

ANNEX 1:

Qualitative analysis of monitoring results per each thematic area



ReSPA

Regional School
of Public Administration

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**Regulatory reform
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development
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Evaluation of
Public Policies**

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Qualitative Analysis of Monitoring Results for Area 1:

Policy Development and Coordination

I Report on the implementation of the General Questionnaire

I. The results in a nutshell

ReSPA's **overall** contribution to institutional and individual improvements in the thematic area of Policy Development and Coordination was scored on **average at 3.8 out of 5**. In other words, this means that participants¹ consider that overall ReSPA contribution to the institutional and individual **improvements is "the good extent"**. It can be concluded that this contribution is quite satisfactory but that ReSPA should invest more efforts to reach the expectations of ReSPA stakeholders in this thematic area.

It is noted that respondents score ReSPA contribution to their *individual improvement at on average level is 3,96* and average score ReSPA contribution to the *institutional improvement is lower 3,45*. It can be concluded that respondents praise slightly more ReSPA contribution to their individual improvement rather than the institutional one. This can be also explained with the fact that institutional changes are more complex to happen and need a longer time to be implemented.

Also, it should be mentioned that 83 % of the respondents confirmed that the benefits from ReSPA action(s) have contributed to forwarding the country-level PAR implementation in the area of Policy Development and Coordination.

II. Individual improvements

On average, the respondents scored ReSPA's contribution to their individual improvement in the domain of Policy Development and Coordination at 3.96 out of 5.

Question 1.1.1 – ReSPA's activities have contributed to acquired knowledge and enhanced skills for using improved approaches and methods for *Policy Development and Coordination*.

¹ The respondents to the questionnaire in this thematic area come from 24 different institutions among the ReSPA members. The questionnaire covered six actions organized by ReSPA. The number of replies differed per each action, with the largest number of responses coming from the participants of seasonal schools, while the lowest number came from the High-Level Ministerial Policy Dialogue meetings.

The respondents scored the contribution of ReSPA to this area *at an average of 3.79 out of 5*, i.e. as having contributed “to a good extent”.

The majority of respondents adjudged that **ReSPA’s activities have contributed greatly (17%) or to a good extent (58%) to the participants’** acquired knowledge and enhanced skills for using improved approaches and methods for policy development and coordination. Only 12% of the responses indicated that ReSPA’s activities had contributed to *an adequate extent* or *not much*, and none of the responses indicated that ReSPA activities had made no contribution to these enhancements at individual level.

Regarding the ways in which the respondents **applied the knowledge and skills they had gained through participation in ReSPA’s activities**, the respondents mentioned the following: involvement in the preparation/implementation/monitoring of strategies (29%) and action plans (33%), especially action plans for some of the EU Accession Negotiation chapters, for the OGP Initiative and for the PIFC Strategy, etc. *From the individual comments provided* by respondents, it can be concluded that ReSPA activities have facilitated the involvement of the respondents in the development of new strategies (for PAR, OGP, and PIFC, etc) and action plans for the implementation of these strategies, as well as some EU Accession Negotiation Chapters (mostly Chapter 23). Some of the respondents adjudged that ReSPA’s activities had helped them better understand how to define measurable results for the goals set in the action plan.

The following individual answers are representative of the survey responses:

- *“I enhanced my level of skills focused on implementing and monitoring action plans, which will help in accession negotiation processes and European integration processes.”*
- *“My involvement in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of an action plan helped*

Question 1.1.2. ReSPA’s activities have contributed to facilitating communication and the exchange of know-how among colleagues and/or leadership.

me to understand better how to define measurable results for the set goals in the action plan.”

The respondents scored the contribution of ReSPA to facilitating communication and the exchange of know-how among colleagues and/or leadership *at an average of 4.13 out of 5 (between 3,5 and 5)*, with 75% of all responses confirming that these activities contributed to *a good extent* (25%) or *greatly* (50%). The huge number of respondents reported improved cooperation with colleagues and a better working environment within their own institutions (46%), improved cooperation with colleagues from other institutions from their own countries (50%), and improved cooperation with similar institutions in the region and/or the EU (37%).

The most relevant examples of how the participants applied the knowledge and skills they had gained from **ReSPA’s activities** are given in the following statements:

- *“I passed on to my colleagues the experiences from the Latvian administration and called for initiatives for various improvements in domestic administration.”*
- *“I gained knowledge of the overall EU accession process, in particular regarding the new methodology.”*
- *“During the training I made contacts with colleagues from the region and the EU and we continued to cooperate and exchange knowledge in areas of common interest.”*

- *“The knowledge and skills I gained from ReSPA’s activities are improved dialogue and exchange of ideas with my superiors, based on better understanding and organizing the processes of preparing, implementing and monitoring policies.”*

These results confirm the importance of the role of ReSPA as a regional hub for networking and exchanging experiences and best practices.

III. Institutional improvements

On average, the respondents scored ReSPA’s contribution to institutional improvements in the domain of Policy Development and Cooperation at 3.42 out of 5, which is less favourable than their responses to questions about individual improvements.

- **Question 1.2.1. ReSPA’s activities have contributed to improved institutional modalities and practices of sharing knowledge and lessons learned within the home institution and among partner institutions.**

The respondents scored the contribution of ReSPA to improved institutional modalities and practices of sharing knowledge and lessons learned within the home institution and among partner institutions **at an average of 3,5 (between 2,88 and 4,33)**. The highest percentage of respondents adjudged that these activities had contributed to an *adequate extent*, while other respondents reported that the activities had contributed to a *good extent* and *xx greatly*.

The majority of responses indicated that the examples of good practice obtained during ReSPA activities had been further developed and explored for replication in **the respondents’ own institutions (37%)**, and that the **expert’s advice provided during the ReSPA activities** had been further explored and developed for implementation in their own institutions (33%). Except for the respondents from Albania, no other country representatives indicated that the recommendations obtained through ReSPA’s analytical papers, policy papers and studies or other ReSPA activities had been implemented in their institutions. From this it can be concluded that such changes in public administration take time and are difficult to achieve in a short period.

One of the most relevant practical examples of the contribution made by ReSPA actions was given in the following response to the questionnaire:

- *“We use the lessons learned through our work on RESPA strategic documents on a daily basis in drafting the **legal acts of our institution.**”*

Question 1.2.2. ReSPA’s activities have contributed to progress towards the introduction and improvement of procedures, methods and tools within the institution.

The respondents scored ReSPA's contribution to progress towards the introduction and improvement of procedures, methods and tools within their institutions with an average of 3.42 out of 5. The majority of respondents adjudged ReSPA's actions as having contributed to a *good extent* (33%), while 21% of respondents reported these actions had *greatly* contributed and 21% reported they had contributed to *an adequate extent*.

Regarding the progress made towards the introduction and improvement of procedures, methods and tools within the institution, the most common response was that information and discussions about new innovative practices, tools and changes of procedures had been promoted by ReSPA's actions (40% of all responses). 21% of respondents reported that these actions had improved internal coordination within their institution and 17% reported improved coordination with other institutions and enhanced procedures for policy coordination.

The following comments on ReSPA's contribution are representative:

- *"Given that the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers of BiH is in charge of drafting the Work Programmes and Reports of the Council of Ministers of BiH and coordinating with other institutions, ReSPA helped us to improve coordination with other institutions of BiH in drafting these strategic documents."*
- *"Internal coordination has improved in the field of the UN Sustainable Development Goals."*

IV. **ReSPA's contribution to the implementation of Public Administration Reform in the ReSPA member administrations**

The monitoring exercise wanted to find out how the benefits of the ReSPA actions mentioned above had contributed to advancing the country-level implementation of PAR in the area of Policy Development and Coordination. This contribution was fully confirmed by 83% of all the respondents, while only 16.67% reported no contribution. Clearly, the vast majority of respondents consider that ReSPA actions are beneficial for advancing PAR implementation within their respective administrations in the area of policy development and coordination.

The sources for confirmation of given responses are: ReSPA research documents, EC country reports, and OECD/SIGMA monitoring reports.

The following comments included in the responses provide additional views on the relevance of ReSPA actions in the area of Policy Development and Coordination:

- *"Exchanging experiences and examples from practice, documents and guidelines are excellent tools for administrations willing to improve their performance."*
- *"Policy Development and Coordination were incorporated as a pillar of the new PAR Strategy 2030. Some of the good practices seen in other countries are among the options to be implemented in the Accountability Pillar of the PAR Strategy 2030 (on Managerial Accountability and organization)."*
- *"Sharing experiences among the institutions of the WB countries is extremely important for the improvement of the EU accession negotiation process for candidate states."*

V. The way forward

Generally speaking, the results of the monitoring exercise for ReSPA's thematic area 1 Policy Development and Coordination are satisfactory. The main takeaways and lessons learnt from the monitoring of implemented activities are briefly listed below:

- ✓ ReSPA is successfully fulfilling its role as a regional hub for networking and exchanging experiences and best practices. ReSPA is both directly and indirectly influencing working environments and interactions among civil servants across the region.
- ✓ **ReSPA's strongest component is that of improving cooperation with colleagues from similar institutions from the region and/or the EU.** Networking and exchanging experiences during ReSPA events is considered a very important tool for enhancing capacities.
- ✓ Thanks to ReSPA's actions, more attention is now being paid to Policy Development and Coordination.
- ✓ There is still a need to provide further training to administrations on the overarching policy cycle. ReSPA will evaluate the possibility of organising large-scale training activities for this purpose.
- ✓ ReSPA serves as a driver of change and inspiration at individual level. However, bringing about such change at institutional level is more challenging.
- ✓ ReSPA has contributed to improving cooperation within different institutions at regional level. Sharing knowledge and information remains an important component of ReSPA.

Qualitative Analysis of Monitoring Results for Area 2:

Monitoring and Evaluation of Public Policies

I Report on implementation of General questionnaire

I. The results in a nutshell

All of the responses in this monitoring exercise were from participants of the regional seminar on monitoring and reporting aspects of the policy development cycle. Responses were received from six institutions of public administration in the ReSPA member countries.

The respondents assessed ReSPA's contribution to institutional and individual improvements in their activities in the thematic area of monitoring and evaluating public policies with an **average core of 3.8** out of 5, meaning the participants consider **ReSPA's activities** overall have contributed to a "good extent". **It can be concluded that this contribution is quite satisfactory**, although ReSPA should invest more efforts into meeting the expectations of ReSPA stakeholders in this thematic area.

The respondents scored ReSPA's contribution to their *individual improvement at an average of 3.93*, while the average score for ReSPA's contribution to *institutional improvement was lower*, at 3.71. This disparity can be also explained by the fact that institutional changes are more complex and require more time to be implemented.

All of the respondents confirmed that the benefits of ReSPA's actions have contributed to advancing the country-level implementation of PAR in the area of monitoring and evaluating public policies.

II. Individual improvements

The respondents rated ReSPA's contribution to their individual improvement in the domain of the monitoring and evaluation of public policies with an average score of 3.8 out of 5.

Question 2.1.1 – ReSPA's activities have contributed to increased acquisition of knowledge and enhanced skills for using improved approaches and methods for the monitoring and evaluation of public policies.

Regarding the question on individual improvements, the majority of responses adjudged that **ReSPA's activities** had contributed *greatly* (14%), or to a *good extent* (71%) to acquired knowledge and enhanced skills for using improved approaches and methods for monitoring and evaluating public policies. Only 14% of respondents reported that these activities had contributed to an

adequate extent or not much, while no responses indicated that ReSPA activities had not contributed to these enhancements at individual level.

