



## **PAR Visibility and Communication Project**

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# **Public Administration Reform Strategic Communication Framework**

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**ANNEX 1: TRACKING SYSTEM OF CITIZENS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS PAR**

**ANNEX 2: ACTION PLAN: 1. MEDIA PLAN - Activities related to traditional media, social media and internet; 2. CAPACITY BUILDING PLAN**

**ANNEX 3: STRATEGIC MEDIA FRAMEWORK**

**ANNEX 4: RELATION OF THE PAR ACHIEVEMENTS WITH THE PAR STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2015-17 MEASURES AND/OR RESULTS**



## List of abbreviations:

AP – Action Plan  
CPR - Central Population Register  
CSO – Civil Society Organisations  
EU – European Union  
EUIC – EU Info Centre  
HRM – Human Resource Management  
IT Office – Office for Information Technologies and E-government  
LGAP – Law on General Administrative Procedure  
LSG units – Local Self-government units  
MEI - Ministry for European Integration  
MoF - Ministry of Finance  
MPALSG - Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government  
NAPA - National Academy for Public Administration  
OCSO – Office for Cooperation with Civil Society Organisations  
OGP – Open Government Partnership  
PA – Public Administration  
PAR – Public Administration Reform  
PARS – Public Administration Reform Strategy  
PFM – Public Finance Management  
PPS - Public Policy Secretariat  
SAB - State Administration Bodies  
SCF – Strategic Communication Framework  
SCTM – Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities  
SIS – Single Information System  
TA – Tax Administration



# 1. Introduction

The main objective of the Strategic Communication Framework is to formulate guidelines for consolidated communication in order to raise awareness and inform the public about the process, challenges and results of public administration reform in the Republic of Serbia.

The purpose of the strategic framework is to provide a communication basis and define the meaning, direction and tone of communication on specific initiatives, in order to demonstrate the improvement in the quality of the public administration system in its entirety.

This document was developed for the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, the Ministry of Finance and other ministries, organizations and institutions responsible for communicating the public administration reform process, the Delegation of the European Union to Serbia, and the interested members of the general public.

In the development of the document, the guidelines from the Communication Strategy of the Government of the Republic of Serbia on Serbia's Accession to the European Union, as well as the Communication Strategy on IPA were taken into consideration.

Prior to developing a Strategic Communication Framework for increased visibility and improved communication on public administration reform and public finance management, a comprehensive Situation Analysis of the capacity of institutions participating in the reform and their previous efforts and effects in the field of communication on these topics has been undertaken. The findings of the analysis serve as the basis for defining the Strategic Communication Framework.

The analysis indicates the need for a strategic orientation of the communication of the reform. In parallel with strengthening capacities for external communication, special attention should be given to improving internal communication and identifying mechanisms for more effective coordination among the stakeholders. Clear, well-defined procedures for internal and external communication are needed, as well as improvement of the communication capacities of public administration institutions.

According to the findings of the analysis, all major communication channels are in place (events, traditional media, websites, social networks). However, there is a need for:

- strengthened **coordination** between the actors and
- **continuous support to public servants in charge of PAR/PFM communication** in the implementation of activities.

Available financial resources for PAR communication should be pooled together in order to achieve synergetic effects.

The key challenges, according to the findings of the analysis, are the following:

- **Citizens do not have a clear picture of what public administration is** – The public does not know what exactly public administration reform entails, which was established by the public opinion survey conducted in November and December 2018 and focus groups held in January 2019 in the scope of this project. The survey shows that 24% of survey respondents know what PAR is, 26% have never heard about the process, while 46% say that they have heard about the PAR concept, but they do not know what it entails. The situation with public finance management is similar, 20% of the respondents are familiar with the concept, while 36% have not heard of this part of the reform at all. Citizens often do not understand how public administration functions, and therefore they have undefined or unrealistic expectations. In addition, citizens perceive public administration as a general category - the state or the government - and do not distinguish among these terms.



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- **Citizens do not understand the language of public administration** - Whether it is daily or official communication relating to different processes, regulations and policies, the language is complex and incomprehensible to most target groups. The lack of understanding of the language leads to a lack of understanding of the process, and consequently to further separation of public administration from its citizens. "Translating" reforms and their advantages into an understandable and clear language, using practical examples and achievements to show real progress, is also one of the main challenges. Citizens do not need to know if some of the novelties in their administration are actually the effects of PAR, but it is important that they are aware these innovations are part of government efforts to create open, good, and customized public services for citizens and businesses.
- The general perception of the public is that **PAR is a never-ending process** which lasts for years. Even the word "reform" has a negative connotation and there is a lot of mistrust regarding the possibilities for change. Proclaimed goals, such as professionalization, modernization, depoliticization and rationalization, are constantly repeated. At the same time, the politicization of public administration / the lack of transparency in its work creates an impression that the work of public administration is primarily related to decision-making and management of the political system.
- **A negative attitude towards public administration as slow, bureaucratic and expensive**, and towards public servants as insufficiently competent, is still present. Citizens and businesses do not feel that the administration provides services, mainly because a client-oriented approach is often lacking. Therefore, communication of reforms at all levels should focus on providing new solutions which bring tangible benefits to citizens and the economy.
- **Lack of two-way communication** - the citizens do not have the impression that they can communicate with the public administration or express their opinion about the work of the public administration.
- **Lack of clear civil servant responsibilities** / no remuneration system - perception that the responsibilities of employees are not clearly defined, which further creates the impression that no one is responsible, which is additionally contributed by the absence of a clearly defined remuneration system and a lack of jobs dealing solely with communication.
- **EU support to public administration reform processes is not sufficiently recognized**, shows the research conducted by the project - the public is moderately familiar with the significant financial resources provided by the EU. Although 15% of respondents stated that the EU is the biggest donor to Serbia, at the same time 19%, 18% and 15% respondents put China, Germany and Russia ahead of the EU, respectively.
- **The EU is considered a key source of public administration reform funds** by 25%, while an additional 23% believe that Germany has provided the most assistance. Therefore, ensuring that EU support is recognized and clearly linked to the positive experiences of citizens is another challenge for this project and all stakeholders involved in PAR / PFM communication.

The complexity of the PAR and PFM processes brings many communication challenges, which will be mitigated by focusing on:

- **Improving coordination**
  - at political level
  - at sectoral level
  - at institutional level



- between the stakeholders;
- **Promoting results and achievements rather than procedures and activities;**
- Further **strengthening of the capacity** of stakeholders for efficient communication;
- **Defining relevant messages** which interest the target audience;
- **Providing simplified information** to national and local media **and creating strong media partnerships.**

## **2. An Overview of Policies and Potential Topics for Communication in the Field of Public Administration Reform**

### **2.1. Policies and Topics**

The current situation in the field of public administration reform in Serbia is shown in Table 1, through an overview of the results of reform processes to date (which also represents potential topics for communication), an overview of public policies which define and/or follow the objectives of the 2014 PAR Strategy in detail and a list of EU-funded projects currently or previously implemented under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) in this area.

The results and processes which represent achievements in public administration reform until 2019 have been identified in a wide consultation process with ministries and institutions involved in the public administration reform, complementary support projects under the Sector Reform Contract, other projects financed or co-financed by the EU and the Delegation of the European Union to Serbia. They are fully compliant with the External Evaluation Report of the Public Administration Reform Strategy in Serbia<sup>1</sup> and the findings of the Situation Analysis, which makes PAR communication future-proof.

This table links the objectives of the PAR Strategy, the results achieved, relevant public policies, and EU support to these reform processes. In the next section, each of the results e.g. potentials for communication was elaborated, with a message proposal for the target group.

Finally, at the end of this document you can find the action plans for 2019 and 2020, which integrate the elements elaborated in this Strategic Communication Framework and consolidate the target groups, time period, channels, responsible institutions and communication tools for each communication activity.

