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Report on “User involvement in service design and delivery”, with a focus on women



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0. Executive Summary

This report, *User Involvement in Service Design and Delivery, with a Focus on Women*, examines how digital public services in Kosovo—particularly those offered through the eKosova platform, address or fail to address the unique needs of women. While Kosovo has made significant strides in digital transformation, most services continue to follow a supply-driven, institution-centered approach rather than being designed around real-life user journeys. As a result, services often fall short in reaching and supporting women, especially those from marginalized, rural, or digitally excluded backgrounds.

The report begins by outlining the importance of user-centered service design for ensuring inclusive governance and gender equity. It explains how platforms like eKosova hold transformative potential—but only if services are co-designed with the people they are meant to serve.

Through a mixed-methods research approach, the study conducts:

- A desk review of digital inclusion and public service access in Kosovo;
- A policy analysis of international frameworks such as the OECD Good Practice Principles (2021), the SIGMA Principles of Public Administration (2023), and Ireland’s Action Plan for Better Public Services (2023);
- A gender-inclusive evaluation of ten digital services on eKosova most relevant to women, such as maternity leave applications, childcare benefits, healthcare access, and employment support.

The findings indicate a systemic gap in Kosovo’s current public service design processes. No evidence was found of public services having undergone iterative design phases such as problem framing, co-creation, prototyping, and testing with women users. As a result, services lack contextual relevance, are often inaccessible, and may unintentionally reinforce digital exclusion.

In response, the report introduces a comprehensive framework for inclusive public service design, structured into four phases:

1. Context Analysis – Mapping user needs, barriers, and the institutional ecosystem;
2. Envisioning Solutions – Co-creating ideas through participatory methods;
3. Idea Development – Defining ethical, systemic, and technical implications of proposed solutions;
4. Prototyping and Testing – Iterating based on user feedback and emotional journey mapping.

These phases are grounded in international best practices and customized to Kosovo’s policy environment. The report also presents case studies from the UK (GOV.UK and the Government Digital Service) and Estonia (X-Road Model), offering actionable lessons Kosovo can adopt.

1. Introduction

Public services play a critical role in ensuring social welfare, economic participation, and civic engagement. However, when service design does not account for gender differences, it risks reinforcing existing inequalities, particularly for women from marginalized backgrounds.

A user-centered approach to service design prioritizes the real experiences and needs of different demographic groups, ensuring that public services, both digital and offline, are inclusive, accessible, and user-friendly. When services are designed without gender considerations, they fail to meet the specific needs of women, particularly in areas such as maternity benefits, childcare support, social protection, employment services, and legal assistance.

In Kosovo, the digitalization of public services through platforms like eKosova¹ has introduced new opportunities for efficiency and accessibility. However, these advancements have also exposed gender disparities in digital literacy, economic constraints, and socio-cultural barriers. While eKosova provides a centralized platform for accessing government services, its lack of gender-sensitive design prevents it from being fully effective for women.

Kosovo's e-Government Strategy 2023-2027² recognizes the importance of digital transformation, but it does not explicitly address gender disparities in access to online public services. Additionally based on the report Gender and Digitalization in Kosovo³, women, particularly those from low-income and rural communities, continue to face significant barriers, including:

- Lower digital literacy → Many women lack the skills and confidence to navigate online platforms effectively, particularly when digital tools are not designed with accessibility and diverse user contexts in mind.
- Limited access to smartphones, computers, or the internet due to financial or social constraints → While affordability is a critical factor, social norms and stereotypes about women's use of technology can also restrict their access to digital tools. In some households, women's use of mobile phones or internet-connected devices is discouraged or controlled, limiting their ability to engage independently with digital services.
- Unequal distribution of caregiving responsibilities → Women disproportionately bear the burden of unpaid care and domestic work, which limits the time and flexibility they have to access public services, whether digital or in-person. This imbalance is particularly acute for women in rural areas or those working in the informal economy, where rigid schedules, lack of support infrastructure, or the absence of childcare services further hinder their engagement with government programs and platforms.
- Transportation and mobility challenges → In many rural and peri-urban areas, inadequate or expensive public transportation, along with entrenched gender norms, limits women's ability to travel to physical service access points such as municipal offices or community internet hubs.

¹ eKosova Platform. Republic of Kosovo – Ministry of Internal Affairs. Available at: <https://ekosova.rks-gov.net> [Accessed April 2, 2025].

² Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo. e-Government Strategy 2023–2027. Available at: <https://mpb.rks-gov.net/Uploads/Documents/Pdf/EN/2700/e-Government%20Strategy%20Kosovo%202023-2027.pdf> [Accessed April 2, 2025].

³ Kosovo Women's Network (KWN). Gender and Digitalization in Kosovo. Prishtina: KWN, 2022. Available at: <https://womensnetwork.org/publications/gender-and-digitalisation-in-kosovo/> [Accessed April 2, 2025].

These challenges can significantly impact their ability to benefit from digital services, particularly in cases where remote authentication or digital identity verification is required.

- Lack of representation in service design → Women remain underrepresented in the design and evaluation of public services. This absence leads to solutions that overlook gender-specific needs such as safety, time flexibility, service accessibility for caregivers, and privacy concerns.

Despite international best practices advocating for user-centered and gender-inclusive digital government policies, Kosovo's digital services remain largely gender-neutral rather than gender-responsive. Without the active integration of women's perspectives in service design, public services risk excluding or inadequately serving a large portion of the population.

The report has been prepared for the European Policy Institute of Kosovo (EPIK) as part of the project "Strengthening Civil Society's Role in Public Service Design and Delivery in Kosovo", an initiative which is enabled through a project supported by the European Union and the German Government and implemented by the GIZ, in cooperation with the Government of Kosovo.

2. Objective of the Report

This report aims to serve as both a critical assessment and a forward-looking guide for embedding gender-responsive approaches in the design and delivery of public services in Kosovo. At a time when digital transformation is rapidly reshaping how citizens interact with the government, it is crucial that this shift does not deepen existing inequalities—particularly those affecting women.

The primary objective of the report is to present a structured, actionable framework for public institutions to develop and deliver services that actively address the diverse needs, preferences, and lived realities of women. It moves beyond merely identifying gaps and challenges by proposing concrete tools, tested methodologies, and international best practices that Kosovo can adapt to its unique social, cultural, and institutional context.

Drawing from global digital governance leaders such as the United Kingdom and Estonia, and aligning with standards from the OECD, EU, and SIGMA, this report introduces a practical model of inclusive service design. This model emphasizes participation, evidence-based planning, and iteration as central pillars of effective public service innovation.

The report's objectives can be summarized as follows:

- To establish a structured approach for integrating gender perspectives into every stage of public service design and delivery, from needs analysis to testing and feedback. This includes a hands-on methodology inspired by globally recognized service design frameworks, adapted to the Kosovo context.
- To ensure that both digital and in-person public services are inclusive, accessible, and efficient for all women, including those from rural areas, low-income households, minority communities, and those with disabilities.
- To provide practical guidance for policymakers, service providers, designers, and technologists, equipping them with tools and reference points to create services that are not only efficient, but equitable. To promote policy coherence between Kosovo's national digital strategies and European frameworks, such as the European Interoperability Framework (EIF), the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025, and the Tallinn Declaration on eGovernment.

The chapters that follow analyze the current state of user involvement in Kosovo's public service design, evaluate selected eKosova services through a gender lens, and conclude with tailored recommendations for Kosovo's digital future. In doing so, the report seeks to support Kosovo's efforts in creating a public service ecosystem where women are not only beneficiaries—but co-creators of better, more inclusive governance.

3. Research Methods

3.1. Desk Review

The desk review involved a comprehensive examination of existing reports, statistical publications, and relevant documentation to assess the accessibility, usability, and responsiveness of public services for women in Kosovo. Key themes investigated included the digital divide, representation in public service development, and barriers related to socioeconomic and cultural factors.