Regarding the **respondents'** explanations as to **how they had applied the knowledge and skills they gained from ReSPA's activities**, a high proportion of respondents mentioned their involvement in the preparation of monitoring reports, in analysing data for monitoring reports, in the development of indicator passports, and in the implementation and monitoring of strategies and action plans. The following comments are representative of many responses:

"It helped me think thoroughly about indicators, their values, measurements and the way to define them so that we can really measure the achievements as close as possible to what we planned, and not just partially. It has also helped me be more precise when defining indicators."

*"Sharing experience, organising different meetings and activities and the study and analytical papers prepared by ReSPA have been very useful in the preparation of the **monitoring report**."*

Question 2.1.2. ReSPA's activities have contributed to facilitating communication and the exchange of know-how among colleagues and/or with leadership.

On the second statement regarding individual improvements in communication and the exchange of know-how, 71% of all the respondents confirmed that **ReSPA's actions had contributed either to a good extent (57%) or greatly (14%)**. The majority of responses reported improved cooperation with colleagues and an improved working environment within their institutions (57%), as well as improved cooperation with similar institutions in the region and/or the EU (57%). In addition, 43% of responses indicated improved cooperation with colleagues from other institutions in their countries, as well as improved dialogue and exchange of ideas with their superiors (43%).

The most relevant comments provided by the participants on how they had **applied the knowledge and skills gained through ReSPA's activities** were as follows:

"I was transferred to a higher position within the Sector, thanks to a better understanding of the policy planning process, including monitoring and evaluation."

*"The shared experience of monitoring sector strategies in Montenegro contributed to my better understanding of the system and I proposed **introducing similar regulation in North Macedonia**."*

*"Sharing experiences and attending different meetings and activities organised by ReSPA have been very helpful in strengthening my collaboration with colleagues and improving **my capacity in my daily work**."*

III. Institutional improvements

On average the respondents scored ReSPA's contribution to institutional improvement in the domain of monitoring and evaluation of public policies at 3.71 out of 5.

- **Question 2.2.1. ReSPA's activities have contributed to improved institutional modalities and practices of sharing knowledge and lessons learnt within the home institution and among partner institutions.**

The responses to the first question regarding institutional improvements were similar to the responses regarding individual improvements.

The highest percentage of respondents adjudged that ReSPA's activities had contributed either to a *good extent* (57%) or *greatly* (14%).

Responding to the question of how **institutional modalities and practices of sharing knowledge and lessons learnt within the home institution and among partner institutions have been improved**, most survey participants explained that the *expert advice provided during ReSPA activities had been further explored and developed with a view to implementing this advice in their institutions* (71%) and that the recommendations provided by ReSPA's analytical papers, policy papers and studies, as well as other ReSPA activities, were starting to be implemented in their institutions (43%).

The following are the most relevant examples of comments provided by the respondents:

- *"I think that ReSPA, via all the activities, documents, recommendations, support, experts and other instruments, is helping us as civil servants in increasing our capacity and knowledge and improving the quality of the Department of Public Administration."*
- *"Staff turnover and institutional re-organization after the election of the new government in December 2020 had a big impact on institutional memory. This affected the activities of the institutions and meant that some processes needed to be revised and re-established."*

- **Question 2.2.2. ReSPA's activities have contributed to progress towards the introduction and improvement of procedures, methods and tools within the institution.**

On the second statement regarding institutional improvements in specific procedures, 71% of all responses confirmed that to **ReSPA's activities had contributed either to a good extent** (57%) or *greatly* (14%). The majority of responses confirmed that the information and discussions about new innovative practices, tools and changes of procedures were promoted (57%). In addition, 43% of the responses confirmed that ReSPA activities had helped them in the initiation, introduction and implementation of new working methods and tools.

The following comments from the respondents are the most helpful examples of how the participants have **applied the knowledge and skills they gained through ReSPA's activities**:

- *"Improving the preparation of PAR Strategy Reports."*
- *"A Draft Methodology for the manner of preparation, monitoring of implementation, evaluation and reporting of sector strategies as a strategic planning document and Draft Guidelines for the necessary elements and structure that should be contained in the sector strategies, the manner of monitoring the implementation, evaluation and reporting have been prepared. Both documents are accompanied by a Form for the necessary structure of the sector strategy; Action plan form; Form for determining risks at the level of strategic goals and strategic objectives and Form for monitoring the implementation by priority areas / priorities, goals, measures and activities."*

- *“Sharing experiences regarding the gained benefits from the use of new innovative tools is a growing trend over the years and has been crucial in our daily work, especially during Covid-19.”*
- *“The tools and materials were a valuable asset for further exploration in the course of implementation in the **home institution**.”*

IV. ReSPA’s contribution to the implementation of Public Administration Reform in the ReSPA member administrations

The monitoring exercise wanted to find out how the benefits gained from the ReSPA actions mentioned above have contributed to advancing the implementation of PAR at country level with regard to the Monitoring and Evaluation of public policies.

All of the respondents confirmed **that their participation in ReSPA’s activities had** contributed to the monitoring and evaluation of public policies. (NB: no responses to this question were provided by Serbia and the Republic of Srpska.)

The most frequently mentioned sources for confirmation of the given responses are the OECD/SIGMA monitoring reports. Additional sources used to confirm previously explained statements include ReSPA research documents, EC country reports, and internal monitoring documents.

The following examples of comments from the respondents illustrate their statements in the responses are:

- *“PAR is tightly connected to ReSPA activities, and most of the recommendations find their place in improving the PAR M&E framework.”*
- *“The experience and knowledge gained during the seminar contributed to better reporting on the progress in the implementation of the Action Plan of the PAR Strategy. It also contributed to better implementation and monitoring of the PAR Strategy.”*
- *“ReSPA, via all the activities, documents, recommendations, support, experts and other actions/instruments, has contributed to forwarding/strengthening the country-level PAR implementation in the area of monitoring and evaluation.”*
- *“The quality of the Annual Report on the implementation of the PAR Strategy was improved.”*

V. The way forward

Generally speaking, the results of the monitoring exercise on the contribution of **ReSPA’s** activities to the monitoring and evaluation of public policies was adjudged as quite satisfactory. The main lessons learnt from this monitoring exercise of thematic area 2 are briefly listed below:

- In addition to successfully fulfilling its role as a regional hub for networking and exchange of experiences and best practices, ReSPA also provides valuable training activities. These activities have both a direct and indirect positive influence on the working environments of civil servants and their interactions with each other across the region.

- **ReSPA's strongest component is that of improving individual and institutional** capacities through facilitating meetings among colleagues from different institutions in the region and/or the EU. The respondents highly valued the improvements they had made in their capacity to cooperate with colleagues from other institutions in their countries and in their dialogues and exchanges of ideas with superiors, which they considered to be very important results of their participation in ReSPA activities.
- ReSPA serves as a driver of change and inspiration at individual level, However, it is more challenging to bring about such change at institutional level.
- ReSPA has contributed to improving cooperation within different institutions at regional level. Sharing knowledge and information remains an important **aspect of ReSPA's work.**

Qualitative Analysis of Monitoring Results for Area 3:

Regulatory Reform and Implementation of Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA)

I Report on the general questionnaire

I. The results in a nutshell

The participants² rated the overall contribution of ReSPA's activities to institutional and individual improvements in the thematic area of Regulatory Reform and Implementation of RIA with an average **score of 4.2 out of 5**, i.e. as **having contributed either "greatly" or "to a good extent"**. From this it can be concluded that ReSPA's contribution is quite satisfactory and has fulfilled the expectations of ReSPA's stakeholders and management for this thematic area.

A notable result of this survey is that the respondents scored ReSPA's contribution to their individual improvement at 4.4 out of 5, slightly higher than they scored ReSPA's contribution to institutional improvement, at 4.05 out of 5. This disparity can be explained by the fact that institutional changes are more complex and challenging to initiate, as well as requiring more time to implement.

The participants reported that their interactions with ReSPA had helped them to become more deeply and professionally engaged in the preparation of strategies and RIA reports, as well as enabling them to develop broader network within their home administrations and with other administrations from the region. In addition, the participants reported that the examples of good practices obtained during ReSPA activities have been further developed and explored for replication in their institutions. However, efforts still need to be undertaken towards full **implementation of the recommendations of the ReSPA study on "Better Regulation in the Western Balkans" (2018)** and the advice of the relevant experts. It is important to highlight *that 90% of the respondents agreed that the benefits of ReSPA actions have contributed to advancing the implementation of PAR at country-level in the area of "Regulatory Reform and implementation of RIA".*

II. Individual improvements

The respondents rated ReSPA's contribution to their *individual improvement in the domain of Regulatory Reform and implementation of RIA* with an average score of 4.4 out of 5.

Question 3.1.1 – ReSPA's activities have contributed to acquired knowledge and enhanced skills for using improved approaches and methods for "Regulatory Reform and Implementation of RIA".

² Respondents of the questionnaire in this thematic area come from 9 different institutions from the ReSPA member administrations.

The respondents scored the contribution of ReSPA's **activities** to their knowledge and enhanced skills for using improved approaches and methods for regulatory reform and RIA implementation with an average score of **4.2 out of 5**, i.e. as contributing to "a good extent" or "greatly" in this area.

The majority of respondents reported that they had applied the knowledge and skills gained at **ReSPA's activities** through their involvement in the following activities:

- in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of Strategies (50%).
- in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of respective action plans (50%).
- in the actual preparation of RIA reports (40%).

It should be noted that more efforts still need to be undertaken to boost the engagement of civil servants in organizing and engaging in public consultation processes, since only 10% of the respondents selected such processes as an area in which they had applied their skills and knowledge.

According to the individual comments provided by the respondents, ReSPA's activities have facilitated their greater involvement in the preparation of the new PAR Strategic Framework. The participants reported being better able to share information at WG meetings on the preparation of the new PAR Strategic Framework, including knowing what to focus on particularly, and how other countries have resolved certain issues, etc. In addition, the respondents reported that the recommendations which emerged during ReSPA activities have helped them in monitoring national strategies.

As an example of the contribution and influence of ReSPA's actions, one respondent reported that their participation had increased their knowledge in the field of public consultations and had enhanced their exchanges of experiences with colleagues from other ReSPA countries. The same respondent had introduced their institution to the idea of improving the existing rules for conducting public consultations and had also written a monograph related to public consultations. *This example illustrates how ReSPA's activities can serve as a driver of change and inspiration in individual cases.*

The respondents also emphasised that their cooperation with colleagues and their working environments had improved as a result of participation in ReSPA actions, with many now assisting each other in the preparation of RIA Reports. In one case, the participant of a ReSPA activity reported having since organized training sessions in RIA for civil servants at which they could share experiences from other countries in the region. This case confirms the strong replication component of ReSPA actions.

Question 3.1.2. ReSPA's activities have contributed to facilitating communication and the exchange of know-how among colleagues and/or the leadership.

The respondents rated the contribution of ReSPA's **activities to facilitating communication** and the exchange of know-how among colleagues and/or the leadership at an average of **4.6 out of 5**, meaning to "a good extent" or close to "greatly". This confirms that ReSPA is a regional platform for

networking and facilitating communication and the exchange of know-how among colleagues and/or leaders in the Western Balkans.

The majority of respondents highlighted the following improvements after and as a result of their participation in ReSPA actions:

- improved cooperation with colleagues as well as the working environment within their home institutions (50%).
- Improved cooperation with colleagues from other institutions in their countries (50%),
- improved cooperation with colleagues from similar institutions from the region and/or the EU (60%).

