



# ReSPA

Regional School  
of Public Administration

BUILDING TOGETHER  
GOVERNANCE FOR THE FUTURE

## Annual Monitoring of ReSPA's Activities in 2022

Policy Development  
and Coordination

Regulatory Reform  
and Implementation  
of RIA

Human Resources  
Management and  
Development  
(HRMD)

Quality  
Management  
(QM)

E-government  
(E Gov)



ReSPA activities are funded  
by the European Union

## List of Acronyms

<b>BiH</b>	Bosnia & Herzegovina
<b>CAF</b>	Common Assessment Framework
<b>CSA</b>	Civil Service Agency
<b>e-Gov</b>	e-Government
<b>EFAC</b>	CAF External Feedback Actors
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FBiH</b>	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
<b>HRMD</b>	Human Resources Management and Development
<b>HRMIS</b>	Human Resources Management Information System
<b>IPA III</b>	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance III
<b>ITIL</b>	Public Administration Service Catalogue
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>OGP</b>	Open Government Partnership
<b>PAR</b>	Public Administration Reform
<b>PARCO</b>	Public Administration Reform Coordinator's Office
<b>PEF</b>	CAF External Feedback Evaluation Procedure
<b>QM</b>	Quality Management
<b>ReSPA</b>	Regional School for Public Administration
<b>RIA</b>	Regulatory Impact Assessment
<b>RQMC</b>	Regional Quality Management Center
<b>RS</b>	Republika Srpska
<b>RR</b>	Regulatory Reform
<b>WB</b>	Western Balkan
<b>WG</b>	Working Group

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# 1. Introduction

The present report summarises the main results of the annual monitoring of ReSPA's activities implemented in 2021. It is based on an annual survey including:

1. One general questionnaire for each area (Policy Development, Regulatory Reform, Human Resource Management, Quality Management and eGovernment), covering workshops, conferences, training and similar activities addressed to civil servants of ReSPA members, carried out by ReSPA in the period between 6 and 18 months before the survey (i.e. in 2021).
  - 1.1. When available, the post-event questionnaires for such kind of activities are integrated into the assessment, as well.
2. A specific questionnaire on implementing recommendations, issued as a part of ReSPA studies about 30 to 40 months before the survey, filled in by institutions from the respective ReSPA members.
3. A post-event report on in-country support projects implemented in 2021, filled in by the recipient institutions in the respective administrations.

Assessment Tools 1 and 3 are based on the perception of the participants involved in ReSPA activities in the different countries (either individuals or institutions' representatives). Tool 2 is based on the actual data related to a number of recommendations which have been adopted/implemented.

All the assessment tools aim to capture the level of achievement of ReSPA's induced outputs (or short-term outcomes) according to the ReSPA's intervention logic, as established in the ReSPA strategy.

This report includes the main survey report for Questionnaire 1 and the thematic area reports, which analyse more in-depth the same outcomes area by area, including Assessment Tools 2 and 3. A section on conclusions and recommendations closes the report and includes methodological considerations about the survey.

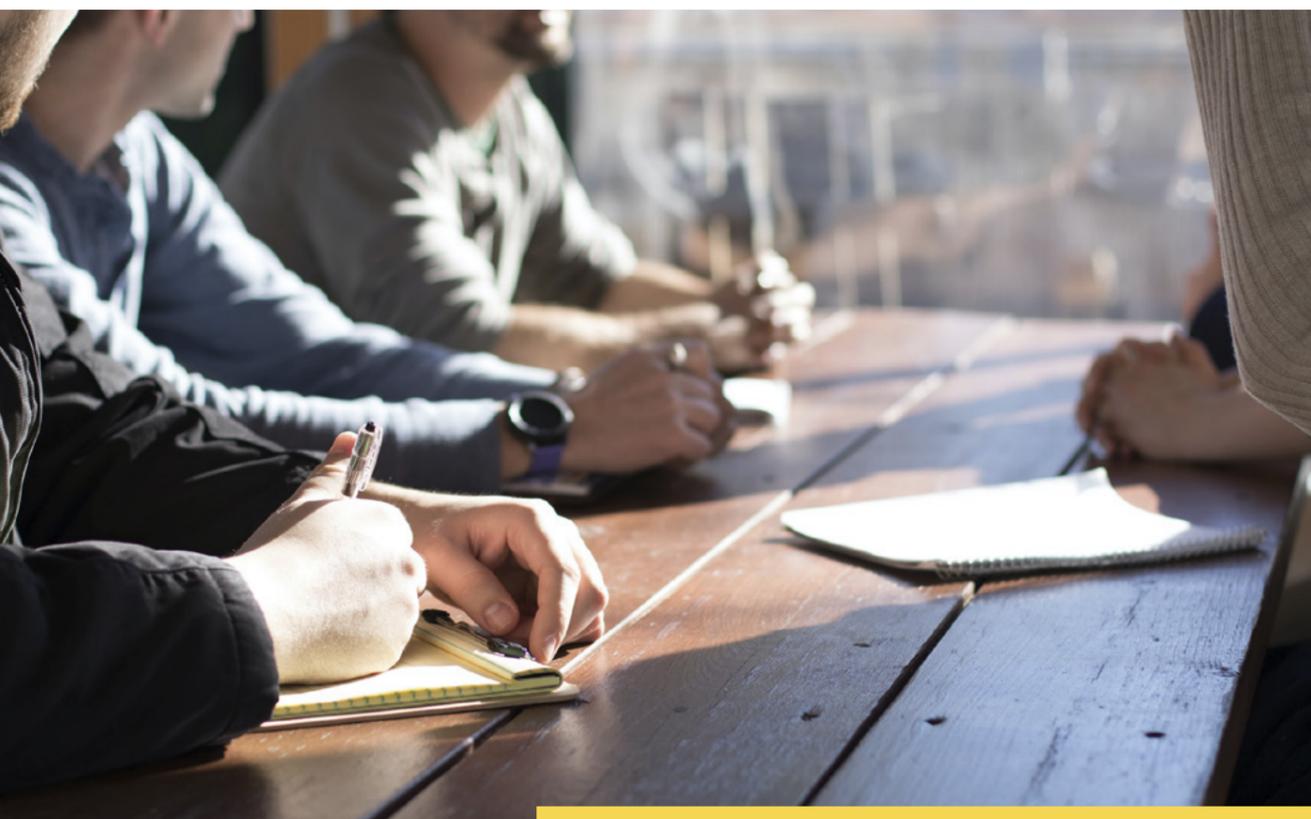
The reader should keep in mind some basic information as follows:

Indicators. Questionnaire 1 asks about the participants' perception of four indicators:

- ★ ReSPA's contribution at the individual level, in terms of:
  - Better methods of work and networking; and
  - New skills acquired
- ★ ReSPA's contribution at the institutional level, in terms of:
  - A better method of work (e.g. reference to good practices) and coordination within the respondent's own institution; and
  - Innovation/consolidation of reform measures within the respondent's own institution.

Scores and assessments. In Questionnaire 1 (and 1.1), respondents are asked to use a scale of scores for each indicator to identify how much of an effect ReSPA's contribution has had. The scores include five levels: 'not at all' = 1, 'not much' = 2, 'to an adequate extent' = 3, 'to a good extent' = 4, 'greatly' = 5. In addition, they are asked to select some predefined types of contribution for each indicator and to provide individual free comments, including actual examples of contributions. In Questionnaire 2, the recommendations adopted and implemented are given a score of 4 out of 4; those adopted and under preparation for implementation get a score of 3 out of 4; those adopted but not under preparation earn a score of 2 out of 4; those not adopted have a score of 1 out of 4. When mentioned in this report, the scores of the recommendations are converted to a scale of 1 to 5 to allow comparisons with the other scores. In Tool 3, the scores reflect the level of the post-event satisfaction of the institutions involved in in-country support projects.

Response rate. Twenty-six per cent of the participants who received Questionnaire 1 responded, which means 108 respondents to the questionnaire distributed among the different ReSPA members. The response rate needs to be improved (see the methodological recommendation below). Still, it already represents a significant sample of the universe of ReSPA users, considering that the respondents are civil servants with significant institutional responsibilities.



### | General survey on workshops, training, conference and the like

An initial consideration regards the good scores obtained by each indicator in the different areas in Questionnaire 1. This questionnaire regards the general activities implemented by ReSPA in 2021 addressed to individuals from among the civil servants in the public administrations of ReSPA members, including workshops, training, conferences, etc. The participants' response, on average, for all areas and all indicators was that these ReSPA activities contributed 'to a good extent' (3.99 out of 5) to individual growth and improved institutional functioning in their respective countries and areas. The fact that these responses relate to events implemented between 6 and 18 months earlier implies an effort of reflection on the part of the respondents, which is an added value to their response.

The scores are confirmed by the post-event Questionnaire 1.1, which yielded an average score between 'to a good extent' and 'greatly' (4.36 out of 5). These questionnaires, filled in by the participants immediately after each event, reflect the perception of the moment, which then matures in comparison with practice over the following months, to be finally evaluated through the annual monitoring questionnaire.

The results of Questionnaire 1 also show an improvement compared to the 2021 survey, both in terms of the response rate (significantly improved from 20% to 26%) and in terms of the general average score (slightly improved from 3.83 to 3.99).

### | Survey on the implementation of ReSPA recommendations

ReSPA carries out regional studies on specific reform measures to be considered for adoption and implementation at the level of respective administrations. The studies contain a diagnosis of the present situation and several recommendations identified jointly with ReSPA members, which are addressed to their administration for eventual implementation. It is crucial to monitor the implementation process. This is assessed according to the scale mentioned above over a period of about two years or more.

The 2022 survey assesses ReSPA's recommendations in two areas: Regulatory Reform; and Human Resource Management and Development. The implementation process is evaluated at 4.21 out of 5 for Regulatory Reform (RR) and 3.1 out of 5 for Human Resource Management and Development. Out of the 46 recommendations in the area of RR, 55% have been adopted and implemented, and 20% have been adopted but their implementation is under preparation. Out of the 57 recommendations in the area of HRM, 40% have been adopted and implemented, and 38% have been adopted but their implementation is under preparation.

### | Survey on in-country support projects

Except for the area of Policy Development, these projects have been carried out in all the areas and seem to have the highest appreciation score. The average of the four areas involved is 4.68 out of 5, while five projects are assessed at 5 out of 5 in Human Resources Development Management, Regulatory Reform and RIA, Quality Management and e-Government.

## 2. Main findings

### Quantitative assessments

Concerning [Questionnaire 1](#), in most thematic areas ReSPA's contribution to individual improvements is rated higher than the contribution to institutional improvements, and the score of the institutional performance indicator, despite being pretty good overall, is the lowest.

This is easy to understand because ReSPA's general activities address the strengthening of civil servants' individual capacities. The transformation of such capacities into changes in institutional behaviour, especially in new institutional functions and measures, relies on several other factors, including the institutional and political context.

The quantitative differences of the same indicator between the different thematic areas are rather small, as the data shows homogeneous trends between the different indicators. A more in-depth analysis could allow considerations about which activities (topics, types, etc.) are preferred by the participants – some general hypotheses in this regard will be formulated below.

The responses to the two individual improvement indicators (communication and networking, on the one hand, and skills, on the other) are not particularly differentiated. The differences, conversely, between the two indicators of institutional improvement (working methods and coordination, on the one hand, and new functions and measures taken, on the other) are significant in most cases, in favour of working methods and coordination. This seems rather understandable because methods – as a consequence of improved networking and competencies on the individual level – change faster than institutional functions and measures.

With respect to the [monitoring of the recommendations](#) issued by ReSPA's regional studies, the fact that 75% (in Regulatory Reform) and 78% (in HRM<sup>1</sup>) of them are either already implemented or under preparation for implementation is a clear sign of their relevance and value, especially considering that they are affecting policy decisions and institutional changes in ReSPA's members.

With respect to [in-country support](#) projects, as noted above, the monitoring exercise is still a sort of post-event

<sup>1</sup> Merit recruitment in the Western Balkans – An evaluation of change between 2015 and 2018

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assessment based on the subjective judgement of representatives of the beneficiary institutions. This must be improved in the future (as discussed below), but it is already significant that the institutions involved have rated the projects so highly.

### Qualitative assessments

On the qualitative side, the survey contains some information and a few considerations that can be used for a qualitative assessment of the activities carried out, as described below:

- ★ In Questionnaire 1, respondents choose from a number of predefined descriptions of the results under the different indicators. They also provide free comments and examples under each indicator.
- ★ Questionnaire 2 is accompanied by qualitative considerations on the nature of the recommendations in the case of HRM, but not yet in the other cases. For the latter, the present data only allows general considerations.
- ★ Assessment Tool 3 only contains proposals for qualitative considerations to be included in future surveys in the case of HRM. However, qualitative considerations on the effects of in-country support projects are still limited. Very general considerations will be developed anyway.

### Assessments from the general questionnaire (Questionnaire 1)

The first important result that respondents almost unanimously emphasise is the role of ReSPA as a **networking hub**, providing opportunities, practical arrangements and regional bodies for exchanging experience and know-how between the administrations of ReSPA's members and with administrations of the EU. This enables a learning process that is not notional but is based on the exchange of experiences. The power of lessons learnt through the exchange of experiences at the regional and the EU levels cannot be compared to theoretical learning. As stated by many respondents, the ability to network remains even after the ReSPA events. It often becomes a way of working that extends to colleagues and one's own institution. The Regional Quality Management Centre of ReSPA (RQMC) systematises this approach and is cited as an irreplaceable support. The same high appreciation applies to the recommendations from regional comparative studies and in-country support projects, which respondents often cite as an important source of exchange.



