



Agjencia Kosovare e Standardizimit
Kosovo Standardisation Agency
Kosovska Agencija za Standardizaciju

MIDTERM STRATEGY OF KOSOVO STANDARDIZATION AGENCY 2020 - 2025



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MIDTERM STRATEGY OF

KOSOVO STANDARDIZATION

AGENCY

2020 - 2025



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Abbreviations

AKS	Kosovo Standardization Agency
CB	Certification Body
CCMC	CEN-CENELEC Management Centre
CEN	European Committee for Standardization
CENELEC	European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization
DPS	Albanian General Directorate for Standardization
ETSI	European Telecommunication Standards Institute
e-CMIS	e-Commerce Management Information System
FMG	Free Movement of Goods
GoK	Government of Kosovo
IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
IR	Inception Report
MTI	Ministry of Trade and Industry
NSB	National Standardization Body
QI	Quality Infrastructure
QMS	Quality Management Systems
SMIS	Standards Management Information System
TC	Technical Committee
WTO/TBT	World Trade Organization/Technical Barriers to Trade

About AKS

AKS, the Kosovo Standardisation Agency, is the sole standards body in Kosovo; it has been working for 14 years to provide the standards users and the standardization stakeholders in the country with the European and international standards adopted as national ones and with the standardization policies and rules according to the European and international requirements.

The most recent Law No. 06/L-019 on Standardization, provides AKS with an improved framework, as it is transposing the European Regulation 1025/2012 on standardization, in many of the aspects concerning standardization procedures. The standardization legislative framework was especially changed in 2018 to give AKS the opportunity to work according to the European principles, policies and rules.

The quality infrastructure in Kosovo is established and functioning. AKS is one of the quality infrastructure (QI) main pillars and is performing its duties accordingly. The policy on standardization of products, services and of the management systems is developed to guarantee that standards set up specifications as basis for conformity assessment.

According to the law, we are representing Kosovo abroad, and we make all efforts to be present and represented in all the European and international standardization structures. We conclude cooperation agreements with different NSBs and keep good relationships with our peers.

This Strategy is based on the analysis performed at the end of August 2019, analysis focused on the actual situation of the Kosovo NSB. It is recommended to begin by reading the analysis first (Annex I to the Strategy) to fully understand the objectives and the priorities we have set for the following five years.

1. The context

We function in a new born country constantly challenged where organizations must be adapting to, updating, anticipating or even driving change in order to perform well and be recognized.

The pressure to adapt, to change, to better ourselves and the Agency makes us face standardization challenges every day. To thrive in such an environment, organizations must have a clear vision of where they want to go and what they want to achieve. This Strategy sets out our vision (why we do what we do), our mission (what we do and how we do), our goals (what we need to achieve to realize our mission and vision) and our priorities (where we need to focus our resources to make this happen). These priorities are designed to be regularly adjusted to respond to changes coming from our internal and external drivers.

All our efforts will go into performing at European requested level, with the obvious goal of joining the standardization European structures, keeping also in mind the international ones, but also, at the same time, being the trustworthy and relying factor at national level and serving our stakeholders with proper standardization deliverables.

2. Facing challenges

Worldwide standardisation is in a continuous development process, changes are needed, new requirements are set; therefore, we are facing challenges every day and the more circumstances change the more we have to adapt and prioritize our work. Making standardization everyday abiding by the European and International systems comes with risks and opportunities that we face or seize. The mixture of national economy, political aspects, European requirements, international rules, all concerning standardization one way or another, gives AKS the opportunity to make its own way as a well-established body.

As Kosovo is a new country, there are some special circumstances, due to this situation and some differences compared to the other NSBs in Europe. We started from ground zero, fourteen years ago. Our history of standardization is short. We started to develop our collection of standards exclusively based on European and international documents with no original national standards.

This type of circumstance has its own advantages but also some disadvantages.

Having no national original standards means that we have no standards conflicting with the European ones, but it also means having no standardization education and culture, lack of understanding regarding standards use, no culture of the discussions and development of standards in the technical committees. Companies are not used to implement standards in their businesses and contracts, authorities are lacking the procedure for enforcing this culture to the society. For all this to happen, we need to concentrate on specific activities, according to the European and international examples, guides, rules and policies.

Economical aspects: as a small country, the economy is showing steps of moving forward but we still feel uncertainty and lack of knowledge and education about standardization and its benefits. The challenge is to make us known by as many stakeholders as possible, using specific marketing and promotion tools.

Both private and public standardization stakeholders need to understand the role and the importance of standards in economy and the part they are playing in economic development and in removing the technical barriers to trade. Educating, informing and training them to this extent is one of the objectives AKS is assuming and is part of this strategy.

Standards are relevant to many aspects of our daily lives. They play an important role, alongside regulations, in protecting the environment, enhancing safety as well as health and well-being of consumers and employees. When products and services conform to standards, they are presumed to be safe, reliable and fit for purpose.

Political aspects: nationally, AKS is working according to the new law on standardization and, same with most developing countries, is facing difficulties due to underfunding. We need time and resources to make people aware of the benefits standards bring to their daily life. Changes come with financial efforts but also with spending time and learning a lot. There is a national request to provide standards in the fields

where Kosovo economy is active, therefore standards have to be adopted and approved in a fast track manner.

Externally, having to meet the national demands and provide our stakeholders with the necessary European and international standards, we need to be able to convince the European and international standardization organisations that we are a reliable partner and that we can cope with all the requirements and join them as members. In addition to this, the special position our country is in, with not all governments recognising its independence, raises additional difficulties in being accepted in the European and international standardisation organisations.

However, even if in a large degree this is out of our control, joining CEN/CENELEC, ISO and IEC remains one of our main goals. While having to wait for a more favourable global and regional circumstance we need to do everything in our power to fulfil all the technical requirements of the European and international structures we intend to become members of, so as, when the time comes, to be ready to prove the system is in place.

Societal aspects: Kosovo consumers increasingly expect products and services to be tailored to their needs, in general. For the moment, this applies to standards in a small degree as they have grown accustomed to a certain traditional way of acquiring them and only now, we are in the process of offering new standardization services. This pushes us to be more persuasive and better integrate standardization stakeholders into our decision-making processes. In addition, it becomes more and more important to ask for the customer feedback, to better anticipate their expectations and their behaviour.