<b>Public policies</b>	<b>PAR Strategy 2014 objectives</b>	<b>Results and processes (communication potentials)</b>	<b>EU support</b>
- <b>Public Administration Reform Strategy in</b>	1. Improvement of organizational and	1.1. A comprehensive and systematic development	- PAR Sector Reform Contract (SBS)

<sup>1</sup> The External Evaluation Report was prepared as part of the project “Support to Public Administration Reform under the Sector Reform Contract for Public Administration Reform”



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<p><b>the Republic of Serbia</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Strategy for regulatory reform and improvement of the public policy management system for the period 2016-2020</b></li> <li>- <b>Strategy on Development of e-Government in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2015-2018</b></li> </ul>	<p>functional systems of PA</p>	<p>and targeted implementation, monitoring and evaluation of public policies was enabled by the Law on Planning System. Now there is an operational Single Information System for the planning and implementation of public policies.</p> <p>1.2. Central Population Register</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased data entry</li> <li>- All citizen records are transferred and now in electronic format</li> </ul> <p>1.3. e-Government Portal (Law on electronic government)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promotion of new e-Services</li> <li>- 653 new e-Services for citizens and businesses have been developed, through the participation of 141 institutions in the work of the new national e-Government Portal</li> </ul> <p>1.4. Inter-municipal cooperation enabled (the Law on Local Self-Government defines inter-municipal cooperation as an original task of LSGs)</p> <p>1.5. Reducing the number of employees in PA</p> <p>1.6. Reduction of the number of local officials (the Law on Local Self-Government introduced harmonization with the number of inhabitants)</p> <p>1.7. A new portal for the exchange of open data with 48 datasets was established (Open Data)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support to Implementation of the Law on General Administrative Procedure (LGAP) in Serbia</li> <li>- PPS - Reforming policy coordination and the Centre of Government</li> <li>- Support to PAR</li> <li>- Support to e-Government development</li> <li>- Strengthening LSG in Serbia, phase 2</li> <li>- Support to e-Government development + Supply of ICT equipment and software for Serbian e-government infrastructure</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Strategy for Professional</b></li> </ul>	<p>2. Introduction of harmonized merit-</p>	<p>2.1. Amendments to the Law on Civil Servants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HR management in Local Self-</li> </ul>





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**Development of Employees in Local Government Units**  
**Strategy for Professional Development of Civil Servants in the Republic of Serbia**

based public service system and improvement of HR management

enabling merit-based recruitment and depoliticization, performance assessment and strengthened integrity and accountability  
 2.2. By-laws for the civil service system: on internal and public job vacancies in the state administration bodies, on the processes of evaluating work performance and on the methodology for determining the outflow of personnel  
 2.3. Catalogue of job vacancies in public services  
 2.4. The normative framework for the reform of the salary system was adopted, and the implementation was postponed for 1 January 2020  
 2.5. NAPA established  
 2.6. Achievements in terms of amendments to the Law on Civil Servants, which include the Government's starting points for the establishment of a modern HR management system and the improvement of managerial accountability  
 2.7 Code of Conduct for Civil Servants (linking competencies with code regulations)  
 2.8. Planned – introducing the Code of Conduct of employees at the local level

- Government (merit based civil service framework at local level) (Phase 2)
- HRM in LSG - merit based civil service framework at local level (Phase 1)
- Support to establishment of the National Academy for Public Administration
- Support to the NAPA in professional development of Public Administration
- Support to Public Administration Reform at the local level – & 2) (Exchange 5) grant scheme
- Support to Implementation of the Law on General Administrative Procedure (LGAP) in Serbia
- Rightsizing phase 2
- Rightsizing phase 1
- Strengthening the institutional capacities of the Serbian Tax Administration by TA to design a human resources management system
- Support to PAR
- Improving recruitment and career development in the civil service
- EXCHANGE 3
- Support to the Ministry of Finance under the PAR Sector Reform Contract

- **Public Financial Management Reform Programme 2016-2020**
- **Public Procurement Development Strategy**

3. Enhancement of public finance and public procurement management

3.1. Budget Inspection - amendments to the Law on the Budget System distinguish between the work of the Budget Inspection and the Internal Audit



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- of the Republic of Serbia 2014 - 2018</li> <li>- Strategy of Public Internal Financial Control Development in Serbia 2017-2020</li> <li>- National Strategy for the suppression of irregularities and fraud in the handling of EU funds in Serbia 2017-2020</li> <li>- National Strategy for Gender Equality 2016-2020</li> <li>- Economic Reform Programme 2017-2019</li> </ul>	<p>3.2. Programme budgeting enabled with projections for the following two years</p> <p>3.3. Public Procurement System and e-Procurement development - Improving the public procurement system which led to the opening of negotiations under chapter 5 and the implementation of the first phase of alignment with the EU acquis</p> <p>3.4. Improved operational framework for the management and control of public finances (FMC &amp; PIFC)</p> <p>3.5. Budget execution reports (increased quality of reporting)</p> <p>3.6. Gender-responsible budgeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support for further development of PIFC (Twining)</li> <li>- Support for further improvement of Public Procurement system in Serbia</li> <li>- Redundancy and sound functioning of Treasury system by building a functional backup Data Centre</li> <li>- Support to the Ministry of Finance-Treasury Administration capacity building</li> <li>- Support to the Development Public Internal Financial Control Phase 3</li> <li>- Strengthening the institutional capacity of the Serbian Tax Administration by TA to design an efficient system for the tax collection function and efficient financial and material accounting management</li> <li>- MSP IPA 2007</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Serbian Electronic Government Development Strategy 2015 – 2018</li> <li>- Programme of Transformation of the Tax Administration 2015-2020</li> <li>- Strategy for Supporting the Development of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, Entrepreneurship and Competitiveness</li> <li>- National Programme for the suppression of grey economy</li> </ul>	<p>4. Enhancement of legal certainty and upgrading of business environment and quality of PA services</p>	<p>4.1. More efficient administrative procedures (LGAP/e-LGAP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Law on e-Government includes data from an increased number of registers, for example from birth register, residence register, personal documents, unemployment, social protection, etc.</li> <li>- Currently, there are 320 PA institutions in the e-LGAP system</li> </ul> <p>4.2. One Stop Shop – 8 LSGs have introduced it</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support to Implementation of the Law on General Administrative Procedure (LGAP) in Serbia</li> <li>- Supply of ICT equipment and software for Serbian e-Government infrastructure</li> <li>- Support to e-Government development</li> <li>- Support to e-Government development + Supply of ICT</li> </ul>



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### - Economic Reform Programme 2017-2019

- 4.3. E-Gov Portal (IT system for e-LGAP)
- 4.4. Exchange of data from official records enabled through e-services
- 4.5. Services which have the format of one stop shop: E-Baby, e-Kindergarten, e-Enrolment, building permits, registration of property tax at the local level, automatic certification of health cards, registration of businesses, simplification of the procedure for registration of property
- 4.6. Single Inspection Supervision - Law on Inspection Supervision (e-Inspector for Inspection Services)
- 4.7. E-payment

equipment and software for Serbian e-government infrastructure

- Strengthening the institutional capacity of the Serbian Tax Administration by TA to design an efficient system for the tax collection function and efficient financial and material accounting management

- National Strategy for the suppression of irregularities and fraud in the handling of EU funds in Serbia 2017-2020
- Strategy on Personal Data Protection
- 1st OGP AP 2014-2016
- 2nd OGP AP 2016-2018

5. Improvement of citizen participation, transparency, improvement of ethical standards and accountability in discharging the PA duties

- 5.1. Enhanced public participation in law drafting and policy making
  - Law on State Administration (Article 77)
  - Law on the Planning System
- 5.2. Law on Local Self-Government (Civil Budget, Civil Initiatives - Petitions)
- 5.3. Independent internal control mechanisms (5 bodies)
- 5.4. E-booklet on work regulated by the new Law on Access to Information of Public Importance (drafted, but not adopted)
- 5.5. Open Data, as a result of increased transparency of PA
- 5.6. Open Government Partnership (OGP)
- 5.7. Implementation of the Law on Protection of Whistle-blowers
- 5.8. Monthly Online Bulletin of Public Finance introduced; the practice of publishing reports on

- Audit Quality Control in the State Audit Institution
- Strengthening Capacities of the State Audit Institution of Serbia



budget execution in LSG units has been introduced
5.9. Integrity plans were adopted in over 50% of the PA bodies

Table 1: An overview of policies and potential topics for PAR communication

## **2.2. Results and Processes (What do we communicate?)**

Although information on public administration reform in Serbia has been available to a higher extent in recent years, there is a need for strategic and enhanced communication. At the heart of the general direction of PAR communication should be the principle that each step in the PAR will lead to tangible benefits for the citizens and the economy. When planning communication measures, it is necessary to pay attention to a two-way interaction with citizens which will ensure the assessment of citizens' satisfaction with the provision of public services. The 2014 Strategy has defined that the general objective of the reform is to improve public administration in accordance with the principles of the European administrative space, provide high quality services to citizens and businesses and create a public administration which contributes to economic stability and living standard. However, this Strategy did not sufficiently recognize the need for continuous communication with the public. Other strategic documents and laws envision more activities in the field of visibility, communication, awareness raising and citizen participation, e.g. Public Finance Management Reform Programme, Strategy for the Development of Electronic Government in the Republic of Serbia 2015-2018 and the Law on Local Self-Government.

The selection of topics aimed at communicating public administration reform and bringing this area closer to the public depends on many factors which influence whether they will be presented, to which target group and how they will be presented. According to the results of the External Evaluation of the Public Administration Reform Strategy in Serbia<sup>2</sup>, it is estimated that the target achievement rate is around 50%. Also, there is an unbalanced implementation of designed measures and activities and a certain number of horizontal factors which limit effective and efficient implementation, thus limiting communication to a certain extent.

