

Final report on ReSPA's Annual Monitoring 2021



ReSPA

Regional School
of Public Administration

BUILDING TOGETHER
GOVERNANCE FOR THE FUTURE

**Regulatory reform
and implementation
of regulatory impact
assessment**

**Policy
development
and
coordination**

**Human Resources
Management and
Development**

**Monitoring and
Evaluation of
Public Policies**

**Quality
Management**

E-Government



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Contents

List of Acronyms

0. Executive Summary	3
1. Introduction	5
2. Main findings of ReSPA Annual Monitoring on general activities	7
a. Individual benefits from ReSPA activities related to acquiring knowledge and skills and improving communications and exchange.....	7
b. Institutional benefits from ReSPA activities related to better working methods within institution(s) and the introduction/improvement of new measures and tools	8
3. Main findings of ReSPA Annual Monitoring on activities specifically addressed to institutions	9
a. Monitoring the level of implementation of policy recommendations from ReSPA studies	9
b. Monitoring of ReSPA in-country support activities	10
4. Main lessons learned from the first ReSPA annual monitoring	11
5. Recommendations for the future	13
a. Disseminate and follow up the results of the Annual Monitoring 2021	13
b. Networking with Training to further strengthen individual capacities and motivation	13
c. Improving existing tools and promoting new tools to strengthen direct support to institutions	14
d. Improving the questionnaires for the next Annual Monitoring	14
e. Improving targeting and supervision of the survey	15
f. Considering alternative methods where necessary	15
6. Summary of the monitoring reports by area	16
a. Monitoring report for the thematic area 1: Policy Development and Coordination	16
➤ Report on the general questionnaire.....	16
b. Monitoring report for the thematic area 2: Monitoring and Evaluation of Public Policies.....	17
➤ Report on the general questionnaire.....	17
c. Monitoring report for thematic area 3: Regulatory Reform and Implementation of Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA)	19
➤ Report on the general questionnaire.....	19
➤ II Implementation of recommendations for thematic area 3: Regulatory Reform and Implementation of Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA)	21
d. Monitoring report for thematic area 4: Human Resources Management and Development.....	22
➤ I Report on the general questionnaire	22
➤ II The implementation of recommendations for thematic area 4: Human Resources Management and Development	23
➤ III The implementation of the in-country-support mechanism in thematic area 4: Human Resources Management and Development.....	25
e. Monitoring report for thematic area 5: Quality management (QM)	26
➤ I Report on the General Questionnaire	26
➤ II Implementation of recommendations for thematic area 5: Quality Management (QM).....	28
➤ III The implementation of the in-country-support mechanism in thematic area 5: Quality Management (QM)	30
f. Monitoring report for thematic area 6: e-government (e-GOV).....	32
➤ I Report on the General Questionnaire	32
➤ II Implementation of recommendations for thematic area 6: e-Government (e-Gov)	33
➤ III The implementation of in-country-support in thematic area 6: e-Government (e-Gov)	35

List of Acronyms

ADISA	Agency for the Delivery of Integrated Services Albania
AKCESK	National Authority for Electronic Certification and Cyber Security
API	Application Programme Interface
BiH	Bosnia & Herzegovina
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
CII	Critical information infrastructures
CFM	Customer feedback mechanism
CSIRT	Computer Security Incident Response Team
CSA	Civil Service Agency
CSM	Client satisfaction management
e-Gov	e-Government
EU	European Union
FBiH	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
GAPA	General Administrative Procedure Act
GB	Governing Board
GGF	Good Governance Fund
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GQ	General Questionnaire
GSB	Government Service Bus
HRMD	Human Resources Management and Development
HRMIS	Human Resources Management Information System
ID	Identity Document
IPA III	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance III
IT	Information Technology
LMS	Learning Management System
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NAECCS	National Authority for Electronic Certification and Cyber Security
NAPA	National Academy of Public Administration
OECD/SIGMA	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development / Support for Improvement in Governance and Management
OGP	Open Government Partnership
PAR	Public Administration Reform
PARCO	Public Administration Reform Coordinator's Office
PEF	CAF External Feedback Evaluation Procedure
PIFC	Public Internal Financial Control
QM	Quality Management
RIA	Regulatory Impact Assessment
ReSPA	Regional School for Public Administration
RS	Republika Srpska
RR	Regulatory Reform
SQ1	Specific Questionnaire 1 (on ReSPA recommendations)
SQ2	Specific Questionnaire 2 (on ReSPA in-country support)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WG	Working Group
WB	Western Balkan

0.Executive Summary

ReSPA has completed its first Annual Monitoring exercise covering the period 2019–2020 in accordance with the Monitoring Toolkit approved in December 2020. This is the first time ReSPA has carried out systematic monitoring of its activities through the application of a methodology developed entirely within the institution. For this purpose, three different questionnaires were sent to the main beneficiaries, including all ReSPA members. The questionnaires were focused on (i) general activities, (ii) the level of implementation of policy recommendations from ReSPA Studies, and (iii) in-country support.

The key findings from this exercise, relevant for all ReSPA actions in the different thematic areas, are as follows:

- **The professional individual capacities** of participants in ReSPA actions/activities have significantly improved.
- Positive **institutional dynamics** have been triggered by enhanced professionalism in the institutions responsible for implementing public administration reforms (PAR) and in other relevant line institutions.
- **Positive influence on institutions' capacities** to implement methodological and policy innovation is appreciated, although not at the same level as individual capacities.
- Promising results are envisaged from **specific types of initiatives** aimed at institutions, including policy studies and in-country support.

The following lessons have been learnt through this monitoring exercise:

- ReSPA is a **hub for networking and exchanging experiences** of public administration in the Western Balkans (WB) and throughout the EU. The senior staff of the public administrations of ReSPA member countries participating in its initiatives have access to the most up-to-date information, curricula, best practices, technologies and tools. By exchanging experience and knowledge with their peers at regional and EU level, these member countries also have the opportunity to broaden their views.
- There is a **difference between initiatives** addressed to senior staff for enhancing their role in institutions and initiatives addressed directly to institutions for enhancing their capacity for PAR implementation. This difference must be taken into account when planning and executing future activities.
- An **annual survey** based on questionnaires seems the most suitable tool with which to implement Annual Monitoring, though some important challenges still need to be addressed.

The Report offers the following key recommendations:

- To ensure **dissemination at all levels and follow-up** of the results of the 2021 Annual Monitoring exercise. These results will be addressed in the 2022 ReSPA Programme of Work.
- To strengthen individual capacities and motivation further through **more training and networking on key tools for PAR implementation** (e.g. on the Policy Cycle, EU integration, IPA III, RIA, and CAF, etc.).
- To improve existing tools and promote new tools for **strengthening the direct influence of ReSPA activities in enhancing institutional capacity**.
- To **improve the monitoring survey**, including the quality of questionnaires, but also to consider possible alternatives to target the interviewees and ensure increased and balanced response rates.
- To plan monitoring for next year.

1.Introduction

ReSPA has completed the first systematic monitoring of its activities by conducting a survey of all ReSPA members who participated in these activities from early to mid-2019.¹ The survey was conducted in the period March–July 2021

The survey was designed as part of the 2021 Annual Monitoring Report in accordance with the Monitoring Toolkit defined by ReSPA on the basis of a strategy and related methodology developed entirely within the institution. The ReSPA Monitoring Toolkit was finalised through a participatory process that lasted throughout 2019–20 and which was approved by ReSPA's Governing Board in December 2020.