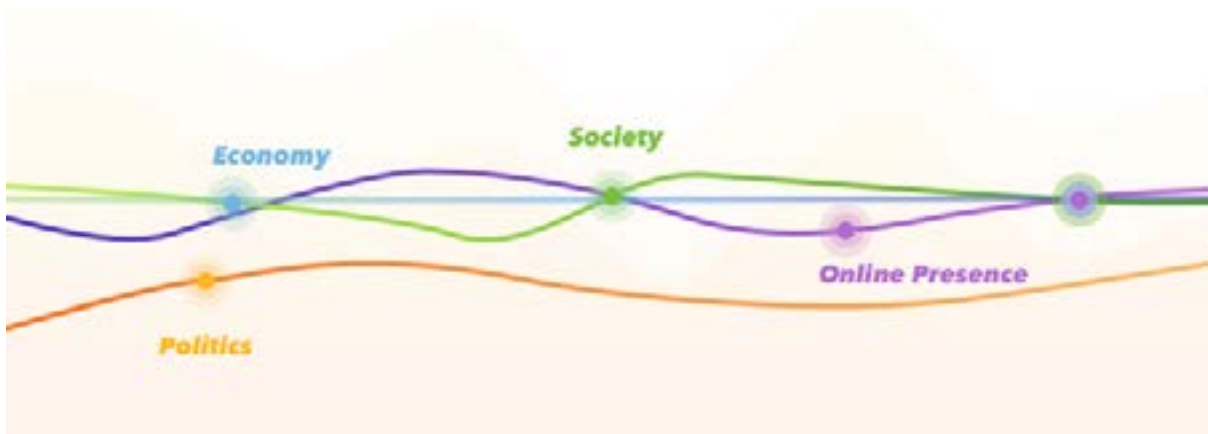
Standards are created by bringing together the experience, expertise and interests of different stakeholder categories such as the producers, sellers, buyers, users and regulators of a material, product, process or service. These stakeholders are represented by business and industry associations, public authorities, professional bodies, trade associations, consumer organizations, environmental organizations, trade unions, enforcement bodies, conformity assessment bodies, etc.

Participation from all sectors of society gives standards users confidence that standards reflect not only the scientific and technical state of the art, but that they also take into consideration the needs, concerns and priorities of the wider society.

Businesses also benefit from having access to standards that take into account the concerns and priorities of societal stakeholders, as they help ensure products and services are developed and delivered in line with market expectations, the health and safety of workers is safeguarded, and environmental protection is maximized; in other words, the social responsibility of market players is promoted. Also, the technical legislation for products is supported by the harmonized standards.

Online presence: digital products and services are taking over the standardization world; this offers us many opportunities in the area of helping to boost efficiency and productivity, modernizing our ways of working and adapting easier to the European and international ones. IT equipment, applications, internal database and e-catalogue and e-commerce is the modern and required way of working with CEN, CENELEC, ISO and IEC as well as with the national stakeholders.

While the political aspects are beyond our reach and cannot be influenced, the needs of our society and, in general, the tendencies of our economy can be met and directed as far as standardization is concerned. That is why, as presented in the graph below, we consider that our challenge is to be able to gather all the needs, tendencies, behaviour and presence in a common position, met and understood both by us, as the National Standardization Body and by our society standardization acting players.



3. Our vision

AKS, a strong National Standards Body, acknowledged by the standards users and standardization stakeholders at national level, a very good and dependable partner at regional, European and international level.

4. Our mission

We develop, adopt and approve national standards, according to the European and international standardization policy and rules to strongly stimulate economic development, to protect health and improve safety, to create the basis for competitiveness in our country and beyond, aiming towards a sustainable future.

We offer various standardization deliverables, tailored to the needs and expectations of the standardization stakeholders in Kosovo.

5. Our objectives

Our objectives for the next five years are built on the present situation of Kosovo and AKS, on the requirements we have to meet and the needs we must fulfil nationally. Sticking to our objectives and meeting them one by one is the focus point of our strategy as this would give us the acknowledgement, image and boost we need at national, European and international level.

That is why, building up on our Business Plan (2015-2020) and according to our Law on standardization, we identified six main objectives to be met in the next five years.

5.1. Kosovo standards (SK) used nationally

We need to ensure that the society in general and standardization stakeholders, in particular, are aware of the benefits that standards bring. We have to ensure that standards are easily accessible, usable, and available when the market needs them.

We will provide education regarding standardization and deliver knowledge and experience to our stakeholders in Kosovo.

5.2. Meeting national needs

To realize our vision, our system must be comprehensive. We will ensure that we are encouraging everyone to come to standardization to speak and we are listening to all voices both in the process of standards development and when we make decisions as an organization.

Also, the national collection of standards must be comprehensive and better suiting all the standardization stakeholders. For this, we need to structure the Annual Standardization Program and to diversify the sources where to purchase the standards that have to be adopted, according to the national needs.

5.3. Overcoming European and international standardization challenges

In order for us to be recognized and seen as a partner at European and International level we need to align our structures and processes to the CEN/CENELEC and ISO/IEC policies, rules and guides .

One of the most important tasks is to gain full access to European and international standards and to the annual lists of approved standards. Given the described context we are working in, this is a challenge and also a priority for us. This also means that we need to cope with the risks but also to take advantage of the benefits of protecting the copyright European and international standards are bearing.

We took the first steps already in October 2018 when AKS managed to conclude a license agreement with CEN and one with CENELEC regarding the supply of the European homegrown standards. For the rest of the standards (ISO, IEC) we actually have a contract with DPS, but we intend to initiate discussions with ISO and IEC to have the same license agreements allowing AKS access to international standards.

5.4. Developing original national standards

AKS considers having a special section in the Annual National Standardization Program dedicated to original national standards in order to meet the needs of our domestic standardization stakeholders; in this respect our efforts will focus in the future short-term period on bringing all the experts together in our technical committees to work on our first original Kosovo Standards. This will be an activity that will need special attention to plan, finance, staff and perform.

Due to the European requirements on conflicting standards, our first Kosovo original standards will be on the special conditions of climate, soil and everything encompassed by the Eurocodes, and they will be the National Annexes to the European Standards already adopted as national ones. We also started to research on an initiative to make a national standard on our Kosovo popular costume, within the national TC on Textiles and Shoe Leather.

This way, we make sure to avoid any overlapping or conflicting situations with the European and international standards adopted and still develop the necessary complementary standards.