Some achievements and planned priorities were communicated to the public, on various occasions and in different media. Many actions from the Public Administration Reform Action Plan have been a catalyst for changes in many areas of public administration, on issues that had never been communicated before, such as open data, the development of gender-responsive budgeting and paperless e-government<sup>3</sup>. All this should be more visible and more efficiently presented to the general public. Good results have been achieved by state institutions, responding to the needs of citizens. Citizens have the right to know about them, and civil servants working in these institutions need to be proud of being part of the reforming administration.

It should be noted that the SIGMA monitoring report from May 2019<sup>4</sup> also refers to shortcomings in both internal and external communication. The recommendation for enhancement of the internal communication is: "A clear message – preferably by the Prime Minister - should be communicated to

<sup>2</sup> <http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/190524-Final-Evaluation-Report-SR.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/AP-RJU-narativni-deo-2018-2020.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Monitoring-Report-2019-Serbia.pdf>



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the senior managers indicating that they are responsible for and should, therefore, take the lead role in service transformation in their work area to deploy the enablers in place". For external communication the SIGMA is suggesting among other "active promotion of the digital signature across the administration as well as among citizens", and that "the Government should raise awareness of all the public administration bodies delivering public services as well as the service users about the key principles of LGAP to accelerate the implementation of LGAP". These are the recommendations that SIGMA suggests being implemented immediately (in 1-2 years).

Furthermore, SIGMA monitoring report also indicates some communication and visibility related issues that need to be addressed in a medium-term perspective. For example, publishing regular public reports on the efforts of government bodies and municipalities concerning the situation with accessibility to public services for people with disabilities or introducing a policy on user engagement into service delivery improvement actions across the administration.

Following the 2014 Public Administration Reform Strategy and other strategic documents stemming from this strategy, as well as the analysis of public policies, the potential results for further communication of Public Administration Reform (PAR) and Public Finance Management (PFM) can be grouped as follows:

1. **System Reform** (Objective 1 - Improvement of organizational and functional sub-systems of PA);
2. **Human resources** (Objective 2 – Introduction of a harmonized public service system based on merits and improvement of HR management);
3. **Public finance reform** (Objective 3 – Enhancement of public finance and public procurement management);
4. **Business environment and quality of services** (Objective 4 – Enhancement of legal certainty and improvement of business environment and quality of PA services): Services for citizens and businesses, or new approaches to services through which citizens can exercise their rights and obligations before the state;
5. **Participation and transparency** (Objective 5 – Improvement of citizen participation, transparency, improvement of ethical standards and accountability in discharging the PA duties).

Relation of the PAR achievements with the PAR Strategy and 2015-2017 Action Plan measures and/or results is fully elaborated and presented in a separate table as Annex 4 to the Strategic Communication Framework.

### **2.2.1. System Reform**

The process of Serbia's accession to the European Union has accelerated the internal reforms which significantly contribute to the accountability, effectiveness and efficiency of public administration. The basis for these changes which lead to a more modern and professional administration is defined in the 2014 PAR Strategy. The establishment of the National Secretariat for Public Policies (PPS) and the adoption of the Law on the Planning System filled the institutional gap and created the basis for coordination of public policies. By establishing the Office for Information Technologies and Electronic Government (IT Office) and developing a strategic framework for e-Government, a significant step towards modernization and professionalisation of public administration was taken.



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Communication of these processes and results to the public strengthens citizen support for reforms, and any progress in policy implementation and the establishment of new institutions and services has a significant communication potential.

All these PAR achievements in the last few years, primarily relating to the regulation of the system and internal reform, are directly reflected on the citizens, not only by affecting the quality of services and saving citizens' resources, but also by creating an understanding that the state is modernizing. The Situation Analysis, however, indicated that citizens have a vague understanding of these changes and that much more systematic information is needed, with a clear link between personal experience and perceived changes.

It is important to emphasize that the Strategic Communication Framework recommends continuous communication of the results of public administration reform.

Table 2 identifies the communication potentials along with the rationale on why public policy changes should be continuously communicated to the public, while the Action Plan (Annex 2) for 2019 and 2020 defines target groups, time period, communication channels and tools.

### PARS – Specific Objective 1: Improvement of organizational and functional systems of public administration

#	PAR achievements	Why communicate? (communication logic)
1.1	A comprehensive and systematic development and targeted implementation, monitoring and evaluation of public policies is ensured through the Law on Planning System and PPS. Now there is an operational Single Information System for the planning and implementation of public policies.	In addition to the institutional foundations and an operational system, these measures enable the involvement of the public in policy making, as well as the alignment of these policies with budgetary resources. Also, these are steps towards creating the first integrated planning and budgeting system in Serbia. Public involvement requires that this process be properly communicated, presenting the state's openness towards citizens, and particularly to the professional public, thus making the policy-making process more transparent. The message: By involving the public, a transparent policy-making process ensures legitimacy for the expertise to be above a purely political approach to determining the key strategic directions of Serbia's development.
1.2	Central Population Register (CPR) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Increased data entry</li> <li>o All citizen records are connected and there is a legal requirement that they be kept in electronic format only</li> </ul>	The establishment of the Central Population Register (CPR) and the improvement of existing registers specially contributed to the modernization of PA. CPR is one of the key PAR results, which will integrate 13 official records managed by different institutions. The full functionality of the register is expected in the second half of 2020. CPR will allow the state to have all records of citizens in one place. Citizens will be relieved from paying fees for issuing certain documents and will not spend time in front of counters waiting to get all necessary documents. At the same time, decision-makers in administrative proceedings will be able to carry out procedures quicker, collecting information about parties in the proceedings through CPR. Thanks to the cooperation between MPALSG and the
1.3	E-Government Portal (Law on electronic government) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Promotion of new e-Services</li> </ul>	





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- 653 new e-Services for citizens and businesses have been developed. 141 institutions participate e-services through a new national e-Government Portal

Ministry of Interior, by the end of 2019 a certificate of citizenship will be available to all institutions outside the Mol system.

Citizens need to be continuously informed about all positive aspects of the CPR, while it is important for the internal public to be fully aware that there is a legal requirement that all records are kept exclusively in electronic format.

Implementation of e-LGAP is an important novelty in the internal reform of administration itself and an important result of improving the functionality of the PA system, which saves time both for the citizens and public servants. The Law on Electronic Government has enabled fast and efficient data exchange in electronic form among state institutions and made it obligatory for all state bodies to use IT, wherever possible; it also enabled the development of the e-Government Portal and the development of services provided to citizens through the e-Government Portal (appointment scheduling, payments, submittal of requests, etc.). The promotion of the e-Government portal as an important PAR result will significantly contribute not only to the use of the portal, but also increase the confidence of citizens in the capacity of the administration to reform itself.

Message for external public: Integrated records of all data modernize the system and save resources, such as time and money, but also reduce the level of stress and mitigates the negative expectation that contact with public administration is an unpleasant experience.

Message for internal public: Integrated records facilitate the performance of all tasks and duties in the long run and contribute to better service delivery to citizens, thereby improving the status and image of public administration employees.

- 1.3 Inter-municipal cooperation enabled (the Law on Local Self-Government defines inter-municipal cooperation as an original task of LSGs)

The Law on Local Self-Government allows municipalities to create associations and initiate and fund joint initiatives of regional importance, which significantly contributes to decentralization. This novelty needs to be communicated to the LSG leaderships as well as to the citizens, as this is a potential for resolving problems related to several municipalities.

Message: Inter-municipal cooperation strengthens capacities at the local level and streamlines reforms to meet the needs of citizens.

- 1.4 Reducing the number of employees in PA

At present, this topic has no affirmative communication potential, until a functional analysis of the public sector is completed. Situation analysis has shown that the current practice of communicating plans which aim at significantly contributing to solving the burning issues related to the welfare of citizens resulted in high expectations, which often led to disappointments and contributed to the notorious mistrust in public administration.



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1.5 Reduction of the number of local officials (the Law on Local Self-Government – harmonization with the number of inhabitants)	<p>In order to achieve greater efficiency, operability and effectiveness, starting from the next local elections, the number of officials will be aligned with the number of residents of the municipality or city.</p> <p>Message: Reducing the number of local officials contributes to a more rational use of limited municipal resources and harmonization with European standards.</p>
1.6 A new portal for the exchange of open data was established (Open Data)	<p>State institutions have opened to the public all data that fall under the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance. This ensures that once published data can be used continuously, in a format readable by other IT systems (machine readable data). Currently 48 datasets are open. In cooperation with the OGP, communicate the importance of opening data to LSGs, especially to the IT community which can use them to create new innovative applications.</p> <p>* in the context of transparency, see <i>achievement 5.5 in Table 6</i></p> <p>Message: By opening the data which do not contain delicate information about specific persons, the institutions respond to the needs of the business community and civil society and contribute to the quality of services and reduction of the cost of doing business. The contribution is specially reflected in the potential decrease in the number of requests for access to information of public importance, which are mostly sent and used by the media.</p>

Table 2: System reform

The messages listed in the table have several common elements, but most importantly, no matter who the message carrier is and whom it addresses at a given moment, it is essential to emphasize the following:

- Internal reforms are implemented for the well-being of all citizens,
- Reforms are being implemented due to the systematic adoption of European principles, standards and values.

