

Public Administration Awards 2026

Western Balkans &
Eastern Neighbourhood



ReSPA – SIGMA

**Western Balkans and Eastern Neighbourhood
Public Administration Awards 2026**

Governing for Impact: Creating Transformative Initiatives

CONTEST RULES



1 | GENERAL CONTEST RULES

- The ReSPA – SIGMA Western Balkans and Eastern Neighbourhood Public Administration Awards 2026 (PAAwards2026) Methodology invites applicants to submit impactful and result-oriented initiatives contributing to the improvement of governance and public service delivery.
- Applications should concern initiatives that have been implemented long enough to demonstrate progress and results. Concepts, proposals or initiatives that have not yet entered implementation are not eligible.
- Each applicant may submit multiple applications, provided that each submission is distinct and made separately.
- The application must be complete with all required fields filled in. The organisers of the competition reserve the right to request additional information relevant to the assessment of the initiative's quality at a later stage.
- Registration, including the submission of the application, must be completed online via the designated platform. Applications submitted by any other means will not be considered.
- In addition to the application form, providing supplementary documentation on project implementation, outputs, outcomes and delivery, as well as other materials the applicant deems relevant in support of their application (incl. charts/tables/diagrams, video, audio, photos, links to websites and social media) is strongly recommended.
- Submissions that violate international copyright rules will be excluded from the competition.
- The competition organisers cannot be held liable for accepted submissions and their contents and rights.
- Projects previously submitted for the Western Balkans Public Administration Awards previous editions may be resubmitted, provided that they have undergone noteworthy updates, adaptations and further development or have achieved significant impact and results which must be clearly demonstrated during the application, assessment and selection process.
- By submitting an application, the applicant acknowledges and agrees to abide by the general contest rules of the ReSPA-SIGMA Public Administration Awards in the Western Balkans and Eastern Neighbourhood 2026.

2 | WHO CAN APPLY? | ELIGIBILITY

- The ReSPA-SIGMA Public Administration Awards in the Western Balkans and Eastern Neighbourhood 2026 is open to all public sector institutions¹ from all administrative levels, i.e. national, sub-national and local, in ReSPA Members (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia), Armenia, Kosovo*, Moldova and Ukraine.
- Applications can be submitted jointly, i.e., by two or more applicants, including cross-regional and with private entities, non-profit organisations and academic institutions, in

¹ This refers to all public administration entities regardless of their organisational structure and their position and role in the organisation of public administration, at both national and any sub-national and/ or local level

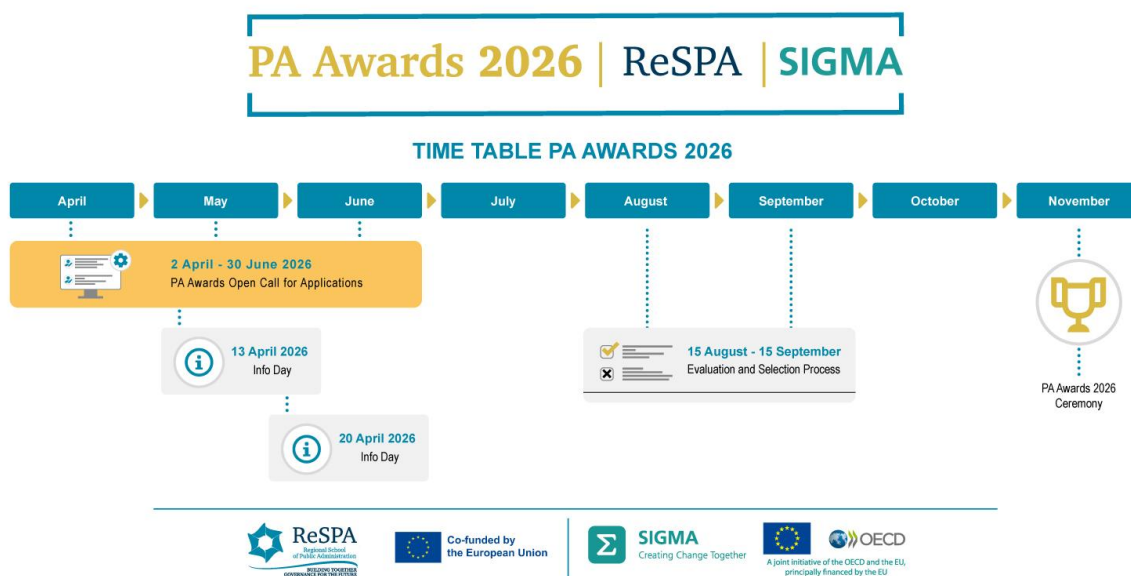
* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and ICJ Advisory opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of independence

Contest Rules

which case a public administration entity must be designated as the lead applicant. The award will only be given to the public administration organisation in such cases.