5.5. Finalizing, upgrading and successfully using our electronic tools

To be better linked to the European and international standardization systems and to improve the way standard users are able to purchase standards we implemented electronic tools; these facilitate the management of the standardization processes and increase the efficiency of the information and selling services.

These systems, although fully operational, currently still do not offer the possibility to deliver standards online due to some particularities of the national financing system.

5.6. Strengthened and visible

In order to prove sustainable and reliable, we need to have our Information Centre up and running, delivering marketing and promotion activities, guidance, standardization information and consultancy. We will develop new products and services to serve our national demands and needs and to work according to the European policy.

Thus, we will offer, according to our Law on Standardization, training courses, consultancy on standardization, information and subscription services.

The specific standardization literature, the Standardization Magazine and Bulletin as well as printed materials on AKS and its activity would bring visibility and information about standardization, but also will contribute to the education about standardization.



6. National standardization priorities (our strategy for meeting objectives)

Our objectives are the ones guiding our way during the next years and they will interconnect between our national obligations and the way we are requested to work at national, European and international level.

Standards are the tools that help supplying efficient solutions for competitive businesses, sustainable economic growth, efficient exports, while also supporting the public policies, certification and market surveillance and offering an effective mechanism for promoting consumer protection and social responsibility.

They ensure the coherence of the essential characteristics of goods and services such as expected quality, environment aspects, safety, economy, reliability, compatibility, efficiency and contribute to meeting the market expectations on products and services.

We will strive to fulfil all our duties and to coagulate the entire technical knowledge in the country for the standardization activities.

6.1. Kosovo Standards (SK) used nationally

Rationale

To encourage the widespread use of national standards and to attract all relevant experts to the technical committees, AKS must clearly demonstrate the benefits of using standards. Examples from CEN/CENELEC and from selected NSBs in Europe can be used and with the support of the government, especially the ministries and other authorities acting as main beneficiaries of standards, AKS can cement its position as the authority in the field of standardization.

We will implement marketing strategies and tools to convince both the authorities and the private sector to be more involved in the decision-making process regarding specific standardization activities and standardization governance.

This can be done first by fostering education about standardization and delivering training courses, speeches and presentations to better spread the knowledge among standardization stakeholders in the country. Also, printed materials like brochures, leaflets or flyers can be developed and distributed on all the above-mentioned events.

Actions

- Reach out to different standardization stakeholders (especially academia, private big companies and authorities) to have visits/events together with AKS, giving the opportunity to speak about the benefits of standards.
- Contact CCMC and selected NSBs to provide AKS with models, examples of this type of presentations to be adapted and used nationally.
- Design and produce printed materials like brochures, leaflets or flyers on AKS as an NSB, on the standardization activity, on the TCs structure, on selling standards and distribute them with the occasion of the events AKS is participating at.
- Initiate a “Training of trainers” program to secure knowledge, experience and expertise internally. For that we will select 2 employees to be following a personal development program for one year, in the beginning and then train them as a permanent basis of improvement and update. They will be subject to all of the training program that CCMC offers, to all of the training that various external projects offer, to experience exchange visits and similar actions that will give them the knowledge and abilities to become trainers we can rely on and we can use as our own.
- We will initiate a training program in year II with courses to be delivered mainly by our trainers.
- Begin a campaign on “Education about Standardization” structured as a program of speeches and training courses designed for different target groups, developed together with the academia and experts from within and outside Kosovo.

Measurement

This objective is a permanent one. During the first year of implementation we plan to reach the following results:

- A more visible Kosovo NSB.
- More events with AKS participation.
- Increased number of standards sold.
- Printed materials on the activities AKS is deploying.
- Own AKS trainers and experts prepared to deliver training courses and speeches.
- AKS training courses delivered as a new service.

6.2. Meeting national needs

Rationale

We have a fairly suitable number of technical committees with a balanced representation of all interested stakeholders thus fulfilling the European standardization system requirements and having all voices at the same table heard and listened.

As a permanent concern, we need to offer the experts coming to the technical committees training courses and a special recognition, but also to benefit of their experience by asking them to contribute to the decision-making process when drawing up the Annual National Standardization Program.

The lists of standards to be adopted, as well as the possible New Work Item Proposals of national original standards should be discussed with them but also with other interested parties that are not TC members. All the standardization stakeholders need to give their input when deciding about the standards to be adopted. Beside TC members, also clients, authorities, universities, the other pillars of the QI, etc. need to express their interest in standards so as all the needs and all the expectations at national level are fulfilled.

The adoption period for standards we are currently using is of 60 days for the entire process until approval. The most difficult part, still, remains the securing of the texts of the standards to be approved. This can take a longer time, as sometimes the organizations we are obtaining the standards from are not reacting in due time. From this point of view, for us to be able to better serve the national community of standards users, we will try to obtain a better delivery time schedule from the License Agreements that we have concluded with CEN and CENELEC.

The collection of standards we have now has to be completed and improved with all the types of standards our stakeholders need, so we need to diversify our sources, to be able to rapidly secure ISO and IEC or EN ISO, EN IEC standards of outmost importance for the Kosovo standardization stakeholders. Also, this list of standards to be adopted needs to be prioritized according to the urgent needs of the stakeholders and of the economy in general.

Actions

- Train and educate the members of the technical committees.
- Submit the lists of standards making the Annual National Standardization Program to all TC members, to all clients, to all involved or interested authorities, QI actors on the market, to obtain their input and feedback, before approving and publishing it, making sure that it includes the actual needs for standards.
- Procedure the way this list becomes the Annual National Standardization Program and set priorities for the standards obtaining process.
- Publish the complete Annual National Standardization Program on the official website, update it whenever necessary and publish the updates in time.
- Contribute to the effective implementation of product legislation by providing the economic operators with the necessary harmonised standards for meeting the requirements in the technical regulations.
- Endeavor to reduce the time needed to obtain the standards, in order to adopt and approve them more rapidly and diversify the sources (CEN, CENELEC, ISO, IEC, DPS, and other NSBs).

Measurements

- Standardization trained experts in TCs.
- Better and more realistic Annual National Standardization Program with updates.
- A procedure on how to draw up the Annual National Standardization Program.
- Reduced time of obtaining the standards to be adopted.
- More sources for the standards needed to be adopted in Kosovo.

