.

Also, UNDP is providing support to representatives of medical institutions in proper implementation of “Covid-19”-related legal provisions (Manual of public procurement in health care is on the final stage of elaboration).
Access to Covid-19-related information

As for the access to information, UNDP Ukraine has conducted an analysis of the public information shared by the local authorities on the Covid-19, safe behavior and protective measures. On 24-30 March 2020 the regional network conducted a survey of access to public information in all oblasts of Ukraine. Regional coordinators assessed the work of 74 holders of public information, specifically Oblast Councils, City Councils at the Oblast level, and Oblast State Administrations. During the monitoring survey, they sent 74 requests for access to public information and analyzed the replies. They also checked 74 official websites of local authorities and filled in nearly 150 evaluation forms. The results of the survey are available here.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, with the support of UNDP and the British Embassy in Ukraine, has established an interactive online map showing current travel restrictions in place around the world due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The map, available at the link https://tripadvisor.mfa.gov.ua/ (currently in test mode) shows Ukrainians which countries they can travel to, as the world gradually reopens its borders following the outbreak of the novel coronavirus.
Corruption reporting application

UNDP Anticorruption Project has supported the creation of mobile application to empower citizens to report any corruption allegations they face, including those connected with health sector and pandemic relief operations. Besides reporting, it allows citizen to monitor statistics of corruption by regions, sectors and government agencies. The platform will be managed by the newly created Anticorruption Agency and it is planned to be launched in December 2020.
Based on the UNDP proposal and the subsequent official request from the Government of Uzbekistan, the UNDP project “Preventing Corruption through Effective, Accountable and Transparent Institutions in Uzbekistan” (PCEAT) plans this year to implement (introduce) Anticorruption Management system (compliance control) in the Ministry of Health (MoH) and in overall health care system (with sectoral risk assessment of the core business processes, including procurement, storing and distribution of medical supplies, disaster and emergency preparedness). This going to be a timely intervention fully aligned with the new UNDP strategic shift. The Project contracted the well-known audit and consulting company - KPMG (Italy) for this intervention and currently kicked off activities online.

The legal framework and the methodology of the intervention will base on:

- The Uzbekistan legislation;
- International Standards (UNCAC, OECD Istanbul Plan of Action);
- ISO 37001:2016;
- ISO 19600:2014;
- OECD 12 Principles of Anticorruption Compliance;
- Transparency International 6 Principles of Anticorruption Compliance.

The implementation will include four phases:

- Analysis of the current status of the Anticorruption system in MoH (6 weeks)
- Improvement/Development of Anticorruption measures and procedures (processes) – (6 weeks)
- Implementation of Anticorruption standards, measures and procedures in the management system (5 weeks)
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of the implemented anticorruption processes and procedures (4 weeks).

Between the 3d and 4th phases, there is a 6 months period to allow new changes to adapt and gain sustainability. In the middle of this period, we will contract a duly authorized (certified) Certification Company to audit and certificate the Anticorruption management System in MoH according to ISO 37001:2016 – ‘Anti-bribery Management System’, which will be valid for three years with confirmation of compliance every 6 months and ongoing consultancy support. The latter should ensure further sustainability of the anticorruption system and corporate cultural shift.
Based on the innovative solution, developed in Azerbaijan, the municipality of Turkestan established an easy-to-use system of online registration of entry, exit and movement of citizens during the Covid-19 lockdown. By submitting their queries through mobile application, website or call-center, citizen of Turkestan, an ancient city in the south of Kazakhstan, can leave their homes without obstruction to purchase food, medicine and daily necessities; get medical check-ups or treatment, visit their workplaces or participate in the funeral procession. This has become possible thanks to the Astana Civil Service Hub, which reoriented its peer-to-peer learning alliances to bring in digital solutions and innovation from the Hub’s participating countries to respond to the new pandemic. The full news story is available here.

Astana Civil Service Hub launched the Virtual Alliance of Practitioners aimed at assisting governments in combating the global Covid-19 pandemic. The Virtual Alliance is a digital platform, accumulating existing research, innovative solutions and technologies of the participating countries and partners of the ACSH. Materials, received within the interaction with participants of existing Peer-to-Peer Learning Alliances, are aimed at improving the efficiency of public administration, the quality of public services delivered during the pandemic, as well as eliminating its consequences in the post-crisis period. More information is here.