### 2.2.2. Human Resources

One of the specific objectives of the Public Administration Reform Strategy is the establishment of a merit-based civil service management system and the improvement of HR management. In addition, the Strategy for Professional Development of Civil Servants in the Republic of Serbia is the basis for the reform of the system of planning, selection, evaluation and remuneration of public sector employees, while the Strategy for Professional Development of Employees in Local Self-government Units provides basic guidelines for establishing a harmonized, lasting and sustainable system of training of LSG staff. Given that the ultimate goal of all reform processes is a reliable, responsible, efficient and cost-effective administration, special attention is focused on the field of strengthening human resources, i.e. capacity strengthening at all administrative levels.

Changes that have been strategically introduced over the past few years can be divided into three important categories:

#### 1. Civil service system





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Amendments to the Law on Civil Servants and three essential by-laws which introduce innovations into the process of selection of candidates through competitive procedures, the process of performance evaluation and determining the outflow of personnel were adopted.

For the implementation of all the amendments to the Law, it is of utmost importance that the previous personnel management units, which focused more on the management of personnel related documentation, turn into HR units, putting people and managing people at the centre. Special attention has been paid to strengthening the role of managers, for whom special training was introduced for participation in competitive procedures and evaluation of the performance of civil servants and newly appointed officials.

In addition, the internal labour market, which should encourage and regulate mobility within the state bodies system, is awaiting normative regulation. The intention of these legal changes is to contribute to the realization of the principle of equal access to jobs. New regulations will also apply to candidates from LSGs and AP.

A complete regulation of the HR management system will require an information management system for HRM, which will be the main tool for all policies in the HRM. The development of a complex platform depends on the normative acts, the adoption of which is expected by the end of 2019, but it will also depend on the available funding.

A legal framework for the reform of the salary system has been adopted, but a new Law on Salaries, which will be aligned with the systematic salary regulations, is expected to be adopted this year, while its implementation should start on 1 January 2020. The reorganization of workplaces and performance evaluation also requires legislative changes and amendments.

### 2. Service system in the Autonomous Provinces (AP) and LSGs

The HR Department of the MPALSG, together with the project "Human Resources Management in Local Self-Government Units - Phase 2", implemented by the Council of Europe and funded by the CoE and the EU, is currently working on defining the criteria for conducting an analysis of the implementation of the Law on Employees in AP and LSG, as well as related by-laws. The analysis should come up with proposals for improvement of this legislation. The Law on Salaries in the AP and LSGs has also been adopted, but the implementation was postponed. Both in AP and LSGs it is necessary to normatively regulate the status and performance evaluation of employees.

### 3. Public services (education, public health, etc.)

The Law on Public Service Employees has been adopted, but the implementation was postponed to allow for harmonization with the Law on Salaries. This law was conceived as an integral text, which regulates both labour relations and salaries, and supports the principles of the public administration system such as personnel planning, public competition, performance appraisal, higher salary for better work, etc. Also, the Catalogue of Jobs in Public Services was adopted and its implementation started, which implies that public services are obliged to apply the catalogue when creating systematisation. For a full implementation of this package, it remains to adopt the Regulation on Coefficients for the Jobs from the Catalogue, and that the Ministry of Finance in the Budget Law adopts the basis for coefficients so that the salary reform can start.

All measures taken contribute to achieving the principles of decentralization, depoliticization, professionalization, rationalization and modernization.

However, very little was done on the depoliticization of the PA; this was also concluded in the EC Report for 2019<sup>5</sup>, which states that political influence on senior managerial appointments remains high,

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.mei.gov.rs/upload/documents/eu\\_dokumenta/godisnji\\_izvestaji\\_ek\\_o\\_napretku/Serbia\\_2019\\_Report.pdf](http://www.mei.gov.rs/upload/documents/eu_dokumenta/godisnji_izvestaji_ek_o_napretku/Serbia_2019_Report.pdf)



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especially regarding an excessive number of acting positions. The report concludes that it is a general impression that Serbia has made progress in PAR and in the coming period it is expected that it will start recruiting civil servants effectively through a merit-based procedure.

An important institution established as a result of public administration reform is the National Academy for Public Administration (NAPA), which represents the central place of the system of professional development in public administration. NAPA has the status of a publicly recognized organizer of non-formal adult education activities. NAPA's task is to implement modern training programs and thus contribute to the improvement of competences of employees in public administration, which results in better quality services for citizens and businesses.

The PAR Strategy also stipulates that the ethics of civil servants and the fight against corruption become part of the state exam. In addition, the Code of Conduct of Civil Servants in all institutions (a recommendation of the Anti-Corruption Agency) is one of the PAR measures and results contributing to the fight against corruption.

### PARS – Specific Objective 2: Introduction of harmonized merit-based public service system and improvement of HR management

#	PAR achievements	Why communicate? (communication logic)
2.1	Amendments to the Law on Civil Servants enabling merit-based recruitment and depoliticization, performance assessment and strengthened integrity and accountability	<p>Reform of the system of performance evaluation/appraisal for civil servants, and the reform of criteria for promotion and salary, completely approximates the system of HR management in public sector to the principles that apply in the business sector. Communication of this reform is necessary both internally and externally. By applying these principles, citizens and businesses get a more professional and better service, which increases the confidence in the state administration. At the same time, it should be communicated to employees in the state administration that their work will be evaluated in accordance with the competencies. These changes provide guidelines for the application of these principles in the overall public administration.</p> <p>Message for external public: Performance evaluation in accordance with competence and systematic professional development of the administration is going to positively impact both the citizens and businesses as it directly contributes to a better, more effective and more efficient service provision.</p> <p>Message for internal public: New legislation creates conditions for an increased level of knowledge and skills of civil servants, thus favourably influencing professional and career development, but also the improvement of the capacity of the administration to respond to the demands of citizens and businesses.</p>
2.2	By-laws for the civil service system: on internal and public job vacancies in the state administration bodies, on the processes of evaluating work	<p>By-laws have to be intensively internally communicated because they define:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the process of selecting candidates through competitive procedures, which involve more intensive tests of knowledge and behavioural competences which are essential for working in state bodies</li> </ol>



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performance and on the methodology for determining the outflow of personnel

2. the process of performance appraisal which introduces the novelty that the behavioural competencies and results of the work of organizational units and the whole body influence the overall assessment of one's work
3. the methodology for determining the outflow of personnel; this should allow us to locate the missing professional staff, the reasons for this and the measures that can be taken.

It is also important to communicate these changes with external public as they strengthen the professionalism of the civil service.

The same messages as for the previous PAR achievement (2.1) apply

### 2.3 Catalogue of job vacancies in public services

It is important for the internal public to communicate the list of jobs and their precise descriptions, as well as the binding rules. The existence of these regulations enables the standardization and professionalization of public administration, as well as harmonization with European principles. The Catalogue should be communicated to citizens as a crucial future mechanism for controlling the public sector employment process, but it is recommended that the external public be informed only when the legislative framework is ready (the Regulation on Coefficients).

Message for internal public: The introduction of the Job Catalogue contributes to the regulation of the employment system in public administration and requires from all public administration services to list and group all public sector jobs, which enables the fulfilment of future objectives and uniform evaluation of jobs.

### 2.4 The normative framework for the reform of the salary system was adopted, and the implementation was postponed for 1 January 2020

Salary reform brings a more equitable distribution of budgetary funds through the application of a uniform basis for the calculation of wages and a more objective performance appraisal of each employee. The process is accompanied by a whole set of laws which should enable this, in particular the Law on Public Servants. This is a crucial issue which needs to be properly internally communicated first with managers and staff in the units. The focus in external communication should be mainly on the professional public.

Message for external public: The reform of the salary system brings a fairer budget allocation and introduces a more objective performance evaluation of public sector employees and higher incomes for the most skilled and highly qualified staff.

Message for internal public: The reform of the salary system, in addition to introducing a more objective performance appraisal of all employees in public services, focusing on the complexity of work, competence, accountability, autonomy in work, communication and working conditions, also introduces precise performance standards. Adhering to new standards implies that employees in the PA who perform above standards will be motivated by higher salaries, while those performing below the standards will be referred to additional training first. Reduction of salaries and layoffs will be applied for serious violations of obligations, and all who work within standards will be entitled to a salary increase after five years.

### 2.5 NAPA established

The key factor in realising the planned reforms in the PA are the people who participate in them and are the subject of the reform. NAPA



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represents a significant institution for further development of the PA, through investments in the development of human potential.

Target groups should be informed about what NAPA offers, why its role is important and how much it can help in the future to have the best staff working in the public administration.

