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No Data - No Policy

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Abstract: **Objective:** Studying of the strategies in Albania in terms of the implementation of the "evidence based policy" principle. **Prior Work**: As specialist on strategic planning in INSTAT i have prepared an inventory on evidence based strategies. **Approach:** The methodology of this study is based on qualitative method, analyzing case by case every strategy in Albania in terms of using statistical data on the building of the priorities. **Results:** From 16 studied strategies and only 4 of them have described the SWOT analyses based on statistical indicators. The "evidence based policy" principle is not applied and the objectives are raised by political incentives at the macro level and as a result the achievement of the objective is immeasurable. **Implication: 1.** If the strategies/policies in Albania aim to respond to the needs of Albanian society, then it is expected that they are based on an assessment of needs with measurable statistical indicators. **Value:** this study offers a clear argument for policy-makers and other stake-holders in importance of the evidence using during the drafting of the strategies in order to build an effective and efficient policy. This is a study that is not elaborated before.

Keywords: Evidence; Strategic management; Strategy

1. Introduction

The data play a key role in the process of drafting a strategy, as they constitute the reference base on which the current situation in a certain field is analyzed, as well as the needs for undertaking policies to respond to these needs, placing them in the strategic objectives plan. The analysis of the data not only determines the need for strategy design, but also determines the degree to which it is necessary to intervene for the improvement of a certain aspect of public life, as well as presents the future trend in this direction.

2. The Importance of the Data in the Development of the Strategies/Policies

David Easton (1953) in his analysis of the political system presents us with the inevitable task of researching the main data sets that will be incorporated into politics. It is important to determine the type of data that will serve to analyze a problem (Easton, 1953, p. 149). According to Easton, the data are considered as inputs for the political system since they constitute the basis on which the expressed

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interests are articulated and after the mechanization of their processing by the political system, they are converted into outputs or public policies. The importance of the data in this process lies in the fact that the evidence reflects and represents the reality of the needs and shortages encountered by the system as a whole and constitutes the measurable form of these needs/interests, giving the political system the possibility that the outputs they produce are not only fulfillment of these requests/needs but also their projection for the future. The data provide opportunities for comparability from one time to another which is essential for the undertaking in advance of complementary/improving policies of the certain aspects of the public sector.

Tim Hannagan (2002) also treated the importance of data in the process of designing the strategies. The forecasting the future according to him is possible through the analysis of quantitative data. The author interprets the fact that the explanation of the past data is always open to alternatives and changes of the different conditions and factors and quantitative methods are usually considered as methods that provide reliable data for forecasting the future (Hannagan, 2002). This interpretation orients us towards the necessity of analyzing the available statistical indicators that give us an overview of the reality of the sector/sectors for which the strategy will be established.

According to James Huggins (1993), information plays a primary role in all phases of the strategic management. According to the author, the information serves for the analysis of the current situation, as well as the strategic information system generates information that determines the need for the design of a strategy or its change. According to him, this system generates the inputs of information that is necessary for decision-making for undertaking the strategic decisions, as well as providing updated and suitable information helps the executives who may have been exposed to different information but not exposed to the relevant information (Huggins, 1993). The importance that Huggins gives to information and specifically to the construction of a system dedicated to strategic information presents the need to raise the infrastructure and capacities for the disposition and analysis of the information for making strategic decisions and designing strategies based on what the current indicators prove about the level of performance of different areas of the public area. The establishment of this platform and its use as a reference system provides an overview of certain sectors and the analysis of this information determines in itself the need for the design of a strategy as well as the target level of intervention with certain measures/policies in order to complement/improvement of the discussed dimensions that become the object of these policies.