6.3. Overcoming European and International standardization challenges

Rationale

Striving to accede the European and international standardization structures led to some first steps made successfully. “CEN/CENELEC Guide 22 on the organizational structure and processes for the assessment of the membership criteria of CEN and CENELEC”, mentions that at least 90 % of the adopted CEN and CENELEC standards should be implemented at national level. The latest achievement we had is the two signed License Agreements with CEN and CENELEC allowing AKS to adopt homegrown European standards as national Kosovo ones. Some other steps were made regarding the requirements for joining CEN and CENELEC and these are serious commitments proving AKS is dedicated to abiding by the European standardization rules.

It is AKS’s intent to contact also ISO and IEC to have license agreements concluded on the providing of international standards to be adopted as Kosovo Standards. This would enlarge our access to standards and allow us to supply the standards users in Kosovo with a larger range of standards.

While trying to be as close as possible to the requirements we face a number of risks; however, a number of opportunities are also presented and should be seized to the national standardization benefit and to the benefit of Kosovo economy.

Thus, some of the risks are connected to the political background and barriers to understanding and change, encompassed in a circle of problems that are beyond the reach of AKS. Still meeting the requirements imposed by the European system presents a lot of opportunities. Some of them are connected to the copyright on standards and protection of this copyright, and the way of conducting standardization activities, in general. While others concern personal development of AKS staff (either present or future) in terms of speaking fluent English, possessing computer skills, being trained on the European standardization requirements, all to the benefit of overcoming the European and international standardization challenges.

Another important requirement of the CEN/CENELEC Guide 22 is that the NSBs possess an Action Plan. AKS fulfilled this requirement for the period 2015-2020; further on we will develop annual work plans aimed to implement this strategy.

Actions

- Adopt European standards at a higher rate, especially the harmonized ones and complement them with adoption of international standards.
- Abide by every provision in the CEN and CENELEC License Agreements, try to amend them to better suit Kosovo national needs, especially regarding the time schedule for delivery of standards to be adopted and the information of the annual list of standards to be approved.
- Better support the regulatory authorities to draft and publish the list of harmonized standards relevant for each regulation by obtaining the information on the newly approved standards on a contractual basis.
- Maintain our efforts to join the regional and international standardization organizations and to be present at all their meetings and gatherings.
- Implement copyright protection as a very important issue and use all the marketing and information tools to make this known to the standards users in Kosovo.
- Research on how to implement the provisions in the national law on standardization regarding protection of copyright and the use of control and sanctions notions provided in the law, for a possible means of education and income.
- Draw up and approve a new Action Plan for 2021, starting from the implementation and results of the previous one (2015-2020).

Measurements

- Increased number of standards adopted in a shorter period of time, both ENs, ISO and IEC.
- Signed contract/agreement for info on the annually adopted ENs with a reliable source (either CEN/CENELEC by amending the existent license agreements, or DPS, or another NSB).
- Ability to provide list of harmonized ENs to the regulatory authorities for publishing.
- The copyright protection on standards in force, known by the standards users.
- Campaign on the copyright on standards initiated and running. This campaign should have two directions, an educational one regarding copyright provisions and one based on examples from the real life presenting infringement situations which show prohibited ways to use a standard.
- New Action Plan developed and implemented.

6.4. Developing national original standards

Rationale

The collection of national standards includes presently only European and international adopted standards and it is time for AKS to start developing national original standards, when needed. For that, depending on the field of activity, we need to gather experts in the TCs, as working groups, and to work together with them to develop and approve our first national original standards. It is our plan to begin with the National Annexes to the Eurocodes, as these are needed on the construction market. Another initiative is to have a national standard on the national popular costume, within the TC on Textiles and Shoe Leather. Still, this is a very complex enterprise and we will need human and financial resources, time and government support to succeed.

Actions

- Train TC old and new members on the European rules governing TC meetings (possible with the help of the experts offered by technical assistance projects or upon different agreements with other NSBs).
- Train TC chairs and secretaries on soft skills needed to lead TC meetings with a focus on mediation skills allowing to reach consensus.
- Start making a plan of benefits for TC members to attract them in TCs, introducing a “Box of benefits” for TC members - not necessarily remuneration - but real recognition, fame, author names on standards, on official website, etc.
- Prepare financial estimation for the entire activity and begin lobby it with the decision-making authority.
- Make an annual schedule for the development of the national original standards and include it in the Annual National Standardization Program, as a special, separate section, so as to be public.
- Begin standardization work with the first national original standard.

Measurements

- A pool of trained experts formed.
- Old TC members trained.
- New TC members attracted and trained.
- TC chairs and secretaries trained.
- “Box of benefits” for TC members including attracting benefits for them, not necessarily remuneration but real public recognition, developed and implemented.
- Financial estimation prepared for approval.
- Annual schedule for new national original standards drawn up.

6.5. Finalising, upgrading and successfully using our electronic tools

Rationale

In our efforts to join the European and international standardization systems we made efforts to follow the obvious trend that invaded standardization world as well, namely the urge to deliver our services electronically. We made our presence in the online world with the official website <http://aks.rks-gov.net/>, we built our Standardisation Management Information System (SMIS) and we engineered the e-CMIS – the selling instrument on our website - as well as the online catalogue.

In order for them to be 100% functional and flexible we need an interconnection with the CCMC database for regular information exchange and updates for SMIS, regarding new and withdrawn European standards. We also need some changes in the national financial system, which would allow us to sell and deliver the orders online with e-CMIS, as in this moment the orders can be placed and delivered online while the payments can only be done offline.

Actions

- Obtain connection to CCMC system for SMIS, to receive regular updates on European standards from CEN and CENELEC.
- Get own financial coordinates to be able to get payment online with e-CMIS.
- Share the information using marketing tools to advertise the selling online after it becomes fully functional.

Measurements

- Interconnection with CCMC database for SMIS obtained and functioning, year I.
- AKS financial coordinates obtained, standards sold online.
- Marketing campaign started.

6.6. Strengthened and visible

Rational

Developing new services will mean that we will become more visible and more present on the market for our stakeholders. This would also mean to be able to fulfil another requirement of the CEN/CENELEC Guide 22, on stability and visibility.

Marketing and promotion of the activity and of the products and services - the so-called standardization deliverables - will allow us to be known on the market, and to better serve the interests of the standards users in Kosovo.

Actions

- Set up the Information Centre and begin working on the marketing, promotion and all new standardization deliverables, as follows:
 - Train a marketing dedicated person to start working on marketing and promotion both the standardization activity and the selling and promotion of standardization deliverables.
 - Improve the data base of clients with all the info needed for marketing.
 - Develop a new service meant to deliver information on the new editions of standards approved to

the clients that have already bought the superseded editions.

