

Open Government Analysis of the Ministry of  
Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (2023)

Proposals for improvements to the current situation

# OPEN GOVERNMENT ANALYSIS OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION (2023)

## ABOUT THE PUBLICATION

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## AUTHORS

Dafina Olluri dhe Anita Selita

## LANGUAGE VERSIONS

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## INTRODUCTION

Data openness is an important process in decision-making and in creating connections between citizens and institutions. The Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MASHTI), as an institution, helps to improve the quality and transparency of the education system through data openness. MASHTI continuously contributes to the publication of data on school performance, student enrollment, educational infrastructure and student outcomes, helping citizens and institutions to better understand the main challenges and needs of the education system. This enables concrete steps to be taken to address problems within this institution.

Opening up data for Kosovo is a step forward in addressing the challenges of transparency and institutional accountability. This access to data in a simple and understandable way for citizens, not only by MESTI, but also by other state institutions, helps not only to inform citizens and engage young people, but also to ensure accountability, by creating the opportunity for them to express their opinions and suggestions in the decision-making process. This data enables citizens to assess whether regulations and policies are being implemented properly and to help improve them where necessary.

The Government of Kosovo is working to open up data and increase transparency, led by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI). Their efforts are part of the commitment to join the Open Government Partnership (OGP) initiative, with the aim of meeting international standards and encouraging active citizen participation. Kosovo has made important steps towards transparency and open governance. Efforts to include the Assembly in global initiatives such as OGP and the creation of collaborative platforms, such as the Parliamentary Transparency Forum, are evidence of the commitment to strengthen the connection between citizens and institutions. These initiatives aim to increase civic participation.

Through this paper, we plan to analyze the level of openness and transparency in the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) for the year 2024, using data from the Openness Index. This paper aims to provide a clear picture of data openness in this ministry, identify the challenges encountered, and suggest steps to improve open governance. Through this research, we want to contribute to improving transparency and accountability.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is based on the final 2024 data from the Regional Institutional Index, which analyzes the level of transparency and access to information of municipalities and ministries in Kosovo. The report focuses on key aspects such as the publication of budget documents, financial transparency, and the ability of citizens to access documents and other relevant information.

The study contains data collected from index reports, questionnaires developed with the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI), and documents provided by this ministry. In this paper, four fundamental principles were assessed: transparency, access to information, institutional integrity and citizen awareness. This assessment was carried out by analyzing such criteria as how easy it was for citizens to access official documents through the website, the quality of legal regulations for transparency, additional sources of public information provided by the institution and responses to questionnaires.

The research is focused only on the period of 2024, taking into account the progress in terms of transparency since 2023, when a preliminary report was developed by NED 3.0 and 4.0. Comparing data between these two years helps to identify achievements and remaining challenges, while the recommendations provided are based on the latest analysis.

## ACCESIBILITY

The principle of accessibility, as an essential part of MEST, aims to build a closer and more inclusive relationship between MESTI and citizens, including all stakeholders. According to this principle, official documents should be accessible and easy to find and read by citizens. One of the main goals is for citizens to not only be informed, but also have the opportunity to provide opinions and suggestions on educational policies and programs, helping MESTI to meet their needs and expectations.

During the year 2023-2024, MESTI has made progress in terms of transparency and accountability, increasing access to information and creating opportunities for a more open dialogue with citizens and interest groups. This is shown by the decrease in requests from MEST for access to documents since 2023. Based on the requests for access to documents, they fell from 55 in 2022 to 33 in 2023, reflecting the improvement in transparency and increased access to information since 2022.



MESTI also achieved a transparency achievement of 59% for the year 2023-2024. On the other hand, the publication of strategic plans and other documents, such as the Education Strategy 2022-2026, has served not only as a platform for citizens to contribute with their recommendations but has also shown progress in accountability. MEST has made progress in the field of transparency, as on their website MEST has a special communication channel so that citizens can address their requests and complaints directly to MEST. Also, MEST is working on drafting an information and communication strategy for 2025.

On the other hand, the Law on Access to Public Documents (No. 06/L-081) has been important for these efforts, obliging all public institutions to publish every official document. This law has improved transparency and accountability, creating an environment where citizens have more trust and opportunities for active involvement. In this regard, MEST has invested in training for staff and in improving digital platforms to make access easier and faster. However, one of the main challenges for MEST remains the fact that schools do not have independent budget codes, as financial management is carried out by municipalities. This system limits schools in publishing their expenditures, which makes it difficult to achieve full transparency at the level of local educational institutions.

## AWARNESS

In 2023, the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) of Kosovo took important steps to raise awareness in the field of education, emphasizing the importance of student welfare and environmental protection. In September 2023, MESTI signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the non-governmental organizations Vier Pforten Kosova and the Animal Rights Foundation, with the aim of promoting education on animal welfare and environmental protection in schools and extracurricular activities. This cooperation aims to raise awareness among the younger generations about the importance of environmental protection and the proper treatment of animals, including the issue of stray dogs (MEST).

In the same month, MESTI collaborated with the Kosovo Center for the Rehabilitation of Torture Survivors (KRRT) to improve mental health services for students in Pristina and Gjilan. The "Minds for Peace" project aims to increase the capacities of school psychologists and provide support to around 250 students, emphasizing the importance of an informed approach to trauma in the school environment (MEST).