The survey included three different questionnaires covering the following six main thematic areas envisaged in ReSPA's strategy: (1) Policy coordination and development; (2) Monitoring and evaluation (M&E); (3) Regulatory reform and the implementation of Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA); (4) Human Resources Management and Development; (5) e-Government; and (6) Quality Management.

One general and two specific questionnaires were conducted. The general questionnaire (GQ) covered all the training and networking activities carried out in the period surveyed (conferences, workshops, peer-to-peer and working group (WG) meetings, etc.). The first specific questionnaire (SQ1) covered the implementation of country recommendations issued by ReSPA studies, while the second (SQ2) covered in-country support.

*The general questionnaire (GQ) was sent to all participants, while the two specific questionnaires were sent to the relevant persons in charge within each ReSPA member country. The GQ included two questions on the **ReSPA performance indicators ('individual and institutional improvements')**, with each question including two sub-questions. The responses comprised scores from 1 to 5 and a number of qualitative options which the respondents could select and further elaborate on with their own considerations. A third question was included on the consequences of ReSPA activities, with a yes/no option plus a number of qualitative observations. SQ1 asked each member to rank the recommendations formulated in ReSPA policy studies according to their level of adoption, preparation and implementation, together with certain qualitative considerations. SQ2 focused on in-country support and included the same questions as the GQ, with the exclusion of the question about individual improvements.*

¹ The survey covered general activities from June 2019 and policy studies from January 2019.

The responses to the general questionnaire were analysed by a specialised company which provided a general quantitative report which was analysed by the Programme Managers and ReSPA management. The responses to the specific questionnaires were also analysed by the Programme Managers and ReSPA Management who produced this Monitoring Report.

A total of 95 people provided valid and complete responses to the general questionnaire, representing approximately 20%² of all those who received the questionnaire. This total corresponds to almost all of the members of the Working Group, i.e. of those who were involved in the majority of ReSPA activities in each area. Not all of the countries responded at the same rate.

Responses to the two specific questionnaires on the level of implementation of policy recommendations from ReSPA studies and on in-country support varied from 90% to 100%.

This monitoring report highlights the key findings and lessons learned and outlines key recommendations for the future. This report, together with the area reports, will be validated and reviewed during the respective thematic area workshops.

² According to Smart Survey UK, there can be a stark difference between the survey response for an internal and an external survey. Average employee survey response rates typically run at around 30-40% in contrast to the average response rate for external surveys at 10-15%.

2. Main findings of ReSPA Annual Monitoring on general activities

a. Individual benefits from ReSPA activities related to acquiring knowledge and skills and improving communications and exchange

The question about 'individual benefits from ReSPA activities' elicited the strongest and most positive response of all items included in the general questionnaire. The most highly appreciated benefit of ReSPA activities, with the highest scores in all areas (>4 out of 5), was that of personal improvement both in terms of specific know-how regarding various areas of PAR and in greater ability to work in teams resulting in stronger interests in networking with colleagues from other country-level, regional and EU institutions.

This result is a positive foundation to build on. From the anecdotes and examples provided, this benefit appears to provide the basis for establishing a new professional identity on the part of senior and middle-ranking staff of regional public administrations, which rewards them both in personal terms and for their institutional role.

The responses show strong motivation for participation in ReSPA activities, and this motivation should remain high in the future so long as ReSPA is able to continue delivering high-quality responses to the needs of those affected.

Perceived individual benefits are closely linked to ReSPA's short-term outcomes centred on strengthening regional PA capacities for improving the reform process, since building such individual capacities is the requisite first step for building institutional capacities.

The responses to this item in the general questionnaire show that professional capacities and open-mindedness acquired at individual level have enabled the participants to play a critical role within their institutions as promoters of innovation, since they are now able to identify weaknesses that were not evident to them before and to push for changes to address these weaknesses.

The responses show that the participants particularly appreciated the seasonal schools. These schools provide longer periods of at least five days of training and skills development in specific techniques and procedures, enabling participants to acquire the tools with which to propose and implement innovations in their own work and create a conducive environment for peer-to-peer exchanges among colleagues.

➤ *on the skills and operational tools acquired through ReSPA activities:*

The results show that the participants feel able to respond better to the requests of their institutions, with respondents noting that they are now more involved in the preparation of documents and plans related

to their area. In some cases, the respondents are using the know-how they have acquired to train other country staff and colleagues (e.g. Area 3 – on RIA).

Some of the respondents have experienced improvements in their careers as a consequence of the know-how they have acquired, e.g. on Areas 3 (regulatory impact assessment – RIA) and 4 human resources management and development – HRDM). Although the number of these respondents is relatively small, this is a very important finding of the survey.

➤ *on improved working methods:*

Almost all of the respondents feel that they have become more able and willing to work with others as a result of their participation in ReSPA activities. In addition, almost all the respondents declared that they had become more interested in dialogue with other institutions and in gaining knowledge of good practices in other countries of the region and the EU.

b. Institutional benefits from ReSPA activities related to better working methods within institution(s) and the introduction/improvement of new measures and tools

The responses to the question about the institutional benefits of ReSPA activities are less clear than to previous questions, mainly because institutional improvements are more difficult to observe and measure. Although the average scores are medium-to-high, only a few of the anecdotes and examples supporting the responses to the questionnaire include any mention of specific and concrete improvements or changes. Often these responses refer to innovative methods of work introduced by individual members of an institution and changes in the internal climate and dynamics of the institution. These factors relate more to the individual improvements considered above than to direct institutional benefits from ReSPA activities.

➤ *on improved working methods at institutional level:*

Most of the institutional benefits highlighted by the respondents regarding methods of work seem to relate to improvements in individual know-how. The improvements noted included better coordination both within and among institutions at central government level, stronger networking with country-level, regional and EU institutions, and a stronger focus on the content of policy.

➤ *on new procedures, policy measures and tools adopted:*

The responses to question 2.2 on new policy procedures, measures and tools were more focused than the responses to more general questions. These responses include numerous references to specific tools and methods acquired or consolidated through participation in ReSPA activities. This is especially the case in areas where specific approaches and tools are expected to be adopted, including in the areas of quality management (QM), the use of human resources management information systems (HRMIS), and RIA.

3. Main findings of ReSPA Annual Monitoring on activities specifically addressed to institutions

ReSPA studies, including policy recommendations and in-country support activities, were monitored through two specific questionnaires.

a. Monitoring the level of implementation of policy recommendations from ReSPA studies

ReSPA policy studies are planned and executed according to regional priorities and country demands. The studies are based on a comparative approach and provide specific recommendations to be adopted and implemented by the participating countries. SQ1 provided quantitative data and a limited number of qualitative considerations regarding the adoption and implementation of the recommendations of these studies.

The ReSPA studies conducted and monitored for this report are related to three areas: Regulatory Reform & Regulatory Impact Assessment; Service Delivery; and Human Resource Management (HRM). (In the case of HRM, two studies were conducted: on merit recruitment and individual performance appraisal.) The response rate to the questions on Service Delivery were notably low, with only two out of five countries responding, which is an issue that needs to be investigated. However, the response rates to the questions on Regulatory Reform & RIA and for both of the HRM studies were satisfactory. According to the responses to these questions, the results of the studies and their recommendations were as follows:

- 41.79% of the study recommendations for Merit-Based Recruitment were adopted and implemented, while 35.82% were adopted but still in preparation.
- 30.23% of the study recommendations for Individual Performance Appraisal were adopted and implemented, while 39.53% were only adopted.
- 51.1% of the recommendations for Regulatory Reform and RIA, were adopted and implemented, while 22.2% were only adopted.