- Use the database to identify new potential clients. Example: if a medical laboratory bought a package of standards, use that information to offer those standards to all the medical laboratories in the country.
- Make pro-active marketing. Study different fields of activity and based on the information in the database and on internet create specialised packages of standards and offer them to the potential clients in the respective fields of activity. Start for the beginning with the 19 fields where the TCs are active and their portfolio of standards.
- Introduce subscriptions to new editions for clients that have bought already superseded editions, as a new service.
- Develop consultancy services for all the companies that need to work with standards or to have a QMS or Standardization Department.
- Keep, maintain and regularly edit and issue the standardization Magazine and Bulletin.
- Develop a selection of printed materials on AKS and its activities to be distributed on the occasion of various events AKS is participating at - interlinked with objective 6.1.

Measurements

- Set up the Information Centre with its own room and office and begin specific activities:
 - Program to sell standards to the authorities developed and initiated.
 - Increased number of clients in the database.
 - Completed set of information on the clients in the database.
 - Increased numbers of standards sold.
 - Marketing activities done on the standardization activity.
 - Subscription to new editions of standards developed and introduced.
 - 1 employee trained on how to manage consultancy on standardization.
 - 1 new publication on AKS each year.
 - Standardization material published, at least, 1 time a year.
 - Selection of promotion materials done and offered to (potential) stakeholders.

Annex I

Root analysis of the last five years

Foreword

This analysis is based on the facts found in August 2019 and has its roots in the Business Plan developed for the period 2015-2020. It takes into consideration everything that AKS has done according to this document or still needs to do and reasons for which things took some turns or others, according to the political, economic, societal or just originally incidental trend.

All the other documents governing the standardization activity in Kosovo were studied and compared to the actual situation of AKS.

Standardization activity

Organization and legal framework

AKS is organized according to the Law no. 06/L-019 on Standardization from February 2018 and on 3 administrative instructions (sub legal acts) which are regulating the organization of the technical committees, professional standardization council, and the logo used by the Agency.

The Professional Standardization Council

The Professional Standardization Council is an advisory board of AKS. The scope of the Council is to provide advice, approve the Standardization Programme and recommend activities in the area of standardization. The representation of the standardization stakeholders in the Council is a balanced one.

Technical committees

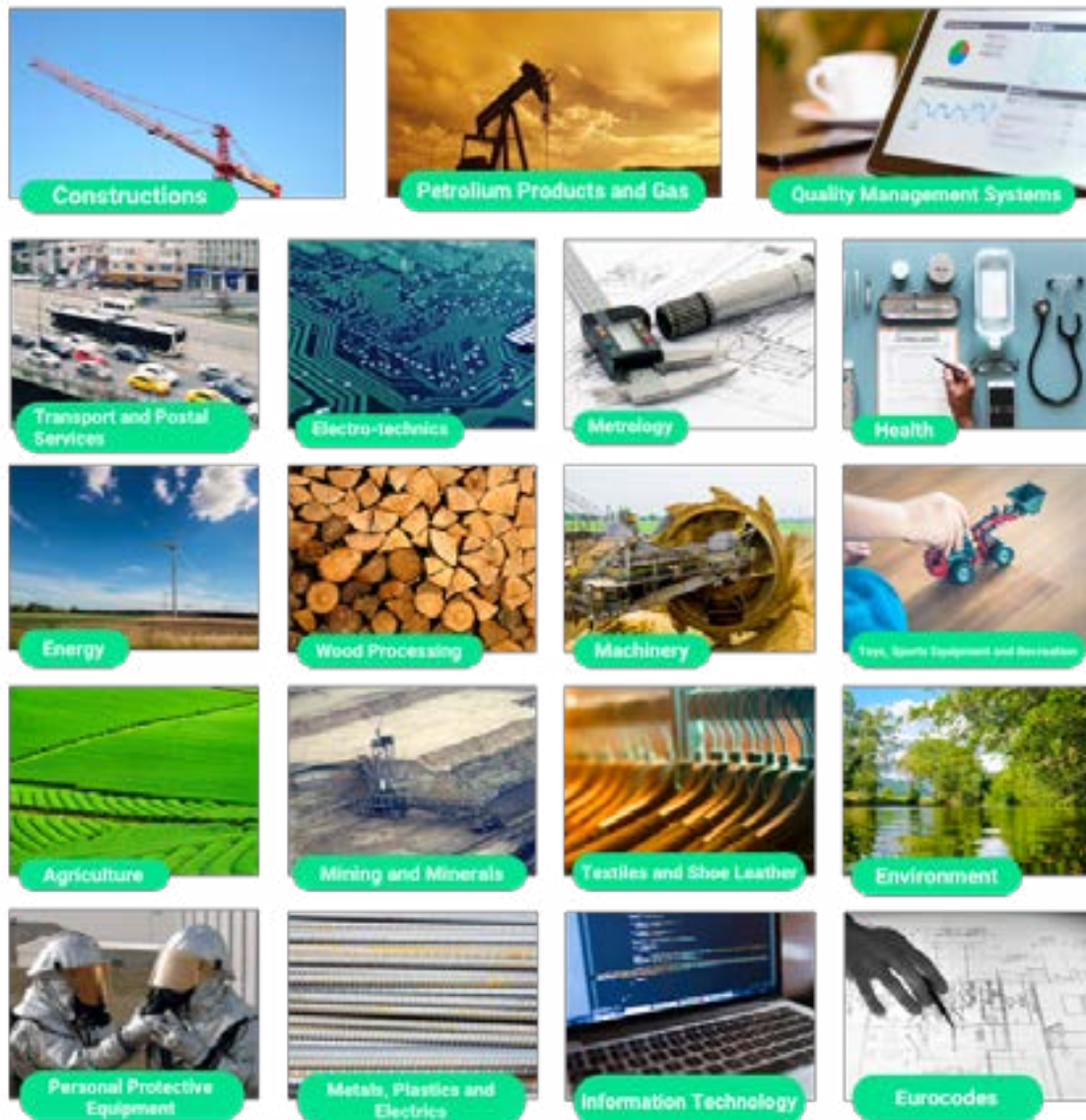
The standardization activity is focusing on adoption of European standards as national ones and this activity is delivered by 19 technical committees which were established in the last years.