The **ReSPA Seasonal Schools** are mentioned as the activities that most enable this profound exchange between colleagues from different administrations. Due to the high number of participants and the relatively long duration, the schools help to build lasting professional relationships between colleagues. They also support discussion on a rather wide range of experiences concerning the different administrations of the region and the EU.

ReSPA's activities create or consolidate participants' **specific skills**, especially in using new technical tools and applying new approaches and methods. According to the respondents, these skills are reflected in their roles and positions in institutions. Upon their return to the institutions, many put the approaches they have learned into practice, prepare strategic plans and measures, set up working groups and/or facilitate workshops in the subjects they have been trained in.

Among such skills and their application, participants in the different areas particularly stress the following:

- ★ In the area of **Policy Development**, respondents mention their more substantial involvement in policy analysis and planning and strategy preparation (less so for inter-ministerial coordination and action plans). They emphasise their renewed contribution to the definition of improved legal frameworks and the adoption of specific instruments.
- ★ In the area of **Regulatory Reform**, they emphasise their increased familiarity with RIA preparation, implementation and assessment, and public consultations, as well as their involvement in developing these instruments and their implementation in practice.
- ★ In the area of **Human Resource Development**, respondents mention performance appraisals, the strategic development of recruitment policies, the establishment of HRMIS, and the use of electronic tools for selection procedures. They also emphasise their involvement in the drafting of laws and bylaws, the preparation of amendments to civil service laws, the definition of guidelines and the adoption of manuals.
- ★ In the area of **Quality Management**, familiarity with the CAF and the ability to contribute to its implementation is the most important outcome of ReSPA's activities mentioned by the participants, together with training on CAF external evaluation and other high-level contributions enhanced by frequent reference to the ReSPA RQMC.
- ★ In the area of **e-Government**, participants mention their increased capacity to improve the design of policies and measures to put citizens at the centre, familiarity with specific advanced technologies, involvement in introducing new procedures and, in particular, the agile approach to e-Government.

Due to participation in ReSPA's activities, the beneficiaries tend to strengthen their role in their institutions. Many are involved in **informal and formal training of colleagues**, and some become the reference point for the specific approaches and techniques learned within and outside their institutions.

Unfortunately, a strengthened role rarely results in **career improvements** (less than 20% of respondents).

At the institutional level, the new capacities created, thanks to ReSPA's activities, soon have a positive effect in terms of an **improved working environment**, mainly due to better cooperation between colleagues and the transfer of know-how that is thus made possible.

According to respondents, through training, networking, specific studies and targeted support from ReSPA, institutions can base their internal elaborations and plans on the **analysis and discussion of best practices**. Where necessary, they can turn to ReSPA for further help and clarification.

While admitting that improving the **performance of institutions** is a much slower process than acquiring skills and improving working methods, respondents note some clear progress at this level, closely linked to the skills and methods acquired through ReSPA.

The general questionnaire also included a direct question on the contribution of ReSPA's activities to the **implementation of PAR** in the contexts of different administrations. The vast majority of respondents stated that the contribution was significant and cited examples of how the above improvements had contributed to the acceleration and completion of reforms. Of course, the responses to this question remain at the level of just impressions and need to be verified during the evaluation process.

### Assessments from the questionnaire on recommendations and post-event report on in-country support (Assessment Tools 2 and 3)

There were three **regional studies** included in the 2022 monitoring:

- ★ In the area of Regulatory Reform, a study on Better Regulation Reform in WB.
- ★ In the area of HRMD, two studies were included:
  - Merit Recruitment in the Western Balkans: An Evaluation of Change between 2015 and 2018.
  - Individual Performance Appraisal of Employees in Central Public Administration in the Western Balkans.

ReSPA's regional studies involve all its members and provide recommendations both general and specific to each administration. According to respondents, they are a powerful instrument for implementing PA reforms, as they address the details of the measures to take, the rules to follow and the methods to put in place at the level of the respective administrations.

**The administrations, even more, appreciate in-country support projects** because they respond to specific demands to be supported in the already initiated reform processes, which need to overcome administration-level bottlenecks in order to be completed. The projects monitored in 2022 are:

- ★ Support to the Ministry of Finance and Economy of Albania in strengthening managerial accountability in general government units in Albania and raising awareness on the delegation of managerial tasks.
- ★ Support to the Regulatory Unit in the Albanian Prime Minister's Office in strengthening their capacities regarding RIA implementation and quality control through the organisation and delivery of a Training of Trainers Programme for Regulatory Impact Assessment and Impact Assessment Methodology in Albania (RIA ToT Programme).
- ★ Support to the Department of Public Administration of Albania (DoPA) in improving the recruitment process in the Albanian Civil Service with a particular focus on the interview phase.
- ★ Support to Department of Public Administration of Albania in increasing the usage of and awareness about the importance and benefits of HR Information Systems in the Albanian Public Administration, with a particular focus on the local level.
- ★ Support to the Ministry of Public Administration and Local-Self Government of Serbia administration for comparative analysis of good practices (EU and Western Balkans) on the role of HR units in strategic management within the state administration.
- ★ Support to the Human Resources Management Service (HRMS) of Serbia for carrying out a comparative analysis of good practices (EU and Western Balkans) on the implementation of the modern selection process of the HRM, including e-recruitment.
- ★ Support to the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government (MPALSG) of the Republic of Serbia to carry out a feasibility study for online exams.
- ★ Support to the Civil Service Agency (CSA) of the RS, BiH (CSA RS, BiH) to finalise the CAF implementation in the Ministry of Administration and Local Self-Governance of the RS, BiH.
- ★ Support to Ministry of Public Administration of Montenegro in developing the Strategy for Information Society in Montenegro.
- ★ Support to the General Secretariat of the Government of the Federation of BiH, BiH, in developing the ITIL Service Catalogue.
- ★ Support to PARCO-BiH to analyse the current situation of preconditions for key e-service delivery enablers in BiH and the Road Map for e-service delivery of BiH.

# 3. Conclusions

## | ReSPA key activities are widely appreciate

In particular, the monitoring survey provides a comprehensive view of **respondents' positive perceptions** regarding activities aimed at ReSPA's contribution at the individual level (schools, conferences, workshops, study tours, etc.). Although the response rate of 26% (and lower in some areas) shows a significant increase since 2021, it is still low. Respondents, however, expressed their opinions by providing a score and some important qualitative observations, which can help ReSPA Programme Managers fine-tune their activities.

On the other hand, the beneficiary institutions themselves evaluated the contribution of the activities of ReSPA specifically aimed at strengthening institutions for implementing the PAR (regional studies and in-country support projects). Indeed, the instruments used (a questionnaire on the implementation of recommendations and an assessment tool on the satisfaction of in-country projects) mainly provide quantitative assessments and are relatively weak from a qualitative point of view. However, their results show no doubt about the appreciation of the institutions concerned with these activities.

ReSPA acts through two different and complementary channels. **Individual capacity building** –realised through training activities, conferences, regional thematic meetings, and working visits to EU institutions – provides trained and up-to-date individual resources to institutions of ReSPA members to increase their awareness, initiative and innovation in the different areas of PAR. The second channel – represented by regional comparative studies and in-country support projects – consists of **direct support to the institutions** in their specific reform processes and materialises in rather detailed policy and operational suggestions concerning the public administration reforms in the pipeline, their fine-tuning, regulations and practical arrangements for implementation.

Through these channels, the activities of ReSPA seem to be widely appreciated by both individuals and institutions. From the general questionnaire, it emerges that individual capacity building functions as a driver for institutions to initiate new reform initiatives and to increase internal training and awareness. From the Assessment Tools 2 and 3 on direct institutional support activities, it emerges that institutions are eager to find workable solutions for implementing reform processes, and not only highly value the support of ReSPA but also show a high level of implementation.

## | The irreplaceable added value of ReSPA as a regional hub for networking

From the responses to all the assessment tools, it is universally acknowledged that the main contribution of ReSPA is its **networking capacity**, which underpins all monitored activities. Seasonal schools, thematic conferences and workshops, and working visits are all based on the exchange of experiences between ReSPA members in a similar regional context and with EU countries at different stages of the PAR process. Direct institutional support activities, including regional specialised centres, are also based on cross-administration comparisons and good practices that have proved to be effective in the other ReSPA member.

**Seasonal schools**, as mentioned above, are particularly appreciated in this regard because they allow networking on a personal level and contribute to the creation of a regional class of civil servants with a solid common knowledge base, international open-mindedness and the awareness of being confronted with similar problems in modernising public administrations and implementing reforms.

Regional comparative studies and in-country support projects are evaluated very positively this year, as was the case last year, because they compare **good practices** between administrations and suggest how to apply them in concrete terms to the administrations concerned. Special mention should be made of the QM Regional Centre, which many interviewees cite as a key guidance and assistance tool.

## | The added value of ReSPA as support for reform engineering

Through its in-country support projects and comparative studies, ReSPA helps different administrations face challenges in order to implement reforms effectively. This support is not only provided for strategies and policies, such as those provided by the EU, SIGMA and various specialised institutions, but also **support for practical implementation and adaptation** to specific contexts, which is close at hand and easy to access.

## | Comparison with 2021 monitoring

From a quantitative point of view, it is possible to say that the **good level of the scores** obtained last year has been maintained and also improved. From a qualitative point of view, clearer trends have appeared, allowing better future planning.

There is a problem with better understanding the **synchronisation between monitoring and programming** of the activities. Last year, some of the present trends were already clear, and some recommendations were formulated to enhance the 2022 programme. We do not have data to check whether the recommendations were taken into account in the programming process, but we can advance some hypotheses to be further verified.

The following main **recommendations were formulated last year**, regarding which some preliminary remarks can be made:



- ★ **Ensure dissemination of monitoring results at all levels and follow-up.** Monitoring results were presented in the meeting of each thematic group; they were also included in the ReSPA annual report adopted by the ReSPA Governing Board at the ministerial level in November 2021 and are available on ReSPA's website.
- ★ **Increase training and networking on key tools for implementing the PAR** (e.g. on the policy cycle, EU integration, IPA III, RIA and CAF, HRMIS). This seems to have been done at least in part (e.g. the HRMIS study and workshop), but the monitoring reports do not yet have tools to assess the related improvement in programming.
- ★ **Strengthen direct support actions to institutions** (regional studies with recommendations and in-country support projects) and improve their monitoring. All the allocated amounts were spent on in-country projects, and monitoring was improved. However, the recommendation does not seem to have led to significant changes. It is unclear whether measures have been taken to increase and improve the quality of these activities.
- ★ **Improve the monitoring survey**, including the quality of the questionnaires, but also ensure higher and better-distributed response rates between the areas. The quality of the general questionnaire was improved to make qualitative considerations more usable. The response rate increased, although it remains below a reasonably ambitious target of 40–50%. Alternative methods have been discussed and discarded for now, although further evaluation and possible testing are needed.

The **use of the recommendations issued from the monitoring report** is not yet systematic, and their consideration in the programming of the following year should be strengthened.

Generally speaking, the **monitoring methodology** applied so far has confirmed its validity. However, there are still some issues that need to be addressed to improve it and the need to further develop it.

## 4. Recommendations

The following recommendations come from the conclusions established above:

1. Further **improve the methodology** and continue testing new approaches, among other things:
  - a. **Questionnaire No. 1** would still need more clarity in mentioning standard options under each question, particularly regarding the difference between Questions 1.1 and 1.2.
  - b. Further efforts should be made to increase the **response rate to Questionnaire No. 1**, e.g. by strengthening the information campaign and/or asking the respective institutions to recommend that their staff respond.
  - c. **Assessment Tools 2 and 3** should include qualitative descriptions of the issues addressed by the recommendations from regional studies and the in-country support projects, at least as examples. A monitoring mission in those ReSPA members that have benefited from regional studies and/or in-country support could also be envisaged, specifically to strengthen the qualitative monitoring of the interventions.
  - d. In addition to the development suggested for Assessment Tools 2 and 3, the ReSPA working groups could create **a tool to assess the demand for professional skills and competencies** in certain areas in their respective institutions. This could be a lightweight questionnaire (a kind of checklist) on the capacity to deal with and manage certain key functions and tools for the institutions concerned. This would allow, on the one hand, monitoring of the actual trickle-down at the institutional level of the training provided by ReSPA and, on the other hand, better information to be obtained on programming needs.
2. **According to the three assessment tools, seasonal schools for individuals and in-country support projects for institutions are the two types of activities that received the most appreciation.** They should therefore be particularly nurtured (expanded in number and/or strengthened qualitatively).
3. **Networking** at the personal and institutional levels **and exchanging good practices** with administrations in the region and the EU are the learning modes most appreciated by both individuals and institutions. This aspect should be taken into account in the programming phase.