Apart from the Service Delivery study, which represents a specific case to be better understood, about 70% of the ReSPA study recommendations³ have been adopted and some 30–50% have been both adopted and implemented. This is certainly a satisfactory result. Given that a rather long time-period has elapsed

³ 70% refers to responses received from two countries only (Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina)

since the conduct of some of these studies, however, further assessments are needed of the recommendations that are lagging behind, since the information available is insufficient to afford an understanding of all the implications of the monitoring results regarding this very important tool for direct support to institutions.

b. Monitoring of ReSPA in-country support activities

In-country support is a form of support that ReSPA offers to its members to address specific issues related to PAR implementation. This support includes providing an expert to work with the relevant country-level institution(s) for a given period on a project approved by ReSPA to help the institution(s) in various tasks, such as the finalisation of a strategy, the acquisition of a methodology, or the establishment of a new intervention model, etc. To date, such in-country support has been activated for the following seven projects: one project in Serbia on a Learning Management System; two projects in Albania on Cyber Security; two projects in Montenegro on Digital Transformation; one in BiH entity of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina on Common Assessment Framework (CAF); and one project in BiH entity of Republika Srpska on CAF. According to the scores provided by the recipient institutions, these seven projects were greatly appreciated: on fourteen scores available to assess the contribution of these projects to the recipient institutions, six were 5/5 and eight were 4/5. The **respondents'** comments were also very positive, showing that the beneficiaries highly appreciated the assistance provided by ReSPA in response to their specific problems. Indeed, the results show that in-country support is a highly valued modality for providing direct support to institutions. Despite the success of the projects, it should be noted that the number of days available for this mechanism was partly underutilised.

4. Main lessons learned from the first ReSPA annual monitoring

There are several important lessons to be learnt from this first monitoring exercise:

- *Individual effects.* The first lesson is that the role of ReSPA as a hub for regional networking in the Western Balkan countries and networking throughout the EU has a strong direct effect on individual levels of training, skills enhancement and professionalism among the participants. This **is the case in spite of ReSPA not being a 'school' in the proper** sense. There are two main added values for individuals from participation in ReSPA activities:
 - *Training and networking* seem to be the most appreciated outputs of ReSPA activities and were explicitly mentioned in all the areas surveyed for this monitoring report. While such training is always linked to the acquisition of best practices and based on networking with peer institutions/colleagues, it also improves know-how among the participants, especially in terms of know-how on the use of advanced systems and models of intervention such as policy cycle management, QM, RIA, HRMIS, and e-GOV.
 - *Open-mindedness* is also much appreciated as an output of participation in ReSPA activities, providing participants with valued experience beyond the confines of their institutions, including opportunities to meet colleagues working at the same level but with completely different experiences and thus with many mutually relevant issues and knowledge to exchange.

Such individual effects are the main vectors of institutional improvement. Strengthening individual professionalism is the main vector of ReSPA's contribution to institutional improvement. Indeed, most of the changes reported in the institutions by the survey participants are in fact related to new initiatives and specific capacities acquired by certain individuals who became the enactors and leaders of such changes.

- *Direct influence on institutional improvement.* The impact of ReSPA activities on institutions is not at the same level as their individual impact. There is a need to review and improve the focus of the approaches taken in those ReSPA activities that are directly addressed at institutions.
 - *Comparative policy studies.* From the responses to the specific questionnaire on the implementation of ReSPA study recommendations, the level of appreciation of these recommendations among the participants seems satisfactory for RIA and quite satisfactory for HRM, but less satisfactory for QM, where the low rate of responses should be considered. From the general questionnaire, the appreciation of the influence of these studies seems generally weaker. Any contradictory indications in the data on

recommendations need to be resolved and further information needs to be obtained about this issue. This is especially important because the use of comparative studies issuing recommendations seems to be a valid tool for enhancing ReSPA's direct influence at institutional level. One of the reasons for the slight discrepancy in this case is related to the fact that the general questionnaire and the specific questionnaire measuring the level of implementation of policy recommendations were completed by different respondents. Another reason is the fact that implementation takes time, hence recommendations from older studies achieve a higher rate of implementation. The results of the questionnaire measuring the level of implementation of policy recommendations are more accurate in this regard, since this questionnaire was completed directly by public officials responsible for and dealing with the respective thematic areas.

- *In-country support* is another tool for enhancing ReSPA's direct influence at institutional level. From the responses to the specific questionnaire, the results of this support seem particularly satisfactory, especially in the capacity of such projects to respond to key institutional needs. Not only are the scores very high for this support but also the qualitative comments are highly significant. In-country support has thus proved to be one of the most effective ReSPA tools for providing direct support to institutions. This is a tool that therefore needs to be further assessed in order to identify opportunities for its expansion.
- *The formulation of the questionnaires*, including the general and the specific questionnaires, needs improvements in terms of the clarity of the questions, the the precision of the explanations about the response options, etc.
- *The design and management of the survey* also need improvement.

5. Recommendations for the future

a. Disseminate and follow up the results of the Annual Monitoring 2021

Disseminating the results of the 2021 Annual Monitoring Report is an important means of ascertaining the role of ReSPA and of increasing the attention of relevant stakeholders to ReSPA activities. Following up the recommendations may strengthen ReSPA's performance and thus must not be overlooked.

b. Networking with Training to further strengthen individual capacities and motivation

Based on the interest shown by individual participants in ReSPA activities, the training component should be strengthened with a focus on effective techniques and tools to be applied in the relevant institutions and on good practices from other countries, including, for example, the large-scale training on RIA, the Policy Cycle, etc. as suggested in the responses to the questionnaire. Longer periods of training should be preferred, such as the training provided by the seasonal schools, which lasts at least five full days and was positively appraised in the questionnaire. This is because more extensive training allows for the attainment of deeper shared knowledge, teamwork, and for tackling a wider range of topics. Good practices from the region and the EU should be selected, presented and discussed in order to serve as a potential source of inspiration for participants to bring changes back home with them. Representatives of foreign public administrations could be invited, for instance through OECD/SIGMA, to talk about problems they have previously addressed and how these problems were successfully addressed. Training should include the following objectives:

- To open the minds of the participants by sharing knowledge and networking with people with different experiences.
- To strengthen the **participants'** ability to use innovative tools applicable in specific contexts.
- To strengthen the **participants'** ability to work in teams.

These are not new objectives of training, as demonstrated by the **survey respondents' high level of** appreciation of these elements, but they are objectives that should be further reinforced.

c. Improving existing tools and promoting new tools to strengthen direct support to institutions

➤ *Improving the institutional focus in general activities*

A stronger focus should be placed on having participants discuss cases from their own institutions during training and networking activities, including the presentation and comparison of specific cases and exercises in institutional innovation, etc. For example, comparative studies could be integrated in such training and networking initiatives.