This is a good number of TCs, taking into consideration that Kosovo is a small country. More than that, the representation in these TCs has a good balance encompassing authorities, public and private companies, universities and other interested entities, thus complying with a very important requirement of the CEN/CENELEC Guide 22.

All TC secretariats are held by AKS. AKS employees are responsible for running them, each standardisation officer managing about 3 TCs, including the Standardization Director.

In terms of human resources, the Agency has in total 9 employees, and one person employed in the internship regime. For the time being, the staffing is considered to be sufficient.

The TCs established by AKS are presented below:

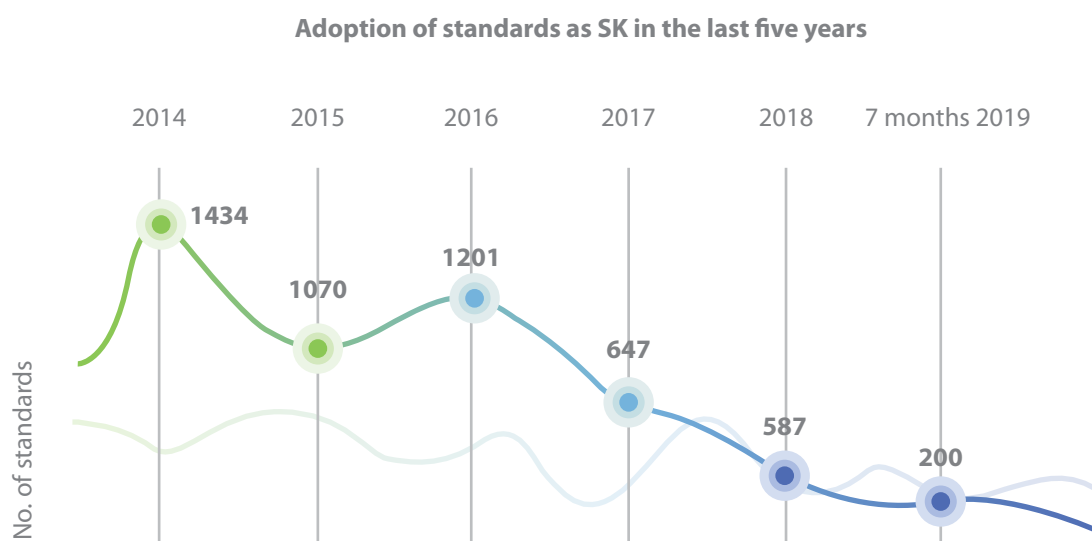


Collection of standards

The collection of Kosovo Standards includes presently around 10.500 European and international adopted standards, out of which approximately 9.000 are in force. Most of these standards were adopted with the help of an agreement concluded with DPS (the national standards body in Albania) which has been the main supplier of standards during many years. Some of these standards were already translated in the Albanian language, but not as many as needed.

Two years ago AKS finally secured License Agreements with both CEN and CENELEC on the access to and adoption of European Standards. About two hundred standards have already been adopted in the frame of these License Agreements and some other lists of European standards were prepared and requested for to be further adopted.

The number of standards adopted drastically decreased during the last years, as illustrated below.



Among the reasons for the decreasing trend of adopted standards are the lack of up to date information about the development of European standards by CEN and CENELEC and the difficult access to such standards, due to the fact that these privileges are reserved to CEN and CENELEC members, while AKS is still not one of them. It is important that now, after almost two years of implementation of the License Agreements, AKS has a discussion with the two European standardisation organisations to clarify all aspects and increase the efficiency of these agreements. Another issue needing clarification is the influence of the License Agreements on the cooperation with DPS and other NSBs in what concerns access to European standards provided to AKS.

Also, when enquiring at the national level on their standard needs, AKS should get the opinion of all stakeholders, including clients or potential clients of standards, such as authorities, universities and so on, not only the opinion of the TC members, as per the current procedure.

There are no national original standards in the collection, but these will be developed according to the market needs. The first need comes from the construction sector and will regard the National Annexes to Eurocodes. For this, AKS will need support from the Ministry of Trade and Industry and other relevant authorities, so as to make a financial plan for this action.

Visibility

Nationally, the visibility of AKS suffers as the Agency still works to get the acknowledgement needed. Some important steps were made with the new law and the newly signed License agreements but in order to be more visible and known by everybody as the Standardization Authority, strong and well driven towards specific

European goals, AKS mainly needs marketing and promotion actions. The standardization activity needs to be known and promoted with specific marketing tools.

Internationally and at the European level, AKS needs to make its presence more known. Until now, AKS succeeded to be present in the General Assemblies especially CEN/CENELEC and ISO/IEC but didn't attend any European or International TC meetings, since this is open to members only.

Connected activities

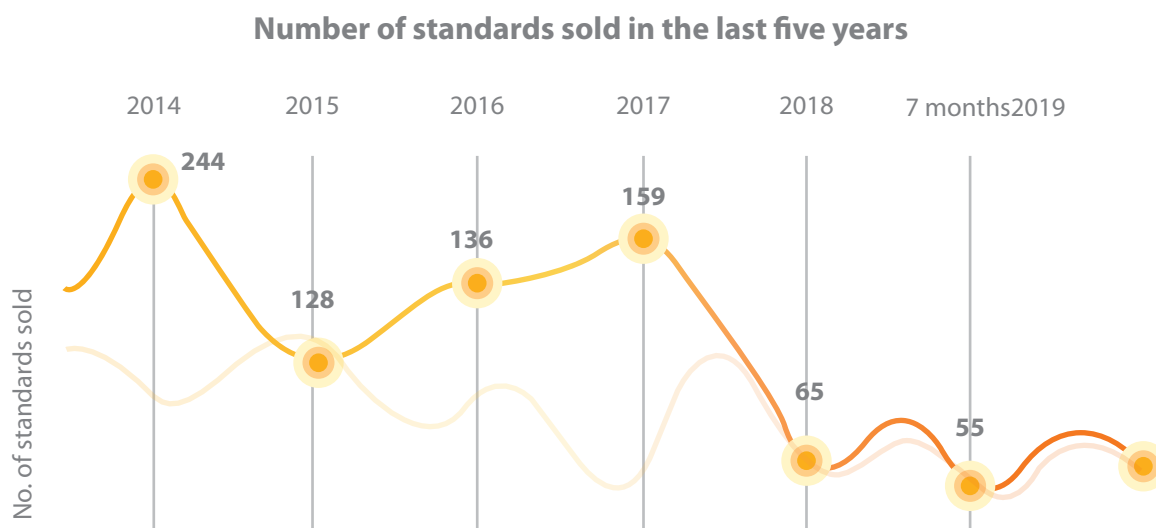
Although given the possibility by the Law on Standardization to develop training courses, to develop specific publications, make studies, research and offer information services, these are not done yet as the Agency is lacking dedicated and trained personnel for these types of activities.