Message for external public: Continuous training of employees in the public sector enables every citizen to be sure that they will receive professional and adequate service in accordance with the best European practices and standards.

Message for internal public: Training brings continuous professional development, possibility of career advancement and the ability to respond to the needs of citizens and business in a standardized way.

- 2.6 Achievements in terms of amendments to the Law on Civil Servants, which include the Government's starting points for the establishment of a modern HR management system and the improvement of managerial accountability

Former personnel units, which primarily dealt with legal and formal recording of employees, are turning into HR units. Along with managers, they are the main driver of change in HR management. Therefore, mandatory training was introduced for managers who take part in competitive procedures and evaluate the work of civil servants and newly appointed officials.

These changes are very important for the internal public, because they directly contribute to the professionalization of public administration, which is reflected in the satisfaction of citizens with a more modern administration.

Message for external public: The criteria being introduced in the public administration sector professionalize public administration, which directly affects the quality of services provided and brings the administration closer to EU standards.

Message for internal public: Former personnel units are slowly turning into HR units which put people and managing people at the centre of their attention.

- 2.7 Code of Conduct for Civil Servants (linking competencies with code regulations)

- 2.8 Planned – introducing the Code of Conduct of employees at the local level

In support of developing a service-oriented PA, the introduction of this code is a significant contribution. A civil servant should be trusted by the public, maintain legality and impartiality in their work, be politically neutral, excluded from conflict of interest, etc. Article 3 of the Code stipulates: "A civil servant shall behave in the manner which contributes to the preservation and promotion of public confidence in the integrity, impartiality and efficiency of the body."

It is important to communicate this Code, both internally and externally, because it regulates the behaviour of civil servants through a set of rules which should serve as a measure of value and gain public confidence in public administration. It is in the public's interest to be familiar with the existence of these norms. Also, the internal public should adopt and apply the Code regulations.

Message for external public: There are standards of the behaviour of public administration employees which clearly prescribe what citizens and businesses can expect in matters relating to their rights, interests and



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obligations. The rules are in line with the standards of the European Code of Good Administrative Behaviour.

Message for internal public: The introduction of competencies in the work of public administration is in line with the existing Code of Conduct for Civil Servants, which should include the moral standards of the challenging profession they perform.

### *Table 3: Human resources*

The recommended messages for internal and external public, stated in Table 3, have a lot of common elements and it is important to communicate them as a whole complex of changes in the HR sector in public administration. It is of key importance to highlight the following:

- Evaluation of the work of the employees in PA in accordance with their competence directly contributes to a better, more effective and more efficient provision of services to the citizens and businesses
- Standardization of the criteria for employment and work in public administration helps professionalise the administration and brings it closer to the values of the European administrative space
- Continuous training contributes to the personal and professional development of public sector employees and guarantees better quality of services provided to citizens and businesses.

### **2.2.3. Public Finances**

Serbia has introduced internal financial control in the public sector in accordance with EU standards, which should contribute to the regulation of the public financial management system, complete and transparent control of the spending of money from the budget and prevention of unprofessional and inappropriate spending of taxpayers' money. The strengthening of financial accountability, control and discipline was achieved, a strategic framework for public finance management was adopted, which was the basis for improving the capacity of the budgetary inspection and the public procurement system. Developing a future e-Procurement system (submission of e-Bids, e-auctions, e-Catalogues, electronic dynamic procurement system, etc.) contributes to the establishment of systemic mechanisms for controlling public finances and preventing corruption in public procurement processes.

The external evaluation of the PARS confirms that the goals related to gender-responsive budgeting have been achieved<sup>6</sup>. Regular publication, along with the accompanying promotion of overall and detailed reports on budget execution as key measures of budget transparency, is equally important for citizens, the public financial management system and for Serbia's EU integration.

Table 4 contains a list of PAR achievements in the area of public finance management and public procurement, explained potential for communication and proposed messages for a wide public.

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<sup>6</sup> Over the past three years gender responsive budgeting - the most advanced example in the Balkans - has been gradually introduced and implemented through the program budgeting and the gender budget analysis and income and expenditure restructuring in order to promote gender equality. (External Evaluation of Serbian Public Administration Reform Strategy, pg. 219)





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## PARS - Specific Objective 3: Enhancement of public finance & public procurement management

#	PAR Achievements (communication potentials)	Why communicate? (communication logic)
3.1	Budget Inspection (amendments to the Law on the Budget System divided the work of the Budget Inspection and Internal Audit)	Programme budgeting aims to improve transparency and effectiveness in terms of defining activities, costs and concrete expected outcomes at the level of results and impact more precisely. In this way, programme budgeting links the budget process with the process of strategic planning and execution of the budget. Although this is mainly intended for the professional and internal public, the external public may be interested in the rules being introduced in the planning and execution of budgetary resources, harmonized with EU standards, contributing to an increased confidence of citizens in public administration.
3.2.	Programme budgeting enabled with projections for the next two years	Programme budgeting with projections for the next two years brings Serbia closer to European standards and values. It provides strategic, purposeful planning, which gives citizens confidence in the rational spending of budgetary funds. Message to all public: Grouped budget items according to programmes that have the same strategic goal increase the transparency and efficiency of the use of public funds through more precise identification of priorities, which also enables better insight into the effect of invested funds.
3.3	Public Procurement System and e-Procurement development - Improving the public procurement system that led to the opening of negotiations under Chapter 5 and the implementation of the first phase of alignment with the EU acquis	The level of quality of tendering procedures has been significantly improved, as well as the competitiveness of the tenderers. Systemic mechanisms have been established to prevent corruption in public procurement processes. The e-Procurement system is also being developed as well as the e-Procurement Portal. It is important to communicate that the system is accelerated by the fact that all data is electronically available, but also that the improvement will contribute to a complete digitization of the process, so that in 2020 the use of paper in tender procedures will pass into history. Message to the External Public: The introduction of modern information technologies in public procurement procedures ensures simplification and unification of procedures, improves economy, transparency and competitiveness, and significantly limits potential corruptive actions. The regulation of this system directly contributes to harmonization with the EU standards. Message to the Internal Public: Improving the public procurement system standardizes key processes, delivers greater operability and facilitates information transfer, and electronic document exchange significantly reduces the possibility of errors.
3.4	Improved Operational Framework for Public Finance	As a result of PAR and European integration, this framework contributes to more professional regulation of the public finance management system, transparently in controlling the spending of



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Management and Control (FMC & PIFC)	money from the budget and preventing unprofessional and unintentional spending of funds. Message to all target groups: A professionally managed public finance management system allows for transparent control over the spending of budget funds, contributes to the stability of public finances and directly affects the EU's financial support.
3.5 Reports on budget execution (increased reporting quality)	The publication of the budget execution report, especially in the format of open data, is important to communicate because it contributes to better analytics and transparency of the work of all state bodies. A good example is the publication of the budget execution report by the Ministry of Finance and a number of cities and municipalities. A message to all target groups: proper reports on budget execution, as a means to implement policy, are important control instruments and should ensure that the current practice of administrative classification cost is slowly abandoned and opens space for sound information on the purpose, the end-user and the total amount of funds.
3.6 Gender responsive budgeting	This new tool looks at ways to eliminate gender-based inequalities in society in a systematic way. The introduction of indicators for gender responsive budgeting contributes to a better and more purposeful distribution of budget funds. Message to all public: Gradually introducing the principle of gender equality into the budget process implies balanced revenue and expenditure planning in order to ensure equal access to resources, services and opportunities.

Table 4: Public finances

The main messages related to achievements in improving public finance management and public procurement are:

- Professionally regulated public financial management system ensures more efficient use of public funds, enables transparent control of spending of budget funds, contributes to the stability of public finances and directly affects EU financial support
- Improving the public procurement system standardizes key processes, bringing greater operability, increased cost-effectiveness, transparency and competitiveness and the administration closer to EU standards.

### 2.2.4. Business Environment and Quality of Services

The Government has made efforts to increase legal security and improve the business environment and the quality of service, but most importantly, a change of attitude of public administration towards citizens and businesses is initiated: the administration is changing from control-oriented towards service-oriented. In the last few years, significant progress has been made in improving services, enacting laws governing public policies, public consultations and e-Government.



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The main achievement according to the changed Law on General Administrative Procedure / LGAP is that the employees finally started to exchange data on which the official records are kept, which significantly eases all processes in the public administration. In addition, the one stop shop service system provides for the possibility of data collection and exchange by the institutions themselves instead of citizens. Good examples of the functioning of a one stop shop are: an integrated procedure for issuing building permits in accordance with the Law on Planning and Construction, issuing personal documents carried out by MIA (identity card, passport, driving licence) or certification of health cards (related Tax Administration and Health Insurance Funds). MPALSG is introducing Service Delivery Centres in eight cities and municipalities: Lazarevac, Šabac, Bela Palanka, Pirot, Kruševac, Smederevska Palanka, Sombor and Žitište.