➤ *Improving the quality of comparative studies in order to issue more relevant and owned policy recommendations*

The quality of comparative studies and the methods used in such studies should be improved so as to ensure stronger appropriation and ownership by the recipient institutions. In particular, the participatory method should be maintained and strengthened, entailing country-level sessions with relevant institutions to jointly identify difficulties and responses in order to formulate recommendations closely adapted to and relevant to each specific context.

➤ *Expanding the use of in-country support missions and strengthening the monitoring of these missions*

The use of in-country support could be expanded and improved through better information and consultation in the preparatory phases and through stronger follow-ups.

➤ *Promoting other ReSPA initiatives addressed to institutions*

Programme managers should discuss whether specific initiatives addressed to institutions could be planned through workshops involving those specific institutions and tasked with addressing institutional needs.

d. Improving the questionnaires for the next Annual Monitoring

➤ *Improving the general questionnaire*

The two main questions and sub-questions of the general questionnaire should be improved so as to avoid any overlapping. The explanatory options should be carefully specified.

The third question on ReSPA's contribution to PAR improvement at country level should be reviewed in order to help the respondents better formulate their responses.

➤ *Improving the specific questionnaires*

The specific questionnaire on recommendations should include more qualitative information, as well as considerations about the reasons for any delays in adoption and implementation and/or the factors that led to success.

The specific questionnaire on in-country support should include adequate explanatory options to help the respondents better illustrate the benefits of these projects.

e. Improving targeting and supervision of the survey

The annual survey should be better integrated with the after-event questionnaires already in use. While the after-event questionnaire is addressed to all participants, the annual survey should be more specifically targeted, with Working Group members constituting the core of the target population, though the survey could be expanded according to the importance of specific events,

f. Considering alternative methods where necessary

Conducting a survey remains the most suitable instrument for assessment because it enables feedback from the direct beneficiaries of the ReSPA activities, bypassing political and bureaucratic filters. In order to be reliable, a significant number of interviewees must be targeted and the response rate must be higher to ensure the representativeness of the sample.

If it is impossible to guarantee such conditions, different instruments may be adopted, such as annual monitoring missions based on sample interviews.

6. Summary of the monitoring reports by area

a. Monitoring report for the thematic area 1: Policy Development and Coordination

➤ *Report on the general questionnaire*

The respondents assessed the overall contribution of ReSPA activities to institutional and individual **improvements in the thematic area “Policy Development and Coordination”** with a score of 3.8 out of 5. In this thematic area, the participants came from 24 different institutions of the ReSPA member countries while the questionnaire covered six actions organized by ReSPA.

The respondents scored ReSPA’s contribution to their **individual improvement** at 3.96 on average, which is higher than the score given for institutional improvement (3.45). The majority of respondents judged **that ReSPA’s activities** had greatly (17%) or to a good extent (58%) contributed to acquired knowledge and enhanced skills at individual level in terms of using improved approaches and methods for policy development and coordination.

Regarding the explanations given by the respondents as to **how they applied the knowledge and skills they gained from the ReSPA activities they participated in**, the high level of responses mentioned their involvement in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of strategies (29%) and action plans (33%), especially in action plans for some of the EU Accession Negotiation chapters, the OGP Initiative, and the PIFC Strategy, etc.

Regarding the **respondents’ explanations as to how ReSPA’s activities have contributed to facilitating communication and the exchange of know-how among colleagues and/or the leadership**, the great majority of responses recognized an improved capacity to cooperate with colleagues and promote a better work environment within their own institutions (46%) and improved cooperation with colleagues from other institutions from their own countries (50%). The respondents judged that ReSPA activities had **contributed “to a good extent” overall** to institutional and individual improvements.

Regarding institutional improvement, the respondents stressed that ReSPA activities had contributed to improved institutional modalities and practices of sharing knowledge and lessons learned within their own institutions and among partner institutions. They mentioned that examples of good practice obtained during ReSPA activities have been further developed and explored for replication in their own institutions (37%), and that the expert advice provided during ReSPA activities had been further explored and developed with a view to implementing this recommendation in own institutions (33%).

Regarding the kinds of progress made towards the introduction/improvement of procedures, methods and tools within their institutions, the most frequent response was that information and discussion about new innovative practices, tools, and changes of procedures had been promoted (40% of all responses).

It should also be noted that 83% of the respondents confirmed that the benefits from ReSPA actions have contributed to supporting the country-level implementation of PAR in the area of Policy Development and Coordination.

The key conclusions from the survey are that ReSPA should invest more efforts into meeting the expectations of ReSPA stakeholders regarding this thematic area in the future, that institutional changes are more complex and need a longer time to be implemented, and that more attention is now being paid by respondents to Policy Development and Coordination as a result of ReSPA actions.

b. Monitoring report for the thematic area 2: Monitoring and Evaluation of Public Policies

➤ Report on the general questionnaire

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

Overall, ReSPA's contribution to institutional and individual improvements of participants in the thematic area of the monitoring and evaluation of public policies was scored 3.8 out of 5.

ReSPA's contribution to the individual improvement of participants (3.93) was scored higher than ReSPA's contribution to institutional improvement (3.71).

Regarding individual improvements, the majority of respondents judged that **ReSPA's activities** had contributed *greatly* (14%) or to a *good extent* (71%) to their acquiring knowledge and enhanced skills for using improved approaches and methods for the monitoring and evaluation of public policies. Most respondents mentioned their **greater 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 as a consequence of their participation in ReSPA activities**. The great majority of respondents also recognized ReSPA's contribution in the form of improved cooperation with colleagues and the working environment of their own institutions (57%), as well as improved cooperation with similar institutions in the region and/or the EU (57%). In addition, improved cooperation with colleagues from other institutions within their own countries was mentioned by 43% of respondents, as well as improved dialogue and exchange of ideas with their own superiors (43%).

Regarding the institutional improvements resulting from ReSPA activities, the majority of respondents confirmed that institutional **modalities and practices of sharing knowledge and lessons learned within their home institutions and among partner institutions had improved**. Most respondents mentioned that the expert advice provided during ReSPA activities had been further explored and developed with a view to its implementation in their institutions (71%). The majority of respondents confirmed that information and discussion about new innovative practices, tools and changes of procedures had been promoted (57%).

It should be noted that 100% of the respondents confirmed that the benefits of ReSPA actions had contributed to advancing country-level implementation of PAR in the thematic area of monitoring and evaluating public policies.

The key conclusions are that ReSPA should invest more effort into meeting the expectations of ReSPA stakeholders in this thematic area in the future, that ReSPA serves as an effective driver for change and inspiration at individual level but that it is more challenging to achieve such change at institutional level, that ReSPA has contributed to improving cooperation within different institutions at regional level, that sharing knowledge and information remains an important component of ReSPA, and that individual capacities have improved due to meetings with colleagues from other institutions in the region and/or the EU. Improved capacities to cooperate with colleagues from other institutions in the same country, as well as improved dialogue and greater exchange of ideas with superiors, are considered by the respondents to be very important results of ReSPA activities.

c. Monitoring report for thematic area 3: Regulatory Reform and Implementation of Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA)

➤ *Report on the general questionnaire*

Overall, ReSPA's contribution to institutional improvements and individual improvements among the participants in its activities in the thematic area of Regulatory Reform and Implementation of RIA was scored with an **average of 4.2 out of 5**, i.e. the respondents/participants⁴ assessed ReSPA's activities overall as contributing either "greatly" or to a "good extent" to institutional and individual improvements.