3.2. Literature Review & Policy Analysis

The literature review focused on evaluating academic studies, international benchmarks, and institutional policy frameworks to determine how gender inclusion is addressed in digital governance strategies. The following key documents and frameworks were analyzed:

- OECD Digital Government Policy Framework: Emphasizes that digital transformation must be inclusive, user-driven, and informed by data. While Kosovo has adopted many digital tools and platforms, its policies still lack explicit, actionable measures to ensure gender-responsive digital service delivery⁴.
- Kosovo's e-Government Strategy 2023–2027: Provides a roadmap for digital service modernization but does not explicitly address the gender gap in access or participation in service design⁵.
- Administrative Burden Prevention and Reduction Program (2025 – 2028): Aims to streamline bureaucratic processes and enhance the efficiency of digital public services, contributing to improved accessibility for citizens. The program is tailored based on a user-centered approach involving users of diverse groups and backgrounds in the design and delivery of service.⁶
- Kosovo Women's Network (KWN) Report on Gender & Digitalization (2022): Highlights that women, especially in rural areas and older age groups, face disproportionate barriers to accessing digital services. These include limited digital literacy, poor infrastructure, lack of access to devices, and low levels of awareness about available services⁷.
- OECD/SIGMA Principles of Public Administration for EU Enlargement (2023): Introduces modern standards for digital governance in candidate countries. It underscores the importance of user participation, performance metrics, and gender-sensitive service planning—principles not yet fully institutionalized in Kosovo's public administration.⁸

⁴ OECD (2020), *Digital Government Policy Framework: Six Dimensions of a Digital Government*, OECD Publishing, Paris. <https://www.oecd.org/gov/digital-government-policy-framework.pdf>

⁵ Government of Kosovo (2022), *e-Government Strategy 2023–2027*, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Department for e-Governance.

⁶ Office of the Prime Minister – Strategic Planning Office (2023), *Administrative Burden Prevention and Reduction Programme 2025–2028*, Government of Kosovo.

⁷ Kosovo Women's Network (KWN) (2022), *Gender and Digitalization in Kosovo: Barriers to Accessing Digital Services*, Prishtina. <https://womensnetwork.org/publications>

⁸ OECD/SIGMA (2023). *The Principles of Public Administration for EU Enlargement*. OECD Publishing, Paris. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/governance/principles-public-administration-eu-enlargement>

- OECD Good Practice Principles for Public Service Design and Delivery (2021): Provides a three-pillar framework for inclusive, ethical, and scalable digital public services. These principles have served as a guiding reference throughout the evaluation of eKosova's services.⁹
- OECD Government at a Glance Report (2023): Offers comparative insights into citizen trust and digital service performance, advocating for the collection of disaggregated usage data and the introduction of citizen feedback mechanisms.¹⁰
- Ireland's Action Plan for Designing Better Public Services (2023): Presents a practical, phased approach to service design through prototyping, iterative development, and co-creation. This framework has inspired the methodology proposed in Chapter 4 of this report.¹¹
- Service Design and Delivery in the European Neighbourhood Policy East Region (2022): A comparative report analyzing public service delivery in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, and Azerbaijan. It underscores the need for participatory design and inclusivity—elements that Kosovo can adapt to improve its digital services.¹²
- Towards User-Oriented Public Services in Kosovo (UNDP & ADA): Emphasizes the need for feedback systems, end-user consultations, and performance monitoring. The report stresses that public trust and uptake improve when services are built around user needs and when marginalized groups are actively engaged in design.¹³

Together, these sources offer valuable insight into the policy landscape, revealing both progress and gaps in making Kosovo's digital services more gender-responsive and inclusive. These findings informed the structure of the proposed framework and guided the evaluation of selected services on the eKosova platform in later chapters.

3.3. Evaluating the Implementation of eKosova Services: A Gender-Inclusive Approach

This evaluation assesses the design, accessibility, and usability of 10 selected services on eKosova to determine whether they effectively serve women's needs. Evaluation of implementation of eKosovas Service methodology:

- Applying OECD's Good Practice Principles for Public Service Design & Delivery
- Identifying barriers & usability gaps
- Proposing targeted improvements aligned with international best practices

⁹ OECD (2021). *Good Practice Principles for Public Service Design and Delivery in the Digital Age*. OECD Working Papers on Public Governance No. 44, OECD Publishing, Paris. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/gov/digital-government/good-practice-principles-for-public-service-design-and-delivery.htm>

¹⁰ OECD (2023). *Government at a Glance 2023*. OECD Publishing, Paris. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/gov/government-at-a-glance-22214399.htm>

¹¹ Government of Ireland (2023). *Action Plan for Designing Better Public Services*. Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform. Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/6c8a7-action-plan-for-designing-better-public-services/>

¹² OECD (2022). *Service Design and Delivery in the European Neighbourhood Policy East Region: A Comparative Report*. OECD Publishing, Paris. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/governance/service-design-enp-east-region.pdf>

¹³ UNDP Kosovo & Austrian Development Agency (2022). *Towards User-Oriented Public Services in Kosovo: Final Report*. United Nations Development Programme. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/kosovo/publications/towards-user-oriented-public-services-kosovo>

This evaluation assumes that women accessing these services are already registered on eKosova and possess basic digital literacy skills to log in and navigate the platform. Therefore, the focus is on assessing the user experience, accessibility, and inclusivity of each service beyond the registration phase. By embedding OECD's framework into eKosova, Kosovo can transition from gender-neutral digital services to gender-responsive public service delivery, ensuring that women are not just service users but co-creators of a more inclusive digital government.

4. Creating Better Public Services: A Framework for Inclusivity

This chapter presents a structured framework for inclusive public service design, applicable to all public services but with a particular focus on digital services, notably eKosova. Digitalization has the potential to enhance efficiency, accessibility, and transparency, yet many digital services fail to meet the needs of women due to design limitations, a lack of user-centered approaches, and the exclusion of women from decision-making processes.

Public administrative services¹⁴ encompass a wide range of interactions between governments and citizens, businesses, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These include enquiries, applications, and registrations for government benefits and services, payments and financial transactions such as tax declarations or business permits, and access to official information and documentation, including legal decisions, identity documents, and financial assistance. Such services enable individuals to exercise their rights, access entitlements, fulfill legal obligations, and pursue economic and personal ambitions. At the same time, effective service delivery allows governments to implement policies, collect revenues, allocate budgets, gather critical data, and enforce regulations¹⁵.

Kosovo's digital transformation efforts, as outlined in the e-Government Strategy 2023-2027¹⁶, recognize the importance of user-centered public service design. Substantial investments in budget, human resources, and institutional capacity have led to notable improvements in digital service delivery, with several services now available online through eKosova. These efforts have transformed previously complex administrative procedures into digital services, enhancing efficiency and accessibility for many users.

Public services can be delivered in-person, by telephone, by mail, or digitally. While digitalization has transformed service accessibility, it is crucial to recognize that digital solutions alone do not automatically translate to inclusivity or efficiency. A successful digital transformation requires more than just shifting paper-based processes online; it must involve reengineering services based on user needs, removing unnecessary complexity, and ensuring equitable access¹⁷.

At the heart of these efforts is the Administrative Burden Prevention and Reduction Programme 2022-2027, which aims to simplify bureaucratic processes, remove unnecessary procedural steps, and enhance the efficiency of public services. This program has played a crucial role in digitizing high-demand services, reducing in-person visits to public institutions, and improving administrative efficiency. By focusing on process simplification and automation, the program has eased access to services for many citizens, streamlining tax declarations, business registrations, and identity document applications.

¹⁴ The term "administrative service" refers to all services that are necessary for citizens, businesses and NGOs, such as permits, licenses, registrations, authorizations, consents, certifications, etc. The term does not include subsidies, transfers and tenders. The draft Public Service Catalogue has identified around 700 such services delivered by central and local institutions. The services reviewed by this paper will follow the mentioned Catalogue, when referring to a particular service.

¹⁵ OECD/SIGMA (2023). *The Principles of Public Administration for EU Enlargement*. OECD Publishing, Paris.

¹⁶ Ministry of Internal Affairs, Republic of Kosovo (2023). *e-Government Strategy 2023–2027*. Available at: <https://mpb.rks-gov.net>

¹⁷ OECD (2021). *Good Practice Principles for Public Service Design and Delivery in the Digital Age*. OECD Publishing, Paris.

In the past, public administrations viewed e-government primarily as a tool to increase efficiency—digitizing documents and automating workflows. However, modern digital governance goes beyond mere automation. Digital government is about embedding a culture of user-centered service design, where:

- Processes and services are re-engineered to optimize accessibility, transparency, and efficiency.
- Technology is an enabler, not the driver, of transformation.
- Government-citizen interactions are designed with inclusivity, particularly addressing the barriers faced by women, the elderly, and marginalized communities.

By applying a service design framework, Kosovo can move from policy-level recognition of digital inclusion to actual implementation, ensuring that services like eKosova are not just available online but actively designed to meet diverse user needs.