4. **Direct support to institutions** has proven effective in engineering reforms. Should it receive a higher priority in ReSPA programming? In the 2022 monitoring survey, as in the 2021 survey, these activities have garnered high levels of appreciation and allow ReSPA to give its support at the heart of the reform process, thus complementing its capacity-building role. The choice, of course, cannot depend only on the monitoring survey results but must consider the actual policy and programme context.
5. **Specialised regional support.** The success of the QM Regional Centre shows that, especially for those tools and procedures that have to be adopted and applied in their respective contexts by all administrations, the availability of permanent regional support is a strong added value. Help desks, specialised centres and other easily accessible tools for on-the-spot advice, information on good practices and targeted training services would be very useful.
6. **Refer to monitoring when programming.** Most of the above recommendations call for a closer link between monitoring and programming. Monitoring results should be incorporated into the programming process by establishing specific procedures that can be better considered. For instance, they could be regarded as one of the starting points in defining new annual programming procedures; their reference could also be included in the justification/rationale of planned interventions and/or the whole annual programme.
7. **Monitor the consistency of the annual programme.** As part of the annual monitoring, the consistency of the ReSPA programme for year  $T_0$  (the current year) will also need to be checked with the recommendations from the monitoring carried out in year  $T_{-1}$ .

## 5. Summary findings per thematic areas

### I Policy Development and Coordination

Policymaking is critical in directing a country's economic and social development, providing a sense of **direction and predictability** even at a time of continuous upheaval. Good policymaking entails considering, at least, a **medium-term perspective** and providing linkages with **relevant financial plans** as critical enablers of policy implementation. Likewise, the policy must be **evidence-based, realistic** and part of a comprehensive overarching **national agenda**.

All **Western Balkan administrations have now formally established most of the critical centre-of-government functions** necessary for effective policy coordination, communication and the smooth functioning of government decision making. Meanwhile, **major challenges linger concerning European integration** planning, coordination and transposition, indicating key areas that need attention and support in light of the region's shared accession ambition.

Among ReSPA's members, however, a **large proportion of the draft laws** put forward by governments are **not part of the executive's official programme**. This indicates a lack of planning and a specific ad-hoc approach to legislating, which **impedes proper preparation** and **adversely affects relations** between the executive and the legislature. Furthermore, unnecessary and all-too-frequent employment of extraordinary or shortened parliamentary procedures **hampers legislative quality** and **diminishes democratic accountability**. Nonetheless, there is progress being made in this thematic area: SIGMA notes that **Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia**, in particular, have made **strides forward in policy development and coordination**, driven primarily by the introduction of new methodological tools and regulatory enablers.

Member administrations' sectoral strategies **meet the essential criteria** to include baseline analytical data, the definition of policy problems and objectives, and the provision of an indicative financial framework required for its implementation. However, weaknesses remain concerning harmonisation between the policies and the overall

financial plans, with **requisite funds not planned in the relevant budgets**. In addition, activities foreseen in the relevant strategy documents are not always transposed onto the government's annual programmes, creating barriers to proper planning, coordination and implementation.

Looking forward, in addition to improvements in members' capacities in support of **European integration**, and the need for **harmonisation between policy documents and the budget** – as well as the overall government programme – ample room for improvement exists with regards to **strengthening the centres of government and improving their coordination functions**. This would ensure a more consistent implementation of all the essential 'gatekeeping' roles and would achieve stronger policy coordination and coherence.

## Monitoring of workshops, conferences, training and other similar activities

### The results in a nutshell

The overall ReSPA contribution to the institutional and individual improvements of participants to its activities in the thematic area "Policy Development and Coordination" **averages 3.86** (the individual scores range from 3.2 to 4.25), which is quite satisfactory and has reached the level of the expectations of ReSPA stakeholders and management for this thematic area.

A total of 34 respondents to the questionnaire in this thematic area come from 27 different institutions in the ReSPA members. The questionnaire covered 10 actions organised by ReSPA.

It is noted that respondents are assessing ReSPA's contribution to their *individual improvement at an average score of 3.98* while the average score of ReSPA's contribution to *institutional improvement is lower – 3.74*. It can be concluded that respondents praise slightly more highly ReSPA's contribution to their individual improvement rather than the institutional one. This can also be explained by the fact that institutional changes are more complex and need more time to implement.

**Comparing these monitoring results with the previous ones (in 2021), a slight improvement can be seen: from an average score of 3.8 to 3.86.**



### Improvements for individuals

**3.96**

On average, respondents score ReSPA's contribution to their individual improvement in the domain of "Policy Development and Coordination" at **3.96 out of 5**. More specifically:

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

**4.12**

Respondents assessed the contribution of ReSPA related to this criterion **with an average of 4.12 out of 5**, meaning that the contribution is rated mainly as "greatly" valid. The result from the previous annual monitoring exercise was weaker – **3.79**, which shows an **important improvement of the assessment of the induced outputs of ReSPA's activities in this area**.

Most of the survey participants (**52.94%**) stated that ReSPA's activities contributed to their improved cooperation with colleagues and a better working environment within their **institution**. At the same time, **47.06%** of the survey participants stated that ReSPA's activities contributed to **their improved cooperation with colleagues from other institutions in their administration, in the region, or in the EU**.

Only 12% of the responses conclude that these activities contributed *to an adequate extent or not much*. There were no replies with the assessment that ReSPA's activities were without contribution to these enhancements on the individual level.

Regarding the explanations of **how they applied the knowledge and skills gained at ReSPA's activities that they participated in**, 50% of the survey participants stated that ReSPA's activities contributed to their acquisition of know-how in specific planning and policy analysis techniques and methods. Almost 40% stated that ReSPA's activities contributed to their involvement in the preparation/implementation/monitoring of the Strategy and/or a regulatory/legal framework. A lower percentage of participants confirmed their involvement in the promotion/establishment/consolidation of an inter-ministerial (inter-institutional) coordination mechanism and in the preparation/implementation/monitoring/costing of an action plan.

**Question 1.1.2. ReSPA's activities have contributed to facilitate communication and exchange of know-how among colleagues and/or leadership.**

**The majority** of the survey participants stated that (to an adequate extent or more) **ReSPA's activities have contributed to acquired knowledge and enhanced skills for using improved approaches and methods for policy development and coordination of PAR and PFM**, by giving ReSPA's contribution an average score of **3.97** (ranging from 3.75 to 4.25).

Namely, **50%** of the survey participants stated that ReSPA's activities contributed to **their acquisition of know-how in specific planning and policy analysis techniques and methods**. Thirty-eight per cent stated that ReSPA's activities contributed to their involvement in the preparation/implementation/monitoring of the strategy and/or a regulatory/legal framework. In comparison, 32% confirmed their involvement in the promotion/establishment/consolidation of an inter-ministerial (inter-institutional) coordination mechanism. Also, 29% confirmed their involvement in the preparation/implementation/monitoring/costing of an action plan.

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

### Improvements for institutions

**3.72**

On average, respondents assessed ReSPA's contribution to *institutional improvement in the domain of "Policy Development and Cooperation"* at **3.72 out of 5**, less favourably than the responses to questions on individuals' improvements. At the same time, it is **higher than in the previous annual survey**, when the result was 3.42. More specifically:

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

Respondents scored the contribution of ReSPA related to this criterion **at an average of 3.74** (ranging from 3.2 to 4.0). Half of the responses recognised that the coordination and exchange of information within and with other institutions is improved. At the same time, equal percentages (44%) of participants confirmed: that the institution sets plans of work with objectives and targets; and that the best practices are discussed and analysed with a view to their possible application.

Regarding the **institutional modalities and practices of sharing knowledge/lessons learned within the home institution and among partner institutions have been improved**, 41.18% of the survey participants pointed to ReSPA's contribution to the progress in the improvement of the laws and regulations. A total of 26.47% confirmed that new planning/analytical/operational systems and tools were tested/adopted. An equal percentage (20.59%) of survey participants stated that ReSPA's activities contributed to information systems being established/improved and that new functions/offices and capacities for policy development, inter-ministerial and inter-institutional coordination were created/acquired/organised.

It can be concluded that these kinds of changes are slow in public administrations and are hard to achieve in a short period.

**Question 1.2.2. ReSPA's activities have contributed to progress towards the introduction/improvement of procedures/methods/tools within the institution.**

The majority of the survey participants stated that (to an adequate extent or more) ReSPA's activities have contributed to improved institutional achievements of the improved legal framework, adoption of new planning and implementation tools, strengthening of institutional functions in the area of policy development and coordination, by giving ReSPA's contribution an average score of **3.71** (ranging from 2.25 to 4.0). The responses are pretty similar to the reactions to the first statement.

**Regarding the kinds of progress made towards the introduction/improvement of procedures/methods/tools within the institution, the most often response is:** information and discussion about new innovative practices/tools/changes of procedures were promoted (**40% of all responses**). **Relatively often, responses are also:** improved internal coordination within the institution and coordination with other institutions (21%); and enhanced procedures for policy coordination (17%).

### | Monitoring of ReSPA actions through the post-event questionnaire

Based on the results of the *post-event questionnaires* filled out by the participants of events organised in 2021 in the "Policy Development and Coordination" thematic area during 2021. Regarding **individuals' improvement**, the vast majority of participants confirmed that ReSPA activities contributed to a greater exchange of experience and know-how, giving an average score of 4.12 out of 5.

The contribution to **institutional improvement** was rated at 3.74 out of 5. The vast majority of participants confirmed that they will be able to apply the knowledge acquired during ReSPA's activities in practice.

### | ReSPA's contribution to the implementation of PAR in ReSPA members' administrations

**The monitoring exercise wanted to know how the benefits from the ReSPA action(s) mentioned above have contributed to advancing the administration-level PAR implementation in the area of Policy Development and Coordination.** The question was: **Has the institutional improvement in the above responses contributed to advancing the PAR implementation in your administration in the area of Policy Development and Coordination in the period covered by monitoring?** Most of the survey participants (**70.59%**) answered "yes", while only **29.41%** replied "no". The vast majority of respondents consider that ReSPA actions are beneficial for advancing PAR implementation within their respective administrations regarding this thematic area.

**The most often utilised sources for confirmation of responses are: ReSPA research documents; EC administration reports; and SIGMA monitoring reports.**

## II Regulatory Reform and Implementation of Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA)

**Regulatory Impact Assessment and Public Consultations**, the two principal regulatory management tools for participatory, evidence-based policymaking, **have now been formally ushered in and institutionalised by all administrations across the Western Balkans.** These two areas have shown satisfactory progress, mainly in recognition of strengthening the regulatory and methodological frameworks and more consistent implementation of the existing rules. This has generated **significant improvements in monitoring results** by both SIGMA and the European Union, acknowledging the strengthened regulatory and methodological enablers for greater quality and inclusiveness of the decision-making processes.

Nonetheless, the **main recorded improvements stem from a relatively low baseline, indicating that more work** lies ahead. As is the case across other PAR thematic areas, **implementation of formalised arrangements remains inconsistent**, and there are few enforcement mechanisms to ensure that impact assessments and public consultations are carried out. Key regulations and guidance for ensuring the quality of legal drafting are in place in the region. Quality control of legal drafting is established and consistently implemented in almost all administrations.



Furthermore, **legislative amendments are made frequently**, leading to unpredictability. The quality of legislation has improved, which will generate the most significant gains in this area – considering that the laws have largely been harmonised with their EU counterparts. In addition, there is good progress in the region as regards consistent and committed policy implementation, change management and improvements in the organisational culture.

The consistency of conducting **public consultation** has moderately improved in most administrations, while improvement is also experienced in governance arrangements on public consultations. In those instances where consultations are held, the relevant authorities do not always publish consultation reports.

Public consultation portals remain relatively common throughout the region, but their utility and user-friendliness have yet to be improved. Regarding interacting with civil society organisations, WeBER's PAR Monitor notes that most CSOs report that relevant ministries **rarely provide written feedback on their inputs during consultations.**

ReSPA's work in this area remains guided by the member administrations' need for support in **ensuring greater and more consistent application of the relevant regulations and methodologies for RIA and public consultations**, as well as greater capacities of the line ministries and centres of government to improve the quality of policy analysis and ensure early planning and implementation to increase their use and impact in policy design and final decision making.

## Monitoring of workshops, conferences, training and other similar activities

### The results in a nutshell

**4.27** As regards this second cycle of monitoring of ReSPA activities, it can be stated that the overall average<sup>2</sup> score given to ReSPA's support in the thematic area "Regulatory Reform and implementation of RIA" is **4.27 out of 5**, meaning that the support is rated at above "to a good extent" or above "very useful", while the overall ReSPA contribution to the institutional and individuals' improvements of participants to its activities in the thematic area "Regulatory Reform and Implementation of RIA" averages 3.95 out of 5.

Response rate: 44% – 35 respondents from 28 different institutions in ReSPA's members

It is noted that respondents assess ReSPA's contribution to their *individual improvement* at 4.16 out of 5 and ReSPA's contribution to *institutional improvement* at 3.75 out of 5. It can be concluded that **respondents rate ReSPA's contribution to their individual improvement slightly more than its contribution to the institutions' improvement**. This can also be explained by the fact that institutional changes are more complex to effect and need a longer time to implement.

It is noted that participants acknowledge that interaction with ReSPA has helped them to be more profoundly and professionally engaged in the preparation of strategies, RIA reports, IPA programming and SDG implementation, and has enabled them to have a broader network not only within their home administration but also with other administrations in the region. In addition, the participants consider that examples of good practices obtained during ReSPA's activities have been further developed and explored for replication, while it is almost impossible for ReSPA's actions to affect the institutions' plans and objectives. It is essential to highlight that **85.7% of respondents agree that the benefits from ReSPA's activities contribute to advancing the national level PAR implementation** in "Regulatory Reform and Implementation of RIA".