- The respondents scored ReSPA's contribution as follows:
 - 4.4 out of 5 for individual improvement
 - 4.05 out of 5 for institutional improvement
- The participants declared that their interactions with ReSPA had achieved the following results:
 - They had become more deeply and professionally engaged in the preparation of strategies and RIA reports, with enhanced awareness of RIA & public consultation.
 - The activities had enabled them to develop a broader network within their own administrative institutions and with other administrations from the region.

Individual Improvement

Acquired knowledge and skills

- The respondents scored the contribution of ReSPA to the acquisition of knowledge and skills at individual level **at an average of 4.2 out of 5**.
- The respondents emphasised that they had applied the knowledge and skills gained through ReSPA's activities, including in the actual preparation of RIA reports (40%).
- More efforts need to be undertaken to boost the engagement of civil servants in public consultation processes, since this response-option was selected by only 10% of respondents.

Better communication and exchange

- The respondents scored the contribution of ReSPA to better communication and exchange **at an average of 4.6 out of 5**, confirming ReSPA as a key platform for networking in the region.
- The majority of respondents (60%) highlighted that cooperation with colleagues from similar institutions in the region and/or the EU had been enhanced due to ReSPA actions.

⁴ The respondents to the questionnaire in this thematic area came from nine different institutions of the ReSPA member countries. A total of four actions were monitored under this thematic area.

Institutional Improvement

Better work methods in institutions

- The respondents scored the contribution of ReSPA to better work methods in institutions **at an average of 4.1 out of 5**.
- The majority of respondents highlighted that institutional modalities had improved as a result of developing and exploring opportunities for replicating the examples of good practices in the domain of Better Regulation provided through ReSPA activities (50%).
- Only 30% of the respondents believe that improvements resulted from the recommendations obtained through ReSPA's analytical policy papers and studies. This shows that bringing about significant change within institutions through ReSPA recommendations still remains a challenge.

Introduction and improvement of new and existing measures and tools

- The respondents scored the contribution of ReSPA to the introduction and improvement of new and existing measures and tools **at an average of 4 out of 5**.
- The majority of respondents highlighted the following improvements as examples of progress achieved within their institutions due to ReSPA actions:
 - Improvement of internal coordination within the institution and coordination with other institutions (50%).
 - Improvement of procedures, modalities and practicalities for conducting RIA and public consultation (30%).

The way forward

- As a result of ReSPA actions, more attention is now paid to RIAs and public consultations and there is a greater understanding among the participants of RIA and public consultations importance.
- There is still a need for further training on RIA for the administrations. Accordingly, ReSPA will explore the possibility of organising a large-scale Training of Trainers Programme on RIA.
- More efforts needed to be undertaken to boost the engagement of civil servants in organizing and participating in public consultation processes. Accordingly, ReSPA may consider organising inclusive actions related to public consultations.

➤ *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 has measured the implementation of recommendations from a regional study entitled **Better Regulation in the Western Balkans**. The study was published in 2018 and refers primarily to the situation in the period 2016–2017. The study offers a total of 45 recommendations for national and sub-national administrations. These recommendations 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 the recommendations were not scored by the survey respondents.

It can be concluded that more than half (51.1%) of the recommendations have been adopted and implemented, while 22.2% are adopted and under preparation but have not yet been implemented. This means that 73.3% of the **study's** recommendations have been taken into account by the national administrations of the ReSPA member countries. A small percentage of the recommendations (26.5%) have not been implemented and are not in the preparation phase, including the recommendations that were not scored and whose status is thus unclear.

The average score for the implementation of recommendations per administration is shown in the following table:

Administrations	Number of recommendations	Score
Albania	6	3.5
BiH institutions	1	n/a
BiH FBIH	4 + 4	4 ⁵
BiH Republika Srpska	7	3.07
Montenegro	9	3.55
North Macedonia	6	2.66
Serbia	8	3.12
<i>All recommendations</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>3.31 (regional average)</i>

⁵ In the case of FBIH, scoring was provided for only 4 of the 8 recommendations, in calculating the average score, only the completed scores were taken into account.

The recommendations of the study were generally assessed as having achieved 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 the implementation of the Better Regulation agenda. The regional average of the scores for the implementation of recommendations is 3.31 out of 4 (with 4 being the maximum score).

d. Monitoring report for thematic area 4: Human Resources Management and Development

➤ *I Report on the general questionnaire*

Overall, ReSPA's contribution to institutional and individual improvements of participants was scored at 4/5, indicating that this contribution meets the expectations of the stakeholders.

The respondents scored ReSPA's contribution to their **individual improvement** at 4.13/5.

- ReSPA's contribution to **individuals' acquired knowledge and enhanced skills** for using improved approaches and methods (i.e. question 4.1.1.) was scored at 4.13/5, i.e. above the **level of "a good extent"**. The majority of respondents applied their enhanced knowledge and skills through involvement in merit-based recruitment, performance appraisal, and online management and facilitation (75%) while a minority of respondents selected the response option of the involvement of civil servants in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of a strategy (18.75%).
- **ReSPA's contribution** to improved communication and exchange of know-how among colleagues (i.e. question 4.1.2.) was scored at 4.13/5, i.e. above the level of **"to a good extent"**. The majority of respondents indicated they had improved their capacities as a result of meetings with colleagues from other institutions in the region and/or the EU (50%). These results also indicate that ReSPA has contributed to improving the career prospects of 18.75% of the respondents.

Through participation in ReSPA activities, the participants have gained crucial knowledge to improve their everyday work, as well as skills for more effective online collaboration and meetings, increased productivity and self-confidence, and an increased capacity for developing new ideas and solutions regarding the HRM aspects of PAR strategy. Peer learning and exchange of ideas among colleagues from other countries was recognised by the survey respondents as being important and beneficial.

The contribution of ReSPA activities to **institutional improvement** was scored at 3.87 out of 5.

- ReSPA's contribution to improved **institutional modalities and practices of sharing knowledge/lessons learned** (Question 4.2.1) was scored at 4.1/5, slightly above the **level of 'good extent.'** The majority of respondents emphasised that such improvement was achieved through

enhanced cooperation and exchange of ideas and/or documents with colleagues, while a minority (31.25%) attributed improvement to the adoption of recommendations offered by ReSPA's analytical papers, policy papers and studies.

- **ReSPA's contribution to progress towards the introduction and improvement of procedures, methods and tools** (Question 4.2.2) was scored at an average of 3.88 out of 5, slightly below the level of 'a good extent'. The majority of respondents indicated that this progress was achieved through improved procedures for merit-based recruitment, performance appraisal, HRMIS, and online management (50%), as well as the promotion of information and discussion about new innovative practices, tools, and changes of procedures (50%). The **lowest score for ReSPA's contribution** (12.50%) was given to the improvement of internal coordination within single institutions and coordination with other institutions, as well as to the development of internal rules on different issues.

ReSPA activities led to the generation of new ideas for the implementation of HRMIS and the development of new IT tools for e-recruitment.

Quotes:

"These new ideas and approaches have provided the basis for a greater understanding of the current performance appraisal and especially of the recruitment system, as well as providing ideas for additional adjustments and future improvements in the area."

"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."

It can also be noted that ReSPA actions and recommendations have contributed to changes in the Law on the Civil Service in Serbia. In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, ReSPA actions and recommendations have initiated the development of HRMIS e-applications, the development of a new rule book for performance appraisal, and the development of a roadmap for IT HR.