Given that life events often involve both government and private-sector interactions, such as starting a business, moving homes, or accessing healthcare, governments should also explore public-private partnerships to improve service delivery. By collaborating with civil society, technology providers, and user groups, Kosovo can develop truly inclusive and adaptive digital services¹⁸.

While these efforts have significantly improved service accessibility, the structured, iterative approach to service design, as outlined by the OECD¹⁹, is not yet systematically embedded in the early stages of public service development. Our research did not identify any example in Kosovo where a public service followed a clear, internationally recognized service design process, one that involved research, prototyping, user testing, and iteration, before being digitized. As a result, there is limited data on how gender, accessibility, or user needs were considered before services were launched.

By adopting a multi-framework approach, Kosovo can strengthen its digital public services by ensuring that new services are piloted, tested with diverse users, and continuously improved before full implementation. The following sections detail how Kosovo can incorporate these principles into its ongoing digital transformation efforts, ensuring that future digital services are designed with inclusivity, accessibility, and continuous improvement in mind.

¹⁸ SIGMA (2022). *Service Design and Delivery in the European Neighbourhood Policy East Region: A Comparative Report*. OECD Publishing. Available at: <https://www.sigmaweb.org>

¹⁹ OECD (2021), *Good Practice Principles for Public Service Design and Delivery*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

4.1 Principles of Inclusive Service Design

4.1.1 What is service design

Service design is a multidisciplinary approach that focuses on creating user-friendly, efficient, and effective services by considering the entire user experience throughout the service delivery process. It combines design thinking, user research, business strategy, and technology to develop holistic, seamless, and inclusive services.

Service design is not just about digital services; it applies to any type of public or private service, including healthcare, education, social welfare, transportation, and government services. It ensures that services are accessible, functional, and responsive to user needs rather than being designed based on internal bureaucratic processes.

*"Services are transforming OECD economies on a massive scale (...) With manufacturing slipping to less than 20% of GDP and the role of services rising to more than 70% in some OECD countries, services are seen as playing a principal role in economies."*²⁰

In the public sector, service design ensures that government services are accessible, easy to use, and aligned with citizen needs. Unlike traditional service delivery models, which often focus on organizational efficiency rather than user experience, service design puts the citizen first.

Traditional Approach		Service Design Approach	
	Services designed based on internal bureaucratic processes		Services designed based on citizen needs and experiences
	Rigid, one-size-fits-all service delivery		Flexible, personalized services based on user groups
	Reactive problem-solving (fixing issues after complaints)		Proactive user research to prevent issues before they occur
	Limited opportunities for user feedback		Continuous user testing, feedback, and improvement
	Services may not be accessible to all (e.g., complex online forms)		Focus on inclusivity and accessibility for diverse populations

²⁰ OECD (2023), *Government at a Glance 2023*, OECD Publishing, Paris. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/publications/government-at-a-glance-22214399.htm>

In Kosovo, digital services like eKosova hold great potential to simplify interactions between citizens and the government. However, if digital platforms are not designed with a service design mindset, they risk excluding vulnerable or marginalized communities such as women, elderly citizens, and individuals with low digital literacy.

Applying service design to eKosova could:

- Make digital services more user-friendly and efficient.
- Ensure that women's needs are integrated into digital governance.
- Reduce bureaucratic complexity and improve accessibility.
- Enhance transparency and trust in public services

4.1.2. Applying International Frameworks for Gender-Responsive Digital Services

Kosovo's digital transformation efforts, as outlined in the e-Government Strategy 2023-2027, recognize the importance of user-centered public service design. While these efforts have significantly improved service accessibility, a structured, internationally recognized service design process has not yet been systematically embedded in the early stages of public service development. Our research did not identify any example in Kosovo where a public service followed a clear, iterative service design methodology—one that involved research, prototyping, user testing, and iteration—before being digitized. As a result, there is limited data on how gender, accessibility, or user needs were considered before services were launched.

To further enhance eKosova and Kosovo's digital transformation, it is essential to align with the latest best practices in service design. The OECD's Good Practice Principles for Public Service Design and Delivery in the Digital Age (2021) provide a strong foundation, but more recent frameworks, such as the 2023 SIGMA Revised "Principles of Public Administration", Ireland's 2023 Action Plan for Designing Better Public Services, and the OECD's 2023 "Government at a Glance" Report, offer valuable insights that Kosovo can incorporate into its digital governance model.

The following internationally recognized frameworks offer structured approaches to enhancing digital public service design and delivery:

1. OECD Good Practice Principles for Public Service Design (2021)²¹
 - Focuses on user-driven, transparent, and efficient digital government services.
 - Establishes a three-pillar approach emphasizing accessibility, scalability, and accountability.
2. SIGMA "Principles of Public Administration" (2023)²²
 - Developed by OECD and the EU, these principles set modern standards for digital governance.
 - Emphasize user research, performance indicators, and public participation in service development.
3. OECD's "Government at a Glance" (2023)²³
 - Provides comparative benchmarks on digital governance and citizen trust in online services.
 - Recommends tracking public feedback, service accessibility metrics, and digital inclusion rates.

²¹ OECD (2021), *Good Practice Principles for Public Service Design and Delivery in the Digital Age*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

²² OECD/SIGMA (2023), *The Principles of Public Administration for EU Enlargement*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

²³ OECD (2023), *Government at a Glance 2023*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

4. Ireland's "Action Plan for Designing Better Public Services" (2023)²⁴

- Introduces a structured, phased service design approach, incorporating user prototyping and iterative development.
- Advocates for co-creation between government, civil society, and end users to improve digital inclusion.

By integrating these principles, Kosovo can enhance its digital public services through structured design. This proposed framework, combined with the latest public administration insights, provides a strong model for Kosovo's digital transformation. Additionally, to support the practical implementation of this methodology, a set of annexes is included at the end of the report, providing templates and tools such as interview guides, stakeholder maps, and user journey worksheets designed to guide teams through each phase of the service design process.

Phase 1: Context Analysis – Understanding the System and Its Users

This phase involves a deep exploration of the ecosystem where a service operates. It maps socio-cultural, institutional, and infrastructural factors, helping frame the problem accurately and revealing the root causes behind service exclusion or inefficiencies.

1.1 Research Methods: Use both quantitative (e.g., usage analytics, digital access rates) and qualitative methods (e.g., interviews, shadowing, focus groups). Prioritize ethnographic research with women in rural areas, low-income households, or single-parent families to surface hidden needs.

1.2 Sensemaking Wall: Barriers and Opportunities: Visually organize all findings to identify key constraints (e.g., lack of digital access, financial barriers) and opportunities (e.g., offline access points, mobile-first formats). Distinguish between gender-neutral vs. gender-specific barriers.

1.3 Stakeholder Map: Identify and map all key players: public institutions, NGOs, community centers, women's advocacy groups, and users. Note which groups are underrepresented in current feedback or service usage.

1.4 Problem Framing: Reframe the problem to reflect deeper structural issues. For instance: *"Women are not using eKosova because the service is not accessible on low-bandwidth mobile networks used in rural homes."*

1.5 User Research Interviews: Conduct interviews across diverse demographics. Include women of different ages, family statuses, digital abilities, and municipalities. Explore how they access services, what tools they use, and their pain points.

1.6 From Needs to Insights: Translate observed needs into sharp insights. For example: *"Women trust human interaction more than online forms for child benefit applications—suggesting a blended support model may be necessary."*

²⁴ Government of Ireland (2023), *Action Plan for Designing Better Public Services*, Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform.

1.7 Data and Knowledge Catalogue: Collect supporting data, legal constraints, and local knowledge. Include gender-disaggregated service usage data if available and assess gaps.

👉 For a practical, hands-on flow of tools used in this phase, see Annex 1: Context Analysis.

Phase 2: Envisioning Solutions – From Ideas to Concepts

This phase focuses on ideating potential solutions that solve user-identified challenges. Solutions are generated collaboratively through participatory formats, emphasizing co-creation with end-users, particularly underrepresented groups.

2.1 Ideas Elicitation: Frame “How Might We” questions with gender-sensitivity. Examples:

- *“How might we simplify service access for women who only have basic digital literacy?”*
- *“How might we inform new mothers about services they are entitled to, without requiring them to search online?”*
- Hold ideation workshops that include women from various communities, front-line service providers, and civil society representatives.

2.2 Evaluation Matrix: Use criteria that assess inclusivity, especially toward vulnerable user groups. Score ideas for gender impact, ease of use for low-tech users, and offline accessibility.

