



Thematic  
analysis/diagnosis:  
**Information &  
communications  
technology**

## Executive Summary

The Republic of North Macedonia has not yet adopted the ICT Strategy, which covers the period 2020-2025. However, the main document for the development of broadband networks is the National Operational Broadband Plan, which specifies the targets of the country until the year 2029. It almost corresponds to the targets of the Digital Decade 2030 of the European Union, with which the conditions and goals can be compared.

The National Operational Broadband Plan (adopted in 2019) needs to be revised in order to ensure that certain corrections are made, which would give new momentum in the area of financing the National transport fiber-optic network in the country. Moreover, after the National Strategy for ICT and the action plan will be adopted, part of the competencies that now belong to various institutions, such as the Ministry of Information Society and Administration, Agency for Electronic Communications, Public Enterprise National Broadcasting, etc. should be transferred to the Digitalization Agency. According to the Network Readiness Index, North Macedonia is ranked 64th (2021 report) out of 130 countries analyzed in the overall ranking. Its main force is Impact. The biggest room for improvement, however, concerns technology. Although most of the territory of the country is connected to the Internet (via so-called broadband technology), the country lags behind the ultra-fast Internet of over 100Mbps compared to the countries of the European Union, and to some extent lags behind the high-speed Internet (between 30-100Mbps).

The country is preparing for the implementation of 5G technology in one city (by 2023), which means that the country will catchup with the EU countries where this technology is already in use in many countries. In the course of 2022, contracts should be signed for 5G by the telecommunication operators. Digital services are the driver of economic growth, reduction of corruption and elimination of waiting at counters. However, the development of electronic services is slow, and also during the development not enough care is paid to the fact that all services should be provided on a single National portal for electronic services. The second problem is the identification of the citizens when creating a user account. Electronic identifications should facilitate this process greatly. There is need for greater promotion and raising awareness of the population about the existence of electronic services, and the Government should adopt a conclusion to close the counters for all services that exist online.

Digital skills are the key to the implementation of the digital transformation and the Government's digitalization program. Therefore, it is necessary to create staff, as professionals who will fill the vacancies for IT staff within several public institutions, as well as the administration itself to be trained in the use of IT systems. It is also necessary for the population to get used to the digital trends, e-commerce, e-exchange, interoperability, use of electronic documents, etc. To that end, a significant increase in investment in cyber security is needed at the same time. North Macedonia has been the subject of cyber-attacks on multiple occasions in the past and it should be expected that they may increase in the next period.