From this it can be concluded that ReSPA serves as a driver for change and inspiration at individual level, though it is more challenging to bring about such change at institutional level. ReSPA activities contribute to strengthening knowledge and skills, as well as to the improvement of procedures, methods and tools. Peer learning remains a crucial instrument for the exchange of ideas and for facilitating mutual learning.

➤ *II The implementation of recommendations for thematic area 4: Human Resources Management and Development*

Within the thematic area of Human Resources Management and Development, the survey monitored the implementation of recommendations from the following two ReSPA studies:

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

Merit Recruitment in the Western Balkans: An Evaluation of Change between 2015 and 2018. This study evaluated the progress achieved in merit-based recruitment in the Western Balkans from 2015, when the first ReSPA study on merit-based recruitment was produced, to 2018. The study identified obstacles to the successful implementation of HRMD policies and proposed recommendations for improving the quality of implementation. The study focused on the area of recruitment and selection as crucial areas for the analysis of the quality of implementation of HRM policies in the Western Balkans. A total of 67 recommendations were proposed for national administrations: Albania 7, BiH administration 8, BiH Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina 10, BiH Republika Srpska 9, Montenegro 10, North Macedonia 9, and Serbia 14.

Among all ReSPA member countries, 41.79% of the study recommendations were adopted and implemented, 35.82% were adopted and under preparation but not yet implemented, 7.46% were adopted neither implemented nor under preparation for implementation, and 14.92% recommendations were not adopted at all. The average scores given for the implementation of recommendations per administration are presented in the following table:

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 Administration in Western Balkans study. This study reported on the state of the art in performance appraisal in the Western Balkan countries, with a special focus on improvements in the implementation of performance appraisal, comparisons among the countries of the region, and examples of existing good practice in the EU and worldwide. The study 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.

Among all ReSPA member countries, 30.23% recommendations have been adopted and implemented, 39.53% have been adopted and are under preparation but not yet implemented, 18.6% have been adopted but have neither been implemented nor are under preparation for implementation, and 11.62% were not

adopted at all. The average scores given for the implementation of recommendations per administration is shown in the following table:

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	

From this it can be noted that the implementation of recommendations related to merit-based recruitment (41.79%) is higher than the implementation of recommendations for performance appraisal (30.32%). Although the score for implemented recommendations is below 50% for both studies, the percentage of recommendations that are under preparation for merit-based recruitment is 35.82% and almost 40% for performance appraisal, indicating that changes are still happening but not very quickly. From this we can conclude that the countries of the Western Balkans are dedicated to changes and improvement.

➤ *III The implementation of the in-country-support mechanism in thematic area 4: 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, the National Academy of Public Administration of Serbia (NAPA) is responsible for delivering training to a wide range of target groups, including civil servants working 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 wider range of target groups is that of developing online courses.

In 2018, ReSPA helped NAPA to develop a Learning Management System and a number of training modules. NAPA requested support for this project in developing two complementary modules for an online platform to enhance its internal processes. These two additional modules, a Program Compiler Module and an LMS Planning Module, were needed 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 can retrieve from the LMS and to ensure there is no duplication in the entry 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*.

Further Development of a Learning Management System for the National Academy of Public Administration of Serbia was scored 5/5 on both questions about the contribution to institutional improvement, the question about increased knowledge-sharing, and the question about improvements to specific procedures.

The response to Question 421 on knowledge-sharing shows that in-country support has helped NAPA to develop an overview of training processes and evidence. In addition, training materials are now available for downloading and knowledge-sharing. The automatic exchange of data with other government institutions has been enabled, and a training schedule has been automatically published on the website.

The response to Question 422 on specific procedures shows that the in-country support has helped NAPA to document every process in LMS, to create instructions for all users, and to tailor services according to users' needs.

The response to the question about the link with PAR implementation (Point 2 of the Questionnaire) indicates that ReSPA's in-country support contributed to advancing the implementation of PAR in the area of Human Resources Management and Development through the professional development of civil servants at country level. This support has improved their competencies for a good quality work and thereby improved the quality of services provided by the PA to citizens and businesses.

e. Monitoring report for thematic area 5: Quality management (QM)

➤ *I Report on the General Questionnaire*

The respondents to the thematic area of quality management in the general questionnaire came from 16 different institutions of ReSPA's member countries. The questionnaire covered seven actions organised by ReSPA, including international events, the PA Award 2020, and the provision of training in the use of quality management instruments.

The survey participants rated ReSPA's overall contribution to improvements in quality management at institutional and individual level **at 3.75**, i.e. close to the level of contributing to 'a good extent', and thus can be seen as quite satisfactory. Based on the responses, the most important results of ReSPA's contribution are as follows:

- Training in the use of QM instruments, especially CAF, was highly praised by the respondents for enabling them to acquire important knowledge.
- The 'regional' component of ReSPA activities produced the desired effect of facilitating knowledge-sharing among regional colleagues

- The importance of being exposed to examples of good practices was especially noted by the participants.
- In several institutions, specific new user-centred practices and tools have been introduced.
- ReSPA activities influenced the participants to advocate for more measures related to QM in PAR strategies.

Quotes:

"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 was initiated, which should be posted on the Ministry's website."

"CAF is incorporated into the new 2030 PAR Strategy. Civil servants of the country were capacitated to implement and evaluate CAF."

Individual improvements

The respondents scored ReSPA's contribution to their individual improvement in the domain of Quality Management at 4 out of 5. The percentages below represent the participants' assessment of the extent to which ReSPA's activities have contributed to their acquiring knowledge and enhancing their skills for using improved approaches and methods in QM:

75% to a good extent 12% to an adequate extent 13% greatly

The extent to which ReSPA's activities have contributed to facilitating communication and the exchange of know-how among colleagues and/or leadership was scored at an average of 3.8 out of 5:

31% to an adequate extent 63% to a good extent 6% greatly

Institutional improvements

The survey respondents scored the contribution of ReSPA's activities to improved institutional modalities and practices of sharing knowledge and lessons learned within their own home institutions and among partner institutions at an average of 3.7 out of 5:

44% to an adequate extent 44%, and to a good extent 12% greatly received

The contribution of ReSPA's activities to progress towards the introduction and improvement of procedures, methods and tools within the participants' institutions was scored at an average of 3.5 out of 5:

44% to an adequate extent 44% to a good extent 6% not much

The way forward

- ✓ Exposure to good practices should be a strong component in ReSPA activities.
- ✓ Activities are needed for assisting institutions to anchor QM/CAF in their PAR strategies.

➤ *II Implementation of recommendations for thematic area 5: Quality Management (QM)*

ReSPA measured the implementation of recommendations from the **Comparative Study on Service Delivery**, a regional study produced in 2018 with the prime 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 in the following key thematic fields: **GAPA (the General Administrative Procedural Act); Digitalisation and e-government; Quality management in service delivery. The study also included a specific area on the Accessibility of services for vulnerable groups.** Recommendations were given for all Western Balkan countries and Kosovo.*⁶

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

The respondents from these two countries reported on the level of implementation of the study recommendations for improving QM as follows:

Albania:

1. **Short-term recommendations** - out of three recommendations, one has been adopted and implemented while two have been adopted and are under preparation but have not yet been implemented.
2. **Mid-term recommendations** - out of two (2) recommendations, one has been adopted and implemented and one 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 or e-public services by NAIS.