👉 For practical tools and worksheets to facilitate this phase, see Annex 2: Envisioning Solutions.

Phase 3: Idea Development – Refining the Chosen Concept

Here, the most promising idea is further developed and tested from a social, ethical, and technical lens. This step ensures that the service is robust, scalable, and inclusive.

3.1 Idea Description: Define the core value of the service and whom it serves. Include a “gender lens” in the idea description—for example, *“Designed to reduce administrative burden for working mothers applying for childcare supplements.”*

3.2 User Stories: Craft stories that reflect women’s needs:

- *“As a caregiver in a rural village, I want to apply for social assistance using my mobile phone without going to the municipality office.”*
- *“As a survivor of domestic violence, I want to access legal aid discreetly and securely.”*

👉 For supporting materials and examples to guide this phase, refer to Annex 3: Idea Development.

Phase 4: Prototyping, Testing, and Assessing Implications

This phase involves creating and testing low- or high-fidelity prototypes with real users, evaluating their experience, and improving accordingly. It ensures that services are not just functional, but also emotionally accessible and equitable.

4.1 Desktop Walkthrough: Simulate the service experience with a cross-functional team, identifying weak points from a woman’s perspective. Is the language understandable? Are instructions too bureaucratic? Are there assumptions about digital literacy?

4.2 Emotional Journey Feedback: Track the emotional flow of users—especially women—across the service. Are there moments of confusion, frustration, fear? Use these insights to soften tone, improve clarity, or add reassurance features (e.g., “your data is safe”).

4.2.1 System UX Map: Connect the user experience with backend systems. Ensure steps are minimized for users with limited time or access. Highlight where additional support (voice chat, human interaction, SMS follow-up) may be critical.

4.2.2 Prototype: Build and test multiple iterations. Ensure diverse women are part of each round of testing—young mothers, elderly women, Roma women, unemployed urban women, etc.

👉 For templates and tools to support testing and emotional journey mapping, see Annex 4: Prototyping and Testing.

4.2 Case Studies: Lessons from UK & Estonia

This section examines two of the world's leading digital government models²⁵, the United Kingdom’s Government Digital Service (GDS) and Estonia’s X-Road system, and extracts key lessons that Kosovo can apply to enhance user-centered digital service design on eKosova.

Country	Key Features	Lessons for Kosovo
United Kingdom (GDS Model)	◆ User testing before launch ◆ Simple, standardized design ◆ Data-driven service updates	✓ Establish a unified design system ✓ Require real user testing before launching new services ✓ Implement data-driven improvements
Estonia (X-Road Model)	◆ Integrated public databases ◆ Proactive service delivery ◆ Strong digital identity system	✓ Connect government data systems to reduce bureaucratic burden ✓ Introduce automated service notifications ✓ Improve digital authentication and security

²⁵ OECD (2023), *Government at a Glance 2023*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

By adopting best practices from the UK and Estonia, Kosovo can enhance eKosova's inclusivity, efficiency, and accessibility, ensuring that women and all citizens receive proactive, user-friendly digital public services.

4.2.1. United Kingdom: GOV.UK & the Government Digital Service (GDS)

The United Kingdom is widely regarded as a global leader in user-centered digital public service design. The Government Digital Service (GDS), established in 2011, has transformed the UK's public services through its "digital by default" strategy, ensuring that all government services are:

- Tested with real users before deployment - The UK mandates that all digital services undergo rigorous user research, prototyping, and usability testing before launch.
- Designed with simple, accessible interfaces - GOV.UK's design system follows strict accessibility standards, ensuring that all citizens, including those with low digital literacy or disabilities, can easily navigate online services.
- Continuously updated based on data-driven insights - Digital services in the UK are never considered "finished." Instead, they are iteratively improved based on user feedback, analytics, and performance monitoring²⁶.

The GOV.UK Verify system further improves service accessibility and security by allowing users to prove their identity online once, granting access to multiple government services without needing to repeatedly verify personal information²⁷.

How Kosovo can learn from the UK's GDS Model:

- Implement a Unified Digital Design System - Kosovo could establish a centralized design system for eKosova, ensuring that all services follow a consistent, intuitive user experience across government platforms.
- Mandate Real User Testing - Just as the UK requires all government services to be tested with real users before deployment, Kosovo should introduce user-testing processes within eKosova, ensuring that services work for all demographics, including women, elderly users, and rural populations.
- Adopt an Agile, Data-Driven Approach - The UK continuously refines its services based on real user behavior, feedback, and service performance data. eKosova could follow this model by implementing real-time monitoring, feedback loops, and automated service improvements²⁸.

4.2.2. Estonia: The X-Road Digital Government Model

Estonia is widely considered a pioneer in digital governance, having created one of the most seamless and efficient digital service ecosystems in the world. The X-Road system enables secure, real-time data

²⁶ Government Digital Service (2023), *Digital Service Standard*, GOV.UK. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/service-standard>

²⁷ Cabinet Office (2021), *GOV.UK Verify: What it is and how it works*, UK Government. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/introducing-govuk-verify>

²⁸ Government Digital Service (GDS), UK Cabinet Office (2022), *Government Service Standard*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/service-standard>

exchange between public institutions, eliminating the need for citizens to provide the same information multiple times²⁹.

- Integrated public databases - Citizens only need to provide their information once, as all government systems are interconnected. This reduces bureaucratic inefficiencies and makes it easier for women to access services without repeated paperwork.
- Proactive service delivery - Instead of requiring users to find and apply for benefits manually, the government proactively notifies citizens when they are eligible for services such as childcare support, healthcare benefits, or tax deductions³⁰.
- Strong digital identity (e-ID) system - Estonia's digital identity system ensures secure and efficient authentication, making it easy for users to access services from anywhere, at any time.

How Kosovo can learn from Estonia's X-Road Model:

- Reduce Bureaucratic Complexity Through Data Integration - Kosovo could enhance eKosova by connecting government agencies through a secure data-sharing system, ensuring that users don't have to repeatedly submit the same information.
- Adopt Proactive Service Notifications - Women in Kosovo often miss out on government benefits due to a lack of awareness or complex application processes. eKosova could introduce automated notifications to inform women about maternity benefits, childcare assistance, social security programs, and legal aid services.
- Strengthen Digital Identity Systems - Estonia's e-ID system allows users to access services quickly and securely. Kosovo should invest in improving its digital authentication process to provide seamless and secure online access to public services³¹.

5. Evaluating the Implementation of eKosova Services: A Gender-Inclusive Approach

This chapter evaluates the design, accessibility, and inclusivity of ten (10) selected public services available on the eKosova platform, focusing specifically on how well they address the needs of women.

The eKosova platform serves as the centralized digital hub for public services in Kosovo, allowing citizens to access and complete administrative procedures online. The platform reduces bureaucratic delays,

²⁹ OECD (2020), *The E-Leaders Handbook on the Governance of Digital Government*, OECD Publishing, Paris. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/gov/digital-government/e-leaders-handbook.pdf>

³⁰ OECD (2019), *Digital Government Review of Estonia: Empowering the Digital Transformation of the Public Sector*, OECD Digital Government Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1787/4de9f5bb-en>

³¹ e-Estonia (2023), *Digital Identity, Republic of Estonia*. Available at: <https://e-estonia.com/solutions/e-identity/id-card>

increases efficiency, and improves accessibility by digitizing services that were previously only available in person.

The analysis is grounded in a multi-framework approach that includes the OECD's Good Practice Principles for Public Service Design and Delivery, SIGMA's Principles of Public Administration (2023), and the Double Diamond service design methodology. These frameworks emphasize a user-centered, inclusive, and iterative approach to service development. The evaluation also considers whether these services embed principles of gender responsiveness, accessibility, and usability, and whether they offer equitable experiences for women, especially those from rural or marginalized communities, after registration and login.

Building on the insights from the section "Case Studies: Lessons from the UK & Estonia," the chapter identifies specific practices that Kosovo could adapt to enhance the inclusivity and effectiveness of eKosova. These examples serve not only as models for improving digital service design but also highlight the importance of integrating best practices from different countries when aiming for inclusive, data-informed, and citizen-centric digital governance.

As of 2025, eKosova offers 220 digital public services across 26 distinct categories, addressing a wide range of citizen and business needs. With over 1 million registered users—51% of whom are women the platform has become a central gateway for accessing government services in Kosovo.