### Improvements for individuals

**4.16** On average, respondents score ReSPA's contribution to their individual improvement in the "Regulatory Reform and Implementation of RIA" domain at **4.16 out of 5**. More specifically:

**Question 3.1.1** ReSPA's activities have contributed to facilitate communication and exchange of know-how among colleagues and/or the leadership.

Respondents assessed the contribution of ReSPA related to this criterion **at an average of 4.26 out of 5**, meaning that the contribution is valid somewhere between "to a good extent" and "greatly". This confirms that ReSPA is a regional platform for networking, facilitation of communication and exchange of know-how among colleagues and/or the leadership in the region.

The majority of respondents highlighted that after and due to ReSPA's actions: they improved cooperation with their counterparts in other institutions within their administration, in the region or in the EU (**88.57%**); they improved their cooperation with colleagues, and a better working environment was enabled within their own institution (**31.43%**). **Only 17.14%** confirmed that, thanks to ReSPA's actions, they had improved their career prospects (promotion, a new, better or higher position) – this can also be attributed to the challenging promotion procedures that are in place in various administrations of ReSPA members.

The results indicate that ReSPA is fulfilling its role as a regional hub for networking and exchanging experiences and

<sup>2</sup> The overall average score comes as a result of the average score obtained by the "general thematic area questionnaire", the average of "the post-event questionnaire" and the average score of the "in-country support questionnaire".

best practices. It directly and indirectly influences the working environment and interaction among civil servants across the region.

According to the individual comments provided by respondents, it can be noted that ReSPA is valued as a platform where they can share new practices in the region with their counterparts in other institutions, which is helpful after the COVID "isolation". Respondents confirmed that they passed on the information and knowledge gained at the workshop to other colleagues, enabling them to apply good practice examples in their work environment. Furthermore, ReSPA has helped them to expand contacts and exchange experiences with counterparts from the region and the EU, as well as to improve regional cooperation in the domain of PAR. Some respondents praised the bridging that ReSPA makes with officials of the EC (mainly DG NEAR), while calling for more activities organised in partnership with EU member states or EU institutions.

**Question 3.1.2** – ReSPA's activities have contributed to acquired knowledge and enhanced skills for using improved tools and methods for regulatory reform and RIA implementation and/or IPA III and/or SDGs.

**4.06** Respondents assessed the contribution of ReSPA related to this criterion **at an average of 4.06 out of 5**, meaning that the contribution is rated between "to a good extent" and "greatly" valid.

The majority of the respondents highlighted that they applied the knowledge and skills gained at ReSPA's activities through their engagement as an RIA trainer/workshop facilitator (68.57%), their enhanced awareness of specificities and best practices in the area of regulatory reform and RIA from EU countries and ReSPA members (31.43%).

It is noted that more efforts need to be undertaken to boost the engagement of civil servants in organising/being engaged in public consultation processes. This response was selected by only **17% of the respondents**.

According to the individual comments provided by respondents, it can be noted that ReSPA's activities helped them to understand better the roles and responsibilities of various actors in evidence-based policymaking and enabled better performance in RIA processes. In addition, they confirmed that ReSPA helped to improve their knowledge as an RIA trainer, especially when understanding examples from comparative practice in this area. Respondents confirmed that they are now more familiar with the connection between public administration reform and SDGs. Many respondents praise ReSPA's involvement in capacity building related to the IPA III instrument, while one of them also confirmed that, thanks to ReSPA, their presentation skills had improved.

### Improvements for institutions

**3.75** On average, respondents rate ReSPA's contribution to institutional improvement in "Regulatory Reform and Implementation of RIA" at **3.75 out of 5**. More specifically:

**3.2.1.** ReSPA's activities have contributed to progress of the institution towards the introduction and/or improvement of working methods/internal and external coordination/internal and external networking and communication

Respondents rated the contribution of ReSPA related to this criterion **at an average of 3.74 out of 5**, meaning that the contribution is rated slightly less than "to a good extent".

The majority of respondents highlighted that ReSPA's actions boosted the progress of the institution towards the introduction and/or improvement of working methods/internal and external coordination/internal and external networking and communication through discussing and analysing best practices with a view to their possible application (**68.57%**); improving the coordination and exchange of information within the institution and with other institutions (**51.43%**). However, ReSPA's actions barely impacted the institutions' plans of work, objectives and targets (**8.5%**).

According to the individual comments provided by respondents, it can be noted that, thanks to ReSPA's actions, one given institution is in the process of changing the regulation of impact assessment, and they are using some of the

information that they obtained in a ReSPA workshop. Furthermore, thanks to ReSPA's actions, administrations have exchanged new practices regarding public consultations, have better understood their roles and responsibilities within their institution and have improved articulation and the passing down of information to partner institutions, as well as within home institutions. In addition, the systematic coordination of NIPAC and other institutions for strategic planning and coordination has been improved. In one specific case, it is noted that ReSPA's actions enabled better communication with non-governmental organisations and civil society.

Respondents note that, due to ReSPA's activities, they learned and searched for examples of best practices and noted down some that they may come into contact with if needed when starting the planning process. In addition, ReSPA's activities helped one given institution draft the RIA Manual.

### 3.2.2 ReSPA's activities have contributed to progress towards institutional achievements in terms of design and implementation of regulatory reform and RIA processes, and/or IPA III and/or SDG implementation

**3.77** Respondents assessed the contribution of ReSPA related to this criterion **at an average of 3.77 out of 5**, meaning that the contribution is rated as valid "to a good extent".

The majority of respondents highlighted that ReSPA activities contributed to this criterion through: assisting the institution to develop specific know-how for RIA or IPA III or SDGs (42.86%); assisting the establishment of specific procedures and responsibilities for RIA or IPA III or SDGs in the institution or a wider institutional framework (28.57%); and assisting the institution to use new tools related to RIA implementation, such as a standardised RIA template, Standard Cost Model template, Cost-Benefit Analysis, Cost-Effective Analysis, etc. (25.71%).

According to the individual comments provided by respondents, it can be noted that, thanks to ReSPA's actions, tools received for practical RIA have been shared within the institution and recommendations made to use them on sequent RIA processes, while IPA recommendations are being applied in the process of programming of IPA III Programmes. The institution of one of the respondents confirmed that his/her institution is planning to organise a Training of Trainers (ToT) on the RIA programme for civil servants. Another institution, thanks to ReSPA's action, is working on the development of the following tools: an impact test on small and medium enterprises, an impact test on gender and application of the SCM model. In one of the ReSPA administrations, a new Decision of RIA is planned and all good practices (acquired during ReSPA's activities) are being applied.

### Monitoring of ReSPA actions through post-event questionnaire

Based on the results of the *post-event questionnaires* filled out by the participants of events organised in 2021 in the "Regulatory Reform and RIA Implementation" thematic area during 2021 regarding **individuals' improvement**, the vast majority of participants confirmed that ReSPA's activities contributed to a greater exchange of experience and know-how, giving an average score of 4.39 out of 5.

**4.37** The contribution to **institutional improvement** was rated at 4.37 out of 5. The vast majority of participants confirmed that they will be able to apply the knowledge acquired during ReSPA's activities in practice.

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

Asked whether they agree that the benefits from ReSPA action(s) have contributed to advancing the national-level PAR implementation in the area of "Regulatory Reform and Implementation of RIA", **85.71% of the respondents replied "yes"**, while 14.29% replied "no". The vast majority of respondents consider that ReSPA's actions are beneficial for advancing PAR implementation within their respective administrations as regards this thematic area.

Respondents provided some comments under this section. Some of them are listed below:

- ★ ReSPA contributed to progress towards institutional achievements in terms of design and implementation of regulatory reform.

## Annual Monitoring of ReSPA's Activities in 2022

- ★ RIA and stakeholder engagement are pushed by ReSPA continuously, and this has enhanced capacities and awareness in this area. Very important for PAR implementation.
- ★ Improving impact assessment is an important recommendation from the EC, and ReSPA is assisting in this regard.
- ★ ReSPA's role is unique and its support for better regulation agenda is crucial for PAR reform in the Western Balkans.
- ★ After the ReSPA training, new ideas for improving coordination within the administration and better planning of IPA funds emerged.
- ★ Increase the administrative capacity of central, regional and local bodies to more effectively safeguard IPA funds, ensuring that the positions in the structures are filled on a permanent basis, retaining key staff while increasing engagement in effective coordination mechanisms for improved project preparation and monitoring, with emphasis on the strengthening the single project pipeline.

### Monitoring of implementation of recommendations from ReSPA studies

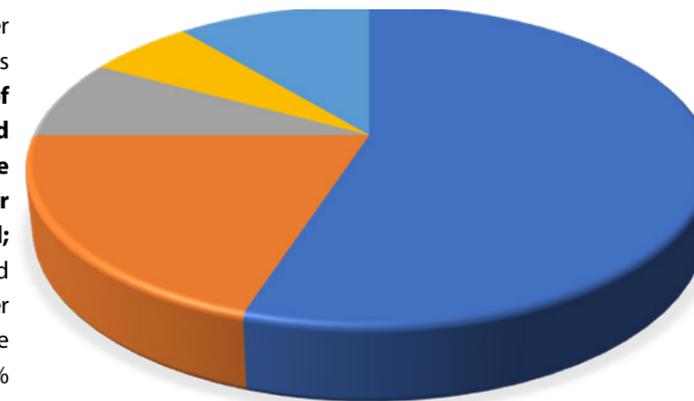
Within the thematic area "Regulatory Reform and Implementation of Regulatory Impact Assessment", ReSPA measured the implementation of recommendations from the following regional study:

- **Better Regulation in Western Balkans.** The study was published in 2018.

The main objective of the study is to provide policy recommendations for Western Balkan administrations and jurisdictions and the region as a whole. The study also provides an update of the ReSPA Baseline Analysis on Better Regulation in the Western Balkans and compares the progress achieved in better regulation and RIA implementation. It reviews the best practices in better regulation and RIA implementation in the Western Balkan countries and identifies potential benefits of policy design diffusion and regional transfer of best practices.

The study offers, in total, **45 recommendations** for national/sub-national administrations.

The recommendations of the "Better Regulation Study" for all ReSPA members were implemented as follows: **55.5% of the recommendations were adopted and implemented; 20% of the recommendations were adopted and under preparation, but not yet implemented; 8.8% of the recommendations were adopted but not implemented and not under preparation for implementation; 6.6% of the recommendations were not adopted; 11.1% of recommendations were not given a score.**



It can be concluded that more than half (55.5%) of the recommendations were adopted and implemented, while 20% were adopted and under preparation, but not yet implemented. This means that **75.5% of the recommendations of the study have been taken into account by the national administrations.** On the other hand, only a limited percentage of the recommendations (15.4%) were not yet implemented and not in the preparation phase.

Generally speaking, the recommendations of the study have a satisfactory level of implementation and/or preparation for implementation. This is clear proof that the administrations in the region are satisfactorily progressing towards improving their performance as regards regulatory reform and implementation of the Better Regulation agenda. The regional average of the scores of implementation of recommendations is 3.37 out of 4 (4 is the maximum score).



### Monitoring of projects supported through the in-country mechanism implemented in 2021

**4.50** ReSPA supported implementation of two in-country support projects during 2021 within the “Regulatory Reform and RIA Implementation” thematic area. The average score for the implementation of the projects was 4.5 out of 5.

1. ReSPA supported the Ministry of Finance and Economy of Albania in strengthening managerial accountability in general government units in Albania and raise awareness on the delegation of managerial tasks

Satisfaction with the action was scored at 4 (very useful) on a scale of 1 to 5 by the institution.

At the individual level – The action targeted 55 public servants from four different institutions in Albania of various levels of governance through training sessions, hands-on support sessions and a Training of Trainers programme.

At the institutional level – Four different institutions in Albania of various levels of governance have strengthened their capacities as regards managerial accountability and improved delegation procedures and reporting lines. As the beneficiary institution said in its praise, the action was a good opportunity for Albania to further develop its internal control system.

2. ReSPA supported the Regulatory Unit in the Albanian Prime Minister’s Office in strengthening its capacities as regards RIA implementation and quality control through the organisation and delivery of a Programme of Training of Trainers for Regulatory Impact Assessment and Impact Assessment Methodology in Albania (RIA ToT Programme).

Satisfaction with the action was scored at 5 (extremely useful) on a scale of 1 to 5 by the institution.

At the individual level – The action targeted five senior public servants from the Regulatory Unit of the Prime Minister’s Office, Albania, in four different institutions in Albania in strengthening their capacities as regards the RIA implementation and quality control through the organisation and delivery of a RIA ToT Programme. It is worth mentioning that all of them are now engaged as trainers for the RIA Network in Albania (based in various line ministries), thus putting into practice the knowledge and skills gained.

At the institutional level – The action transformed the Regulatory Unit of the Prime Minister’s Office, Albania, into a kind of “knowledge hub” for RIA implementation and quality control and a “point of reference” for this topic.

## III Human Resources Management and Development (HRMD)



Professional management and the development of human resources are crucial to the ability of public administrations to attract, develop and retain the talent needed to deliver their governments’ mandate. This consideration is partly reflected in the efforts of the ReSPA members to improve the relevant civil service policy and regulatory frameworks and develop the necessary staff and institutional capacities, as evidenced by a **modest improvement** in this segment recorded by SIGMA.