These results indicate that ReSPA is fulfilling its role as a regional hub for networking and the exchange of experiences and best practices and that it is directly and indirectly influencing the working environments of civil servants and their interactions with each other across the region.

From the individual comments provided by the respondents, the following examples should be noted. Thus, one comment reported that ReSPA was valued in their institution and among their colleagues for its publications and for the support it provides for improving governance. Various respondents confirmed that ReSPA had contributed to improving cooperation within different institutions at regional level, while other comments also confirmed that sharing knowledge and information remains an important component of ReSPA. One respondent felt that improving cooperation with colleagues from similar institutions in the region and/or the EU is ReSPA's strongest component and that networking during ReSPA events and exchanging experiences is a very important tool for enhancing these capacities. Another respondent reported that they had increased the number of their contacts from the region thanks to ReSPA activities.

III. Institutional improvements

On average, the respondents scored ReSPA's contribution to *institutional improvement in the domain of Regulatory Reform and implementation of RIA* at 4.05 out of 5.

3.2.1. ReSPA's activities have contributed to improved institutional modalities and practices of sharing knowledge and lessons learned within the home institution and among partner institutions.

The respondents scored the contribution of ReSPA related to this criterion **at an average of 4.1 out of 5**, i.e. **slightly above "to a good extent" but below "greatly"**.

The respondents reported that institutional modalities and practices within their home institutions and among partner institutions had been improved in the following ways:

- Through developing and exploring for replication examples of good practices obtained during ReSPA activities (50%).
- Through enhancing cooperation and the exchange of ideas and/or documents with colleagues from the Western Balkan region (40%).
- Through receiving expert advice during ReSPA activities (30%)

- Through the recommendations provided in ReSPA's analytical papers, policy papers and studies.

Although study recommendations and expert advice are considered an important source of potential change and improvement, the lower figures related to these activities indicate that the full implementation of ReSPA's recommendations and expert advice remain a challenge. However, it should be noted that the implementation of these recommendations and expert advice is typically complex and time-consuming, often requiring additional government funding and/or political commitments, and sometimes even a change in mindsets and long-established traditions.

From the individual comments provided by the respondents, relevant examples include one respondent who noted that ReSPA's expert support had encouraged them to help other civil servants understand the differences between various general acts and to initiate ideas for adopting guidelines for the drafting of these acts. Another respondent reported that the Republic of Srpska government had adopted a new project for the optimization of administrative procedures, making use of experiences and practices from Serbia. Another confirmed that ReSPA's actions had introduced and induced them to apply the "Serbia is Digitalizing" programme. These examples show how participation in ReSPA actions has intensified cooperation and the exchange of ideas among colleagues in the Western Balkan region. It should be noted, however, that one respondent reported that the experts' advice had sometimes been difficult to implement in practice.

3.2.2. ReSPA's activities have contributed to progress towards the introduction and improvement of procedures, methods and tools within the institution.

The respondents scored the contribution of ReSPA's activities to this criterion **at an average of 4 out of 5**, i.e. as having contributed "to a good extent". Although 4 out of 5 is a good average, this is the lowest rated criterion within the thematic area of Regulatory Reform and implementation of RIA.

The majority of respondents reported that the progress made towards the introduction and **improvement of procedures, methods and tools within their institutions as a result of ReSPA's** actions could be seen in the improvement of internal coordination within the institution and coordination with other institutions (50%), and in the improvement of procedures, modalities and practicalities for conducting RIA and public consultations (30%).

From the individual comments provided by the respondents it can be noted that more attention is now paid to public consultations and Regulatory Impact Assessments thanks to ReSPA actions, and there is an improved understanding of RIA and public consultations. One respondent mentioned that a new project for administrative simplification had started in their administration, (April 2021 and that they had used methods and tools learnt from regional experience. Another respondent suggested there is still a need for further training of administrations in RIA, proposing an RIA Training of Trainers Programme to achieve this aim.

IV. ReSPA's contribution to the implementation of Public Administration Reform in the ReSPA member administrations

Asked whether they agree that the benefits from ReSPA actions have contributed to advancing PAR implementation at country-level in the area of *Regulatory Reform and Implementation of RIA*, **90% of the respondents replied "yes", while 10% replied "no"**. Clearly, the vast majority of respondents consider that ReSPA's actions are beneficial for advancing PAR implementation within their respective administrations in this thematic area.

The following are some of the most relevant comments provided by the respondents under this section:

- *"Public consultation and regulatory impact assessment play a significant role in public administration reform. That is why the benefits of ReSPA support are great."*
- *"ReSPA has assisted the administration in addressing some of the needs we have faced during the implementation of PAR in the country."*
- *"The benefits of ReSPA are great in all fields and not just related to PAR implementation."*
- *"The exchange of regional practices in the area of administrative simplification and RIA is necessary for improving daily work and for new initiatives."*
- *"ReSPA activities have contributed to PAR implementation to a satisfactory level."*
- *"The recommendations of the ReSPA study on RIA-related topics have improved our framework in the domain of RIA implementation."*
- *"Networking and the exchange of experiences and best practices, including sharing experiences in drafting and the implementation of strategies, has been very useful to us."*

V. The way forward

Generally speaking, the results of the monitoring exercise of ReSPA's activities and contributions in the area of *Regulatory Reform and Implementation of Regulatory Impact Assessment* (thematic area 3) are quite satisfactory. The main takeaways and lessons learnt from this monitoring exercise are briefly listed below:

- ✓ ReSPA is successfully fulfilling its role as a regional hub for networking and the exchange of experiences and best practices, and its actions are directly and indirectly influencing the working environments of civil servants and improving their interactions across the region.
- ✓ Improving **the participants'** cooperation with colleagues from similar institutions in the **region and/or the EU is considered to be ReSPA's strongest component**. Networking during ReSPA events and exchanging experiences is considered a very important tool for enhancing capacities.
- ✓ Thanks to ReSPA actions, more attention is now paid to Regulatory Impact Assessments and public consultations and the importance of RIA and public consultations is better understood.
- ✓ There is still a need for further training on RIA for the administrations. ReSPA will therefore evaluate the possibility of organising a large-scale programme of RIA Training of Trainers.
- ✓ ReSPA serves as a driver of change and inspiration at individual level. However, it is more challenging to bring about change at institutional level.

- ✓ ReSPA has contributed to improving cooperation within different institutions at regional level. Sharing knowledge and information remains an important component of ReSPA's activities.
- ✓ Although ReSPA recommendations from papers and studies and expert advice are considered an important source of potential change and improvement, their full implementation remains a challenge.
- ✓ More efforts still need to be undertaken to boost the engagement of civil servants in organizing and engaging in public consultation processes.
- ✓ In a limited number of cases, it has been found difficult to implement the **experts' advice**.

Last but not least, it is important to highlight that the ReSPA stakeholders, almost unanimously, **agree that ReSPA's actions** in the domain of *regulatory reform and implementation of RIA* have been beneficial for advancing PAR implementation within their respective administrations, which is also ReSPA's main objective of operation.

II. Implementation of recommendations for thematic area 3: Regulatory Reform and Implementation of Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA)

Within the thematic area of Regulatory Reform and Implementation of Regulatory Impact Assessment, ReSPA measured the implementation of recommendations from the following regional study:

- **Better Regulation in Western Balkans.** The study was published in 2018, but it refers mainly to the situation and state of play during 2016-2017.

The main objective of this study was to provide policy recommendations for Western Balkan countries and jurisdictions and for the region as a whole. The study provided an update of the ReSPA Baseline Analysis on Better Regulation in the Western Balkans and compared the progress achieved in better regulation and RIA implementation in Western Balkan countries. It also reviewed best practices in better regulation and RIA implementation in the Western Balkan countries and identified the potential benefits of policy design diffusion and regional transfer of best practices.

The study offered a total of 45 recommendations for national/sub-national administrations:

- Albania – 6 recommendations
- BiH institutions – 1 recommendation/remark
- BiH Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina – 8 recommendations³
- BiH Republika Srpska – 7 recommendations
- Montenegro – 9 recommendations
- North Macedonia – 6 recommendations
- Serbia – 8 recommendations

³ Four out of eight recommendations for the FBiH Administration were not scored by the administration itself and therefore their level of implementation is unclear.

The recommendations of the “Better Regulation Study” for all ReSPA members were implemented as follows:

- 51.1% of the recommendations have been adopted and implemented.
- 22.2% of the recommendations have been adopted and are under preparation but have not yet been implemented.
- 6.6% of the recommendations have been adopted but have neither been implemented nor are under preparation for implementation.
- 8.8% of the recommendations have not been adopted.
- 11.1% of recommendations have not been scored.

Number of recommendations	Level of adoption of recommendations	Level of adoption and implementation per administration	%
23 recommendations	4/4 Recommendation was adopted and implemented	Albania 3 BiH 4 BiH-RS 4 Montenegro 5 North Macedonia 2 Serbia 5	51.1
10 recommendations	3/4 Recommendation was adopted and under preparation but not yet implemented	Albania 3 BiH-RS 1 Montenegro 4 North Macedonia 1 Serbia 1	22.2
3 recommendations	2/4 Recommendation was adopted but not implemented and not under preparation for implementation	BiH-RS 1 North Macedonia 2	6.6
4 recommendations	1/4 Recommendation was not adopted	BiH-RS 1 North Macedonia 1 Serbia 2	8.8
5 recommendations unscored	Unscored recommendations	BiH institutions 1 BiH 4	11.1

More than half (51.1%) of the study recommendations have been adopted and implemented, while 22.2% have been adopted and are under preparation but have not yet been implemented. This means that 73.3% of the recommendations of the study have been taken into account by the national administrations. On the other hand, 26.5% of the recommendations have neither been implemented nor are in the preparation phase (including the unscored recommendations, whose status is unclear).

The average scores for the implementation of the recommendations per administration are shown in the following table:

Administrations	Number of recommendations	Score
Albania	6	3.5
BiH institutions	1	n/a
BiH FBiH	4 + 4	4 ⁴
BiH Republika Srpska	7	3.07
Montenegro	9	3.55
North Macedonia	6	2.66
Serbia	8	3.12
<i>All recommendations</i>	45	3.31 <i>(regional average)</i>

Generally speaking, the recommendations of the study have a satisfactory level of implementation and/or preparation for implementation. This is a clear proof that the administrations in the region are progressing satisfactorily towards improving their performance in regulatory reform and the implementation of the Better Regulation agenda. The regional average score for the implementations of the study recommendations is 3.31 out of 4.

⁴ In the case of FBiH, scoring was only provided for 4 of out of the 8 recommendations. In the average score, only the filled scores have been taken into account.

Qualitative Analysis of Monitoring Results for Area 4:

Human Resources Management and Development (HRMD)

I Report on the general questionnaire

I. The results in a nutshell

The participants⁵ rated the overall contribution of ReSPA's activities to institutional and individual improvements in the thematic area of Human Resources Management and Development with an average score of **4 out of 5**, i.e. **between "a good extent" and "greatly"**. From this it can be concluded that ReSPA's contribution in this regard is quite satisfactory and has met the expectations of ReSPA stakeholders and management for this thematic area.

The respondents scored ReSPA's contribution to their *individual improvement* at **4.13 out of 5**, slightly higher than the average score of **3.88 out of 5** for ReSPA's contribution to *institutional improvement*. From this it can be concluded that the respondents placed a higher value on ReSPA's contribution to their individual improvement than to institutional improvement, though the disparity can also be explained by the fact that institutional changes are more complex to bring about and need a longer time to be implemented.