1. Civil Status – Services related to birth certificates, marriage certificates, and personal identification.
2. Education – Application for student financial aid, document verification, and scholarship services.
3. Taxes – Online tax filing, payment services, and tax documentation requests.
4. Family – Includes applications for maternity supplements, child benefits, and social assistance.
5. Health – Services related to public health insurance, medical benefits, and disability recognition.
6. Vehicle Services – Registration, driver's license renewal, and vehicle-related administrative tasks.
7. European Youth Card – A specialized service for young citizens accessing benefits and discounts.
8. Police Services – Requesting police reports, background checks, and related law enforcement services.
9. Utilities – Payment of water, electricity, and municipal waste services.
10. Property Services – Land registration, property ownership verification, and related real estate matters.
11. Contributions and Pension – Social security, pension contributions, and retirement benefits.
12. Finances – Access to state financial aid, payments, and subsidies.
13. Business Services – Business registration, licensing, and tax obligations for companies.
14. Judiciary – Court-related services, legal case tracking, and document submissions.
15. Licensing – Application for professional licenses and business operation permits.
16. Security Fund – Services related to social security and compensation for injuries.
17. Address Services – Updating official residence, address registration, and municipal records.
18. Job Services – Online applications for employment programs, job postings, and labor market services.

19. Consular Services – Access to diplomatic services, visa applications, and foreign document processing.
20. Legal Auditors – Services related to compliance, audits, and legal financial verification.
21. Grants & Subsidies – Application for state-sponsored grants and financial aid for businesses and individuals.
22. e-Municipality – Local government administrative services, including municipal applications and requests.
23. Banners & Advertising – Authorization for public advertisements and billboards.
24. Document Verification – Digital authentication of legal and administrative documents.
25. Treasury Services – Financial transactions and reporting related to government funds.
26. Agriculture – Support programs for farmers, land subsidies, and rural development assistance

Digitalizing public services is a critical step toward enhancing efficiency and accessibility. However, if inclusivity is not embedded from the outset, these services risk reinforcing existing inequalities and leaving behind communities that may already experience barriers to engagement, such as women, caregivers, and those in underserved areas.

- Identify gaps in accessibility, usability, and responsiveness across selected digital services.
- Assess the extent to which these services address the lived realities and specific needs of women, such as access to maternity support, childcare benefits, or legal assistance.
- Offer data-informed recommendations to improve inclusivity, user experience, and service delivery.

Each service is evaluated using a structured assessment template, developed to ensure a consistent and comparative review across domains, focusing on:

#	Assessment criteria	Description
1.	Accessibility & Inclusion	Are services easy to access, multilingual, mobile-friendly, and usable by all women?
2.	User Experience (UX)	Is the process clear, efficient, and designed to minimize administrative burdens?
3.	Gender Responsiveness	Does the service consider women’s specific needs, privacy concerns, and safety?
4.	Efficiency & Responsiveness	Are application processes fast, transparent, and supported by real-time tracking?
5.	User Feedback & Improvement	Can women provide feedback and see continuous improvements to services?

Based on usage data and insights from the eKosova platform, ten public services (Service 1 to 10) have been selected for evaluation, prioritizing those most frequently accessed by women and most relevant to their daily needs. This chapter examines these services using a structured evaluation framework grounded in internationally recognized service design principles, including those developed by the OECD,

SIGMA, the European Union, and national models such as the United Kingdom's Government Digital Service and Estonia's X-Road system.

The analysis focuses on assessing each service's accessibility, usability, and inclusivity to determine the extent to which they address the needs of diverse user groups, particularly women. The evaluation assumes that users—especially women—are already registered on the eKosova platform and possess the basic digital literacy skills required to log in and navigate the interface. Consequently, the assessment concentrates on service performance beyond the registration stage. By identifying potential barriers and highlighting opportunities for improvement, this chapter aims to contribute to the advancement of inclusive, user-centered, and gender-responsive digital public services in Kosovo.

Service 1: Family Category

The Family category on eKosova includes the following key services:

1. Childbirth – Provides documentation and registration support for newborns.
2. Applying for maternity support – Offers financial assistance to women during maternity leave, partially covered by the state.
3. Applying for child support – Enables parents to apply for monthly child allowance based on eligibility criteria.
4. Application for the Social Assistance Reform – Allows families with low income to apply for financial aid through the reformed welfare scheme.
5. Request for recognition of the status of paraplegic and tetraplegic persons – Provides a pathway to officially register for disability status and access related benefits.

Assessment Criteria	Findings	Score	Recommendations
1. Accessibility & Digital Inclusion	✅ Available in Albanian, Serbian, English. ✅ Mobile-friendly app exists. ❌ No clear service description before application. ❌ No clear information about payment amounts or eligibility. ❌ Limited digital literacy. ❌ Lack of internet access. ❌ Not owning personal devices.	3/5	Add simplified service descriptions at the start of each service, and provide accessible formats (e.g., video guides).

2. User Experience (UX) & Design Usability	✗ No upfront guidance on financial calculation or payout schedule. ✗ No clear assisted access for women with low digital literacy.	2.5/5	Include a progress bar and clear instructions with visual cues; redesign flows to be intuitive for users with low literacy. Introduce alternative payment options (cash pickup, family account authorization, simplified bank account registration). Provide clear instructions & support for women who need to open a bank account. Enable assisted application options at municipal centers.
3. Gender Responsiveness & Relevance	✗ No priority processing for single mothers, unemployed women. ✗ No privacy/data security information visible. ✗ Targets women, but no support for financially vulnerable groups without bank accounts.	2.5/5	Introduce fast-track processing for vulnerable groups. Display privacy policy on data usage. Collaborate with banks to simplify account creation for eligible women.
4. Efficiency & Responsiveness	✗ No real-time tracking or confirmation notifications for applications.	2	Add dashboards with live status, and estimated processing time for each service.
5. User Feedback & Continuous Improvement	✗ No user feedback system or public performance data available. ✗ No public data showing how user input informs service improvements.	1.5/5	Introduce service rating & reporting mechanism. Publish service performance reports. Create visible “Give Feedback” buttons, conduct regular satisfaction surveys, and publish performance insights quarterly.

Service 2: Health Category

The Health category on eKosova includes the following key services:

1. Request for the Selection of a Family Doctor – Enables citizens to choose their designated primary care physician.
2. Request for Change of Family Doctor – Allows users to switch primary care providers.
3. Request for Selection of Family Doctor for Other Persons – Facilitates selection on behalf of dependents.
4. Request for Change of Family Doctor for Other Persons – Enables changes for family members (e.g., children, elderly dependents).
5. Analysis Results – Provides access to laboratory test results digitally.
6. Electronic Vaccination Passport – A digital record of vaccination history.

Assessment Criteria	Findings	Score	Recommendations
1. Accessibility & Digital Inclusion	✓ Available in Albanian, Serbian, English. ✓ Mobile-friendly app exists. ✗ Users cannot select a QMF outside their registered address, even if they have moved temporarily. ✗ Process requires visiting the Civil Status office for updates.	3/5	Offer assisted applications at healthcare centers. Introduce a "Temporary Residence Declaration" option for users needing a different QMF.
2. User Experience (UX) & Design Usability	✗ No clear eligibility rules (e.g., how often a doctor can be changed). ✗ Users must restart the entire process if they select the wrong QMF.	2.5/5	Implement tracking and estimated processing times. Allow users to modify their QMF selection without restarting the application. Implement a verification step before submission.

	✗ No address verification before submission, leading to unnecessary rejections. ✗ Many users are confused during the application process, especially when acting on behalf of others. The distinction between personal and dependent services is unclear.		Streamline forms, use plain language, and include tooltips or examples for complex terms. Show confirmation pages before submission.
3. Gender Responsiveness & Relevance	✗ No prioritization for caregivers (mostly women) applying on behalf of children or elderly family members. ✗ No targeted support for pregnant women or individuals with chronic conditions.	Equity & Fairness	Introduce priority processing for women managing family healthcare. Provide guidance for expectant mothers on relevant services. Include visual prompts or FAQs for caregiving situations, and provide guidance for women acting on behalf of dependents.
4. Efficiency & Responsiveness	✗ No real-time tracking or confirmation notifications for applications.	2	Add dashboards with live status, and estimated processing time for each service.
5. User Feedback & Continuous Improvement	✗ No user feedback system or public performance data available. ✗ No public data showing how user input informs service improvements.	1.5/5	Introduce service rating & reporting mechanism. Publish service performance reports. Create visible “Give Feedback” buttons, conduct regular satisfaction surveys, and publish performance insights quarterly.