⁶ *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.

- ✓ Developing a central policy for quality assurance tools: ADISA has the authority to assess the quality of service delivery and performance based on the Council of Ministers' Decision (VKM) No. 640, dated 2 October 2019.
- ✓ Developing the user feedback mechanism (CFM) as part of the Citizen Centric Service Delivery project.
- ✓ Legislation related to standardising citizen-centric public service delivery models has been developed and is being implemented (ADISA is implementing).
- ✓ Involving users and the wider community 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 separately for the "state level institutions" (users of the budget for BiH institutions) and for entities of Federation of BiH and Republika Srpska.

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 one long-term recommendation given has been adopted but has neither been implemented nor is under preparation for implementation. The respondents gave no description of the implementation of this recommendation.

Federation of BiH level

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

Republika Srpska level

No specific responses were provided by the respondents from the Republika Srpska to the level of implementation of study recommendations in the area of QM implementation. However, since there is one Action Plan of the Strategic Framework for Public Administration Reform 2018–2022 of BiH with measures defined for all administrative levels, it can be considered that responses received about the implementation of measures related to QM from the Action Plan refer to Republika Srpska as well.

As the respondents indicate, the most meaningful progress on QM in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been made in the following areas:

- ✓ The Strategic Framework for Public Administration Reform 2018–2022 and its Action Plan include QM in the public services area, with clear actions for CAF, client satisfaction and other QM tools. Action plans for QM have also been developed at each administrative level.
- ✓ PARCO supports and actively promotes the implementation of CAF in institutions at the level of BiH institutions. Civil Service Agencies at the level of both entities support the introduction of CAF in their institutions.
- ✓ PARCO is working on the development of a methodology for CSM (client satisfaction management), an index for CSM in BiH is being developed, and the implementation of CSM is widely supported by PARCO and GIZ.
- ✓ Institutions from all four levels have developed guidelines for measuring employee satisfaction. CSA FBiH, as part of the GIZ support has started piloting a project on Client Satisfaction Measurement.

➤ *III The implementation of the in-country-support mechanism in thematic area 5: Quality Management (QM)*

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

In line with the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Srpska Government, the Civil Service Agency (CSA) of the Republic of Srpska has been promoting the CAF model and its implementation among the institutions of RS. Upon a request for assistance from the Ministry of Energy and Mining of RS for introducing CAF, the CSA of the RS applied for in-country support to provide technical assistance to the CAS RS to facilitate the introduction of the CAF model in the Ministry. The reason for this application for assistance was the lack of technical knowledge to implement the CAF model fully. One Senior Expert in Common Assessment Framework CAF was engaged. Together with the employees of CSA RS, the expert successfully introduced a full model of CAF in the Ministry.

The responses given to the question **on knowledge-sharing** (question 521) indicate that in-country support contributed **“greatly”** to institutional improvement, scoring 5 out of 5. The respondents appraised the expert engaged by ReSPA as being highly qualified and as having provided great support in introducing the CAF model.

The responses regarding **specific procedures** (question 522) indicate that in-country support has contributed **“to a good extent”** in helping achieve progress towards the introduction and improvement of procedures and methods within institutions, scoring 4 out of 5. The support provided by ReSPA was

appraised as excellent and useful. One example is the Ministry of Energy and Mining of the RS which, thanks to ReSPA support, has harmonized 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** (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”

The Civil Service Agency of the Federation of BiH (CSA FBiH), in accordance with the Decision of the Government of the Federation of BiH, has undertaken several steps and activities for promoting the CAF model and its implementation within public authorities, including at local government level in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The CSA sought technical assistance from ReSPA in the form of in-country support to facilitate CAF self-assessment and the formulation of a CAF Improvement plan for the Municipality of Bihac. Given that neither the CSA FBiH nor the Municipality had the technical knowledge or skills in CAF implementation required to undertake this work, the application from the CSA FBiH for the Municipality of Bihac as the end beneficiary was accepted and one senior expert in CAF was engaged.

The responses regarding **knowledge-sharing** (question 521) indicate that in-country support contributed “greatly” to institutional improvement, scoring 5 out of 5. Based on the introduction of the CAF model through this project, 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.

The responses to the question on **specific procedures** (question 522) indicate that in-country support has supported institutions “to a good extent” in achieving progress towards the introduction and improvement of procedure and methods within the institutions, scoring 4 out of 5. The respondents adjudged that this support had helped their institutions develop an overview of training processes and of registering the attendance at the training. In addition, training materials are now available for downloading and knowledge sharing. The automatic exchange of data with other government institutions has also been enabled, and a training schedule has been automatically published on the website.

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

f. Monitoring report for thematic area 6: e-government (e-GOV)

➤ *I Report on the General Questionnaire*

The responses to the general questionnaire regarding the thematic area of e-government were provided by 22 different institutions from among the ReSPA members. The questionnaire covered 12 activities organized by ReSPA, including international events, seasonal schools, workshops and webinars. The respondents rated ReSPA's contribution to institutional and individual improvements of participants in the thematic area of e-Government with an average score of **3.50**. From this it can be concluded that ReSPA's contribution is satisfactory, although more specific efforts should be invested to raise the level of ReSPA's contribution, especially to institutional improvements. Based on the survey responses, the most important results of ReSPA's contribution are as follows:

- There has been a significant acquisition of knowledge and skills, especially of an innovative nature, at individual level. This has been applied most effectively through involvement in the preparation of strategic documents and for the internal transfer of knowledge about innovative new practices.
- The importance of formal and informal knowledge-sharing with colleagues from across the region has been increasingly recognised and emphasised, leading to significant improvements in approaches and methods in individual work.
- ReSPA's Seasonal School was very well appraised. The participants greatly appreciated the opportunity provided by this activity for longer exposure to good practices and the sharing of experiences.

Quote:

"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."

Individual improvements

On average, the respondents scored ReSPA's contribution to their individual improvement in the domain of e-Government at 3.64 out of 5. The majority of the respondents judged that ReSPA's activities had contributed to their acquiring knowledge and enhanced skills for applying improved approaches and methods in e-Government:

50 % to a good extent 37% to an adequate extent 9% greatly 4.5% not much

The respondents scored 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 3.64 out of 5:

67% to a good extent 33% to an adequate extent

Institutional improvements

According to the respondents, ReSPA's activities have contributed to improved institutional modalities and practices of sharing knowledge and lessons learned within their home institutions and among partner institutions at an average of 3.3:

36% to an adequate extent 27% to a good extent 14% greatly 23% not so much

The respondents scored the contribution of ReSPA's activities to achieving progress towards the introduction and improvement of procedures, methods and tools within their institutions at an average of 3.36:

45% to an adequate extent 32% to a good extent 14% not much 9% greatly

The way forward

The "innovativeness" of ReSPA activities in this area, where it is of crucial importance, was highly praised by the survey respondents and needs to be integrated in future activities. The seasonal school and other longer-term events need to be maintained.

➤ *II Implementation of recommendations for thematic area 6: e-Government (e-Gov)*

ReSPA measured the implementation of recommendations from the **Comparative Study on Service Delivery**, a regional study 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 formulating short-, mid- and long-term recommendations. The study analysed service delivery in the following key thematic fields: **GAPA (General Administrative Procedural Act), Digitalisation and e-Government, and Quality Management in Service Delivery**. The study included a specific area on the accessibility of services for vulnerable groups. Recommendations were formulated for all Western Balkan countries and Kosovo.*⁷

Only two of the five countries responded to the questionnaire regarding the implementation of recommendations in the area of Digitalisation and e-Government, i.e. Albania and BiH: institutions at the state level, the entities of the Federation of BiH (FBiH) and Republika Srpska (RS).