These initiatives reflect MEST's commitment to integrating awareness into educational policies, promoting an educational environment that values student well-being and responsibility towards the environment.

## INTEGRITY

In 2023, the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MASHTI) had an integrity score of 69%. Compared to the previous year, 2024 saw several improvements and new measures taken by the institution. One of the most significant changes was the drafting and publication of a code of conduct for its officials on its official website, which clearly defines the expected behaviors for elected leaders, political staff and public servants. This step has helped address the lack of such a regulation that was highlighted in the 2023 report.

MESTI has also strengthened the asset declaration process, ensuring that officials' declarations are more accessible to the public, in accordance with the Law on Access to Public Documents and the Law on Personal Data Protection. This has increased the transparency and accountability of the institution's officials. Another important development has been the provision of training to officials on topics related to lobbying activities, conflicts of interest, anti-corruption efforts and whistleblowing. Through these training, MESTI has aimed to increase the awareness and skills of its staff to respond effectively to irregularities and to maintain higher ethical standards.

In terms of lobbying regulation, despite the fact that Kosovo still lacks a specific law regulating this activity, MESTI has taken steps to promote transparency in interactions with interest groups, thus strengthening the protection of the public interest. These measures have directly impacted the improvement of the integrity of the institution. As a result, in 2024, MESTI achieved an integrity score of 69%, marking an improvement of 65% compared to 2023. This progress reflects the institution's commitment to strengthening integrity and transparency in its activities and to building a more accountable administration towards citizens.

## TRANSPARENCY

Since 2024, MESTI has taken important steps to improve transparency, including publishing strategic documents and key information, organizing public consultations, and strengthening monitoring and accountability mechanisms. The measures taken have contributed to a significant improvement in transparency, reaching a transparency level of 58%, reflecting the ministry's commitment to providing a more open and transparent approach to the public.

Furthermore, MESTI has continued its efforts to ensure that information related to the budget, public procurement, and other documents is accessible and available to the public through its official website. The website is regularly updated with strategic reports and documents, ensuring access to information in both official languages and promoting engagement with stakeholders. However, there is still room for improvement in the transparency of contracts and procurement procedures, which represents an area with potential for development. These efforts highlight MESTI's commitment to strengthening transparency and enabling the active involvement of citizens in decision-making processes.

Furthermore, the launch of the Pivot-RP Platform and the two reports on Financial Transparency and Public University Profiles is another important step towards strengthening transparency in the higher education sector. These initiatives are a continuation of efforts to ensure more open and available access to important public information, enabling citizens and stakeholders to have a clear overview of the functioning of universities and public finances.



## Citizen engagement in the work of MASHTI in Kosovo

In 2024, ODK continued its collaboration with UBO Consulting to conduct a comprehensive study on citizens' perceptions and engagement with MASHTI's work. This study included a broad representative sample of 1,132 citizens from different demographic profiles, analyzing factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, residence, and family income. The main goal of this research was to assess how citizens perceive MASHTI's approach to their concerns and their ability to influence education policies.

This year's findings show that a large proportion of citizens still feel limited in their ability to contribute to MASHTI processes. Only 29.9% of respondents believe they can have a positive impact, while the majority express skepticism about their involvement. In terms of satisfaction with MASHTI's performance, 36.6% of citizens are moderately satisfied, while only 2.8% of them express very satisfied with the institution's work.

These results highlight the need for MESTI to strengthen citizen involvement in its policies and decision-making. Increasing transparency and creating concrete opportunities for active participation are essential to foster a sense of ownership and accountability among the public. Greater citizen involvement would help shape more informed and inclusive policies, building trust in the institution and increasing its effectiveness. Therefore, MESTI should continue to develop more efficient channels of communication and public engagement to ensure that its initiatives reflect the needs and expectations of Kosovo citizens.

# Recommendations

## ACTION STEPS

To build more trust, accountability, and transparency, the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI) can take these steps:

### Strengthening Accountability

A strong culture of accountability helps to ensure that governance is transparent and honest. MESTI could strengthen this by publishing a Code of Conduct for officials on its official website, so that citizens know what ethical standards are required. Additionally, clear guidelines for all officials – from managers to civil servants – would help create a culture of accountability.

### Strengthening Integrity

MESTI could develop an internal integrity plan or anti-corruption policy to help prevent violations and strengthen accountability. Regular training for officials on ethics, conflict of interest and transparency would help everyone to be more aware and prepared to act fairly.

### Increasing Transparency

To gain more trust, MESTI should make key documents, draft laws and consultation results public in formats that are easy to read and use. This would help citizens and organizations better understand what is happening and how they can get involved.

### Transparency in Lobbying

MESTI could establish clear rules for lobbying activities, to avoid unfair influences on public policies. A public register for lobbyists would be an important step to show citizens who is influencing decision-making and how.

# Recommendations

## Greater Citizen Participation

Only 33.9% of citizens feel they can contribute to MESTI's work. To improve this, the Ministry could create open platforms where citizens and organizations can provide their opinions and suggestions. This would help more voices be included in public policies.

## Building Trust with Continuous Work

Trust is built over time and with continuous work. MESTI could conduct regular evaluations of its own work and request independent evaluations to see where it can improve. Openness and direct communication with citizens would greatly help make MESTI a more trusted and respected institution.

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If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact:

[info@opendatakosovo.org](mailto:info@opendatakosovo.org)