Service 3. Job Category

The Job category on eKosova includes the following key services:

1. e-Learning – Concepts and Basics on Occupational Safety and Health
2. e-Learning – Latest Occupational Safety and Health Legislation
3. e-Learning – Security Risks – Preventive and Protective Measures
4. e-Learning – Hygiene Risks, Preventive and Protective Measures
5. e-Learning – Ergonomics, Psychosocial Risks, and Health Promotion
6. e-Learning – Trainings Held and Certificate of Participation
7. Declaration of Unemployment
8. Declaration for Participation in the Union

Assessment Criteria	Findings	Score	Recommendations
1. Accessibility & Digital Inclusion	✔ Available in Albanian, Serbian, English. ✔ Mobile-friendly app exists. ✘ Unemployment declaration is not actually available online. ✘ No job search feature or employer connections.	1/5	Enable full digital unemployment registration. Create a job-matching tool for job seekers.
2. User Experience (UX) & Design Usability	✘ No clear descriptions of services. ✘ Unemployment status tracking is unavailable.	2/5	Provide clear guidance on services. Implement tracking & notifications.
3. Gender Responsiveness & Relevance	✘ No programs for women returning to work. ✘ No financial incentives for businesses hiring women.	1.5/5	Introduce career support programs for women. Create re-employment pathways for women (e.g., post-maternity leave programs). Offer support for informal workers, especially in caregiving roles.

	✗ No recognition of caregiving as a reason for employment gaps.		
4. Efficiency & Responsiveness	✗ No real-time tracking or confirmation notifications for applications.	2	Add dashboards with live status, and estimated processing time for each service.
5. User Feedback & Continuous Improvement	✗ No user feedback system or public performance data available. ✗ No public data showing how user input informs service improvements.	1.5/5	Introduce service rating & reporting mechanism. Publish service performance reports. Create visible “Give Feedback” buttons, conduct regular satisfaction surveys, and publish performance insights quarterly.

Service 4: Open Jobs

Overview: The Open Jobs section on eKosova provides users with a listing of current job vacancies available across public sector institutions.

Assessment Criteria	Findings	Score	Recommendations
1. Accessibility & Digital Inclusion	✔ Available in Albanian, Serbian, English. ✔ Mobile-friendly app exists. ✘ The platform lists job openings but does not offer filters (e.g., location, sector).	2/5	Add search filters and sort functions.
2. User Experience (UX) & Design Usability	✘ No clear descriptions of services. ✘ Listings lack visual clarity and structured formats (e.g., bullet points, icons).	2/5	Provide clear guidance on services. Introduce structured, uniform formats for job ads.
3. Gender Responsiveness & Relevance	✘ No information on programs supporting women in employment. ✘ No data or filters that highlight inclusive employers or jobs with flexible arrangements.	1/5	- Highlight women-friendly policies (e.g., maternity support, flexible work). - Partner with organizations promoting gender equality in employment.
4. Efficiency & Responsiveness	✘ No alerts, notifications, or real-time updates for new job posts.	1/5	Integrate a dashboard to track application status if connected

	✗ No tracking of user interest or engagement.		
5. User Feedback & Continuous Improvement	✓ A “Report Issue” button is available but there’s no public record of updates or performance improvements.	3/5	Introduce a feedback section and publish quarterly reports on improvements or user needs.

Service 5: Education Category

The Education category on eKosova includes the following key services:

1. Registration of Private Preschool Institutions for the Voucher Program: Apply to register private preschools under the government voucher scheme.
2. Application for Teaching Career License: Initiate licensing for teaching professionals.
3. Application for Renewal of the Teaching Career License: Renew existing teaching career licenses.
4. Application for an Advanced Teaching License: Apply for a higher-tier teaching license.
5. Application for Renewal of the Advanced Teaching License: Renew previously issued advanced teaching licenses.
6. Application for a Permanent Teaching License: Apply for a lifetime or indefinite teaching license.
7. Verification of Diploma – Serbian Language Schools: Submit documents for validation of diplomas from Serbian-language schools.
8. Verification of Diploma – University of North Mitrovica: Validate diplomas issued by the University of North Mitrovica.
9. Learning Recognition Application: Submit requests to recognize informal or prior learning.
10. Equivalence and Academic Info – Public & Private School Documents: Pay fees for document verification.
11. Equivalence and Academic Info – Higher Education Diplomas: Administrative fees for verifying higher education credentials.
12. Equivalence and Academic Info – Pre-University Diplomas: Administrative fees for pre-university diploma validation.
13. Fee for Verification of Various Documents: Pay fees for miscellaneous educational document verifications.
14. Licensing of Private Educational Institutions and Preschools: Apply for institutional licenses.
15. Licensing of Private Educational & Vocational Training Institutions: Covers licensing beyond preschools—also includes vocational and pre-university bodies.
16. Student Center – Rent from Public Facilities: Rental services for student housing or premises.
17. Student Center – Participations: Likely refers to contributions or participation fees in student centers.
18. University of Prizren – Rent from Public Buildings: Rent payment services for facilities tied to the University of Prizren.
19. University Participations (Prizren, Peja, Gjiilan, Gjakova, Mitrovica, Ferizaj): Payments linked to university participation fees.
20. University of Ferizaj – Rent from Public Buildings: Similar rental-related services for Ferizaj's public education properties.
21. Kosovo Accreditation Agency – Accreditation Fee: Accreditation fee submission for educational institutions.
22. Albanological Institute of Prishtina – Rent from Public Buildings: Facility rental management service.
23. Agency for Vocational Education – Various School Locations (Prizren, Gjiilan, Ferizaj): Participation or rental-related applications tied to regional vocational schools.
24. National Qualification Authority – Other Administrative Tasks: Covers a wide array of administrative services.

25. University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina” – Participations: Fee services for student engagement or programs.

26. University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina” – Sale of Services / Goods / Projects: Payment portals for services, products, or project-related activities at the university.

Assessment Criteria	Findings	Score	Recommendations
1. Accessibility & Digital Inclusion	✓ Available in Albanian, Serbian, English. ✓ Mobile-friendly app exists. ✓ Most services are accessible online. ✗ No features tailored to different user literacy	3/5	Include explanations for key processes in simplified language.
2. User Experience (UX) & Design Usability	✓ Clear service categories. ✗ No clear descriptions of services. ✗ Some services lack detailed guidance or status tracking. ✗ No estimated processing times provided.	2/5	Provide clear instructions for each service and track application progress. Display estimated processing times visibly.
3. Gender Responsiveness & Relevance	✗ No indication that women’s needs (e.g., returning educators, caregivers, etc.) are considered. ✗ No support services for underrepresented groups in education.	1/5	Conduct user research to understand gender-specific barriers. Introduce licensing pathways for women re-entering the workforce.

4. Efficiency & Responsiveness	✗ No alerts, notifications, or real-time updates for new job posts. ✗ No tracking of user interest or engagement.	1/5	Integrate a dashboard to track application status if connected
5. User Feedback & Continuous Improvement	✓ A "Report Issue" button is available but there's no public record of updates or performance improvements.	3/5	Introduce a feedback section and publish quarterly reports on improvements or user needs.

Service 6: Property Category

The Property category on eKosova includes the following key services:

1. Certificate of Real Estate Rights: Request a legal document proving ownership or rights over a real estate property.
2. Certificate on Rights to Real Estate for Family Members: Obtain documentation confirming real estate rights for family members.
3. Coordinates of the Cadastral Unit: Access geographical coordinates of a specific cadastral (land/property) unit.
4. Coordinates of the Cadastral Unit for Family Members: Request cadastral coordinates specific to properties held by family members.
5. Copy of the Plan for the Cadastral Unit: Obtain the cadastral map/plan for a property unit.
6. Copy of the Cadastral Unit Plan for Family Members: Get cadastral unit plans relevant to family-owned property.
7. Application for Renewal of the License of Real Estate Appraisers: Submit a request to renew the professional license of property appraisers.
8. Application for Change of Degree of License of Real Estate Appraisers from First Degree to Second Degree: Request an upgrade in professional certification level for real estate appraisers.

Assessment Criteria	Findings	Score	Recommendations
1. Accessibility & Digital Inclusion	✓ Available in Albanian, Serbian, English. ✓ Mobile-friendly app exists. ✓ Most services are accessible online. ✗ No features tailored to different user literacy	3/5	Include explanations for key processes in simplified language.
2. User Experience (UX) & Design Usability	✓ Clear service categories. ✗ No clear descriptions of all services.	2/5	Provide clear instructions for each service.