- Consulting firms or other organisations offering consulting services are not eligible to apply.
- Individuals who work in public administration and other natural persons are not eligible to apply either individually or as part of a joint application.

3 | TIMETABLE FOR THE ReSPA-SIGMA PA AWARDS 2026



DEADLINE TO SUBMIT APPLICATION: 30 JUNE 2026

4 | BENEFITS AND IMPACTS OF PARTICIPATION

- A unique and exclusive package of awards is available for contestants, including trophies, certificates and special recognition for outstanding efforts, as well as peer learning activities and **tailored learning journeys** for winners to observe best practices in the regions and in the EU.
- The awards provide **external visibility and international acknowledgement** for public administrations, further leading to internal recognition and development possibilities, including the scaling up of their initiatives to other administrative and geographical areas.
- Contestants will receive **valuable feedback** for project improvement thanks to the Awards' multi-step assessment process.
- Submitted initiatives will be used in **ReSPA's and SIGMA's** learning exchange and practice **transfer activities** in the region and internationally.
- Winners will join a Community of Inspirational Practices, which represents a **'hub of excellence'** with networking opportunities in the region and beyond.
- The process of writing the application itself is a highly beneficial opportunity for learning and networking.
- Participation in the competition offers candidates the opportunity to inspire each other with shared ideas, knowledge and exchange of best practices.



5 | EXPLOITATION RIGHTS AND COPYRIGHTS

- By submitting a project to the ReSPA-SIGMA PA Awards, the applicant provides the award organisers with the exploitation rights to any submitted videos, pictures and other content for non-commercial promotion of the nominated product, presented in print, broadcast and any other forms of media, as well as for events.
- The applicant must own the copyright of all pictures, sounds, contents and other materials related to their application. All software used must be licensed.

6 | CONTEST LANGUAGE

The contest will be carried out in English, and the application form must be completed in English. Supporting materials (including press releases and news reporting, data analytics, visualisations, statistics and citizen feedback) may be submitted either in their original language or in English. All stages of evaluation and assessment will be conducted in English.

7 | EXCLUSION AND DISQUALIFICATION OF SUBMISSIONS FROM THE AWARD

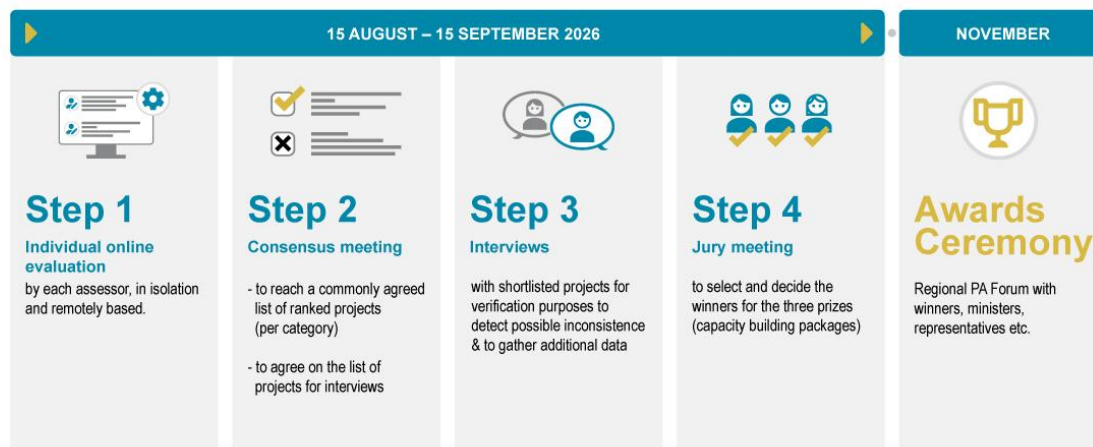
- Incomplete submissions and submissions that do not comply with the general contest rules and conditions will be withdrawn from the selection process. Applicants will be informed in a timely manner if their application is withdrawn from the selection process. There is no legal recourse against disqualification for any of the reasons outlined below.
- Conditions leading to the immediate disqualification from the contest:
 - conflict of interest and non-adherence to the process by those concerned;
 - presentation of misleading and false information in supporting documents;
 - inability to provide sufficient documentation to review the initiative;
 - unethical behaviour, including undue pressure on any person involved in the evaluation and selection process;
 - lack of ownership of the creative rights or infringement of others' copyright;
 - false registration information or non-compliance with the rules of the contest.

8 | THE SELECTION OF WINNERS & THE JURY PROCESS

The winners will be selected from a pool of applications received during the call for applications through the selection process described on the ReSPA website. For more information, see below.

PA Awards 2026 | ReSPA | SIGMA

Four-step Evaluation & Selection Process after eligibility check



The International Jury is composed of ReSPA representatives and/or ReSPA-selected independent experts and SIGMA representatives and/or experts appointed by them.