The participants reported that their interactions with ReSPA had helped them to become more deeply and professionally engaged in the development of HRMIS applications, in the development of a Performance Appraisal Rulebook, and in the preparation of PAR strategies, etc. Peer learning and the exchange of ideas among colleagues from other countries was recognised as important and beneficial. The fact that people say they work better together after ReSPA activities is a consequence of the opportunities provided by these activities to engage in exchanges with colleagues and institutions in different environments.

The participants value both personal/cultural exchanges and the acquisition of new know-how, with the latter being closely linked to the former. This corresponds to the specific mission of ReSPA, which facilitates networking among different WB administrations and wider exchanges within the EU framework. It seems that attaining and applying such open-mindedness in their professional work is exactly what the participants expect and obtain from their involvement in ReSPA activities.

Exchanging experiences is essential for the learning process at both institutional and individual level. However, such exchange is rarely considered a value per se because it is always associated with the acquisition of specific knowledge that translates into practical progress at institutional level, such as the adoption of new laws, procedures, and tools.

⁵ The respondents to the questionnaire in this thematic area come from nine different institutions of the ReSPA member administrations.

Finally, it is important to highlight that 93.75% of respondents agreed that the benefits gained through ReSPA's actions have contributed to advancing the country-level implementation of PAR in the HRMD area.

II. Individual improvements

The respondents rated ReSPA's contribution to their *individual improvement in the domain of Human Resources Management and Development* with an average score of 4.13 out of 5.

Question 4.1.1. ReSPA's activities have contributed to acquired knowledge and enhanced skills for using improved approaches and methods for Human Resources Management and Development.

The respondents rated the contribution of ReSPA to acquired knowledge and enhanced skills for using improved approaches and methods for Human Resources Management and Development with an average score of **4.13 out of 5**, i.e. as having contributed beyond a "good extent".

The majority of respondents reported that they had applied the knowledge and skills gained at **ReSPA's activities** as follows:

- Through their involvement in merit-based recruitment, performance appraisal, online management and facilitation, HRMIS (75%).
- Through their engagement in national/local working groups on various HRMD-related issues (43.75%).
- Through other changes at individual level (31.25%).

18.75% of the respondents reported having been involved in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of strategies, while 25% reported involvement in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of action plans.

According to the individual comments provided by respondents, the knowledge and skills they have gained from ReSPA activities have facilitated their involvement in preparing a new PAR Strategy, initiating activities related to development of HRMIS, the development of a rulebook for performance appraisal, and the development of roadmaps for IT HR, etc. In addition, the respondents report that the recommendations which emerged during ReSPA activities have helped them in terms of increased productivity and self-confidence.

From the comments provided by the respondents, it is noteworthy that one of the participants declared the commitment to applying the lessons learnt from what was observed in institutions in Finland by striving to be more agile and to enhance informality in **participant's** administration. *This confirms that ReSPA can serve as an important driver of change and inspiration in individual cases.* The respondents also reported that ReSPA meetings with colleagues from other institutions in the region and/or the EU, as well as cooperation with colleagues from other institutions in their

respective countries through ReSPA actions had facilitated the improvement of their capacities *This shows that ReSPA activities successfully facilitate peer learning.*

Question 4.1.2. ReSPA's activities have contributed to facilitating communication and the exchange of know-how among colleagues and/or the leadership.

The respondents rated the contribution of ReSPA to facilitating communication and the exchange of know-how among colleagues and/or the leadership *with an average score of 4.13 out of 5*, i.e. as contributing beyond “a good extent”. **This confirms that ReSPA is a regional platform for networking** and for facilitating communication and the exchange of know-how among colleagues and/or the leadership.

The majority of respondents reported that their participation in ReSPA's actions had contributed to the following improvements:

- improved capacities thanks to meetings with colleagues from other institutions in the region and/or the EU (50%).
- improved capacities to cooperate with colleagues from other institutions in their respective countries (43.75%)
- improved cooperation with colleagues and an improved working environment in their home institution (43.75%),

The results indicate that ReSPA has also contributed to improved career prospects for some respondents (18.75%).

From the individual comments provided by the respondents, it can be noted that some reported having increased their knowledge in using online tools for effective collaboration/management, and in using digital skills and IT support in different areas as a result of ReSPA actions. Peer learning and the exchange of ideas among colleagues from other countries was recognised by the respondents as important and beneficial. The fact that people work better together after ReSPA activities is a consequence of the opportunities provided for exchanges with colleagues and institutions in different environments.

III. Institutional improvements

The respondents rated ReSPA's **contribution to** improvements in the area of *Human Resources Management and Development* at institutional level with an average score of 3.87 out of 5.

Question 4.2.1. ReSPA's activities have contributed to improved institutional modalities and practices of knowledge-sharing and lessons learned within the home institution and among partner institutions.

The respondents rated the contribution of ReSPA related to this criterion *with an average score of 4.1 out of 5*, i.e. as having contributed slightly beyond “a good extent”.

The majority of respondents reported that institutional modalities and practices within their home institution and among partner institutions had improved as follows:

- Through enhanced cooperation and exchange of ideas and/or documents with colleagues from the Western Balkan Region (56.25%).
- Through developing and exploring examples of good practices obtained during ReSPA activities for replication in their institutions (50%).
- Through further exploration and development of the advice provided by the expert, with a view to implementing this advice in their own institutions (50%),

However, only 31.25% of the respondents reported that the recommendations obtained through ReSPA’s analytical and policy papers or studies had begun to be implemented in their institutions.

According to the individual comments provided by respondents, the opportunity to become more familiar with updated methods of work is the biggest benefit of ReSPA activities. It should be noted that one of the respondents expressed the view that new thematic areas should be introduced.

Question 4.2.2. ReSPA’s activities have contributed to progress towards the introduction and improvement of procedures, methods and tools in the participating institutions.

The respondents rated the contribution of ReSPA’s **activities** to progress towards the introduction and improvement of procedures, methods and tools in their institutions with an average score of **3.88 out of 5**, i.e. as contributing **close to “a good extent”**. The majority of respondents reported that this progress could be seen in the following improvements in their institutions:

- improved procedures for merit-based recruitment, performance appraisal, HRMIS and online management (50%).
- greater promotion of information and discussion about new innovative practices, tools, and changes of procedure (50%).
- new working methods and tools initiated, introduced and implemented (31.25%).

The responses to this question **further indicate that ReSPA’s actions contributed less significantly to the improvement of internal coordination within the participants’ institutions**, coordination with other institutions, and the development of internal rules on different issues (12.50%).

From the individual comments provided by the respondents it can be noted that ReSPA’s actions also contributed to the change of the Law on Civil Service in Serbia, the new provisions of which law entered into force on January 1, 2019. One of the respondents claimed that the changes of law had been made according ReSPA recommendations. These are the short-term outcomes of ReSPA’s Intervention Logic, to which ReSPA activities are expected to contribute. As a result of the ReSPA workshop, new ideas were gained on HRMIS implementation and new IT tools were developed for e-recruitment.

IV. ReSPA's contribution to the implementation of Public Administration Reform in the ReSPA member administrations

Asked whether they agree that the benefits of ReSPA's actions had contributed to advancing PAR the implementation of PAR at country-level in the area of *Human Resources Management and Development*, **93.75% of the respondents replied "yes"**, while only **6.25% replied "no"**. Clearly, the vast majority of respondents consider that ReSPA's actions are beneficial for advancing PAR implementation within their respective administrations as regards this thematic area.

From the comments provided by the respondents under this section, the following can serve as representative examples:

- *"ReSPA's in-country mechanisms gives a great support to institutions."*
- *"People working in HR are an important group of employees in our system of work. In our strategic document for PAR we need to improve merit-based recruitment and assessment of employees. Most of RESPA's activities are related to our strategic document and the activities we need to achieve."*
- *"New ideas and approaches provided the basis for better understanding the current appraisal system, and especially the recruitment system, as well as providing alternatives for additional adjustments and future improvements in the area."*
- *"ReSPA's activities and research documents have contributed to the revision and improvement of some procedures in the area of HRM."*
- *"ReSPA activities have influenced the improvement of HRM regulation in the public sector in my country, as well as establishing new practices in daily operations related to different aspects of HRM."*
- *"Given that these are dynamic processes, as well as the fact that we are currently in the process of adopting a new law on administrative civil servants and a law on public sector employees, the exchange of experiences is always beneficial."*

V. The way forward

Generally speaking, the results of the monitoring exercise for ReSPA's thematic area 4 *Human Resources Management and Development* is quite satisfactory. The main takeaways and lessons learnt from this monitoring exercise of activities implemented in the domain of HRMD are briefly listed below:

- ✓ ReSPA is successfully fulfilling its role as a regional hub for networking and the exchange of experiences and best practices and is directly and indirectly influencing the working environments and interactions among civil servants across the region.
- ✓ Improving cooperation with colleagues from similar institutions from the region and/or the **EU is ReSPA's strongest component**, and networking during ReSPA events and exchanging experiences is considered to be a very important tool to enhance capacities.
- ✓ Thanks to ReSPA actions, more attention is now paid to HRMD.
- ✓ ReSPA serves as a driver of change and inspiration at individual level, though it is more challenging to bring about change at institutional level.
- ✓ ReSPA has contributed to improving cooperation within different institutions at regional level, and sharing knowledge and information remains an important component of ReSPA.

- ✓ ReSPA recommendations from its papers and studies and expert advice are useful tools for supporting countries in the improvement of merit-based recruitment and performance appraisal processes.

Last but not least, it is important to highlight that ReSPA stakeholders in the domain of *HRMD* almost unanimously agree that ReSPA's actions are beneficial for advancing PAR implementation within their respective administrations, which is also ReSPA's main reason for operation.

II Report on the implementation of recommendations from studies for the thematic area: Human Resources Management and Development

Within this thematic area the implementation of recommendations from the following two studies was monitored:

- Merit Recruitment in the Western Balkans: An Evaluation of Change between 2015 and 2018.
- Individual Performance Appraisal of Employees in Central Public Administration in the Western Balkans

Merit Recruitment in the Western Balkans: An Evaluation of Change between 2015 and 2018.

This study evaluated the progress achieved as of 2015, when the first ReSPA study on merit-based recruitment was produced. The study identified obstacles to the successful implementation of HRMD policies and proposed strategies for improving the quality of implementation. The study focused on the area of recruitment and selection as crucial areas for analysing the quality of implementation of HRM policies in the Western Balkans. The study also provided recommendations for improving the implementation of merit-based recruitment.

There was a total of 67 recommendations proposed for national administrations, as follows:

- Albania - 7 recommendations
- BiH administration - 8 recommendations
- BiH Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina - 10 recommendations
- BiH Republika Srpska - 9 recommendations
- Montenegro - 10 recommendations
- North Macedonia - 9 recommendations
- Serbia - 14 recommendations

The recommendations for all ReSPA member administrations have been implemented as follows: 41.79% recommendations have been adopted and implemented; 35.82% of recommendations have been adopted and are under preparation but have not yet been implemented; 7.46% recommendations have been adopted but have not been implemented and are not under preparation for implementation, and 14.92% recommendations have not been adopted.

