

**CHALLENGES AND GOOD PRACTICES IN
COORDINATING AND IMPLEMENTING
PUBLIC FINANCE MANAGEMENT REFORMS
IN THE WESTERN BALKANS**

2-3 SEPTEMBER 2025

Hotel Bianca, Kolašin, Montenegro

Provisional Agenda



Background

Public Financial Management (PFM) reforms are essential pillars of good governance, accountability, and fiscal transparency in the Western Balkans. While notable progress has been achieved in strengthening legal and institutional frameworks for budget planning, execution, and oversight, many countries continue to face persistent and systemic challenges in the effective design, coordination, and implementation of their PFM strategies. These include limited administrative capacities, weak monitoring systems, insufficient alignment with broader government planning, low implementation rates, and high dependency on donor funding. Such issues are particularly pronounced given the pressures of EU integration and increasing fiscal demands.

The regional event “Challenges and Good Practices in Coordinating and Implementing Public Financial Management Reforms in the Western Balkans” will provide a platform for policymakers, practitioners, and experts to exchange insights and experiences from across the region and beyond. The event will focus on identifying practical solutions to the most pressing PFM implementation challenges, including coordination, strategic planning, costing, and performance measurement. It will also explore synergies between PFM and broader public administration reform (PAR) agendas.

The first day of the event will be dedicated to addressing common regional challenges in the development and implementation of PFM strategies—drawing on findings from the 2024 SIGMA monitoring reports. Particular emphasis will be placed on coordination mechanisms, alignment with annual work plans, reporting practices, indicator frameworks, and the role of digital tools. The discussion will also focus on one of the most critical areas of PFM—public procurement—with participants sharing key challenges, innovative solutions, and good practices from their respective administrations.

The second day will feature thematic sessions on three priority areas in the region: public investment management, state-owned enterprises as sources of fiscal risk, and the modernization of tax policy and administration. Through peer presentations and discussions, participants will exchange concrete experiences and practical approaches for enhancing efficiency, transparency, and accountability in these domains.

Organized in cooperation with SIGMA/OECD, the World Bank, and the Center for Excellence in Finance, the event aims to produce a set of operational recommendations to support more coherent and sustainable implementation of PFM reforms. It will also help promote continuous regional dialogue and learning, contributing to stronger institutional capacities across Western Balkan administrations.

Objectives:

- To analyze key implementation challenges in the development and delivery of PFM strategic documents across the Western Balkans, particularly in light of findings from the 2024 SIGMA monitoring cycle.
- To facilitate regional exchange of experiences and good practices in public procurement, public investment management, modernization of tax policy and administration, and the management of fiscal risks through state-owned enterprises.

DRAFT

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Tuesday, 2 September 2025

08.30 – 09.00	Registration and Welcome Coffee
09.00 – 09.30	Welcome Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Novica Vuković, Minister of Finance, Montenegro• Maja Handjiska-Trendafilova, Director, ReSPA• Representative of the Delegation of the European Union to Montenegro
09.30 – 09.45	Keynote Address: Public Financial Management as a Pillar of EU-Oriented Reform and Good Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Representative from the European Commission
09.45 – 10.30	2024 SIGMA Monitoring Reports: Regional Overview of Achievements and Challenges in Coordinating and Implementing PFM Reforms <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation by SIGMA/OECD
10.30 – 11.00	Coffee Break
11.00 – 12.30	World café discussion: Key Challenges in PFM Strategic Document Development and Implementation Across the Western Balkans
12.30 – 13.00	Rapporteurs inform the plenary on the main takeaways of each World Caffee round table
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch
14.00 – 15.30	Panel Discussion: Public Procurement Reforms – Practices, Challenges and Integrity Frameworks <p><i>The discussion would focus on a review of progress on procurement reforms, integrity mechanisms, and digitalisation.</i></p>
15.30 – 15.45	Wrap-up Session and Key Takeaways from Day 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jelena Mrdak, ReSPA Programme Manager
16.00 – 19.00	Networking

Wednesday, 3 September 2025

8.45 – 9.00	Welcome Coffee
09.00 – 10.30	Public Investment Management – Good Practices and Practical Solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentations by administrations
10.30 – 11.00	Case study: Challenges in Managing Financial Risks - Managing State-Owned Enterprises in Montenegro
11.00 – 11.30	Coffee Break
11.30 – 13.00	Modernizing Tax Policy and Administration – Challenges and Regional Insights <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentations by administrations
13.00 – 13.15	Closing Remarks and Evaluations Jelena Mrdak, ReSPA Programme Manager
13.15 – 14.00	Lunch