Services provided to citizens through the e-Government portal (scheduling of appointments, payment, sending requests, etc.) include:

- "Baby, Welcome to the World" (e-Baby) service - registration of the child immediately after birth in the hospital;
- Enrolment in kindergartens (e-Kindergarten) and primary schools (e-Enrolment) - for enrolment of children in the first grade of primary schools, the data for the birth certificate and the certificate of residence are provided by the schools themselves - this used to be the obligation of the parents;
- E-Payment allows all fees to be paid electronically via payment cards and iPay vouchers. Also, municipalities are gradually being equipped with POS terminals so that in the future all fees can be paid on the spot with a card, which saves both time and money for commissions charged by banks and post offices.
- Local Tax Administration (LTA) is an information portal for property tax reporting which provides insight into the level of tax collection, verification of obligations and payment by card.

Unlike the e-Kindergarten and e-Enrolment services which are accessed through the e-Government portal and aim to simplify bureaucratic procedures, e-Inspector is an internal unified information system for national inspections which enables the digitization of inspection work and automated risk assessment, as well as the planning of inspection controls. The system supports all business processes of inspections. Currently, almost all inspections are included in the e-Inspector system. In planning the activities related to the achievements of the inspection supervision reform, the plan for the promotion of inspection supervision developed by the Coordination Commission for Inspection Supervision for 2019 was taken into account in order to avoid overlapping, while the activities proposed in the AP will be focused on the promotion of the first results of the operation of the new system by mid-2020. The communication basis for the promotion of inspection control will be based on the results of the new system of work of inspections and on good practice examples.

The Tax Administration is a good example of the functioning of online e-Taxation service through which a unified tax collection and VAT reimbursement is implemented. The connection between the TA system and the Health Insurance Fund enables automatic certification of health cards and completely eliminates the need to spend time to collect documentation from various institutions for the purpose of certifying health cards.

Table 5 identifies the achievements of the public administration reform and the selected topics for communication by grouping the achievements brought by LGAP and e-LGAP into sets that need to be communicated together, as progress in the work of the public administration.





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### PARS - Specific Objective 4: Increasing legal security and improving the business environment and the quality of service delivery

#	PAR Achievements	Why communicate? (communication logic)
4.1	<p>More efficient administrative procedures (LGAP / e-LGAP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Law on e-Government includes data from an increased number of registers, for example from birth registers, register of residence, personal documents, unemployment, social protection, etc.</li> <li>○ At present, there are 320 PA institutions in the e-LGAP system</li> </ul>	<p>The Law on Administrative Procedure (LGAP) has contributed to the communication between the state administration bodies being efficient and flexible, introducing electronic communication and a one stop shop. This will enable citizens and businesses to submit only one request and communicate only with one authority that will eventually to act upon this request (to make a decision, to issue a permit ...). Regarding the manner of one stop shop arrangement, the solutions from the LGAP are flexible and enabled the situational adjustment. One stop shop can also be electronic and through it can apply requests for issuing documents that involve activities of several institutions. The existence of registries, registration of residence, personal documents, unemployment or social protection in electronic form has enabled the development of many services on the principle of one stop shop.</p>
4.2	e-Government Portal (IT system for e-LGAP)	<p>Consequently, the introduction of e-LGAP has begun, the realization of which will bring significant annual savings to the citizens and the economy of Serbia. Estimates of savings go up to five million hours of standing in rows and about a million hours of work by civil servants. Platform e-LGAP, which connects 23 databases of eight major institutions, is a major advancement in the use of IT technology to develop services and speed up and simplify procedures. Thanks to e-LGAP, which provided interconnection of the database of institutions and data exchange, on which official records are kept in electronic form, the conditions for the development of e-services have been created.</p>
4.3.	One Stop Shop	<p>Good examples of PAR performance are time-saving services and at the same time contribute to a change in the opinion that contact with the public administration brings the standard image and recall the unpleasant experience with “returning for one more paper” and unfinished services. The Reform enables the simple acquisition of personal documents (identity card, driver's license, passport), which is now possible in one place, with electronic booking schedule. The introduction of electronic tax payment is ongoing, which allows all taxes to be paid electronically via payment cards and iPay vouchers. The e-Payment service is a solution that will be systematically introduced to all public administration departments. In addition, some municipalities are being equipped with POS terminals, which will enable citizens to pay taxes at the counters in the municipalities using payment cards in the future. This significantly saves time because they will only have to</p>
4.4.	Enabled exchange of data from official records through e-services	
4.5.	Services in the form of one stop shop: E-Baby, e-Kindergarten, e-Enrolment, building permits, registration of property tax at the premises, automatic health cards certification, registration of businesses, simplification of the procedure for registration of property	



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### 4.7. E-Payment

visit one counter and it saves money because the citizens will be exempted from paying commissions to banks and post offices. All above listed changes and achievements facilitate the procedure itself and provide citizens with a quality service.

Message for all target groups: Public administration is approaching citizens and business through the provision of services in accordance with their needs, while taking into account the quality and accessibility of services. Efficient provision of services affects the improvement of business environment and legal certainty.

### 4.6. Unified Inspection Supervision – Law on Inspection Control (e-Inspector for Inspection Services)

Citizens and businesses have the site of the Coordination Commissioner [www.inspektor.gov.rs](http://www.inspektor.gov.rs) as the central location for information or inspections, where they can find all adopted documents on supervision procedures, various instructions and similar.

The reformed Law on Inspection Control reduces the administrative costs of inspection control and the area of unfair competition in the form of a "grey economy", which encourages business predictability and strengthens the investment environment. The inspection itself has been struggling with the negative perception of the public for a long time, so these reforms and the introduction of the e-platform are aimed at raising the inspectors' reputation.

Message for businesses: Introduction of a single inspection supervision is a key step in creating a predictable and fair business environment and contributing to the reduction of the possibility of subjective interpretation of regulations, unequal treatment of businesses and unfair competition.

Message for citizens: The role of inspections is to ensure that the services meet certain standards, to protect citizens from unfair treatment by businesses (in areas such as health, safety, etc.), but also from unfair treatment by the inspections themselves.

### 4.7 Consolidated tax collection - through a functional electronic Tax Administration system and e-Porezi application

Transformation of the Tax Administration is a process which has been implemented in parallel for a long time; it is an inevitable part of the PAR.

A consolidated tax collection has been set as a good example of new services, where tax returns are sent electronically, as well as requests for VAT refund. This is above all a good example which has been functioning for a long time and it has saved a lot of time for all taxpayers and enabled quick overview of the situation in terms of tax returns. It significantly encourages a positive business environment, saves time, and therefore money. Since the establishment of this system, e.g. over 25 million tax refund requests have been filled in electronically and processed. This has almost completely eliminated the need for citizens to physically



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come to the PA, and thus contributed to the rationalization of jobs in the PA.

### 4.8 Improved and digitalized system of Local Tax Administration

Message for businesses: By introducing electronic systems in the PA and further digitization of the PA services, an efficient time-saving system has been created, which ensures a predictable business environment in terms of tax liabilities.

Realization of PAR measures (e-LGAP, digitalization) enabled the centralization of data, which was the basis for the development of a new one-click tax verification system. In addition to this simple verification system, citizens and businessmen in the Republic of Serbia can also apply for an assessment of property tax electronically. This reformed system has significantly increased the collection of property taxes, ensured the monitoring of the level of tax collection, simple verification of tax obligations and electronic payment using payment cards. The consolidated system significantly limits the scope for fraud related to property (for example, when granting social assistance) or when paying property taxes. This system also contributes to a faster and better cadastral reform.

Message for citizens: A quick and reliable submission of tax applications for property tax assessment, electronic tax payments and online overview of complete property are available on a "one click" basis.

Table 5: Business environment and quality of services

### 2.2.5. Participation and transparency

Opening public administration to citizens through better access to useful and quality information is essential for the promotion of PAR results. Participation represents an important principle of democratization of the state and the PA, and the key element of the two-way communication. Transparency, as the imperative of a comprehensive reform, brings Serbia closer to European standards and values and at the same time strengthens public confidence in the PA. Demystification of the improved system of tax collection, budgeting and spending of funds will raise the awareness of taxpayers about improvements in public finance and public procurement management, and indirectly contribute to the increase of "tax culture" among citizens (voluntary compliance with tax regulations through the education of taxpayers). Access to information should be tailored to the user in a way that provides accurate, reliable and understandable information. Promoting the opening of public data and



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the Code of Conduct for Civil Servants in all institutions (recommendations of the Anti-Corruption Agency) are measures of PAR results that contribute to the fight against corruption.

The Law on State Administration, as another good PAR product, prescribes that all state institutions are obliged to inform the public about their work through the media and in another appropriate manner. E-government encourages the promotion of openness and transparency of public administration through better access to information of public importance, through the Work Information booklet and publishing relevant information on the website of each institution. The new Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance will oblige all institutions to publish the information booklet through a single and unified e-application, accessible to all citizens.