Products and services offered by AKS

Selling of standards

Standards represent the only product AKS is offering currently. This selling activity is provided in a traditional manner, standards being delivered in hard copy, at the premises of the Agency.

Selling of standards followed the decreasing trend of standards production, as per the graphic below:



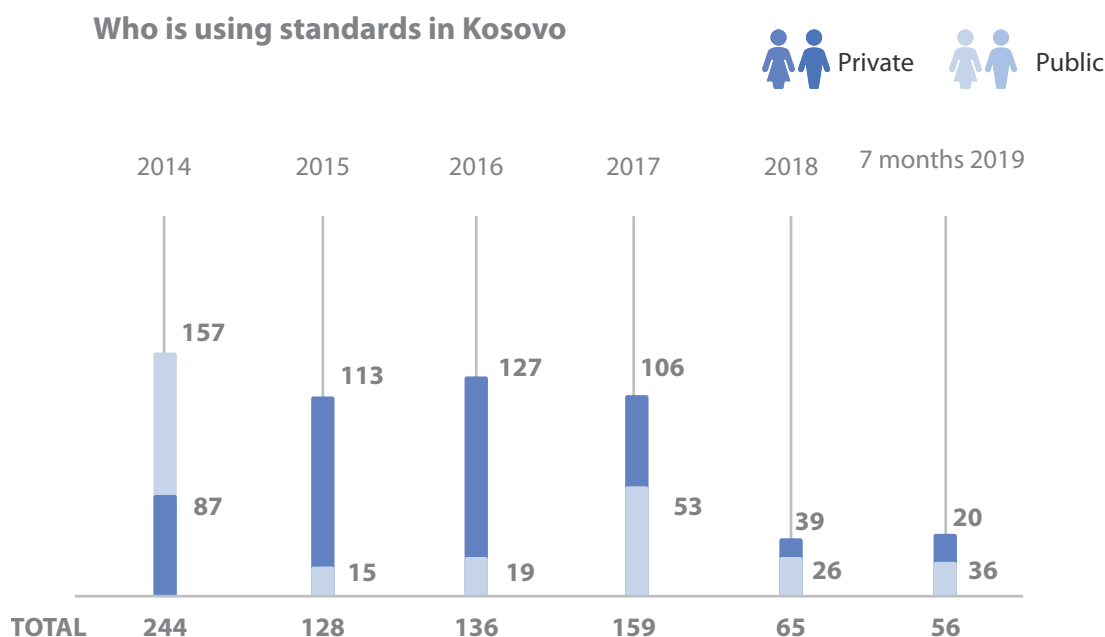
There are several reasons for this decreasing trend:

1. The first one is that the economy and industry in Kosovo are still not very well developed.
2. The second one is connected to the decrease of the number of standards adopted in the recent years, on the clear assumption that if there are no new products, one cannot sell a lot. So, if this number increases, mainly with standards that are required by the stakeholders, for sure the number of sold standards will increase.
3. The third, is connected to the fact that there is no information on the market about the selling of standards. There is lack of active marketing, lack of campaigns and lack of promotion activities,.
4. The fourth one is linked to the fact that the present clients buy in the old-fashioned way, on hard copy, coming to the premises of AKS, despite the fact that there is an e-commerce system in place. This has a negative impact on the efficiency of AKS commercial activities.

If standards do not sell as it should be, studying the interested standards users, the conclusion is that the private operators are more interested than the authorities, proving that the economy and the commerce are functioning, as these operators use standards to sell their products and services on the Kosovo market and abroad.

Kosovo authorities need to work with standards too and they also need to send a message, to be a model for

the economy and society at national level. That is why AKS needs to get to these authorities and to convince them they should get involved.



A programme on selling standards to authorities developed and targeted towards this specific group of clients would prove beneficial to AKS, as state is one of the most important beneficiaries of the standardization activities.

Information Centre

This is a desire for restructuring that was also an objective in the previous Business Plan. For the moment, despite the fact that AKS recently hired one employee dedicated to this activity, it still misses a room and specific furniture and equipment and for that reason the activity didn't start.

This is the place where all the marketing activities should happen. Also, the other services to be developed and provided are to be identified in the Information Centre, which represents one of the important connection platforms with the stakeholders and clients. The activities of the Information Centre should concentrate on providing information on standards, on new editions and withdrawals, on training courses and consultancy.

Certification was also one of the objectives of the Business Plan but, this never happened. Although there is one employee with specific duties on developing the certification body of AKS, due to the changes in policy at the European level no longer encouraging NSBs to have their own certification bodies working together as a single entity, AKS decided to postpone for an uncertain period of time this matter.

Conclusions

AKS is making efforts to function as a European NSB.

It still lacks some activities, especially marketing, promotion and visibility ones.

Some of the requirements in "CEN/CENELEC Guide 22, on the organizational structure and processes for the assessment of the membership criteria of CEN and CENELEC" are met but there is a lot of room for better performing and better meeting these requirements.

The most important task of AKS for the following period should be securing access to standards, both European and international ones and making efforts to meet as many as possible of the requirements in the CEN/CENELEC Guide 22.

A lot of attention should be given to new products and services. These should be the portfolio of AKS, together with some printed information materials.

If the objectives described in this strategy will be met, situation will be improved in a higher degree and progress towards meeting the CEN and CENELEC technical membership requirements will start showing.

The strategy is annexed with an Implementation Plan for the first year. AKS should develop a new one each year, starting from the analysis of the results obtained in the first year. Moreover, AKS should develop a detailed Action Plan determining the responsible persons, deadlines, figures to be met, financial resources and, of course the specific and detailed actions to be done in order to accurately implement the Strategy.

The objectives can change in time, can be adjusted or new ones can be added, but the direction has to remain unchanged and the measured progress has to be visible.

This Strategy can be one of the brochures printed for the first year. It should be translated into Albanian, printed in both languages and posted on the official website of AKS after approval.

Recommendations

Start using CEN/CENELEC Guide 22 on the organizational structure and processes for the assessment of the membership criteria of CEN and CENELEC and use the check list of requirements included to add new objectives to the Action Plan each year, in order to be sure that all requirements are implemented.