The process of developing the strategies is a dynamic process that is initiated by the needs for improvements/adjustments of certain dimensions of the public life in the direction of ensuring the prosperity, development and well-being in all possible sectors. For a raised and articulated need is necessary to be initiated by the current evidence of the main indicators of a certain sector. The National Statistical System in Albania provides the appropriate infrastructure and consolidated information on the main indicators of the social, demographic, economic, sectorial and environmental area, the analysis of which should be the starting point for any initiative undertaken in the national strategic framework. Since the comparability of data from different time series creates the possibility for determining future trends and projections, the statistical databases of INSTAT and other statistical agencies of the National Statistical System contain the necessary statistical datasets that can be used at any time strategic decision-making or the development of national strategies. Under the guidelines and recommendations of EUROSTAT and the United Nations, as well as based on the needs of users, the National Statistical System has continuously expanded the range of statistics produced by increasing the frequency and periodicity of the data, as well as aiming at the comparability of the data. at several levels of classification between units according to the Albanian territorial division, as well as comparability with

the data of other European countries, comparability that is realized by the detailed analyzes carried out by EUROSTAT. In this analysis context, we can say that the National Statistical System has the necessary and sufficient data on which the analysis on the development of national strategies in Albania can be based. The statistical publications in the press releases are also accompanied by the corresponding analysis of the indicators, offering an ease and comprehensibility for the users in terms of the interpretation of the statistical data. Also, INSTAT's scientific periodical provides quantitative and qualitative information on the main indicators, giving light to the interpretation of the results and trends of social, economic, sectorial and environmental indicators. Statistics do not only provide quantitative information of a certain indicator, but also qualitative information since the comparison of the different time series enables interpretations in terms of determining whether there is improvement or deterioration in a certain social, economic, sectorial or environmental dimension, as well as how the statistical result of one area is related to the impact in terms of improvement or deterioration in another area. Therefore, the statistical evidences do not represent an isolated result of a certain indicator, but constitute a consolidated network of interconnection of the evidences of the different sectors inseparable from their cause-effect relation.

3. Conclusions

In the context of the need and necessity of the statistical analysis in the conditions of undertaking the initiative for the drafting of the strategies, we can say that every stage through which the development of strategies goes requires a proper analysis of the relevant statistical data. However, the platform on which the strategy is built is the analysis of the internal and external environment of an institution that performs public functions. During this stage the data analyzing is essential in terms of determining the current situation, current problems, sectors and directions that need to be improved, as well as in terms of determining future trends, given that strategies are several-year plans and as a consequence the forecasting process is needed to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the plan drawn up in the service of the continuous improvement of the public services and the public life as a product.

However, statistical analysis is also necessary for the determination of the strategy objectives, which represent the intended results within a certain period. In order to measure them, the strategic objectives are accompanied by specific sub-objectives, implementation activities for the achievement of each sub-objective and the performance indicators that indicate the level of the implementation of each implementation activity. So it is a chain that requires and aims to measure the process of achieving what is planned and this measurement can carry out basing on evidences that are mainly a quantitative evidences in order to avoid subjectivity in the process of determining the intended results and subjectivity in the process of evaluating the successful realization of the objectives and the implementation of the planned activities.

Data analysis is also a process that accompanies phases such as the implementation and evaluation of strategies, since the evaluation of the implementation process and the results themselves cannot be achieved without an evaluation of the quantitative information of the measurable indicators. Data is the main referential system in the whole strategy development process. The step-by-step evaluation of the progress of the implementation of the strategic document based on measurable indicators not only informs us about the current situation of the contribution that the implementation of the strategy is making, but it can also generate the need for further interventions or for making decisions about new activities, unaccounted before, but generated by updated data analysis at a given moment during the strategy implementation.

The importance of the statistics in the process of drafting the policies/strategies is also presented in the international context. It is to be considered the fact that after the opening of the EU negotiations for Albania, chapter 18 "Statistics" was considered in the group of the first 5 chapters, which constitute the most important chapters. EUROSTAT is drawing up strategies on expanding the range of statistical data based on the analysis of data transmitted by European countries, since EUROSTAT is one of the most important institutions of the European Commission and the funds allocated in the direction of statistical development are constantly increasing. The aim of these policies are to standardize the production standards of statistics so that the statistics of different European countries are comparable, thus creating the possibility for undertaking the necessary policies at the European level.

In order to build strategies that respond to real national or international needs, are measurable, effective, efficient, and evaluable, it is necessary basing of them on the statistical data, which are increasingly applying EUROSTAT standards and expanding increasingly the range of statistical indicators measured for different sectors. The relation between the data and strategies represents a cycle, where data generates strategies, strategies generate results that are represented by data, and these data regenerate the need to formulate strategies/policy in order to respond to the new needs of the public area.

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