Nonetheless, **several challenges need to be addressed**. Perceptions of politicisation continue to affect public administrations’ attractiveness as employers in the labour market. In turn, the **shortage of qualified entrants into the civil service directly translates into administrative performance and service delivery matters** across the region. According to SIGMA’s findings, **political patronage is a barrier** to building a more professional civil service. Recruitment, promotion and dismissal of top-tier civil servants is particularly challenging and influenced by considerations other than merit.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, **overall awareness of the importance of human resources management** as a key reform driver is **not universally acknowledged** within the ranks of senior leadership, with more effort needed to improve HR policy planning, people management and accountability.

In addition to improving the relevant policy frameworks, the **implementation of current legislative provisions should be improved**. More leadership support is needed to make the civil services in the Western Balkans an attractive employer, ethical and capable of effectively implementing government policies.

The region continues to be characterised by **instability within the senior civil servant ranks**, with high turnovers recorded following changes in government. Developing and maintaining effective leadership of the civil service, ideally characterised by continuity, competence, stability and accountability, is of high importance. **There is a long way to go to de-politicised and professional senior management of the civil service**.

Efforts should be made to **increase the overall talent pool, safeguard competence from political interference, and strengthen the quality of employees who are already in their jobs**. Current **training and professional development resources should be deemed inadequate**. This is an area where the region’s civil service has relapsed. Finally, in addition to competence and political autonomy, **greater managerial accountability will be needed** to regain the public’s shaken trust in the institutions. ReSPA will continue to support changes with the guidance of member administrations.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Regional-Overview-Western-Balkans-Monitoring-February-2022.pdf>.

## Monitoring of workshops, conferences, training and other similar activities

### The results in a nutshell

3.98

The overall ReSPA contribution to the institutional and individual improvements of participants to its activities in the thematic area "Human Resources Management and Development" **averages 3.98**, which is quite satisfactory and has reached the expectations of ReSPA stakeholders and management for this thematic area.

The yearly questionnaire, related to the Human Resources Management and Development thematic area, was submitted by a total of 17 respondents, from nine different institutions. The questionnaire covered six actions organised by ReSPA.

It is noted that the respondents' score for ReSPA's contribution to their *individual improvement at an average level is 4.06*, and the average score of ReSPA contribution to *institutional improvement is 3.91*. It can be concluded that respondents praise slightly more ReSPA's contribution to their individual improvement rather than that to the institutions' improvement. This can also be explained by the fact that it is more complex to make institutional changes happen and it takes a longer time to implement them.

The overall ReSPA contribution to the institutional and individual improvements of participants to its activities in the thematic area "Human Resources Management and Development" is deemed as quite satisfactory and has reached the expectations of ReSPA stakeholders and management for this thematic area. There is a very small discrepancy between ReSPA's contribution to individuals' improvement and to the institutions' improvement.

The exchange of experience remains essential in the learning process at the institutional as well as at the individual level. Still, it is never considered a value per se because it is always associated with the acquisition of specific knowledge, which translates into practical progress at the institutional level, such as new laws, new procedures and new tools adopted.

Participants learned about practical examples and their application in the improvement of performance appraisal, improvement/upgrading of HRMIS applications, strategic development in the field of HRMD and drafting of laws and bylaws. The fact that people work better together after ReSPA's activities is a consequence of their exchanges with counterparts and institutions in different environments. Participants continue to seek personal/cultural exchanges and the acquisition of new know-how.

### Improvements for individuals

4.06

On average, respondents score ReSPA's contribution to their individual improvement in the domain of "Human Resources Management and Development" at **4.06 out of 5**. More specifically:

**Question 4.1.1. ReSPA's activities have contributed to facilitate communication and exchange of know-how among colleagues and/or leadership**

Respondents rated the contribution of ReSPA related to this criterion **at an average of 4.00 out of 5**, meaning that the contribution is rated mainly as "greatly" valid. The result of the previous annual monitoring exercise was slightly higher, at 4.13.

The majority of respondents highlighted that ReSPA's actions contributed to improved cooperation with their counterparts from other institutions in their respective administrations, in the region or the EU (70.59%) – in 2020, this score was (50%) – and improved cooperation with colleagues and better working environment within their own institution (70.59%). The results also indicate that ReSPA has contributed to better dialogue with superiors/subordinates

within their institutions (29.41%), improved career prospects (promotion, a new, better or higher position) (5.88%) while 11.76% of the respondents selected other changes at the individual level.

According to individual comments from the respondents, cooperation with colleagues was improved in learning about new trends and methods in the area of HRM and also learning about performance appraisals according to EU best practices. By trying to apply the knowledge obtained at ReSPA's events, cooperation was improved, as was the exchange of practices and experiences within organisational units at one ministry. Participation at ReSPA's events and exchanges of experience also contributed to finding new solutions.

**Question 4.1.2. ReSPA's activities have contributed to acquired knowledge and enhanced skills for using improved approaches and methods**

4.12

Respondents scored the contribution of ReSPA related to this criterion **at an average of 4.12 out of 5**, meaning that the contribution is rated mainly as more than "to a good extent" valid. The score from the previous annual monitoring exercise was 4.13.

The majority of the respondents highlighted that ReSPA's actions contributed to: their awareness of methods and best practices in merit-based recruitment, performance appraisal and HRMIS (70.59%); their contribution to promoting/disseminating such methods at the institutional level (47.06%); their involvement in merit-based recruitment, performance appraisal, HRMIS and their engagement in national/local working groups or bodies on various HRMD-related issues (41.18%). None of the survey participants reported other changes at the individual level.

According to individual comments from the respondents, participants learned about practical examples of solutions to the problems they face (e.g. how to address inflation of high-performance appraisal grades) and how to improve and upgrade the HRMIS application. They also learned about best practices in the EU. One of the respondents not only improved his/her knowledge but was also prompted to think about further strategic development directions in the field of HRM. One is applying the obtained knowledge in drafting laws and bylaws.

### Improvements for institutions

3.91

On average, respondents assessed ReSPA's contribution to *institutional improvement in the domain of HRMD at 3.91 out of 5*, which is less favourable than the responses to questions on individual improvements. The score in the **previous annual survey** was 3.99. More specifically:

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

4.06

Respondents rated the contribution of ReSPA related to this criterion **at an average of 4.06 out of 5**, meaning that the contribution is rated mainly as more than "to a good extent" valid. The result of the previous annual monitoring exercise was 4.1.

The majority of respondents highlighted that improvement was made through: best practices being discussed and analysed with a view to their possible application (64.71%); coordination and exchange of information within the institution and with other institutions (41.18%); adoption/implementation of specific recommendations/suggestions from ReSPA studies/in-country support/other activities (35.29%); 23.53% of the participants confirmed that experts' advice during ReSPA's activities had been further explored and developed in the view of implementation in the institution, while 5.88% noticed other changes at the institutional level.

According to the individual comments, in one administration, a working version of the amendments to the Civil Service Law has been made, which contains certain improvements following the recommendations of several projects and international initiatives (ReSPA, SIGMA), as well as the legal basis for managing the missing parts of the HRMIS. The benefits of projects implemented through ReSPA's in-country support mechanisms were also underlined in the comments. One of the respondents claims that the findings of the "Comparative analysis of good practises on the implementation of the modern selection process, e-recruitment", which was conducted in Serbia, were significantly

considered. It helped them introduce the possibility of using electronic means of communication during the selection procedure, as well as conducting certain phases of the selection procedure electronically at a distance in the presence of members of the selection commission through electronic means of communication.

**Question 4.2.2. ReSPA's activities contributed to progress towards the introduction/improvement of procedures/methods/tools within the institution**

**3.76** Respondents rated the contribution of ReSPA related to this criterion **at an average of 3.76 out of 5**, meaning that the contribution is rated mainly as close to "to a good extent" valid. The result of the previous annual monitoring exercise was slightly higher (**3.88**).

The majority of respondents highlighted that, due to ReSPA's actions, the progress made towards the introduction/improvement of procedures/methods/tools within the institution can be seen in their institutions in: improving guidelines and procedures for merit-based recruitment and/or performance appraisal (58.82%); establishment/consolidation of HRMIS (35.29%); engagement in national/local working groups on merit-based recruitment and/or performance appraisal, and/or HRMIS (35.29%).

The least contribution was seen in strengthening the monitoring of institutional practices for merit-based recruitment and/or performance appraisal and/or HRMIS (11.76%) and other changes related to thematic functions and skills at the institutional level (11.76%).

According to individual comments, based on the experience of Serbia, the reduction of the number of grades for performance appraisal to three was proposed to the Ministry of Public Administration in BiH – Republika Srpska and endorsement of this change is expected. ReSPA's activities, according to one of the participants, contributed to the preparation of new internal documents and the development of working procedures. One of the participants stated that the Manual for Competency Framework and Guidelines was used in conducting everyday duties. Another respondent stated that ReSPA's analysis on e-recruitment was considered in Serbia. To further improve the implementation of the competition procedure, the Regulation on Amendments to the Regulation on Internal and Public Competition for filling vacancies in state bodies was adopted. The amendments introduced the possibility of using electronic means of communication in the work of the selection commission during the selection procedure. Certain phases of the selection procedure are conducted remotely, with the selection committee members being present via electronic communication (Serbia).

### Monitoring of ReSPA actions through a post-event questionnaire

ReSPA also analysed the results of the post-event questionnaires filled out by the participants of events organised in 2021. The post-event evaluation was conducted for all six events organised in 2021. Regarding **individual improvement**, all participants stated that (to an adequate extent or more) ReSPA's activities contributed to a greater exchange of experience and know-how, giving an average score of 4.48 out of 5.

**4.31** The contribution to **institutional improvement** was rated slightly lower – 4.31 out of 5. The participants stated that (to an adequate extent or more) they will be able to apply the knowledge acquired during ReSPA's activities in practice.

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

Asked whether they agree that the benefits from ReSPA's action(s) have contributed to forwarding the country-level PAR implementation in the area of "Human Resources Management and Development", **82.35% of the respondents replied "yes"**. In comparison, **17.65%** replied "no". The vast majority of respondents consider that ReSPA's actions are beneficial for advancing PAR implementation within their respective administrations as regards this thematic area.

As a source of information, several ReSPA studies were specified (*Merit-Based Employment in the Western Balkans: 2015–*

2018; Study about HRMIS and Merit-Based Recruitment in ReSPA Members 2015, 2019, 2020; Performance Appraisal 2021; Performance Appraisal Guidelines), as well as the analytical paper produced with the support of ReSPA's in-country mechanism – *Towards Strategic Human Resource Management in Serbian Public Administration, ReSPA paper on the Role of HR Units in Strategic Management, 2021*.

### Monitoring of implementation of recommendations from ReSPA studies

Within the HRMD thematic area, the implementation of recommendations from two studies was monitored:

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

**Merit Recruitment in the Western Balkans: An Evaluation of Change between 2015 and 2018** – The study identifies the obstacles to implementing HRMD policies and proposes strategies for improving the implementation quality. The study focuses on recruitment and selection as crucial areas for analysing the quality of implementing HRM policies in the Western Balkans. The study also provides recommendations for improvement of the implementation of merit-based recruitment. Comparing the results of the implementation of recommendations in 2022 with the results from 2021 shows no change in the implementation. Certain recommendations have not been implemented, which require more time or more political will.

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia participated in the second monitoring exercise and sent their evaluations, while no input was received from North Macedonia. There were, in total, **57 recommendations** proposed for administrations (Albania – 7, BiH institutions – 8, BiH Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina – 10, BiH Republika Srpska – 9, Montenegro – 9, and Serbia – 14).

**3.05** The implementation of recommendations was rated at an average of **3.05** on a scale from 1 to 4, equivalent to 3.81 on a scale from 1 to 5.

The recommendations for all ReSPA members were implemented as follows: 40.35% of the recommendations of ReSPA administrations which participated in this monitoring exercise were adopted and implemented; 38.59% of the recommendations were adopted and under preparation but not yet implemented; 7.01% of the recommendations were adopted but not implemented and not under preparation for implementation, and 14.03% of the recommendations were not adopted.

**Albania** – One of the implemented recommendations regards more effective monitoring of personal interviews through possible audio recording with the prior permission of the candidate. This measure increases the transparency and impartiality of the examination procedure and reduces the scope of favouritism and politicisation at the interview stage.

**BiH institutions** – One of the implemented recommendations is related to the delegation of the authority for making the final selection decision from the minister to the most senior civil servant of an institution to reduce the scope for political interference with recruitment and selection. The final decision made by the Civil Service Agency of BiH does not cover the level of senior civil servants.

**BiH – Federation of BiH** – One of the implemented recommendations is that the FBiH engage in further evidence-based analysis to restart the preparation of civil service reform concepts, including the revision of the recruitment procedures and draft legislation followed by the adoption of new civil service laws or amendments. The CSAFBiH developed a Policy Paper on the civil service system for its further development and developed a Comparative Study on cantonal laws.

**BiH – Republika Srpska** – The recommendation that builds on the positive experience from BiH and is related to training the selection commission members and strengthening their expertise and professionalism was implemented.

**Montenegro** – One of the implemented recommendations is that Montenegro fully establish an electronic testing system of candidates as an integral part of the entire selection procedure.

**Serbia** – In line with one of the recommendations, Serbia revised the internal rulebooks on the systematisation of positions to formalise the introduction of competencies into job descriptions following the revised civil service law and other regulations.