Start using ISO/IEC Guide 59:2019 - ISO and IEC recommended practices for standardization by national bodies to make sure all the recommendations are followed.

Annex II

Implementation Plan - Measuring success Year I

This is the Implementation Plan for the first year of the AKS Midterm Standardization Strategy.

AKS will have to develop a new Implementation Plan each year, after measuring the results and the degree of implementation of each measure. The plans for the next years will adjust the objectives, the steps and the path of AKS according to the results, trends and performance. The first next step is for AKS to develop an Action Plan based on this Implementation Plan. The Action Plan should be naming specific and detailed actions meant to help fulfilling the actions, with persons responsible, deadlines for the first year and financial resources specified.

Some of the measures are permanent, and they will have to be implemented each year until they reach full implementation. Some of the measures need one-time implementation, in the first year. Others will be ready to be implemented beginning with the year two or three as they are to be prepared by some other measures and only when the supporting ones are done, they can start. Some of the measures interlink and are to be found in more than one objective, as they should be the result of the implementation, proving that the measures are intended to lead to results regardless for what objective they are used.

The responsibility for implementing the measures and getting the results stays on the shoulders of the AKS management, surely supported either by the Ministry of Trade and Industry as the coordinating authority or by the employees of AKS, as this type of measures can never be accomplished with no support and no commitment.

1. Kosovo standards (SK) used nationally

- A more visible Kosovo NSB - permanent concern.
- Improved number of events with AKS participation - 10% increase year I.
- Increased number of standards sold - 20% increase year I.
- Published material on the activities AKS is deploying - at least one new material during year I.
- Own AKS trainers and experts prepared to deliver training courses and speeches - 2 persons beginning *training of trainers program* - year I.
- AKS training courses delivered to stakeholders as a new service, according to the law - 2 training courses year II.

Risks & Difficulties

The risk of this objective not to be implemented is considered minimum as AKS management proved eager to perform at a high level and well-intended with high expectations from the future. For this objective to be met successfully, the first condition is for the personnel to be passionate and driven by the will to succeed.

A possible difficulty is detected for the training of trainers program. This should be developed as a special project, with program, persons named for this, tasks, responsibilities and deadlines. It needs counselling and support.

2. Meeting national needs

- Standardization trained experts in TCs - year II.
- Better and more realistic Annual National Standardization Program with updates - year I.
- A procedure on how to draw up the Annual Standardization Program - year I.
- Reduced time of obtaining the standards to be approved - year I.

Risks & Difficulties

There is a medium risk detected for this objective, especially concerning the way/marketing tool chosen by AKS to send the lists of standards to be approved to every standardization stakeholder, either already in the standardization system or a possible one.

A difficulty to be overcome is for the AKS to obtain the standards to be adopted in a shorter period of time from its source, regardless this source will be CCMC, DPS or another NSB.

3. Overcoming European and international standardization challenges

- Increased number of new standards adopted in a shorter period of time, both European and international - at least 500 standards - year I, minimum 600 year beginning with year II.
- Signed contract/agreement for info on the annually adopted ENs with a reliable source (either CEN/ CENELEC by amending the existent licenses, or DPS, or another NSB) - year I.
- Able to provide list of harmonized ENs to the regulatory authorities for publishing - year I.
- The copyright protection on standards in force, known by the standards users - campaign started in year I.
- Campaign on the copyright on standards initiated and running. This campaign should have two directions, an educative regarding copyright and a more practical one based on examples of infringement situations which should be avoided - initiated in year I and continued each year.
- New Action Plan developed in year I and implemented in year II.

Risks & Difficulties

The risk to not be able to amend the already concluded license agreements with CEN and CENELEC is considered medium. Support and advice should be given to AKS to succeed this endeavour. The same is with the intention to sign new license agreements with ISO and IEC.

The campaign on copyright on standards is considered a possible legal difficulty as AKS has no legal support (specialized on copyright) inside.

4. Developing national original standards

- A pool of trained experts formed - training initiated in year II.
- Old TC members trained - training initiated in year II.
- New TC members obtained and trained - new members for the Eurocodes working groups obtained in year I, training of them in year II.
- TC chairs and secretaries trained - training on soft skills and standardization rules initiated in year II.
- “*Box of benefits*” for TC members including attracting benefits for them, not necessarily remuneration but real public recognition, developed and implemented - development of the concept in year I, implementation of the tool in year II.
- Financial estimation prepared for approval - year I.
- Annual schedule for new national original standards drawn up - year I.

Risks & Difficulties

The trainings can be considered to present a minimum risk, as competences for those who will deliver training courses are to be found externally.

The “box of benefits” can be seen as a difficulty by AKS as they are used to compensate only by remuneration and the concept of rewarding participation in TCs with other types of compensations is not very well known or accepted.

5. Finalising, upgrading and successfully using electronic tools

- Interconnection with CCMC database for SMIS obtained and functioning - year I.
- AKS financial coordinates obtained - year I.
- Marketing campaign started - year I.

Risks & Difficulties

There is a high risk connected to the obtaining of the interconnection with CCMC database. This is a decision out of the reach of AKS.

A possible difficulty is obtaining the financial coordinates and starting to deliver online the standards ordered online and paid for online.

6. Strengthened and visible

- Set up the Information Centre with its own room and office and begin specific activities:
 - Program to sell standards to the authorities developed and initiated - concept developed in year I.
 - Increased number of clients in the data base - 15% increase of new clients in year I, permanent concern.
 - Completed set of information on the clients in the database - permanent concern.
 - Increased number of standards sold - 20% increase in year I, permanent concern.
 - Marketing activities done on the standardization activity - begin actual activity in year I.
 - Subscription to new editions of standards developed and introduced - developing of the product in year I.
- 1 employee trained on how to offer consultancy on standardization - begin training in year I.
- 1 new published materials on AKS each year - 1 new developed and published materials in year I.
 - Selection of printed materials done and offered to (possible) stakeholders - 1 printed materials ready to be distributed in events in year I.

Risks & Difficulties

The first risk detected here is connected to the marketing skills owned by the employees having duties in the marketing and visibility area. But these can be solved with training.

Another medium risk is linked to the possibility to not obtain an adequate space for the Information Centre.

To increase the number of standards sold is going to be difficult but not impossible.

**Midterm Strategy of
Kosovo Standardization
Agency
2020 - 2025**