In the EC Report for 2019, it was positively assessed the introduction of regulatory frameworks for public consultations supplementing the Law on State Administration and Local Self-Government and the Law on Planning System, requiring public consultations to be organized early in the policy-making process. However, it was emphasized that the impact of these regulations should only be assessed in practice. The Government website has been amended but does not yet provide easy access to the main public policy documents of the government. The Report states that the government's annual work plans or action plans for the implementation of government programs are available, but also emphasizes that the government should begin to measure achievements in relation to the stated goals, and not to report on the conducted activities. This is in full agreement with the findings of the situational analysis, which preceded the development of this Strategic Communication Framework. In general, all the websites of institutions dealing with public administration reform contain information on the reform, but there is still a greater focus on informing about the activities of management, rather than on the placement of information that is essential for citizens and the economy. This practice should be changed soon.

### PARS - Specific Objective 5: Increasing citizen participation, transparency and improvement of ethical standards and accountability in the performance of public administration tasks

#	PAR Achievements (communication potentials)	Why communicate? (communication logic)
5.1	Enhanced public participation in law drafting and policy making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Law on State Administration (Article 77)</li> <li>Law on the planning system</li> </ul>	<p>The standard participatory model represents involvement of citizens in communication with the PA, which enables them to express their views and make suggestions for improvement of the PA. The Law on State Administration prescribes that every state institution must organize public consultations at an early stage of adoption / amendment of regulations (Article 77). e-Participacija portal (<a href="http://javnerasprave.euprava.gov.rs">javnerasprave.euprava.gov.rs</a>) was launched, where you can follow all public debates, their calendar and timeline. Also, with the adoption of the Law on Planning System, establishment of PPS and the introduction of Single Information System for the planning and implementation of public policies, the involvement of the public in policy making became more certain. System regulation contributes to transparency and openness towards citizens and enables them to monitor and participate.</p> <p><i>The importance of this process is also explained in the achievement 1.1 in Table 2</i></p> <p>Message for citizens: Decisions made by state administration bodies reflect on the whole society. Now there is an open possibility for</p>



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### 5.2 Law on Local Self-Government (Civil Budget, Citizens' Initiatives - Petitions)

participation and public consultations at an early stage of adoption and amendment of all regulations concerning citizens and economy.

The Law on Local Self-Government introduces the involvement of citizens in the process of preparation of the investment part of the budget of the local self-government, which ensures the participation of citizens in deciding where their money goes in all LSG. Strengthening citizen participation strengthens the democratization of society, and elections are no longer the only moment when citizens are "being asked". In addition, the new Law encourages citizens to start initiatives of relevance to their environment. The number of citizens' signatures required to launch a civil initiative is five percent of the total number of citizens with voting rights. Informing citizens about this right directly raises their awareness that their opinion is important, and it creates a pressure on LSG to have a legal obligation to involve citizens in the system of planning and decision-making.

Message: The participation in deciding the development of priorities improves the quality of life in local communities.

### 5.3 Independent internal control mechanisms (5 institutions)

The State Audit Institution, the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection, the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, the Ombudsperson and the Anti-Corruption Agency play an important role in the supervision and control of the work of state bodies. Modern public administration, according to European standards, implies the existence of strong control mechanisms that will ensure that every citizen is protected first from potential violations of his rights by the state and, on the other hand, that the state system is protected from the "arbitrariness of the individual".

The State Audit Institution checks whether funds from the budget are spent in accordance with the law. The Commissioner for Information of Public Importance shall ensure that information on the work of state bodies is accessible to everyone and takes care that personal data on citizens are not misused. The Commissioner for the Protection of Equality ensures equal treatment of persons or groups on the basis of their personal traits.

### 5.4 The new Law on Access to Information of Public Importance (drafted and awaiting adoption) introduces an e-Bulletin

The new Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance will prescribe mandatory publishing of electronic reports (bulletins), through an unified e-application, accessible to all institutions. The application was created in cooperation with the OGP initiative in Serbia. All institutions will be obliged to publish updated and uniform reports, primarily financial reports, reports on public procurement, investments, etc.

Message: Reformed administration encourages the creation of an open and transparent public administration through more efficient access to information of public importance, since citizens have the right to know what the state bodies are doing and how the taxpayer's money is spent.



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### 5.5 Open Data, as the result of increased transparency of PA

The opening of data represents an important step in strengthening the transparency of the administration, and thus strengthening confidence in public administration. Communication potential lies in the careful selection of the most interesting and useful examples of the application of open data. Particularly important two target groups are the IT community in Serbia, which should be motivated to create useful applications and the institution responsible for managing these data, where quality information can contribute to the depreciation of the present fear of misuse of such data. The Office for Cooperation with CSO has begun the process of opening data on the civic sector and financing CSO from the state budget. In cooperation with the Business Registers Agency, it is currently working on the creation of the first comprehensive database of CSO (associations, foundations and endowments) that will be searched according to different criteria such as territory, area of achievement of goals, year of establishment, activity, status, and other CSO attributes. The database will enable greater transparency and availability of CSO data to the interested public and serve all those who need this information - from the public administration, other CSO, the media, donors and citizens. One of the good examples is the mobile application with the medicine database <https://data.gov.rs/sr/reuses/baza-lekova/> which allows citizens who find themselves abroad without the necessary medicine to easily find the name of the drug in another country and purchase adequate replacement. The process of opening data enables better communication with citizens, involvement of citizens in policy making processes and improvement of public services.

Message: The opening of data contributes to making better personal decisions, encourages greater engagement in the community, provides conditions for the development of the digital economy and enables greater control of the policy making process.

### 5.6 Open Government Partnership (OGP)

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a voluntary international initiative that promotes transparency, citizen empowerment, the fight against corruption and the use of new technologies in order to strengthen the governance system. Serbia's membership in this initiative (since 2012) is an additional quality in the communication of the PA and civil society bodies, as it ensures public participation in improving the integrity, openness, efficiency and accountability of public authorities and attracting the support of the civil sector, academic and professional public.

The OGP initiated and implemented two two-year action plans and some significant initiatives through them: Open Data, electronic work information, the expansion of Open Data to local governments, etc.

Message: The Open Government Partnership initiative is an exceptional example of good practice for involving civil society





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organizations in the development and adoption of regulations and public policy documents.

5.7 Implementation of the Law on Protection of Whistle-blowers

The protection of persons reporting corruption and abuse of position in a public institution is a significant reform measure and a result that contributes to the fight against corruption and the strengthening of the integrity of officials.

5.8 Monthly Online Bulletin of Public Finance introduced; the practice of publishing reports on budget execution in LSG units has been introduced

The practice of publishing a report on budget execution in the LSG and a monthly online Bulletin of Public Finance allows citizens to have a true picture of economic trends based on complete statistics not burdened with misinterpretations. In addition to ensuring transparency, the practice of publishing data about spending the money of taxpayers encourages citizens to greater involvement. The communication potential lies in the regular informing of citizens that the data is available. The Law on the Anti-Corruption Agency prescribes the obligation to establish a mechanism which ensures an efficient functioning of the institutions by strengthening accountability, simplifying complicated procedures, increasing transparency in decision-making, strengthening ethics and control, and abandoning ineffective practices. When the majority of citizens is informed of the legal obligations of institutions, the opportunity for having more pressure on the institutions to comply with the legislation increases.

5.9 Integrity plans were adopted in more than 50% of the PA bodies

Message: A relatively high degree of adoption of integrity plans and the introduction of the practice of regularly publishing reports indicates the increasing willingness of the public administration to follow the principles of transparency and European standards and values.

*Table 6: Participation and transparency*

The main message sent out by PAR accomplishments in the field of participation and transparency is that the administration is more ready today to follow the principles of good governance than it did a few years ago, but that in practice there is a lot of space for improvement, especially in how well the citizens are informed about all mechanisms available to realize their rights in local communities, but also at the central level.



### 3. Communication capacities and resources

Communication capacities and resources for public administration reform were assessed within the Situation Analysis which has been developed as the basis for defining an effective communication framework for pursuing visibility and communication about PAR and PFM reforms. It is based on a public opinion poll, SWOT analysis, interviews, focus groups discussions, analysis of media, websites and social media accounts, document research, etc. The findings confirmed the assumption that there is a lack of human resources responsible for communication, both at central and local level, and the need for increasing the competences. Internal communication needs to be improved and mechanisms for more efficient coordination between stakeholders identified, together with clear, well defined procedures for internal and external communication. Available financial resources for PAR communication need to be pooled together to produce synergetic effects. **Capacities:** At the central level there are civil servants dealing with communication in institutions involved in PAR communication. The following table shows the overall communication capacity of 7 institutions, the beneficiaries of the project "PAR Visibility and Communication":

	Number of staff		Organisational structure	Strategic communication
	PR	Technical support		
<b>MPALSG</b>	3	Social media agency support	No department, there should be one	No strategy, there should be one
<b>MEI</b>	6 (2 partly technical)		Communication Department within the Sector for Communication, EU	2 Strategies: for EU integration process and for support through IPA funds with annual APs
<b>MoF</b>	5	+ IT department Cabinet	Department of Public Affairs	Yes
<b>PPS</b>	1	1	No department, there should be one	No strategy, there should be one
<b>NAPA</b>	1	1	In the process of defining and organising jobs within PR Dept	Yes
<b>OCSO</b>	1	-	No department	No strategy, there should be one
<b>IT Office</b>	3	Sector for IT	PR department	Yes, as well as Action Plans for each project

Table 1: Communication capacity

At the local level, however, there are very few public servants whose job description includes only PR and it has been established that there is only a network of communicators, i.e. PR managers at local level run by the SCTM.