**Individual Performance Appraisal of Employees in Central Public Administration in Western Balkans study** – This study encompasses: the state of the art in performance appraisal in the Western Balkan countries with a special focus on improvement of the implementation of performance appraisals, comparison between the countries of the region, and examples of existing good practice in the EU and worldwide. The study also provides recommendations for improvement of the implementation of performance appraisals in the Western Balkans.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia participated in the monitoring of recommendations in the second monitoring exercise. They sent their evaluation results, while no inputs were received from Albania or North Macedonia. There were, in total, 28 recommendations proposed for implementation to ReSPA members (BiH administration – 5, BiH Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina – 5, BiH Republika Srpska – 5, Montenegro – 9 and Serbia – 4). The implementation of recommendations was rated at an average of 2.89 on a scale from 1 to 4 (equivalent to 3.61 on a scale of 1 to 5).

The recommendations of the study for all ReSPA members were implemented as follows: 17.85% of the recommendations of the ReSPA administrations which participated in this monitoring exercise were adopted and implemented; 46.42% of the recommendations were adopted and under preparation but not yet implemented; 21.42% of the recommendations were adopted but not implemented and not under preparation for implementation; and 14.28% of the recommendations were not adopted.

**Federation of BiH** – One of the implemented recommendations is related to the introduction of regular Individual Staff Performance Appraisal training for managers, organised with ReSPA's support.

**Republika Srpska** – The recommendation that has been implemented is ensuring the utilisation of aggregate performance appraisal data. All institutions send performance appraisal data to the CSARS. The CSA creates and aggregates the reports on performance appraisal adopted by the government.

**Montenegro** – As per two of the implemented recommendations, a larger range of rating categories was introduced, and the contents and management of existing training related to performance appraisal were improved.

## Monitoring of projects supported through the in-country mechanism implemented in 2021

ReSPA supported the implementation of five projects within the HRMD thematic area. The average score for the implementation of the projects was 4.2 out of 5. Three analyses were prepared as a basis for improving e-recruitment, online exams and the role of HR units in strategic management (Serbia). Albania requested support in improving the recruitment process and strengthening the interview phase, promoting the HRMIS and increasing its usage, especially at the local level.

**1. ReSPA supported the Department of Public Administration of Albania in improving the recruitment process in the Albanian Civil Service with a special focus on the interview phase.**

The DoPA obtained a guide to conduct interviews with questions and training for enhancing the interviewing process for all members of the evaluation commissions.

Satisfaction with the action was rated at **4 (very useful)** on a scale of 1 to 5<sup>4</sup> by the institution.

4 1 – not useful at all, 2 – not very useful, 3 – useful, 4 – very useful, 5 – extremely useful.



**Individual level** – The project participants – **78 persons (10 male and 68 female)**: 19 DoPA employees and 59 selection commission members (employees from line ministries and experts) – gained new knowledge on interviewing based on key competencies and behaviour. Nineteen DoPA staff were also trained in increasing resilience and preventing stress in the workplace.

**Institutional level** – In the future it should be monitored whether this action changed the perspective and improved the interview process by focusing on and targeting the soft skills of potential candidates.

**2. ReSPA supported the Department of Public Administration of Albania (DoPA) in increasing the usage and awareness of the importance and benefits of HR Information Systems in the Albanian Public Administration, with a special focus on the local level.**

Satisfaction with the action was rated at **4 (very useful)** on a scale of 1 to 5 by the institution.

The action resulted in the preparation of five video tutorials with step-by-step instructions on: How to use the platform “administrat.al”; and HRMIS – How to use three modules of administrat.al.

**At the individual level** – In the future it should be monitored whether this action increased awareness of the benefits of the portal among civil servants and the public.

**At the institutional level** – It should be monitored whether usage of the platform by the civil servants has increased and whether **the HR procedures have been better conducted and managed.**

**3. The Ministry of Public Administration and Local-Self Government of Serbia was supported in a comparative analysis of good practices (EU and Western Balkans) on the role of HR units in strategic management within the state administration.**

Satisfaction with the action was rated at **4 (very useful)** on a scale of 1 to 5.

This project contributed to the Action Plan of the Strategy of Public Administration Reform 2021–2030 which stresses the importance of transforming traditional HR units into modern ones. **The activities defined in the comparative analysis were elaborated in detail with priority assigned under “importance” in the Action Plan for implementing the PAR Strategy.**

At the individual level – In the future it should be monitored whether the job-family models for the transformation of HR units provided in the analysis contributed to a better understanding of the job-family model. At the institutional level – It should be monitored whether this analysis contributed to an improvement of the **normative framework** related to strengthening the capacity of HR units.

**4. The Human Resources Management Service (HRMS) was supported by ReSPA in creating a comparative analysis of good practices (EU and Western Balkans) on the implementation of the modern selection process of HRM, e-recruitment.**

Satisfaction with the action was rated at **4 (very useful)** on a scale of 1 to 5.

A comparative analysis of good practices has been produced with recommendations for improvement.

At the individual level – It should be monitored whether the analysis contributed to raising awareness of the potential obstacles faced during e-recruitment and the possible ways to overcome them.

At the institutional level – It should be monitored in the future whether the most sensitive e-recruitment issues elaborated in the analysis (privacy concerns and verification of the identity of candidates, data storage and security, keeping the procedure's integrity and other issues) were taken into consideration for upgrading the recruitment practice.

**5. ReSPA supported the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government (MPALSG) of the Republic of Serbia in preparing the feasibility study on online exams.**

Satisfaction with the action was rated at **5 (extremely useful)** on a scale of 1 to 5.

The feasibility study on conducting professional exams at a distance determines the technical, material and other resources needed to conduct online exams and proposes possible models that could be applicable.

At the individual level – The study contributed to learning how professional exams were organised in the countries of the EU and learning about modern trends (tools and instruments) in conducting exams or other forms of knowledge testing (testing and assessment process) online.

At the institutional level – The study provided a software solution for conducting professional exams online. In the future, it should be monitored whether the software served as a prototype that would be further applied to all other professional exams.

## IV Quality Management (QM)



Service delivery rests at the heart of public administration reform, with citizens ultimately benefitting from an effective and efficient system that, above all, prioritises access to and the quality of public services. Encouragingly, the public's **perception of public administration performance across much of the region indicates improvement in the quality of service delivery**, with both SIGMA and WeBER noting the region's citizens' growing satisfaction with the work of their civil servants.

**Quality management systems have traditionally proved to be invaluable in this regard**, helping both pursue and maintain higher standards of administrative performance and are rightly seen as a critical precursor of sustainable public administration reforms. There is growing awareness of the utility of standardised tools and models (CAF, ISO) for practitioners and policymakers alike, with an **encouraging uptake of quality management systems evident across the region**, particularly the CAF (Common Assessment Framework). Empirical evidence of direct linkages between standardised service delivery models and client satisfaction has contributed further to raising interest in this area. As a result, **ReSPA's members are being increasingly vocal in their requests for assistance in developing national quality management plans and roadmaps, with demands for further introduction of the CAF, as well as training and follow-up technical support.**

At the institutional level, **management buy-in and support for quality management** are once more proving to be the decisive factor in introducing and maintaining the requisite level of performance.

**Quality management remains embedded in the PAR strategies** of four out of six ReSPA members – Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and, more recently, Serbia and Montenegro have recognised QM as a strategic reform avenue. Meanwhile, Albania and Kosovo\*,<sup>5</sup> while lacking in formal strategic commitment, are showing steady operational improvement. Predictably, the countries most advanced in CAF and ISO implementation – in terms of the number of institutions using the CAF, materials developed, and capacity development measures implemented – are North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which are also the two with the longest track record in this area.

ReSPA's members and Kosovo\* are increasingly recognising the need to invest further in developing sustainable quality management systems, with ReSPA called on to provide support in implementing system requirements on the ground in the partner public administrations.

Considering ReSPA's position and the authorisation given by the provisions from the Memorandum of Establishing and Operation of the Regional Quality Management centre (RQMC), ReSPA will, through the RQMC, continue the further building of the quantum of knowledge in the Western Balkans public administrations for using QM and in particular the CAF. ReSPA's plans include the provision and implementation of CAF implementation projects, CAF external evaluation (PEF procedure), awareness-raising activities, support to CAF correspondents and other actions, which would, as a whole, lead to increased application of QM and to enhancing the quality of service delivery across public administrations in the Western Balkans.

**ReSPA's high-level policy dialogues and regional events** also represent an excellent platform to raise awareness, further communicating the benefits of quality management to the overall PAR agenda in the region to a decision-making audience that can provide the necessary process ownership and give it the impetus needed.

<sup>5</sup> This designation is used without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Advisory Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

## Monitoring of workshops, conferences, training and other similar activities

### The results in a nutshell

The yearly questionnaire related to the area of Quality Management was submitted by a total of eight respondents, from eight institutions. The questionnaire covered four actions organised and completed<sup>6</sup> by ReSPA.

The overall ReSPA contribution to the institutional and individual improvements of participants to its activities in the thematic area "Quality Management" averages at **4.1 out of 5**, which is a slight increase compared to 3.75 in 2021. This means that participants consider that the overall ReSPA contribution to institutional and individual improvements is rated as valid somewhere between "to a good extent" and "greatly". It can be concluded that this contribution is quite satisfactory and has reached the expectations of ReSPA stakeholders and management for this thematic area.

**4.10** The score of the responses related to ReSPA's contribution to their individual improvement is **4.1, compared to 3.9 in 2021**, while the score of the responses related to ReSPA's contribution to institutional improvement, **4.1**, marks an increase of 8%, since **this was 3.7 in 2021**.

The factors that contributed to an increase of both averages in 2022 cannot be analysed with certainty due to the small number of responses. The overall increase still can be, to a certain extent, associated with the establishment and operations of the Regional QM Centre in ReSPA, as some responses indicate this.

It can be noted that the participants acknowledged with the highest scores that participating in ReSPA's activities contributed to **improved cooperation with their counterparts from other institutions within their own administration, in the region or in the EU**, as well as contributing to their involvement in defining the activities related to QM measures in PAR and in improving methods of work using QM tools, including CAF implementation.

Regarding the contribution of benefits from ReSPA's actions to advancing the country-level PAR implementation in the area of "Quality Management", 87.50% of the respondents replied "yes", which is 8% less than in 2021, while 12.50% of respondents provided a negative answer, compared to 6% of respondents who replied "no" in 2021.

### Improvements for individuals

**4.10** On average, respondents rate ReSPA's contribution to their individual improvement in the domain of "Quality Management" at **4.1 out of 5**.

More specifically:

**Question 5.1.1. ReSPA's activities have contributed to facilitate communication and exchange of know-how among colleagues and/or leadership.**

**4.00** Respondents rated the contribution of ReSPA related to this criterion at an average of **4.0** out of 5, meaning that the contribution is rated mainly as "greatly" valid. The score from the 2021 annual monitoring exercise was 3.8, which shows a slight improvement.

The majority of survey participants (62.50%) stated that ReSPA's activities contributed to improved cooperation with counterparts from other institutions in their own administration, in the region or in the EU, while 50% of the survey participants stated that ReSPA's activities contributed to their improved cooperation with colleagues and a better working environment within their own institution.

<sup>6</sup> Two actions started in 2021 and were completed in 2022: CAF Project in Agency for Gender Equality (BiH) and CAF Project in the Ministry of Information Society and Administration (North Macedonia). The CAF projects are considered as one action although they include three separate training sessions.

This proves the importance of networking at the regional level and building regional operational networks within RQMC (CAF Networks and Network of CAF External Feedback Actors – EFACs).

Twenty-five per cent of the survey participants noticed that ReSPA's activities contributed to better dialogue with "my superiors/subordinates within my own institution" and only 12.50% of the responses confirmed the consequence of their improved career prospects (promotion, a new, better or higher position).

Participants provided examples:

- ★ *Those were great networking events, with participants well selected, so I got to know many counterparts from the region working on the same issues and facing the same challenges in QM.*
- ★ *We created our team for QM in our organisation, and I as coordinator presented the lessons learned to my colleagues.*
- ★ *Improving work and faster communication.*

**Question 5.1.2. ReSPA's activities have contributed to acquired knowledge and enhanced skills for improved approaches and methods in the area of Quality Management (including QM instruments CAF, EFQM, ISO 9001)**

**4.25** The average score for this question is **4.25** which is an increase **compared to 3.8**, the average in 2021. A large majority (75%) of the respondents stated that ReSPA's activities contributed to their involvement in defining the activities related to measures in the PAR Action Plan regarding Quality Management, and (50%) to an increase in their engagement in the national WG or bodies related to QM. Introducing the innovative approaches for improving the QM and the use of the CAF was stated by 37.5% of the respondents. Compared to 2021 there is a noticeable increase in the importance of involvement in defining the measures for the QM section of the PAR Action Plan.

Participants provided examples:

- ★ *I am going to be a member of the QM Supervision Team in BiH which is currently being selected and endorsed.*
- ★ *Better presentation and the CAF opportunities it provides.*
- ★ *The CSAFBiH initiated "Information to the Government of the Federation" which was adopted in June 2022, with the conclusion having the CSAFBiH as a pivotal institution for the promotion of quality management tools*
- ★ *I gained the skills for better presenting QM and CAF to other organisations.*
- ★ *Since QM is now organised/facilitated/monitored at the regional level, it has gained importance, and it is easier for me to get support from the director to organise QM activities in my civil service.*

**It can be concluded that the contribution of ReSPA activities to individual improvement has been significant not only in helping the participants acquire new knowledge and skills but also in boosting their confidence for engaging in the works related to QM in the national strategies.**

### Improvements for institutions

The respondents rated ReSPA's contribution to institutional improvement in the domain of QM with an average score of **4.0**, which is slightly less favourable than the score given for individual improvements. The score is noticeably higher than in 2021 when it was **3.6**. More specifically:

**5.2.1. ReSPA's activities have contributed to progress of the institution towards the introduction and/or improvement of working methods/internal and external coordination/internal and external networking and communication**

4.25

Respondents rated the contribution of ReSPA related to this criterion at an average of **4.25**, which is an increase compared to **3.7** from the 2021 monitoring exercise. This is the biggest increase in the responses in the QM thematic area. It was noted by the respondents that the existence of RQMC brought about an improved position of QM and that the involvement in RQMC thematic networks has been important and is valued by both participants and stakeholders (external networking and communication).