	✗ Some services lack detailed guidance or status tracking.		
3. Gender Responsiveness & Relevance	✗ No indication that services consider women's property rights challenges or inheritance-related exclusions.	1/5	Conduct user research to identify gender-based legal or cultural barriers in property ownership.
4. Efficiency & Responsiveness	✗ No alerts, notifications, or real-time updates for new job posts. ✗ No tracking of user interest or engagement.	1/5	Integrate a dashboard to track application status if connected
5. User Feedback & Continuous Improvement	✓ A “Report Issue” button is available but there’s no public record of updates or performance improvements.	3/5	Introduce a feedback section and publish quarterly reports on improvements or user needs.

Service 7: Civil Status Category

The Civil Status category on eKosova includes the following key services:

1. Download "Birth Certificate": Allows individuals to download their own birth certificate digitally.
2. Download "Extract": Provides access to a civil status extract containing basic personal data.
3. Download "Marriage Certificate": Enables users to digitally download their marriage certificate.
4. Download "Birth Certificate" for Family Members: Permits users to access birth certificates on behalf of close relatives.
5. Download "Extract" for Family Members: Grants access to a civil status extract for family members.
6. Download "Marriage Certificate" for Family Members: Allows the download of a marriage certificate for relatives.
7. Download "Death Certificate" for Family Members: Enables users to obtain the death certificate of a deceased family member.
8. Apply to Regain Citizenship of the Republic of Kosovo: Application form for individuals seeking to reclaim Kosovo citizenship.

Assessment Criteria	Findings	Score	Recommendations
1. Accessibility & Digital Inclusion	✔ Available in Albanian, Serbian, English. ✔ Mobile-friendly app exists. ✔ Most services are available online, including for family members. ✘ No features tailored to different user literacy	4/5	Include explanations for key processes in simplified language. Add guidance or a helpline for women with limited digital literacy.
2. User Experience (UX) & Design Usability	✔ Clear service categories. ✘ No clear descriptions of all services. ✘ Some services lack detailed guidance or status tracking.	3.5/5	Provide clear instructions for each service. Add short tooltips or examples explaining what each certificate is for. Consider a FAQ section for civil status use cases.

3. Gender Responsiveness & Relevance	✗ No gender-specific guidance or explanations regarding usage for single mothers, widows, etc.	2.5/5	Add examples where documents are often used by women (e.g., for childcare, inheritance claims). Ensure inclusive language and gender-sensitive design.
4. Efficiency & Responsiveness	✓ Instant digital download. ✗ No notification or confirmation system once documents are accessed.	4/5	Introduce optional download confirmation emails or SMS alerts.
5. User Feedback & Continuous Improvement	✓ A “Report Issue” button is available but there’s no public record of updates or performance improvements.	3/5	Introduce a feedback section and publish quarterly reports on improvements or user needs.

Service 8: Police Category

The Police category on eKosova includes the following key services:

1. Search Individual Fines – Allows users to look up traffic or administrative fines issued in their name.
2. Search Fine by Reference Code – Enables users to search for specific fines using a reference number.
3. Application for Employment in the Kosovo Police – Digital form for individuals seeking to apply for open positions within the Kosovo Police.

Assessment Criteria	Findings	Score	Recommendations
1. Accessibility & Digital Inclusion	✓ Available in Albanian, Serbian, English. ✓ Mobile-friendly app exists. ✓ Most services are available online, including for family members. ✗ No features tailored to different user literacy	3.5/5	Include explanations for key processes in simplified language. Add guidance or a helpline for women with limited digital literacy.
2. User Experience (UX) & Design Usability	✓ Clear service categories. ✗ No clear descriptions of all services. ✗ Lack of explanation or context about fine reference codes or employment requirements.	3/5	Provide clear instructions for each service. Add help text, tooltips, or links to FAQs to explain fine lookup options and job application steps.
3. Gender Responsiveness & Relevance	✗ No indication that the services are designed with consideration for women (e.g., job application	2/5	Consider highlighting support for underrepresented applicants (e.g., women).

	inclusivity, barriers for female applicants).		
4. Efficiency & Responsiveness	✅ Fines lookup appears instant. ❌ No application status updates or tracking system for police job applications.	3/5	Provide estimated processing timelines.
5. User Feedback & Continuous Improvement	✅ A "Report Issue" button is available but there's no public record of updates or performance improvements.	3/5	Introduce a feedback section and publish quarterly reports on improvements or user needs.

Service 9: Contributions and Pensions Category

The Contributions and pensions category on eKosova includes the following key service Account Statement for Pension Savings, which allows users who are members of the Kosovo Pension Savings Trust (KPST) to download their pension contribution statements. The process is straightforward and user-friendly, including verification via QR code and the ability to select the reporting period (e.g., last year or from the start).

Assessment Criteria	Findings	Score	Recommendations
1. Accessibility & Digital Inclusion	✔ Available in Albanian, Serbian, English. ✔ Mobile-friendly app exists. ✔ Service is accessible online, clearly visible, and simple to use. Supports both citizens and third-party verification via QR code.	4.5/5	Ensure the platform remains optimized for mobile and lower-bandwidth access.
2. User Experience (UX) & Design Usability	✔ The interface is clean and intuitive. Clear instructions and selectable reporting options improve usability.	4.5/5	Provide clear instructions for each service. Add help text, tooltips, or links to FAQs to explain fine lookup options and job application steps.
3. Gender Responsiveness & Relevance	✘ No disaggregated data or targeted features for women, but the service itself is neutral and highly relevant to all working citizens.	4.5/5	Consider incorporating data use breakdowns or FAQs addressing women's concerns.

4. Efficiency & Responsiveness	☒ Real-time download, immediate access to records, and official use accepted.	4.5/5	
5. User Feedback & Continuous Improvement	☒ A “Report Issue” button is available but there’s no public record of updates or performance improvements.	3/5	Introduce a feedback section and publish quarterly reports on improvements or user needs.

Service 10: Inspectorate Category

The Inspectorate category on eKosova includes the following key service

Assessment Criteria	Findings	Score	Recommendations
1. Accessibility & Digital Inclusion	☒ Available in Albanian, Serbian, English. ☒ Mobile-friendly app exists. ☒ Visual clarity.	4.5/5	Add a simple guide or video explaining the process for first-time users.
2. User Experience (UX) & Design Usability	☒ Multi-step form is intuitive (1. Complainant details → 2. Incident data → 3. Witnesses). ☒ Users can upload evidence. ☒ Clear buttons.	5/5	Consider integrating auto-fill for logged-in user data to save time.

3. Gender Responsiveness & Relevance	✔ Gender field included. ✗ No dedicated section for reporting sexual/gender-based misconduct.	4/5	Add tailored language and support mechanisms for GBV-related cases.
4. Efficiency & Responsiveness	✔ Well-structured digital form streamlines submission.	4/5	Provide estimated processing timelines.
5. User Feedback & Continuous Improvement	✔ A “Report Issue” button is available but there’s no public record of updates or performance improvements.	3/5	Introduce a feedback section and publish quarterly reports on improvements or user needs.

Recommendations

To ensure Kosovo's digital transformation is inclusive, effective, and aligned with global best practices, it is essential to integrate the OECD's Good Practice Principles with the European Union's digital governance frameworks. These frameworks not only promote user-centered service design but also ensure transparency, interoperability, and inclusivity across the public sector.

Key Frameworks for Alignment:

- The European Interoperability Framework (EIF): Promotes seamless and secure data-sharing across public institutions and encourages design based on users' needs and life events.
- The EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025: Highlights the importance of gender equality in digital transitions and the need for gender-responsive service design and policy evaluation mechanisms.
- The EU Digital Government Indicators: Provides performance metrics for measuring user-centricity, transparency, and accessibility of digital public services.
- The Tallinn Declaration on eGovernment (2017): Commits EU member states to delivering digital services that are user-driven, proactive, and interoperable, and that protect citizens' digital rights.

Policy Recommendation:

Kosovo's e-Government Strategy 2023–2027 should be revised or supplemented with a formal mandate for applying user-centered design methodologies throughout the public service development lifecycle. This should include:

- Mandatory user testing for all new digital services, ensuring accessibility for women, elderly citizens, and marginalized groups.
- Gender-disaggregated data collection, essential for monitoring gaps in access, usage, and satisfaction with digital services.
- Cross-agency collaboration, structured around user journeys rather than institutional hierarchies, to enhance integration and usability.
- Inclusion of co-creation practices, involving end users—especially women—as active contributors in service ideation and testing.