Albania

No responses were provided by Albania on the level of implementation of five of the recommendations for e-Government.

⁷ *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.

Bosnia and Herzegovina:

Recommendations were given for the three administration levels of BiH as integrated recommendations, while the responses came as:

- one integrated response for the level of the institutions of BiH and the FBiH
- one response for the level of RS

Respecting that, the answers are as follows:

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

- 1. Short-term recommendations** – Three of the six recommendations have been adopted and are under preparation but have not yet been implemented. Two others have been adopted but not implemented, and one recommendation was not adopted.
- 2. Mid-term recommendations** – No information was provided by the respondents regarding the implementation of the five mid-term recommendations.
- 3. Long-term recommendations** – No information was provided regarding the implementation of the single long-term recommendation.

Republika Srpska level

- 1. Short-term recommendations** – All six short-term recommendations have been adopted and are under preparation but have not yet been implemented.
- 2. Mid-term recommendations** – All four recommendations have been adopted and are under preparation but have not yet been implemented.
- 3. Long-term recommendations** – No information was provided regarding the implementation of the single long-term recommendation.

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

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

The following are the biggest remaining challenges:

- Standardisation in digital services has not been introduced in practice and there are no appropriate plans in place for the introduction of standardisation 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. This technology is apparently not interoperable and has thus become obsolete (for instance, e-Covid passports will be based on smartphones rather than ID cards)

➤ *III The implementation of in-country-support in thematic area 6: e-Government (e-Gov)*

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

In the process of developing the strategic document, the main task of the National Authority for Electronic Certification and Cyber Security of Albania (AKCESK) was 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. Given that AKCESK did not have enough capacities to undertake cyber security risk assessment, technical assistance was sought from ReSPA for this specific assessment. Two senior experts in the e-gov area were hired and have since finalised the assessment in coordination with employees from AKCESK.

The responses regarding **knowledge-sharing** (question 621) indicate that in-country support has contributed to knowledge-sharing within the institution “to a good extent”, with this item scoring 4 out of 5. ReSPA support has assisted AKCESK in overcoming the difficulties of assessing the cyber readiness of critical and important information infrastructures in Albania, the which is the subject of Law 2/2017 on Cyber Security.

The responses regarding **specific procedures** (question 622) indicate that in-country support has supported the institution “to a good extent” (score 4) in progressing towards the introduction and improvement of procedures and methods. The expertise provided has helped the institution to assess the level of risks for individual CII (Critical Information Infrastructures) operators and to rate them based on risks and impacts. This support also enabled improved assessment of the level of readiness of CII operators and the drafting of an operational framework to increase the cyber security readiness of the CII operators. These improved capacities were used for undertaking further actions in relation to the new CII classification.

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

2. "Support for 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) in 2019 was to complete the National Cyber Security Strategy Document and to set up and equip the National CSIRT with all necessary monitoring and control systems. A working group was established by a Prime Minister's order and had formulated a vision, a mission, and strategic objectives, together with sub-objectives and measures to be implemented in order to fulfil the vision and mission. Lacking specific capacities to complete the Strategy, technical assistance was sought from ReSPA to help the AKCESK working group conduct detailed cost analysis, a passport of indicators, and the methodology needed to measure these indicators. One senior expert was hired to work in full cooperation with the staff of AKCESK.

The responses regarding **knowledge-sharing** (question 621) indicate that in-country support has contributed "greatly" (5 of 5) to institutional knowledge-sharing practices within home institutions and among partner institutions. With ReSPA support, AKCESK and the working group for National Strategy on Cyber Security drafted quality documents on Cyber Security Strategy that were approved in December 2020.

The respondents scored ReSPA's contribution to specific procedures (question 622) 5 out of 5, indicating that in-country support "greatly" influenced progress towards the introduction and improvement of procedures and methods within the institutions. The support provided was described as very significant and timely, successfully addressing the lack of capabilities of the working group to meet the deadline for completing one of the most important parts of the National Strategy on Cyber Security, i.e. the cost evaluation for the action plan and the passport of indicators.

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

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

The Ministry of Public Administration of Montenegro lacked the capacities to undertake a complex review of "digital society" in Montenegro, including a specific review of gaps and shortages in the provision of

digitized public services. This work needed to be done as part of preparations for formulating an upcoming Public Administration Reform Strategy 2021–2025 and a Digital Transformation Strategy. Expertise was sought from ReSPA through in-country support, and one senior expert was engaged.

The responses regarding **knowledge-sharing** (question 621) indicate that the expertise provided by ReSPA contributed “to a good extent” (score 4 out of 5) to the institutional practice of knowledge-sharing within the home institution and with other institutions. The expert assisted in identifying mechanisms for cooperation among institutions to achieve better use of e-services, the development of an e-services catalogue, and general mutual development of e-government. The cooperation established with the expert led to quality inputs for improving procedures in the development of the catalogue of services.

The response regarding ReSPA's contribution to specific procedures (question 622) shows that In Country support contributed “to a good extent” to progress on the introduction and improvement of procedures and methods within the institution, scoring 4 out of 5. The Ministry gained specific knowledge from the project and has since applied this knowledge in defining data models, attributes and guidelines for improving technologies for the development of e-services and mechanisms to coordinate and manage the respective implementation.

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 contributed to advancing PAR implementation in the area of e-Government.

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 within the Government of Montenegro coordinates the process of development of the information society. In cooperation with other ministries, this ministry is responsible for creating an environment that will facilitate other institutions to implement digitalization projects in order to transform public administration, making it more open, transparent, and accessible to citizens and businesses. The Ministry requested expert support from ReSPA in identifying challenges in the area of implementing the widespread use of e-services, including their upgrading and the introduction of new services in order to connect all infrastructure and services in a single functioning whole. The support was intended to enable the government and other stakeholders in Montenegro to introduce new services and to optimise the work of public entities.

The responses regarding **knowledge-sharing** (question 621) indicate that ReSPA's in-country support contributed “to a good extent” (score 4 of 5) to knowledge-sharing practices within the home institution and among partner institutions. In-country support was judged to have contributed specifically to the development of new approaches to coordination and cooperation between the MPA and its partners.

The responses to the question **on specific procedures** (question 622) shows that the support obtained through the **in-country support mechanism contributed “to a good extent”** to progress on improving procedures and methods within the institution, scoring 4 out of 5. Sharing best practices with the expert and exchanging experiences helped the Ministry staff to better identify challenges in the area of e-services, as well as to recognize methods for upgrading e-services and models for ensuring compatibility in the provision of e services by different stakeholders.

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

Conclusions regarding the use of in-country support in the area of e-government:

- ✓ It was noted that the expertise provided by ReSPA significantly contributed to helping institutions coordinate their resources and actions more effectively with other institutions when developing strategic documents.
- ✓ The lack of capacities in public administration for developing strategic documents and their elements in this area mostly relate to a lack of specific technical knowledge about digitalisation. In such cases, in-country support was used not only to complete a specific task but also contributed to increasing the level of knowledge in the institutions that applied for such assistance.



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