There are no major differences in the choice of the offered options for the question in the subject comparing to the previous monitoring exercise. As the biggest improvement caused by ReSPA's activities in institutional progress, respondents stated that best practices were discussed and analysed with a view to their possible application (50%). The levels of the responses related to: (i) the improved coordination and exchange of information within the institution and with other institutions; and (ii) specific recommendations from studies and in-country support being applied, were both 37.5%, as significant improvements at the institutional level.

Participants provided responses that underpin the above statement of the relatively biggest improvements made at the institutional level due to regional networking and enhanced communication:

- *As an organisation we learned a lot from other, similar organisations in the region, thanks to ReSPA.*
- *Achieving direct communication with counterparts from other institutions.*
- *Exchanging information on the effectiveness of CAFs in institutions.*
- *Having the RQMC at the regional level (and EFACs being introduced) has brought a new dimension to QM implementation. It is not seen as just another project-driven activity, but as a systematic, sustainable and long-term approach to QM implementation in my country and the region. ReSPA's support to EFACs is seen as the only possible way to get external feedback (no one is thinking about EIPA any more).*
- *The CSARS has now been recognised by the government as a provider of services for the level of local self-government. Membership of ReSPA's thematic groups (QM WG, RQMS, EFACs, etc.) is strongly valued and frequently emphasised by all stakeholders.*

#### 5.2.2. ReSPA's activities have contributed to progress in terms of improved legal framework, adoption of new planning and implementation tools, strengthening of institutional functions

3.88

Respondents rated the contribution of ReSPA related to this criterion at an average of **3.88**, compared to **3.5** from the 2021 monitoring exercise. Compared to other criteria, this contribution is the lowest-rated within the thematic area of Quality Management, as was the case also in 2021.

The majority of respondents reported that the progress made due to ReSPA's actions in the legal framework and the adoption of new planning and implementation tools was evident in the following improvements: 75% of the responses indicated that improved methods of work introduced by using QM tools including CAF implementation were the biggest improvement. This can be explained by the nature of actions from ReSPA related to the promotion and training of QM models (CAF). The CAF can be seen as the "implementation tool" used for enhancing the different aspects of institutional performance; 25% of the responses mentioned preparation/implementation/monitoring of Strategy/Action Plan documents on Quality Management and the use of the CAF

Participants provided examples:

- ★ *We implemented the CAF, and we supported other organisations in implementing this tool.*
- ★ *Besides the CAF Facilitator role, my institution is now a centre for the CAF External Feedback procedure and, generally, the CAF Resource centre for the BiH – Republika Srpska.*
- ★ *Noticing weaknesses in work processes.*
- ★ *The CSAFBiH initiated Information to the Government of the Federation which was adopted in June 2022, with the conclusion having the CSAFBiH as a pivotal institution for the promotion of quality management tools*

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

The monitoring exercise aimed to find out whether and how ReSPA's actions have contributed to advancing the implementation of PAR at the level of respective WB administrations in the area of Quality Management. The vast majority (87.50%) of all the respondents confirmed this contribution, while only 12.5% replied "no". The vast majority of respondents consider that ReSPA's actions are beneficial for advancing PAR implementation within their respective administrations regarding this thematic area.

As the source of information, respondents mentioned: the 2021 SIGMA report (50%); EC Reports on the specific administration (25%); and ReSPA's research document (25%).

Individual affirmative answers indicated general and specific statements regarding this question, such as:

- ★ *For the first time, we recognised the CAF and quality management through the PAR strategy, and we planned significant activities related to delivery of services.*
- ★ *Lessons learned via ReSPA helped us to promote and spread a story about the CAF and other QM tools.*
- ★ *The CAF was implemented in several institutions. The CAF and QM are embedded in the PAR Strategy.*
- ★ *The Ministry of Information Society and Administration in the field of Quality Management has had many benefits from the events organised by ReSPA both in support of current and future projects in this area and sharing ideas and experiences that contribute to the progress of quality management in the country.*
- ★ *Advocating for the need for reform in all aspects of public administration.*
- ★ *Yes – Measure 4.1.1.1f of the Action Plan of the Public Administration Reform.*
- ★ *Awareness and interest in the need to implement the CAF have increased.*

A negative answer stated that:

- ★ *Although we are still waiting for PAR Supervision Teams (and the QM Supervision Team) to start working in BiH, we are already working on some recommendations from the PAR Strategic Framework in the area of QM, such as: consistent introduction of the quality management system at all levels of administration, quality management systems being gradually introduced, first into pilot institutions, and then into all others, etc. Lately, in the circle of people in charge of QM in BiH, ReSPA has been recognised as the most important institution at the international level for these issues.*

### Monitoring of ReSPA actions through a post-event questionnaire

ReSPA also analysed the results of the post-event questionnaires filled out by the participants of events organised in 2021. Post-event evaluation was conducted for only one of the four events organised in 2021. All participants of the ReSPA event within Thematic Area 5 stated that (to an adequate extent or more) ReSPA's activities had contributed to a greater exchange of experience and know-how, giving ReSPA's contribution an average score of 4.43.

The contribution to institutional improvement was rated at a lower level of 4.14. The participants stated that (to an adequate extent or more) they will be able to apply the knowledge acquired during ReSPA's activities in practice.

It can be noted that the difference between the post-event scores and the scores from the yearly questionnaire is minor, namely 4.43 vs. 4.1 at the individual level and 4.14 vs 4.00 at the institutional level, respectively.

## Monitoring of projects supported through the in-country mechanism implemented in 2021

ReSPA supported the implementation of one in-country support project during 2021 within the “Quality Management” thematic area.

1. ReSPA supported the Civil Service agency of the RS, BiH (CSARS, BiH) to finalise the CAF implementation in the Ministry of Administration and Local Self-Governance of the RS, BiH

**5.00** The average score for the implementation of the projects is 5 out of 5.

Satisfaction with the action was rated by the beneficiary at 5 (extremely useful) on a scale of 1 to 5 by the institution. Satisfaction with the provided expert assistance was rated at 5 (extremely useful). As the beneficiary institution said in its praise, the expertise of the EU expert was crucial for the beneficiary to implement the CAF workshop effectively and according to the EU standards.

The scope of the assistance – The CSARS, BiH is appointed by the Government of the RS to spread the CAF in the governmental structures of the RS. For introducing the CAF into the ministry, the CSARS, BiH lacked the capacity to implement the most demanding CAF Consensus workshop and CAF Improvement Action Plan workshop. The action was related to technical assistance from the EU Expert in the CAF for coaching and mentoring the CSARS BiH team to implement the CAF Consensus workshop and to prepare the CAF Improvement Action Plan workshop.

At the individual level – The number of civil servants included in the action was 10 (five male and five female), while direct support from the expert was provided to two members of the CAF Team in CSARS BiH.

At the institutional level – Two different institutions in the RS, BiH strengthened their capacities as regards the implementation of quality management, specifically the CAF.

## V E-government (E Gov)



With e-government receiving more prominent focus during and after COVID-19, much of the effort invested is directed at building **critical uptake skills and laying the foundations for greater adoption of e-government protocols through blueprint documents and policies.**

Early results suggest both a **growing commitment** to digital transformation by the region’s governments, as well as **increased awareness** of the new services on offer by the general public, with Albania and Serbia the clear leaders in the field. As of May 2022, **Albania had moved 95% of its services online** while **Serbia is now ranked among the top tier of countries based on their level of digital development**, according to the global UN E-Government Development Index. The EU’s eGovernment Benchmark publication for 2022 also notes improvements in digital service delivery across the region. Looking at the year-on-year progress across the four dimensions evaluated, **all WB administrations have performed better in user-centricity**, while **Serbia tops the regional rankings for transparency**, albeit still below the EU27 average. Encouragingly, and looking at key enablers, **Serbia and Albania are performing close to the EU average in this area.** Interestingly, the **lowest scores for all the countries are recorded in the cross-border dimension.**

The **rate of digital transformation across the region remains uneven** with some members’ public administrations lagging behind. Driven by both a clear policy framework as well as strong political will, **Serbia and Albania are rapidly moving forward with service digitalisation**, translated into immediate benefits for their citizens. Albania is offering some **1,207 services through the e-Albania portal, of which 377 are services that are both initiated and completed online.** Businesses there have also seen a sharp uptake in digital services with the **number of corporations either incorporated or paying taxes online rising steadily year-on-year.** In Serbia, the government has created coordinating structures for digital and simplification strategies. The **adoption of e-payment stands as a major success** in this area with the application of payment for personal income tax now online. The past period has also seen the **list of datasets connected to the Government Service Bus expanded**, to include the Population Register as a key precursor to the interoperability of services. **E-signature is now operational, but its uptake is not yet optimal**, limiting the wider use of digital services.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, meanwhile, has **no dedicated structure or unit dealing with service digitalisation at any of the government levels**, although the Republika Srpska has now developed a digital service delivery strategy. The only areas where digitalisation is slowly picking up are **taxation and customs, albeit with limited interoperability.** Although the electronic signature has been available for businesses dealing with tax authorities at the state and entity levels since 2017, its application has not been expanded to other sectors.

Montenegro has overseen an **improvement in the enablers for public service delivery owing to developments in the interoperability infrastructure** and the affordability of e-signature. Overall, however, **progress in the digitalisation of public services remains modest**, particularly for services offered to private individuals, while service

provision, in general, remains bureaucratic and not user-friendly. Cyber attacks against the public administration infrastructure represent an additional challenge.

North Macedonia has seen **progress in citizen-oriented service delivery**, although the potential provided by digital enablers remains underutilised and could be leveraged to benefit citizens more. The **number of digital services remains low** while the **rate of simplification for administrative procedures through digitalisation continues to be slow**. Encouragingly, **three key laws** – on the central population registry, electronic management of services and electronic documents and trust services – **were adopted to facilitate digital transformation**. Kosovo\*, overall, has seen **slower progress in improving service delivery**, including through digital transformation.

**ReSPA's contributions across this area remain crucial to improving the rate of digital transformation** across the region with a notable improvement in its rating by the members' public administrations compared to 2021. In terms of ReSPA's highlighted programmatic contributions, partners note their: increased capacity to improve **the design of policies and measures to put citizens at the centre**; familiarity with **specific advanced technologies**; involvement in the **introduction of new procedures**; and, in particular, an **agile approach to e-government**.

### Monitoring of workshops, conferences, training and other similar activities

#### The results in a nutshell

The yearly questionnaire related to the area of e-government was submitted by a total of 14 respondents. The joint largest number of respondents came from Serbia (21.43%) and Montenegro, and the lowest number from North Macedonia (7.14%) and the Federation of BiH, BiH (0.00%).

4.05

The respondents responded to questions related to three actions organised by ReSPA, including the meeting of the E Gov Working Group, the Regional OGP meeting and the Seasonal School on Digital Transformation. The overall ReSPA contribution to the institutional and individual improvements of the participants to its activities in the thematic area "E-Government" averages **4.05 out of 5**, meaning having contributed "to a good extent".

**The average for 2022 increased by 15% compared to the average for 2021, which was 3.5.** From this, it can be concluded that ReSPA's contribution in this area is satisfactory and that the raised level of ReSPA's contribution reached the expectations of ReSPA's stakeholders and management for this thematic area.

The average score of responses related to ReSPA's contribution to their individual improvement is **4.07, compared to 3.64 in 2021**, and the average score of responses related to ReSPA's contribution to institutional improvement is **4.03**, while it reached **3.34 in 2021**. The biggest increase in the scores is with the improvements at the institutional level related to acquired knowledge and enhanced skills for improved approaches and methods related to e-government, which is important information given the present specific need for the timely scaling-up of knowledge in this area. The Seasonal School, implemented in 2021, was the most cited activity by the respondents regarding ReSPA's contribution to their newly acquired knowledge and enhanced skills.

It can also be concluded that ReSPA's contribution to institutional improvements in the area of E Gov in 2022 increased to the bigger degree than the contribution to individuals' improvement.

It can be noted that, out of all the options, the participants acknowledged with the highest scores the **"best practices that were discussed and analysed with a view to their possible application"**.

Regarding the contribution of benefits from ReSPA's actions to advancing the country-level PAR implementation in the area of "e-government", 78.57% of respondents answered "yes", compared to 86% in 2021. This decrease could be analysed referring to specific strategic PAR measures which are of the same nature as the events organised by ReSPA.

### Improvements for individuals

4.07

The respondents rated ReSPA's contribution to their individual improvement in the domain of e-government with an average score of **4.07** out of 5, compared to the average score for this section of 3.6 in 2021. More specifically:

#### Question 6.1.1. ReSPA's activities have contributed to facilitated communication and exchange of know-how among colleagues and/or leadership regarding e-government (digital services, open data or OGP).