No of recommendations	Level of adoption of recommendations	Level of adoption and implementation per administration	%
28 recommendations	4/4 Recommendation has been adopted and implemented	Albania 6, BiH institutions 1, FBiH 2, BiH-RS 1, Montenegro 2, North Macedonia 5, Serbia 11	41.79
24 recommendations	3/4 Recommendation has been adopted and is under preparation but has not yet been implemented	Albania 1, BiH institutions 4, FBiH 3, BiH-RS 6, Montenegro 8, North Macedonia 1, Serbia 1	35.82
5 recommendations	2/4 Recommendation has been adopted but not implemented and is not under preparation for implementation	BiH institutions 3, BiH-RS 1, North Macedonia 1,	7.46
10 recommendations	1/4 Recommendation was not adopted	FBiH 5, BiH-RS 1, North Macedonia 2, Serbia 2	14.92

The average score for the implementation of recommendations per administration was as follows:

Administrations	Number of recommendations	Score
Albania	7	3.86
BiH institutions	8	2.75
BiH FBiH	10	2.2
BiH Republika Srpska	9	2.78
Montenegro	10	3.22
North Macedonia	9	3
Serbia	14	3.5
<i>All recommendations</i>	<i>67</i>	

Individual Performance Appraisal of Employees in Central Public Administrations in the Western Balkans. This study reviewed the state of the art regarding performance appraisal in the Western Balkan member administrations with a special focus on improvements in the implementation of performance appraisal, comparison among the countries of the region, and examples of existing good practices in the EU and worldwide. The study also provided recommendations for improving the implementation of performance appraisal in the Western Balkans. A total of 43 recommendations were proposed for national administrations (Albania 8, BiH administration 5, BiH Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina 5, BiH Republika Srpska 5, Montenegro 9, North Macedonia 7, and Serbia 4).

The recommendations for all ReSPA Members were implemented as follows: 30.23% of the recommendations have been adopted and implemented; 39.53% have been adopted and are under preparation but have not yet been implemented; 18.6% have been adopted but have not been implemented and are not under preparation for implementation; and 11.62% recommendations have not been adopted.

No of recommendations	Level of adoption of recommendations	Level of adoption and implementation per administration	%
13 recommendations	4/4 Recommendation has been adopted and implemented	Albania 5, FBiH 2, BiH-RS 1, Montenegro 2, North Macedonia 3	30.23
17 recommendations	3/4 Recommendation has been adopted and is under preparation but has not yet been implemented	Albania 2, BiH institutions 4, FBiH 2, BiH-RS 2, Montenegro 4, North Macedonia 2, Serbia 1	39.53
8 recommendations	2/4 Recommendation has been adopted but not implemented and is not under preparation for implementation	Albania 1, FBiH 1, BiH-RS 2, Montenegro 3, North Macedonia 1,	18.6
5 recommendations	1/4 Recommendation has not been adopted	BiH institutions 1, North Macedonia 1, Serbia 3	11.62

The average score for the level of implementation of the recommendations per administration was as follows:

Administrations	Number of recommendations	Score
Albania	8	3.5
BiH institutions	5	2.6
BiH FBiH	5	3.2
BiH Republika Srpska	5	2.8
Montenegro	9	2.89
North Macedonia	7	3
Serbia	4	1.5
All recommendations	43	

The implementation of recommendations related to merit-based recruitment (41.79%) is higher than the implementation of recommendations for performance-appraisal (30.32%). This can be explained by the fact that the implementation of performance appraisal is a challenge not only for the Western Balkans but also for the EU. Although the number of implemented recommendations from both studies is below 50%, the fact that 35.82% of recommendations for merit-based recruitment and almost 40% of recommendations for performance appraisal are under preparation indicates that changes are still happening but are not happening quickly. From this we can conclude that the countries are committed to change and improvement.

III Report on the implementation of in-country support for the thematic area: Human Resources Management and Development

Further Development of a Learning Management System for the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) of Serbia

As a central training institution, NAPA is responsible for delivering training to a wide range of target groups, including civil servants at central and local level and employees in all public administration

bodies. Face-to-face training activities are not a sufficiently effective educational method to reach a wider group of employees. The only sustainable solution for providing training for a wide range of target groups was found to be the development of online courses. During 2018, therefore, NAPA developed a Learning Management System and number of training modules with support from ReSPA.

NAPA requested support in developing two complementary modules for its online platform to enhance its internal processes. These two additional modules, the Programme Compiler Module and the LMS Planning Module, were intended to enable the automatization of programme preparation and the development of monthly training plans. It was also essential to link LMS with the HRMIS data, so that HRMIS could retrieve data from the LMS and to ensure no duplication in the input of training-related data. The automated system had to eliminate manual publishing of training events on NAPA website following the final approval of the *Civil Servants Education Programme*. The respondents indicated that this project contributed greatly to institutional improvement, scoring both items in the questionnaire with 5 out of 5

The responses regarding **knowledge-sharing** (question 421) indicate that **ReSPA's** in-country support has helped the institution gain a better overview of the training processes and of training evidence. In addition, training materials are now available for downloading and knowledge-sharing, and the automatic exchange of data with other government institutions has been enabled. The training schedule has been automatically published on the website. The specific benefits are as follows:

- The training application can now be completed in just two clicks.
- A list of completed training is now available (offline and online),
- A list of available trainings is automatically generated and published.
- E-Certificates are now available for all completed classroom, webinar and online training. The certificates can be downloaded in pdf format and signed with a qualified electronic signature, making them valid as evidence documents.
- Training materials are available for download.
- All data can be imported and exported in machine-readable format.
- NAPA has created Application Programme Interfaces (APIs) for the automatic exchange of data with other government institutions.
- The NAPA website is connected with API to enable the publishing of live information about the training schedule.

The responses regarding **specific procedures** (question 422) show that **ReSPA's** in-country support helped NAPA to document every process in LMS, to create instructions for all users, and to **tailor services according to users' needs**.

Finally, the responses regarding **the link with PAR implementation** (at point 2 of the questionnaire) indicate that **ReSPA's** in-country support contributed to advancing PAR implementation in the area of Human Resources Management and Development through the professional development of civil servants at country level, improving their competencies for good quality work and at the same time improving the quality of services provided by the PA to citizens and businesses.

Qualitative Analysis of Monitoring Results for Area 5:

Quality Management (QM)

I Report on the General questionnaire

I. The results in a nutshell

The respondents⁶ rated ReSPA's **overall** contribution to institutional and individual improvements in the thematic area of Quality Management with an average score of **3.75 out of 5** i.e. as having contributed "to a **good extent**". From this it can be concluded that **ReSPA's** contribution is quite satisfactory and has met the expectations of the participants.

The respondents scored the contribution of ReSPA actions to their *individual improvement with an average of 3.9*, slightly higher than for *institutional improvement, which was scored at 3.6*. The respondents also gave a high score for individual improvements arising from their acquiring knowledge on the use of QM instruments and CAF, showing that that QM training is considered essential in this thematic area. The importance of the regional aspect of ReSPA activities in this area was emphasised by the respondents, as was the replication potential of ReSPA activities.

II. Individual improvements

The respondents rated ReSPA's contribution to their individual improvement in the domain of Quality Management with an average score of 4 out of 5.

Question 5.1.1 – ReSPA's activities have contributed to acquired knowledge and enhanced skills for using improved approaches and methods for Quality Management.

The majority of respondents adjudged that **ReSPA's activities have contributed to a good extent (75%), to an adequate extent (12%) or greatly (13%)** to acquired knowledge and enhanced skills for using improved approaches and methods in QM. None of the responses indicated that ReSPA activities had *not contributed much* or *not contributed at all*.

⁶ The respondents to the questionnaire in this thematic area came from 16 different institutions of the ReSPA member administrations. The response rate was 20.25 (i.e. 16 of the 79 responses sent). The questionnaire covered six actions organised by ReSPA.

Regarding the question of how the acquired knowledge and skills had been applied, most answers related to questions under c⁷) and d⁸) indicated that the acquired knowledge had been used in applying QM instruments, more specifically the CAF. It is notable that all other options received almost the same scores. Although the volume of responses (16) was rather small, the following examples of **respondents' comments** shed more light on how the acquired knowledge is being used:

- *"I was a part of team for preparing the PAR Strategy for BiH. I suggested using indicators thanks to having participated in ReSPA's actions."*
- *"I took the initiative to introduce client satisfaction measurement in my organisation."*
- *"I gained insights into the new CAF for 2020. I received trainings on CAF PEF procedures that I am now ready to use."*
- *"As the CAF Coordinator in the Ministry, I have continued to implement the Ministry's CAF Action Plan with a focus on including a gender equality component in these activities."*
- *"I have supported my organisation in implementing a CAF."*
- *"I have supported other organisations to implement a CAF."*
- *"In my organization I am recognized as someone who represents the CAF methodology and approach in the work of the ministry."*

Question 5.1.2. ReSPA's activities have contributed to facilitating communication and the exchange of know-how among colleagues and/or the leadership.

The respondents rated the contribution of ReSPA's **actions** to facilitating communication and the exchange of know-how among colleagues and/or the leadership with an **average score of 3.8 out of 5**. Specifically, 31% of all responses **rated ReSPA's actions as having** contributed to *an adequate extent*, 63% to *a good extent*, and 6% *greatly*.

The majority of respondents reported the following improvements after and due to ReSPA actions:

- Improved cooperation with colleagues as well as the working environment within their home institution (43%).
- Improved cooperation with colleagues from other institutions from their country (43%).
- Improved cooperation with colleagues from similar institutions in the region and/or the EU (56%).

These results indicate that ReSPA is fulfilling its role as a regional hub for networking and the exchange of experiences and best practices and that ReSPA is directly and indirectly influencing the working environments of civil servants and their interactions across the region.

The following examples from the comments confirm the above statement:

⁷ c) Strengthened knowledge about QM instruments

⁸ d) Increased capacity for using the Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

- “Thanks to ReSPA, my colleagues and I have established a group for QM from different administrations levels in Bi.H.”
- “Better communication with the BIH state level and RS level in the area of service delivery.”
- “Networking through ReSPA activities is great. It’s not only about sharing experiences but also gaining new contacts.”

From these results and comments it can be concluded that the contribution of ReSPA activities have made a very significant contribution in helping the participants acquire new knowledge and skills at a personal level. The regional component of ReSPA activities is important and has produced the desired effect of promoting greater knowledge-sharing among regional colleagues and of adding value to acquired knowledge.

III. Institutional improvements

The respondents rated ReSPA’s contribution to *institutional improvement in the domain of QM with an average score of 3.7*, which is slightly less favourable than the score given for individual improvements.

Question 5.2.1. ReSPA’s activities have contributed to improved institutional modalities and practices of sharing knowledge and lessons learned within the home institution and among partner institutions.

The respondents rated the contribution of ReSPA’s **actions** related to this criterion *with an average score of 3.7 out of 5*, i.e. as having contributed to an *adequate extent* (44%), to a *good extent* (44%), and *greatly* (12%). This is quite a positive score, especially given that lower scores were typically awarded with regard to ReSPA’s contribution to institutional improvements in other areas.

There is a notable disparity between the answers on **how institutional modalities have been improved**. The majority of respondents reported that institutional modalities and practices within their home institution and among partner institutions have been improved through the following actions:

- The examples of good practice provided during ReSPA activities have been further developed and explored for replication (63%).
- The expert advice provided during ReSPA activities has been further explored and developed with a view to its implementation (38%).
- Improvements have been achieved through enhanced cooperation and exchange of ideas and/or documents with colleagues from the Western Balkan region (31%).

However, only 25% believe that improvements have come about through the recommendations provided through ReSPA analytical and policy papers and studies.

It should be noted here that the score pertaining to the specific activity of the PA award cannot be analysed because there was only one response regarding this activity.

The importance of examples of good practices should be noted and considered when planning activities in this area to ensure this component is included and further strengthened. Sharing good practices in CAF implementation was highlighted by one respondent as follows:

- *“In the organisation of our CAF working group in B&H, we have shared good practices from the region.”*

Question 5.2.2. ReSPA’s activities have contributed to progress towards the introduction and improvement of procedures, methods and tools within the institution.