By embedding these requirements into Kosovo's digital policy frameworks, the government can transition from a siloed, top-down model to a participatory and inclusive digital ecosystem. This shift is critical not only for improving service usability but also for fostering trust, reducing inequalities, and meeting EU accession expectations.

Conclusion and next steps

Kosovo has taken promising steps toward digital transformation through platforms like eKosova and the development of the e-Government Strategy 2023–2027. However, without embedding structured service design practices and ensuring gender-sensitive, user-centered approaches, these digital services risk reproducing the very barriers they are meant to overcome.

The findings of this report underscore that women in Kosovo—particularly those from rural and low-income backgrounds—face distinct challenges in accessing and benefiting from digital public services. To address these gaps, Kosovo must transition from policy intent to operational implementation, guided by international best practices.

Next Steps for Kosovo's Digital Transformation:

- Pilot a user-centered design initiative within eKosova, focused on a high-impact service (e.g., childcare or employment assistance) using the Double Diamond or OECD methodology.
- Establish a Gender-Responsive Digital Services Unit, embedded within relevant government agencies, to oversee the development, testing, and monitoring of inclusive services.
- Introduce a digital public service performance dashboard, aligned with OECD and EU indicators, to track progress in real time and gather feedback from diverse user groups.
- Formalize collaboration with civil society and academia, particularly women-led organizations, to support participatory design workshops, digital literacy efforts, and long-term digital inclusion goals.
- Integrate Kosovo's digital policies with EU governance frameworks, using the EIF, EU Gender Equality Strategy, and Tallinn Declaration as roadmaps for reform and compliance.

By adopting these next steps, Kosovo can build a digital governance ecosystem that is not only efficient and modern—but also inclusive, equitable, and trusted by all.

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Annex 1: Context Analysis – Understanding the System and Its Users

1.1 Research Methods

Tools:

- KoboToolbox (Free, user-friendly for surveys in low-internet areas)
- Google Forms / Microsoft Forms (Quick survey deployment)
- Dedoose / Atlas.ti / NVivo (for qualitative coding & thematic analysis)
- Observation checklists – for structured field observations during service usage.

Resources:

- [UN Women's Gender and ICT Toolkit](#) – for inclusive data collection approaches
- [IDEO.org's Human-Centered Design Toolkit](#) – offers exercises for interviews and empathy-building.

1.2 Sensemaking Wall

Tools:

- Miro / Mural (Digital whiteboards to cluster findings visually – great for remote teams)
- Sticky Notes Wall (Analog) – Great for in-person group workshops.

1.3 Stakeholder Map

Tools:

- Canva or Lucidchart – for clear, printable stakeholder maps
- Power Interest Grid – to classify stakeholders based on influence and relevance
- OpenIDEO Stakeholder Mapping Guide

Resources: [OECD Stakeholder Engagement Toolkit](#)

1.4 Problem Framing

Techniques:

- “Five Whys” Root Cause Analysis
- How Might We (HMW) framing questions
- Reframing Matrix (internal vs. external causes)

Resource: [Service Design Tools](#) – includes framing and synthesis methods.

1.5 User Research Interviews

Guides & Templates:

- Interview script templates (tailored for women, rural groups, caregivers)
- Consent forms for ethical research
- User Journey Templates – to document their experience in a visual flow

Resources:

- [UNDP Gender & Digital Toolkit](#) – for gender-aware interviewing
- [This Is Service Design Doing \(Book\)](#) – includes in-depth guides and templates.

1.6 From Needs to Insights

Tools:

- Insight Cards – write each insight on a card for prioritization
- Affinity Diagrams – cluster related insights together

Templates:

- “I need [X] because [Y]” insight formulation
- “Insight-Solution-Impact” 3-column worksheet

1.7 Data & Knowledge Catalogue

Sources to include:

- Government legislation on digital services
- eKosova usage statistics
- National gender indicators (from ASK or UN Women)
- CSO and NGO reports on access barriers (e.g., KWN, Democracy for Development, GAP Institute)

Tools:

- Google Sheets – for tracking data & documents
- Notion / Obsidian – for organized note-taking and tagging

Annex 3: Idea Development – Refining the Chosen Concept

Goal: Deepen and refine the selected idea by evaluating its social impact, ethical considerations, and technical feasibility. This step ensures that the solution is not only feasible but also just, inclusive, and scalable.

3.1 Idea Description

- Define the solution in 1–2 short paragraphs.
- Include: Title, Catchphrase or summary, and Key value proposition

Tool: Use a simple template like this:

Title: Digital Support for Single Mothers

Catchphrase: “Access. Apply. Advance.”

Description: A blended service offering online + offline support for mothers applying for family benefits.

3.2 User Stories

Create 3–5 short, non-technical scenarios describing how different users will interact with the service.

Template: “As a [user type], I want to [action/goal], so that I can [benefit/need].”

Examples:

- “As a single mother with low digital literacy, I want to be guided through my maternity support application, so I feel confident I’ve submitted everything.”
- “As a rural woman with a poor internet connection, I want to apply through a mobile-friendly version, so I don’t need to visit an urban office.”

3.3 Ethical and System Mapping

- Ask key questions:
 - What data will be collected?
 - Are there privacy risks?
 - Could this service unintentionally exclude or disadvantage any group?
- Sketch a System Overview Diagram showing how users, data, backend services, and external stakeholders interact.

Use an online tool like Miro or Lucidchart to map interactions.

Annex 4: Prototyping, Testing, and Assessing Implications

Goal: Build early versions of the solution (low or high fidelity), test them with real users (especially women from underrepresented groups), and refine based on feedback.

4.1 Desktop Walkthrough

- Simulate the experience using paper mockups or digital wireframes.
- Map out each screen or interaction as a journey.
- Run this walkthrough with your team and note where users get stuck or confused.

Tools: Figma (digital wireframes), Google Slides (quick mockups), paper and post-its (low-tech).

4.2 Emotional Journey Feedback

- Add emotional markers (😊 😐 😞) across the service journey to show where users feel:
 - Supported or frustrated
 - Confused or confident
- Use simple charts or printed service journeys where users can add stickers or emojis.

4.3 System UX Map

- Visually connect:
 - User interactions
 - Backend processes
 - Potential barriers or accessibility issues
- Include: Digital interface, offline support options, emotional checkpoints.

4.4 Iterative Testing & Refinement

- Conduct 3–5 quick feedback loops.
- Involve:
 - Women with low connectivity
 - Rural users
 - Non-tech-savvy participants
- Use “think aloud” testing where users narrate their experience while using the prototype.

Tools: Maze, UsabilityHub, physical observation.

Annex 2: Envisioning Solutions – From Ideas to Concepts

This phase focuses on ideating potential solutions that solve user-identified challenges. Solutions are generated collaboratively through participatory formats, emphasizing co-creation with end-users, particularly underrepresented groups.

2.1 Ideas Elicitation

Tool: 'How Might We' Questions
Description: Transform problems into opportunity questions using 'How might we...?' to stimulate creative thinking.

Use: In workshops or brainstorming sessions to generate a wide range of ideas.

Example: How might we make maternity benefit applications more accessible for single mothers in rural areas?

Tool Suggestion: Miro, MURAL, or simple sticky notes in in-person settings.

2.2 Idea Clustering and Selection

Tool: Affinity Mapping

Description: Group related ideas to identify common themes and patterns.

Use: Organize all ideas from the brainstorming session to reveal insights and prioritize directions.

Tool Suggestion: Google Jamboard, post-it wall, or Trello.

2.3 Evaluation Matrix

Tool: Decision Matrix

Description: Evaluate ideas using defined criteria such as feasibility, impact, cost, and inclusivity.

Use: Compare ideas systematically and select the most promising for further development.

Tool Suggestion: Excel, Airtable, or custom scoring template.

Example Criteria:

- Feasibility: Can this be done with current resources?
- Impact: Will this significantly improve the experience for women?
- Inclusivity: Does this address diverse needs (language, digital access, etc.)?

Suggested Resources and Toolkits

- IDEO.org's Human-Centered Design Toolkit
- Design Council UK: Double Diamond Framework
- Nesta's DIY Toolkit
- UNDP Accelerator Labs: Tools for Inclusive Innovation