The respondents rated the contribution of ReSPA's actions to facilitating communication and the exchange of know-how among colleagues and/or the leadership with an average score of 4.07 (valid "to a good extent"), which indicates that ReSPA's activities contributed to their improved cooperation with colleagues and better communication within their own institution and their improved cooperation with counterparts from other institutions within their own administration, in the region or in the EU.

It can be concluded that events, such as the Seasonal School, which gather a large number of participants within the prolonged duration of the event, regardless of the rather high associated costs, affect institutional cooperation, in-country and regional cooperation and peer learning significantly.

A total of 35.71% of the survey participants stated that ReSPA's activities contributed to their better dialogue with superiors/subordinates within their own institution, and 28.57% of the survey participants confirmed ReSPA's contribution to other changes in terms of personal experience and working methods at the individual level.

From the answers provided, it can be noted that cooperation and communication between participants were boosted while attending the regional event. This also continued afterwards and resulted in concrete meetings and communication.

This reaffirms the role of ReSPA in improving regional cooperation and triggering knowledge sharing between peers, which can be read in the following examples of responses:

- ★ *I had an opportunity to spend time with my counterparts from other sectors, to get to know them better, which provided for better cross-sector collaboration within our institution.*
- ★ *During the Seasonal School I had an opportunity to spend more time with counterparts from other sectors.*
- ★ *In the past six months, we organised several meetings with colleagues from the region on various topics of digitalisation*
- ★ *The team from my institution remained in close contact with some participants from other WB administrations. Our communication with participants from other Serbian institutions significantly improved as well.*

#### 6.1.2. ReSPA's activities have contributed to acquired knowledge and enhanced skills for improved approaches and methods related to e-government (digital services, opening of data, OGP)

4.07

Identically to the previous question, the respondents rated the contribution of ReSPA's actions to acquiring knowledge and enhanced skills for using improved approaches and methods in the area of e-government with an average score of 4.07 (valid "to a good extent") compared to 3.64 in 2021.

Also, 64.29% of the survey participants stated ReSPA's contribution to their involvement in proposals for the introduction of innovative e-government processes and new/upgraded digital services, while 50% claimed that ReSPA's activities contributed to advocating internally or externally for innovative or new practices/changes and new procedures to be introduced into e-government.

It can be noted that at least half of the respondents actively applied the acquired knowledge in their work and specifically advocated for introducing innovative elements for upgrading the existing services and processes, which speaks in favour of the relevance of the chosen topics and well-implemented methodology of the lecturing at the educational events.

A total of 21.43% of the respondents confirmed their involvement in the preparation/implementation/monitoring of e-government programmes/OGP national action plan/digitalisation of public services/data opening (within service delivery), while 14.29% confirmed their engagement in national/local working groups or bodies working on the preparation/implementation/monitoring of various national e-government programmes, etc.

This influence of the acquired knowledge and skills on the involvement of participants in activities about the policy areas needs to be recognised.

The scores and statements above are reflected in the following examples of responses:

- ★ *I noticed how the workshops that I attended positively influenced my approach to service design (design thinking).*
- ★ *In the workshops, we learned one important principle, and that is that we need to put citizens at the centre and think about their needs.*
- ★ *Following an inspiring design-thinking workshop, I formally introduced several design-thinking tools into our internal guidelines for e-service development.*
- ★ *The presentation of emerging technologies and their utilisation and use cases expanded my knowledge, and I see how applying some of these technologies can improve the existing service delivery procedures.*
- ★ *I have already been involved in the formulation of policy documents, including those that involve emerging technologies and innovative practices. After the workshop, I became even more aware of the importance of adequate digital policies, as well as the potential and weak spots of some technologies*

### Improvements for institutions

4.03

The respondents rated the contribution of ReSPA's activities to institutional improvement in the domain of e-government with an average score of **4.03 out of 5**, very close to the score for individual improvements. The score is **noticeably higher than in 2021 when it was 3.34**.

More specifically:

**Question 6.2.1. ReSPA's activities have contributed to (institutional) progress towards the introduction and/or improvement of working methods/internal and external coordination/internal and external networking and communication.**

The respondents rated the contribution of ReSPA's actions to institutional progress related to working methods and cross-institutional networking and communication at **4.14, which is the highest score for ReSPA's contribution in this thematic area. The score in 2021 was 3.32**.

The majority (71.43%) of the survey participants stated ReSPA's contribution to best practices that were discussed and analysed with a view to their possible application at the institutional level. Fifty per cent confirmed that coordination and exchange of information within the institution and with other institutions had improved.

Equal percentages of the survey participants stated that: ReSPA's specific recommendations/suggestions from ReSPA studies/in-country support/other activities had been adopted/implemented; and that the institution had improved in setting the work plans with objectives and targets (42.86%).

A high score of 71.43% proves the usefulness, relevance and application potential of the implemented ReSPA actions. Similar to improved communication at the individual level, it is shown that the inter-institutional level of coordination and exchange of information was positively affected in the area of e-government where the coordination and collaboration of different actors have special significance (simplification of interconnected processes, application of the one-stop-shop principle, interoperability of different registers, etc.).

Improvements at the institutional level were described in the following responses:

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- ★ *In the months following our attendance at the Seasonal School, we introduced a comprehensive service design framework which involves design-thinking methods and tools that we had heard about at the workshop.*
- ★ *During the OGP event held in 2022 we gained an insight into many useful practices of colleagues from the region, not only for Open Data but also for other topics that we found interesting. In the follow-up we had a couple of meetings and communications from which we gained further explanations, documentation and ideas.*
- ★ *The analyses performed by ReSPA helped us to understand the current state of e-government.*
- ★ *A working version of the amendments to the Civil Service Law has been drawn up, which contains certain improvements following the recommendations of several projects and international initiatives (ReSPA, SIGMA), as well as the legal basis for managing the missing parts of the Human Resources Management Information System.*
- ★ *We have in mind all the changes that we should make in the near future for improvements to different aspects in the institution.*

**Question 6.2.2. ReSPA's activities have contributed to improved legal framework, adoption of new planning and implementation tools, strengthening of institutional functions**

3.93

The respondents rated the contribution of ReSPA's activities to progress towards the introduction/improvement of procedures, methods and tools within the institution with an average score of **3.93**. Regardless of being the lowest score for this thematic area in the 2022 monitoring exercise, it is higher than the score in 2021, which was 3.36.

The majority (71.43%) of the survey participants stated that ReSPA's contribution to the agile approach being considered for introduction into managing/developing/upgrading e-services was the most important contribution to institutional improvement as described in this question.

Fifty per cent of the survey participants chose the key lessons learnt and applied them to introduce innovative approaches in transforming digital services in crises as the most important ReSPA contribution, and 42.86% confirmed that measures and procedures have been defined/implemented to strengthen e-government and service digitalisation.

These responses indicate more than half of the respondents recognise that the agile approach and other innovative approaches in project management were the most important take-aways that contributed to progress at the institutional level, which proves that ReSPA should continue bringing the latest trends into its activities in this thematic area.

A total of 35.71% confirmed that activities with beneficiaries have been conducted regarding the introduction of innovative approaches in e-government processes or creation/upgrading at delivery of e-services. For applying a "user-centric approach" in design and delivery of services this is important information on the relevance of ReSPA's contribution.

Also, 7.14% of the survey participants reported other changes in thematic functions and skills at the institutional level. Most respondents rated the activities as having contributed to an adequate extent (45%), while 32% considered that the activities had contributed to a good extent, 14% not much and 9% greatly.

Some comments on ReSPA's actions highlight the **significance of keeping pace with innovative trends when choosing the topics and themes for actions, while others recognise the direct impact of the adoption of new implementation tools**:

- ★ *Service design guidelines have been introduced as a guiding document for all project managers from the e-Government Development Sector.*
- ★ *We plan to conduct workshops with beneficiaries from other institutions to enhance their service design skills and unify service design procedures and knowledge sharing.*

- ★ We have already had experience and were provided with a high-quality document on how to ensure service delivery continuity, but in communication with counterparts from the region, we learned about some innovative practices applied in their countries.
- ★ We are considering the introduction and upgrade of e-building services in order to bring them closer to public administration and facilitate the process of performing and acquiring the necessary services.

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

Individual affirmative answers provide an impression of advancing the PAR processes due to the contribution of ReSPA's activities:

- ★ It has certainly influenced service design already and provided for greater usability and quality of the Serbian e-Government services offered by the public administration.
- ★ Analyses that will be useful for the future strategy have been started.
- ★ Of course, with a better understanding of the priorities that have been defined, there have been changes in the principle of thinking of key institutions in charge of digitalisation, and we can say that all key priorities are perceived as necessary for the further development of e-government.
- ★ Since PARCO is coordinating the PAR process, we are precisely following the activities defined by AP SFPAR, and all of our efforts are directed in that sense. Concretely, the recommendations from ReSPA's in-country support are directly pointed at preconditions set by AP for the area of service delivery.
- ★ It certainly did, since our service delivery improved according to internal monitoring data that I had a chance to see. Working in the e-Government Development sector, I do not come into contact daily with general policy documents/external assessments; therefore, I cannot provide a specific answer on data contained in the newest editions of research and policy documents.

One answer provided a negative but useful connotation to the advancing of PAR processes:

- ★ I think we are now more aware of the necessity of making some big changes in terms of data opening, but we are slowly making the first steps...

### Monitoring of ReSPA's actions through the post-event questionnaire

ReSPA also analysed the results of the post-event questionnaires filled out by the participants of events organised in 2021.

**4.53** The post-event evaluation was conducted for all events organised in 2021. All participants of the ReSPA events stated that ReSPA's activities contributed to a greater exchange of experience and know-how, giving ReSPA's contribution an average score of **4.53**. Most participants of ReSPA's events (97.5%) stated that they will be able to apply the knowledge acquired during ReSPA's activities in practice, by giving ReSPA's contribution an average score of **4.20**.

### Monitoring of projects supported through the in-country mechanism implemented in 2021

ReSPA supported the implementing of three in-country support projects during 2021 within the "E-Government" thematic area.

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1. ReSPA supported the Ministry of Public Administration of Montenegro in developing the Strategy for Information Society for Montenegro.

**5.00**

The average score for the implementation of the projects is 5 out of 5.

Satisfaction with the action was scored by the beneficiary at 5 (extremely useful) on a scale of 1 to 5 by the institution.

At the individual level – The number of civil servants included in the action was: 18 members of the operational Working Group in charge of developing the Digital Transformation Strategy (eight women and 10 men).

At the institutional level – Three different institutions in Montenegro strengthened their capacities regarding analysing the current situation and setting up strategic goals and objectives.

2. ReSPA supported the General Secretariat of the Government of the Federation BiH, BiH, in developing the ITIL Service Catalogue.

The public administration service catalogue (ITIL) is one of the key service delivery enablers as a precondition for systematically introducing interoperable electronic services.

The average score for the implementation of the projects is 3 out of 5.

**Satisfaction with the action was rated by the beneficiary at 3 (useful) on a scale of 1 to 5 by the institution.**

The beneficiary institution recommended that ReSPA arranges surveillance of the technical side of the expertise provided stating that absence of it is reflected in the overall score given of the assistance being "useful".

At the individual level – The number of civil servants included in the action was five (three males and two females). The beneficiary team intensively cooperated with the expert, and each section of work was evaluated through the meeting (minutes delivered to ReSPA).

At the institutional level – The beneficiary directly benefitted from the provided assistance, while indirect benefits will be spread out to the entire public administration of the Federation of BiH as the result of more efficient work of the General Secretary of the FBIH, BiH.

3. ReSPA supported PARCO, BiH to get the analysis of the current situation of preconditions for key e-service delivery enablers in BiH and the Road Map for e-Service Delivery of BiH.

**5.00**

The average score for the implementation of the projects is 5 out of 5.

Satisfaction with the action was scored by the beneficiary at 5 (extremely useful) on a scale of 1 to 5 by the institution. Satisfaction with the provided expert assistance was scored at 5 (extremely useful).

The beneficiary institution emphasised the great value of the action and the fact that broad consultations with various actors took place when preparing the Situation Analyses and the Road Map. The greatest benefit of the action was seen in getting a "clear overview of the envisaged actions, dynamics and key steps for all key PA institution stakeholders that should be undertaken for developing the building blocks, so that BiH gets the necessary level of key enablers (e-signature, e-payment, etc.) for the better provision of e-services". The action significantly contributed to raising the awareness of the general public about the importance of key digital building blocks enabling the efficient PA delivery of e-services.

At the individual level – The number of civil servants included in the action was 78 in total (10 attendees at the consultation meetings with NGOs and IT businesses, 19 civil servants at the workshop for checking the results of the draft of the Road Map, and 49 attendees of the final event in Sarajevo).

At the institutional level – The five main institutions dealing with the implementation of the measure from the PAR Strategy of BiH benefitted from this action.

# Annual Monitoring of ReSPA's Activities in 2022

## Vision:

We are an intergovernmental innovative regional hub for policy research, knowledge sharing, regional cooperation and networking in the field of public administration.

## Motto:

Building Together Governance for the Future!

## Mission:

We improve regional cooperation, promote shared learning and support the development of public administrations within the Western Balkans, and support the integration of the countries in the region into the EU.



# ReSPA

Regional School  
of Public Administration

BUILDING TOGETHER  
GOVERNANCE FOR THE FUTURE

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ReSPA activities are funded  
by the European Union