The respondents **rated ReSPA’s contribution to progress towards the introduction and improvement of procedures, methods and tools within institutions** with an average score of 3.5, i.e. as having contributed to *an adequate extent* (44%) or a good extent (44%), while some rated this contribution (question 5.2.2.) as *not much* (6%).

Compared to other criteria, this contribution is the lowest rated within the thematic area of *Quality Management*.

The majority of respondents reported that the progress made due to ReSPA actions towards the introduction and improvement of procedures, methods and tools within their institutions was evident in the following improvements:

- New working methods have been initiated, introduced and implemented using QM tools, including the CAF (44%).
- Examples of good practice among ReSPA member administrations have been presented at workshops, training sessions, conferences and study visits, etc., and potential replication of these practices has since been explored (38%).
- Improved methods of work have been introduced and implemented in the institution by using QM tools, including CAF implementation (38%).

The following comments from the respondents illustrate the claims made above:

- *“CAF has been used as a result of QM WG work. CAF improvement plans are regularly implemented, which has resulted in improved methods of work like electronic document management, better sharing of information by the director, etc.”*
- *“Thanks to CAF, my organisation has also started to implement Employee Satisfaction Measurement.”*
- *“Electronic document management has been introduced using CAF.”*
- *“As part of the work on the implementation of the CAF Action Plan of the Ministry, a questionnaire on the expectations and perceptions of service users has been initiated, which should be posted on the Ministry’s website.”*

IV. ReSPA's contribution to the implementation of Public Administration Reform in the ReSPA member administrations

The monitoring exercise aimed to find out how the benefits from ReSPA's actions have contributed to advancing the implementation of PAR at country-level in the area of Quality Management. The vast majority (94%) of all the respondents fully confirmed this contribution, while only 6% of replied "no". Clearly, the vast majority of respondents consider that ReSPA actions are beneficial for advancing PAR implementation within their respective administrations regarding this thematic area.

It can be concluded that the OECD/SIGMA monitoring reports (44%) were the most utilised source, alongside EX Country reports (25%), while the ReSPA analytical papers were used in 18% of cases.

V. The way forward

The results of the monitoring exercise for ReSPA's thematic area Quality Management are quite satisfactory. The main lessons learnt from this monitoring exercise of activities implemented are briefly listed below:

- ✓ When planning activities in this area, exposure to good practices should be a strong component. Training is essential in this area for acquiring knowledge and skills at individual level.
- ✓ Sharing a good practices in the use of the CAF and publishing good practices needs to be strengthened.

II Report on the implementation of recommendations for the thematic area: Quality Management

ReSPA measured the extent of implementation of recommendations from the regional **Comparative Study on Service Delivery**. This study was produced in 2018 with the primary objective of providing an operational overview of practitioners' insights into public service delivery in the Western Balkan region, formulating strategic and operational short-, mid- and long-term recommendations, and presenting a joint integrated vision of public administration development at macro level. Analysis of service delivery was undertaken for the following key thematic fields: **GAPA (General Administrative Procedural Act), digitalisation and e-government, and quality management in service delivery**. The analysis also covered the accessibility of services for vulnerable groups. Short-term, mid-term and long-term recommendations were provided for all ReSPA Member countries and Kosovo.*⁹

⁹ *This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Advisory Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Responses on the Questionnaire were received from only two out of five countries: Albania and BiH (institutions at the state level), entities of the Federation of BiH (FBiH) and Republika Srpska (RS):

- Albania – 23 recommendations
- BiH for all administrative levels – 33 recommendations

No of recommendations	Level of adoption of recommendations	Level of adoption and implementation per administration	%
13 recommendations	4/4 Recommendation was adopted and implemented	Albania 7, BiH institutions and FBiH 5, BiH-RS 1,	14.7
22 recommendations	3/4 Recommendation has been adopted and is under preparation but has not yet been implemented	Albania 6, BiH institutions and FBiH 5, BiH-RS 11	24.8
7 recommendations	2/4 Recommendation has been adopted but has not been implemented and is not under preparation for implementation	Albania 1, BiH institutions and FBiH, 6	7.8
7 recommendations	1/4 Recommendation has not been adopted	BiH institutions and FBiH, 7	7.8
40 unscored recommendations		Albania 9, BiH institutions and FBiH, 10 BiH, RS 21	44.9

The respondents from Albania and BiH reported the implementation of the study recommendations for quality management as follows:

Albania:

1. **Short-term recommendations** – One of the three recommendations has been adopted and implemented, while two have been adopted and are under preparation but have not yet been implemented.
2. **Mid-term recommendations** – One of the two recommendations provided has been adopted and implemented, while the other recommendation has been adopted and is under preparation but has not yet been implemented.
3. **Long-term recommendations** – Both of the two long-term recommendations have been adopted and implemented.

The most meaningful progress has been made in the following areas:

- ✓ Developing user feedback mechanisms implemented for e-public services by NAIS.
- ✓ Central policy has been put in place for quality assurance tools and ADISA has the authority for assessing the quality of service delivery and performance based on the Council of Ministers' Decision (VKM) No. 640, dated 2 October 2019.
- ✓ A user feedback mechanism (CFM) has been developed under the Citizen Centric Service Delivery project.
- ✓ Legislation has been developed for standardising citizen-centric public service delivery models and ADISA is implementing this legislation.

- ✓ Users and the wider community are now more involved in reviewing and redesigning public services, with a number of activities implemented by the Prime Minister's Office and ADISA.

Bosnia and Herzegovina:

Recommendations were given for BiH for three administrative levels and have also been monitored and reported separately as follows:

BiH institutions level

- 1. Short-term recommendations** – Four out of five recommendations have been adopted and implemented, while one has been adopted and is under preparation but has not yet been implemented.
- 2. Mid-term recommendations** - All three recommendations have been adopted and are under preparation but have not yet been implemented.
- 3. Long-term recommendations** – The single long-term recommendation has been adopted but has not been implemented and is not under preparation for implementation. No description was provided of the implementation of this recommendation.

Federation of BiH level

- 1. Short-term recommendations** – Three out of five recommendations have been adopted and implemented, one has been adopted and is under preparation for implementation, and another has not been adopted.
- 2. Mid-term recommendations** – Two out of three mid-term recommendations have been adopted but have not been implemented and are not under preparation for implementation, while one recommendation has not been adopted.
- 3. Long-term recommendations** – One long-term recommendation was given but is not applicable.

Republika Srpska level

There was no specific response regarding the implementation of recommendations for the area of Quality Management. However, since there is a single Action Plan for the Strategic Framework for Public Administration Reform 2018–2022 for all administrative levels of BiH, in which the QM thematic area is included under public services, with clear actions for CAF, client satisfaction and other QM tools, the answers related to implementation of the measures from this Action plan refer to all three administrative levels, including Republika Srpska.

The most meaningful progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been made in the following areas:

- ✓ The Strategic Framework for Public Administration Reform 2018–2022 and the accompanying Action Plan include QM in the area of public services, with clear actions for CAF, client satisfaction and other QM tools. Action plans for QM have also been developed for each administrative level.
- ✓ PARCO supports and is promoting the implementation of CAF for the administrations at the level of BiH institutions. Civil Service Agencies at the level of both entities support the introduction of CAF in institutions at their level.
- ✓ PARCO is working on the development of methodology for CSM (client satisfaction management), an index is being developed for CSM in BiH, and the implementation of CSM is supported by PARCO and GIZ.

- ✓ Institutions from all four levels have developed guidelines for measuring employee satisfaction.

The CSA of FBiH has started piloting a project on Client Satisfaction Measurement, as part of the GiZ support.

III Report on the implementation of in-country support for the thematic area: Quality Management

Senior Expert on the Common Assessment Framework for the Civil Service Agency in Republika Srpska (BiH) and the Ministry of Energy RS (BiH)

In accordance with a Decision of the Government of the Republic of Srpska, the Civil Service Agency (CSA) of the Republic of Srpska has been promoting the CAF model and its implementation in the **country's** institutions. Following a request for technical assistance from the Ministry of Energy and Mining of RS in introducing the CAF, the CSA applied to ReSPA for in-country support in introducing the CAF model in the Ministry. The reason for this request was that the CSA lacked sufficient technical knowledge to fully implement the CAF model. A senior expert in CAF was engaged to provide assistance and the CSA RS has now successfully introduced a full model of the CAF in the Ministry.

The responses regarding **knowledge-sharing** (question 521) indicate that **ReSPA's** in-country support has **contributed "greatly"** to institutional improvement, with respondents scoring this with 5 out of 5. According to the respondents, the expert engaged by ReSPA was highly qualified and provided great support in introducing the CAF model.

The responses to the question **on specific procedures** (question 522) indicate that in-country support has **contributed "to a good extent"** (score 4) in progress towards the introduction and improvement of procedures and methods within the institution. The support provided by ReSPA was considered excellent and useful. It has enabled Ministry of Energy and Mining to harmonize the self-assessment questionnaire on the basis of which the Report and Action Plan for Improvement were later prepared.

The response regarding **the link with PAR implementation** (at point 2 of the questionnaire) does not provide direct answer but the contentment is expressed about QM being specifically included as the area for improvement in the current PAR Strategic Framework for BiH.

"Promoting the CAF model and its implementation in Bosnia and Herzegovina - Senior Expert in Common Assessment Framework (CAF) in the Municipality of Bihac, Federation of BiH"

In accordance with a Decision of the Government of the Federation of BiH, the Civil Service Agency of the Federation of BiH has undertaken several steps and activities to promote the CAF model and its implementation within the institutions of public authorities in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, including at local government level. In order to facilitate CAF self-assessment and the formulation of a CAF improvement plan for the Municipality of Bihac, the CSA requested technical assistance from ReSPA in the form of in-country support, since neither the CSA FBiH or the Municipality had the technical knowledge or skills in CAF implementation to undertake this work.

The application from CSA FBiH for the Municipality of Bihac (i.e. the end-beneficiary) was therefore accepted and ReSPA engaged a senior expert in CAF.

The responses regarding knowledge sharing question 521) indicate that ReSPA's in-country support has contributed **"greatly"** to institutional improvement, scoring 5 out of 5. According to the respondents, the introduction of the CAF model has led the Municipality of Bihać to develop and implement a new Rulebook on Internal Organization and to develop and initiate a new methodological approach for conducting customer surveys.

The responses to the question on specific procedures, with an average score of 4 out of 5 for question 522, indicate that ReSPA's in-country support has contributed **"to a good extent"** to progress towards the introduction and improvement of procedures and methods within the institution. This support has helped the institution to gain a better overview of training processes and of registering the attendance at the training. Training materials are now available for downloading and knowledge-sharing. The automatic exchange of data with other government institutions has also been enabled and the training schedule has been automatically published on the website.

The responses regarding the link with PAR implementation (at point 2 of the questionnaire) indicate that the benefits from this ReSPA project have contributed to advancing PAR implementation in this area and in the areas of policy development and the coordination and HRM.

Quotes from the questionnaires:

- *"The support provided was excellent and useful. The result is that the Ministry of Energy and Mining (of the RS, BiH) has harmonized the self-assessment questionnaire on the basis of which the Report and Action Plan for Improvement were later prepared."*
- *"Thanks to ReSPA's support in the CAF implementation, the City of Bihać has developed and implemented a new Rulebook on Internal Organization and has developed and initiated a new methodological approach for conducting customer surveys."*

Qualitative Analysis of Monitoring Results for Area 6:

E-Government (E-Gov)

I Report on the General questionnaire

I. The results in a nutshell

The respondents¹⁰ rated ReSPA's contribution to institutional and individual improvements in the thematic area of e-Government with an average score of **3.5** i.e. as having contributed **"to an adequate extent"** and a **"good extent"**. From this it can be concluded that ReSPA's contribution in this area is satisfactory but that **more efforts should be invested to raise the level of ReSPA's contribution** and meet the expectations of ReSPA stakeholders in this thematic area.

The respondents rated the **contribution of ReSPA's support for individual improvement with an average score of 3.64, slightly higher than for institutional improvement at 3.34**. The majority of answers related to questions under a¹¹) and d¹²) show that the acquired knowledge and enhanced skills *at individual level* have been used most effectively through involvement in the preparation of strategic documents and the internal transfer of knowledge about innovative new practices. The latter is significant because of the importance of innovativeness for activities in the e-GOV area. The Seasonal School was the activity most **cited by the respondents in terms of ReSPA's contribution** to their newly acquired knowledge of innovative practices.

II. Individual improvements

The respondents rated ReSPA's contribution to their individual improvement in the domain of e-Government with an average score of 3.64 out of 5.

Question 6.1.1 – ReSPA's activities have contributed to acquired knowledge and enhanced skills for using improved approaches and methods for e-Government.

¹⁰ Respondents of the questionnaire in this thematic area come from 22 different institutions from the ReSPA members. Response rate: 16.5% (22 responses out of 133 sent Q). The questionnaire covered 15 actions organized by ReSPA. The number of replies differs per actions: the most responses came from the participants of seasonal schools, and the least from the High-level Ministerial Policy Dialogue meetings.

¹¹ My involvement in preparation/ implementation/ monitoring of a Strategy regarding e-Government / digitalisation of public services/ data opening

¹² Advocating internally or externally for innovative or new practices/changes and new procedures to be introduced in e-Government (development of new/upgraded digital; opening of data; preparation/implementation of OGP National Plan)
Improved cooperation with colleagues as well as the working environment in my institution

The majority of the respondents adjudged that ReSPA's activities have contributed to a good extent (50%) and to an adequate extent (37%) to acquired knowledge and enhanced skills for using improved approaches and methods in the area of e-Government. However, only 9% of the respondents concluded that these activities had contributed *greatly*, while 4.5% responded that the activities had *not much* contributed. None of the respondents concluded that ReSPA's had been without any contribution to improvements at individual level.

The majority of responses to the questions under a¹³) and d¹⁴) indicate that the participants have used their newly acquired knowledge and enhanced skills most effectively through their involvement in the preparation of strategic documents and the internal transfer of knowledge about innovative new practices. The latter is significant because of the importance of innovativeness in activities in the area of e-Government. The respondents most frequently cited the Seasonal School as the ReSPA activity that had contributed most to their newly acquired knowledge of innovative practices.

Quotes":

- *"The Seasonal School on Rapid Innovation Lab experience is an incredibly valuable opportunity; it gives you the chance to explore the world of work in a way that you otherwise wouldn't be able to access before."*
- *"The knowledge and skills gained at the Seasonal School on Digital Transformation, ReSPA, Danilovgrad, Montenegro, 02-06 September 2019, have been applied in my involvement in the preparation of a monitoring report for the Thematic Group of public services."*

Question 6.1.2. ReSPA's activities have contributed to facilitating communication and the exchange of know-how among colleagues and/or the leadership.

The respondents rated the contribution of ReSPA's actions to facilitating communication and the exchange of know-how among colleagues and/or the leadership *with an average score of 3.64 out of 5*. More specifically, 67% of all respondents rated these actions as having contributed to a *good extent*, and 37% to an *adequate extent*. Attending ReSPA activities was considered to have contributed most significantly to knowledge-sharing among colleagues within their own institutions (50%). Opportunities to communicate and exchange know-how with colleagues from other countries in the region and the EU were also highly valued (37%), which again underlines the significance of exposure to other practices through ReSPA activities.

Quotes:

- *"The ReSPA Seasonal School on Digital Transformation enabled me to meet and exchange knowledge and share experiences with colleagues from countries in the region."*
- *"Enhanced knowledge and skills using digital skills and IT support in different areas."*

¹³ My involvement in preparation/ implementation/ monitoring of a Strategy regarding E Government / digitalisation of public services/ data opening

¹⁴ Advocating internally or externally for innovative or new practices/changes and new procedures to be introduced in e-Government (development of new/upgraded digital; opening of data, preparation/implementation of OGP National Plan)

Improved cooperation with colleagues as well as the working environment in my institution

From this it can be concluded that the contribution of ReSPA activities **to the participants'** acquisition of new knowledge and skills at personal level was satisfactory. It should be noted that the regional component of ReSPA activities is highly appreciated and considered of great importance. This approach has produced the desired effect of sharing knowledge with regional colleagues.

The innovative aspects of these activities is highly valued by the participants and must therefore be maintained and possibly increased.

III. Institutional improvements

The respondents rated the contribution of **ReSPA's activities** to *institutional improvement in the domain of e-Government* with an average score of 3.34 out of 5, very close to the score for individual improvements.

Question 6.2.1. ReSPA's activities have contributed to improved institutional modalities and practices of sharing knowledge and lessons learnt within the home institution and among partner institutions.

The respondents rated the contribution of ReSPA related to this criterion *with an average score of 3.3 out of 5*

The majority of respondents adjudged that ReSPA activities had contributed to an *adequate extent* (36%), to a *good extent* (27%), or *greatly* (14%). However, 23% of the respondents rated these activities as having made *not much* of a contribution, which could indicate that **ReSPA's activities** have not produced the intended improvements at institutional level. This score calls for attention, **together with the average score of 3.3 given to ReSPA's contribution in this area.**

In order to identify the underlying problem indicated by these scores, a specific analysis of the root causes should be conducted. Among the possible causes that should be investigated is whether the problem due to a failure of **"knowledge transfer" in the institutions due to poor internal communication** or disinterest at high managerial level, whether it was due to the incapacity of the participants to convey gained knowledge, or in broader terms whether the number of participants per country was insufficient to lead to quality changes at institutional level.

*In response to the question about the ways in which institutional practices of sharing knowledge and lessons learned within their home institutions and among partner institutions had improved, the majority of respondents reported that they had further developed and explored the examples of good practice provided during ReSPA's activities with a view to replicating these examples in their own institutions (45%), with an equal number (45%) reporting that they were further exploring and developing ways to implement the expert advice provided during ReSPA activities in their institutions. These are encouraging responses, and it is also worth noting that 27% of the respondents confirmed that "Key lessons learnt regarding innovative approaches in transforming digital services in crises situations have been **discussed internally**", which is good result given the importance of innovative approaches in this particular area*

Several statements illustrate the points made above:

- *“In the scope of our department, new knowledge was analyzed and considered about the future steps of our institution.”*
- *“Everything I learnt at the above events was new for me. Although my institution is not an eGov centre of expertise and activities, we explored all the topics and are starting to implement things that digitally transform recruitment, training, etc.”*
- *“We used the presented good practices and incorporated them into our strategic documents.”*

Question 6.2.2. ReSPA’s activities have contributed to progress towards the introduction and improvement of procedures, methods and tools within the institution.

The respondents rated the contribution of ReSPA’s activities to progress towards the introduction/improvement of procedures, methods and tools within the institution with an average score of 3.36. The majority of respondents rated the activities as having contributed to *an adequate extent* (45%), while 32% considered the activities had contributed *to a good extent*, 14% *not much* and 9% *greatly*.

Regarding the kinds of progress made towards the introduction and improvement of procedures, methods and tools within the institution, the most common answer selected to this question was that *‘Examples of innovative practices or approaches have been presented at Seasonal Schools/ OGP meetings, workshops and conferences etc., and potential replication has been explored or implemented’* (40% of all responses), while there was quite an even distribution of the following responses: *‘Improved procedures and methods regarding digital services/open data/OGP’* (23%); *‘New working methods have been initiated, introduced and implemented’* (27%); and *‘Examples of good practices (among ReSPA Members, EU, globally) were presented at a workshop, training session, or conference or during a visit to another country and have contributed to possible replication or implementation of the model’* (27%).

It can be noted that the rather high score on questions related to “innovative practices being explored”, which included specific activities such as the Seasonal School and OGP meetings, is a good sign that ReSPA should continue with this profile of activities and keep bringing the newest trends into its activities in this thematic area.

The following comment on ReSPA’s PA Award highlights the significance of recognising achievements at the level of institutions:

- *“ReSPA’s annual award to the Agency for the project on training during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is an indicator that we are going in the right direction and has encouraged us to undertake further improvements of our system.”*

IV ReSPA’s contribution to the implementation of Public Administration Reform in the ReSPA member administrations

The monitoring exercise aimed to find out the extent to which the benefits from ReSPA’s actions have contributed to advancing the implementation of PAR at country-level in the area of e-

Government. This contribution was confirmed by 86% of all the respondents, while 14% selected “no” in response to this question. Clearly, the vast majority of respondents considered that ReSPA’s actions have been beneficial for advancing PAR implementation within their respective administrations regarding this thematic area.

There is a strong indication that ReSPA research documents (23%) and OECD/SIGMA monitoring reports (18%) were the most utilised sources, which clearly shows the importance of ReSPA research documents in this particular area.

The following examples from the **respondents’** comments highlight the relevance of ReSPA’s actions in the area of E Government:

- *“Agile management, crisis management, e-Gov services have been incorporated into the new PAR Strategy 2030 and OGP 2020-2022. Customer journey mapping will be a module of training in Serbia.”*
- *“Through the mentioned activities of ReSPA, we had an insight into what is being done in the countries in the region as well as in the world. In a way, through these events, we have determined in which direction we want to introduce digital transformation in BiH. We were presented with a lot of mistakes that due to the knowledge provided to us through ReSPA we will not repeat in BiH. The key concepts and the best way to introduce digital transformation in BiH were explained to us.”*

It should be noted that several comments referred to the mixed members in the e-Government Working group, where there are OGP country contact points together with e-Gov practitioners. These comments draw attention to the dominance of OGP topics over e-Gov topics. As one comment clearly warns: *“The e-Gov area, once the most effective network, has been put aside over the OGP and this has to change soon.”*

V The way forward

The results from this monitoring exercise show that **ReSPA’s** contribution to the thematic area of e-Government is satisfactory.

The main takeaways and lessons learnt from this monitoring exercise of ReSPA activities implemented are briefly listed below:

- ✓ Progress and improvements at institutional level thanks to ReSPA activities could have been more significant. **The “innovativeness”** applied in this area, where it is of crucial importance, is highly praised and needs to be maintained in future activities.
- ✓ **The issue of “lack of understanding” at institutional level (top management)** should be addressed across the area of e-Government. Identifying the causes of this lack of understanding could help inform ReSPA in considering how best to incorporate ‘**knowledge transfer**’ aspects when conceptualising its activities and whether to include more institutions as direct beneficiaries, i.e. more officials from individual institutions relevant in this area.
- ✓ The results clearly underline the importance of ReSPA research documents in this particular area of PAR.
- ✓ The regional component of ReSPA’s activities is valued and considered important by the respondents.

- ✓ The continuity of the Seasonal School needs to be ensured, since it is highly appreciated by the participants as a source for acquiring ideas about innovative aspects of the digitalisation of public services.

II Report on the implementation of recommendations for the thematic area: e-Government

ReSPA measured the implementation of recommendations from the following regional study: **Comparative Study on Service Delivery**. The study was produced in 2018 with the primary objective of providing an operational overview of practitioners' insights into public service delivery in the Western Balkan region and to formulate short-, mid- and long-term recommendations. Analysis of service delivery was conducted for the key thematic fields of the General Administrative Procedural Act (GAPA), Digitalisation and e-Government, and Quality Management in Service Delivery, and included a specific area on the Accessibility of Services for Vulnerable Groups. Recommendations were provided for all the Western Balkan countries and Kosovo.^{*15}

Responses to the questionnaire were received from only two out of five countries: Albania and BiH (institutions at the state level), entities of the Federation of BiH (FBiH) and Republika Srpska (RS).

The extent of implementation of the study recommendations given to these two countries regarding **Digitalisation and e-Government** was monitored and reported, as summarised below.

Albania

There were no responses from Albania on the level of implementation of the five recommendations for e-Government.

Bosnia and Herzegovina:

Recommendations were given for the three administration levels of BiH in a single lot and have been monitored and reported as follows:

BiH institutions level and the Federation of BiH (one joint response)

1. Short-term recommendations – Three out of six recommendations have been adopted and are under preparation but have not yet been implemented, while two have been adopted but have not been implemented and one has not been adopted.

2. Mid-term recommendations – No descriptions were provided of the level of implementation of the five mid-term recommendations.

3. Long-term recommendations – No description was provided of the level of implementation of the single long-term recommendation.

¹⁵ *This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Advisory Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Republika Srpska level

1. Short-term recommendations – All six recommendations have been adopted and are under preparation but have not yet been implemented.

2. Mid-term recommendations – All four mid-term recommendations have been adopted and are under preparation but have not yet been implemented.

3. Long-term recommendations – No description was provided of the level of implementation of the single long-term recommendation.

The most meaningful progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been made in the following areas:

- ✓ Standardisation of digital services has been introduced with appropriate legislation.
- ✓ The Law of Electronic Signature is now in force throughout the whole country, meaning that electronic signatures issued in accordance with this Law are valid countrywide.
- ✓ BiH has adopted a Decision on the Interoperability Framework. The establishment of an Interoperability Working Group consisting of relevant representatives from all administrative levels in BiH is expected.
- ✓ In the Republic of Srpska, work is being done on drafting a Law on e-Government of the Republic of Srpska which will define the management and maintenance of the central building blocks of e-Government (GSB, e-mailbox, e-payment, Government Cloud).
- ✓ A Network of Digital Transformation Practitioners has recently been established with the support of UNDP.

The following key challenges still need to be addressed:

- ✓ Standardisation in digital services has not yet been introduced in practice and there are no appropriate plans for its introduction in practice (BiH institutions and FBiH).
- ✓ Qualified e-signatures have not been introduced in the public sector.
- ✓ Existing personal documents are not used as eID, and it seems that this technology is not interoperable and has become obsolete. For instance, e-Covid passports will be based on smartphones and not on ID card chips)

III Report on the implementation of in-country interventions for the thematic area: e-Government

Four in-country interventions were provided by ReSPA in the reporting period, as described below.

1. “Cyber security risk assessment - for the National Authority for Electronic Certification and Cyber Security of Albania”

The main goal of the National Authority for Electronic Certification and Cyber Security of Albania (AKCESK) is to approve the National Cyber Security Strategy. The protection of critical information infrastructures is one of the policy objectives of the National Strategy for Cyber Security 2020–2025. Since the AKCESK did not have sufficient capacities to undertake cyber security risk assessment, technical assistance was sought from ReSPA to help in undertaking this specific assessment. Two senior experts in the area of e-Government were hired and conducted the assessment in coordination with employees of AKCESK.

The responses regarding **knowledge-sharing** (question 621) indicate that In-country support has contributed to knowledge-sharing within the participants’ institutions “to a good extent”, with an

average score of 4 out of 5. According to the respondents, ReSPA's support has assisted AKCESK in overcoming the difficulties of assessing the cyber readiness of critical and important information infrastructures in Albania (subject of Law 2/2017 on "Cyber Security").

The responses to the question on **specific procedures** (question 622) indicate that in-country support has contributed towards the introduction and improvement of procedures and methods within the participants' institutions "to a good extent", scoring 4 out of 5. Specifically, the respondents reported that the expertise provided by ReSPA had helped the institution to assess the level of risk for individual operators of Critical Information Infrastructures (CII) and to rate them based on risk and impact. The expertise also enabled the participants to assess the level of readiness of CII operators and to draft an operational framework to increase the cybersecurity readiness of the CII operators. These results were used for further action in relation to new CII classifications.

The responses to the question regarding **the link with PAR implementation** (at point 2 of the questionnaire) show that the benefits from this ReSPA project have contributed to advancing PAR implementation in this area and the area of policy development and coordination.

Quotes

- *"ReSPA support has helped AKCESK to overcome the difficulties in assessing the cyber readiness of Critical and Important information infrastructures in Albania, the object of Law 2/2017 on "Cyber Security"*
- *"Respa expertise has helped the Authority to assess the level of risk for individual CII (Critical Information Infrastructures) operators and rate them based on the risk and impact, to assess the level of readiness of CII operators, and to draft an operational framework to increase the readiness of cyber security of the CII operators. Based on the results, the NAECCS is performing further action for new CII classification."*

2. "Support for the completion of the National Cyber Security Strategy of Albania - for the National Authority for Electronic Certification and Cyber Security of Albania"

The main goal of the National Authority for Electronic Certification and Cyber Security (AKCESK) for 2019 was to complete the National Cyber Security Strategy Document and to set up and equip the National CSIRT with the necessary monitoring and control systems. A working group was established by a Prime Ministerial Order and the WG formulated a vision, a mission and strategic objectives, including sub-objectives and measures to be implemented to achieve the specified vision and mission.

In order to complete the National Cyber Security Strategy Document, technical assistance was requested from ReSPA to help the Working Group in AKCESK, which lacked the specific capacities to fulfil the tasks of making detailed cost analysis, developing a passport of indicators and applying the methodology needed to measure indicators. One senior expert was hired who worked in full cooperation with the staff of AKCESK.

The responses to the question on **knowledge-sharing** (question 621) indicate that ReSPA's in-country support has contributed "greatly" (score 5 of 5) to knowledge-sharing practices within their home institutions and among partner institutions. With ReSPA's support, AKCESK and the Working Group for the National Strategy on Cyber Security promptly drafted Cyber Security Strategy, which was approved in December 2020.

The responses to the question on **specific procedures** (question 622) show that ReSPA's in-country support has "greatly" contributed to progress towards the introduction and improvement of procedures and methods within their institutions, scoring this contribution 5 out of 5. The

respondents described this support as a highly significant and timely intervention that effectively addressed the **institution's** lack of capacities to complete one of the most important parts of the National Strategy on Cyber Security in time, i.e. the cost evaluation for the action plan and the passport of indicators.

The responses to the question **on the link with PAR implementation** (at point 2 of the questionnaire) show that the benefits from this ReSPA project have contributed to advancing PAR implementation in this particular area.

Quotes

- *“ReSPA support on that topic has been a very significant one and in proper time, due to lack of capabilities to finish in time one of the most important part of National Strategy on Cyber Security (cost evaluation for the action plan and passport of indicators). Based on ReSPA methodology for cost evaluation of a National Strategy, NAECCS achieved its objective in time and quality.”*

3. “Overview of the situation in Montenegro concerning the digital infrastructure, the stakeholders involved, and the services in place - for the Ministry of Public Administration”

The Ministry of Public Administration of Montenegro faced the problem of a lack of capacities to undertake a complex review of the situation of “**digital society**” in Montenegro in parallel with a specific review of gaps and shortages in the provision of digitized public services. This work needed to be completed as part of preparations for formulating an upcoming Public Administration Reform Strategy 2021–2025 and a Digital Transformation Strategy. Technical assistance and expertise was sought from ReSPA in the form of in-country support, and ReSPA engaged a senior expert to assist the Ministry.

Regarding the question **on knowledge-sharing** (question 621), the respondents indicated that the expertise provided by ReSPA had **contributed “to a good extent”** to improved knowledge-sharing practices both within their home institutions and also with other institutions, rating this contribution with an average score of 4 out of 5. The respondents reported that the expert had effectively assisted in identifying mechanisms for cooperation among institutions regarding the better use of e-services, the development of an e-services catalogue, and on the general mutual development of e-government. The respondents confirmed that the cooperation established with the expert led to quality inputs for improving procedures in developing a catalogue of e-services.

The responses to the question **on specific procedures** (question 622) shows that the respondents **rated ReSPA's** in-country support as having **contributed “to a good extent”** to progress towards the introduction and improvement of procedures and methods within the institution, scoring this contribution 4 out of 5. In particular, the Ministry gained specific knowledge that was applied in defining data models, attributes and guidelines for the improvement of technologies for the development of e-services and mechanisms to coordinate and manage the implementation of guidelines.

The responses to the question **on the link with PAR implementation** (at point 2 of the Questionnaire) indicate that the benefits from this ReSPA project have contributed to advancing PAR implementation in the area of e-Government.

Quotes

- *“One of the key goals was to identify mechanisms for cooperation with institutions regarding the better use of e-services ,the development of an e-services catalogue and general development of e-government. Cooperation was established with the expert, which, among other things, led*

to quality inputs for the improvement of procedures in the development of the catalogue of services.”

4. “Assistance in the formulation of primary indicators for the Action Plan of the Digital Transformation Strategy of Montenegro - for the Ministry of Public Administration in Montenegro”

The Ministry of Public Administration of the Government of Montenegro coordinates the process of development of the information society and is responsible, in cooperation with other ministries, for creating an environment that will facilitate other institutions to implement digitalization projects aimed at transforming **the country’s** public administration, making it more open, transparent and accessible to citizens and the economy.

Technical assistance and expertise was sought from ReSPA to support the Ministry in identifying challenges in the area of implementing and facilitating the widespread use of e-services, as well as expert advice on the process of upgrading these services and introducing new services in order to connect all infrastructure and services within one functioning whole. This assistance would enable the government and other stakeholders in Montenegro to introduce new services and to optimize the work of the public entities.

The responses to the question **on knowledge-sharing**, with an average score of 4 of 5 given for question 621, indicate that **ReSPA’s** in-country support contributed **“to a good extent”** to knowledge-sharing practices within the home institution and among partner institutions. The respondents reported that the in-country support has contributed significantly to the development of new approaches to modalities of coordination and cooperation between the MPA and its partners.

The responses to the question **on specific procedures** (622), with an average score of 4 out of 5, show that the support obtained through the **in-country support mechanism contributed “to a good extent”** to progress towards the improvement of procedures and methods within the institution. Sharing best practices with the expert and exchanging experiences assisted the staff of the Ministry in identifying challenges in the area of e-services and in applying methods for upgrading these services and models for ensuring compatibility in the provision of e-services by different stakeholders.

The responses to the question **on the link with PAR implementation** (at point 2 of the questionnaire) indicate that the benefits from this ReSPA project have contributed to advancing the implementation of PAR in the area of e-Government.

Conclusions about **ReSPA’s** in-country support in the area of e-Government:

- ✓ The expertise provided to institutions by ReSPA has contributed significantly to helping them better coordinate their resources and actions with those in other institutions when developing strategic documents.
- ✓ The lack of capacities in the public administration for developing strategic documents or their elements in this area mostly relate to a lack in specific technical knowledge related to digitalisation. In this case the in-country support was used not only to help complete a specific task but also to raise the level of knowledge in the institutions that applied for this technical assistance.



ReSPA

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