**Coordination:** Findings regarding the procedure of internal and external communication and the practice of the main actors show that there is room for improvement of internal communication, especially when it comes to more adequate communication of PAR within the administration. Improving internal communication and identifying mechanisms for more efficient coordination between stakeholders are among the most important goals. Moreover, existing communication networks (horizontal and vertical, such as IPA visibility officers, network of PR officers in LSGs, network of PR managers conducted by SCCM, etc.) should be used more efficiently in order to make better and more productive use of the existing communication capacities.





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**Channels:** Situation Analysis has confirmed that all major channels of communication are in place (events, traditional media, websites, social media, etc.), although most of them lack a strategic approach. Communication is intensive and all available channels are used, but there is still a need for standardized, clear, well-defined procedures for internal and external communication. Situation analysis findings show that all institutions organize events or participate in events. The intensity differs, as well as the connection of these events with PAR-related topics.

**Procedures:** When it comes to procedures for placing content on the internet and social networks (and for tracking visits, interactions, etc.), but also in terms of the intensity of content publishing, the existing practice varies very much. In general, Situation Analysis has shown that all institutions communicate through print, electronic and internet media and monitor and analyse their posts.

**Funds:** The results of the situation analysis showed that there are funds in the national budget allocated for communication activities and they usually include: the costs for staff engaged especially for communication / PR, photo and video production, press clipping services, maintenance and hosting of websites, media and campaigns in social media and other costs related to visibility and public relations.

In addition to these resources, EU financial assistance also includes support for the implementation of communication activities.

A comprehensive assessment of the communication environment was also presented in the SWOT analysis, which was developed together with the beneficiaries / stakeholders. Special attention was paid to weaknesses such as: lack of capacities (especially human), lack of horizontal and vertical coordination between communication officers, lack of procedures and even vague terminology, negative image of public administration and civil servants, insufficient interest of the media, etc. and how to solve them.

The need to improve internal communication is among the most important conclusions of the Situation Analysis. Modalities for dissemination of information include: strategic level (Government through MPALSG towards other ministries and the local level), operational level (state secretaries, assistant ministers and PR officers), while at the technical level it is necessary to centralize PAR-related content and information on the MPALSG website.

The SWOT analysis presented below confirms these conclusions:



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<b>Internal</b>	<p><b>Strengths - S</b></p> <p>S1 Enough funding (budget, EU funds/support)          S2 New beginning (laws, establishment and strengthening the institutions) and a good timing because the focus has so far been on establishing a legislative framework, and now there are concrete results of PAR that need to be communicated well          S3 Favourable environment (political will, awareness of administration and the citizens for change)          S4 Cooperation with the CSO's</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses - W (internal)</b></p> <p>W1 Insufficient Capacities          W2 Organization (structure, hierarchy, lack of management involvement and interest)          W3 Absence of procedures          W4 Deficiency of general information (what is the reform, who needs to lead)          W5 There is no central PAR point          W6 Insufficient Coordination          W7 Under-informed state and public administration          W8 Inadequate/not understandable language          W9 Frequent delays of deadlines which were communicated to the public, resulting in increased distrust in the capacity of the administration to fulfil the goals it poses</p> <p><b>Weaknesses - W (external)</b></p> <p>W10 Negative image of the State and Public administration          W11 - Lack of interest of media              - Lack of knowledge              - Lack of awareness of common societal interests              - Lack of continuity of media relations          W12 Politicisation          W13 Habits          W14 Lack of professionalism</p>
	<p><b>External</b></p> <p><b>Opportunities - O</b></p> <p>O1 Operational level - Coordination (Chief of the PM cabinet – Council - meetings)          O2 Web platform          O3 Application (Notice board - <i>Oglasna tabla</i>)          O4 Coordination (local/regional/central level)          O5 Brief (where we are)          O6 The upcoming Strategy (PAR Communication Framework)</p>	<p><b>Threats – T</b></p> <p>T1 Political level          T2 Lack of coordination          T3 Sensationalism of the media          T4 Slow reform implementation          T5 Elections (slowing down)          T6 Fluctuation of the workforce</p>

Table 2: SWOT analysis

The continuation of the SWOT matrix has been developed as a model for defining a solution on how to use strengths and opportunities to overcome or reduce weaknesses and threats. It is further elaborated in Section 5 - Communication Approach.

Bearing in mind the different level of knowledge related to PAR and unbalanced communication practices, communicators at the central and local level require additional training and continuous support in the implementation of communication tools and activities. What is common to all institutions is that they are interested in training in the field of communication, and some of the proposed topics are: coordination of communication, presentation skills; communication skills, internal communication, PR techniques and tools, cross-sectoral cooperation, case studies and success stories, new approaches to digital communication, two-way communication, media relations, networking and strategic PR planning.



### 4. Communication Objectives

Despite the numerous established channels of communication and significant efforts in PAR communication, the public is insufficiently informed about what actually the reforms involve and how they bring benefits to citizens.

PAR and PFM reforms are among the prerequisites for joining the European Union. This is why the strategic framework intends to provide better visibility and perception of citizens both regarding the reforms in these areas and the EU support to this process. With a view to this, the strategic framework integrates communication with the general communication framework on Serbia's accession to the European Union, stressing that reforms in this area are only a part of a wider reform process. A key message of the Serbian Government's Communication Strategy for Serbia's accession to the European Union is that "changes on the road to the European Union, with all the difficult decisions they bring, are a unique opportunity for each and all of us to improve our lives and the lives of our families in a regulated country and a fair society"<sup>7</sup>. The latest EC report recommends that EU accession should be more actively and unequivocally communicated in public debates.

Almost all the main findings of the situation analysis point to one direction: it is necessary to translate the communication of progress and the results of the reforms into something that citizens will more easily associate with their experiences and needs. This, in turn, will support a change in the negative perception of public services among citizens.

This strategic framework is aimed at ensuring improved visibility and perception of the essence of the administration reform. At its focal point such communication has the citizen, but also society as a whole, as the starting and ending point.

The main objective of the Strategic Communication Framework is to ensure that the Serbian citizens **understand the essence and advantages of the implementation of PAR and PFM reform. Linking people's experiences with reform processes and with the process of transformation of public administration is a way for communication to be perceived as meaningful and important for citizens.**

Specific goals include:

- Improved public awareness and knowledge of the process, results and effects of PAR and PFM;
- Increased citizens' awareness of EU support to PAR and PFM;
- Improved mechanisms of internal communication and coordination between stakeholders in the sector.

Expected results, therefore, include:

- Increased understanding of the meaning and content of reforms in the field of public administration and public finance management. The citizens should be able to link the changes happening in the public administration to their experiences (What's in it for me as a citizen?);
- Increasing the positive attitude of citizens towards the reforms being implemented;
- Increased knowledge and positive attitude of the public regarding EU support to PAR in Serbia.

### 5. Target Groups

Public administration reform and public finance management reform are a comprehensive process involving numerous institutions, organizations and stakeholders, opening up space for their active role in the communication process. The strategic framework identifies the stakeholders as partners, i.e.

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<sup>7</sup> [http://www.mei.gov.rs/upload/documents/nacionalna\\_dokumenta/communication\\_strategy\\_2011.pdf](http://www.mei.gov.rs/upload/documents/nacionalna_dokumenta/communication_strategy_2011.pdf)



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participants in a communication process who can and should initiate information exchange and engage in spreading the influence in the general public, but also in specific communication niches and topics.

### Target Groups for increasing communication and visibility of PAR

#### External public

Target Group	Justification and Objective
<b>Citizens</b>	<p>Main objective is to raise understanding on PAR, present clear benefits of PAR/PFM, raise awareness of EU role and support to the PAR in Serbia, with specific focus on improved and standardise public services tailored for satisfying their needs and expectations.</p> <p>There is need to increase the transparency of the PA and through this process gradually increase the level of citizens' trust in the PA.</p> <p>Promoting the transparency of public finance system through the implemented reformed measures leads to the strengthening of tax culture, countering shadow economy, increasing trust in how the taxpayers' money is spent (demystification and transparent presentation of the tax collection system).</p> <p>As the PA services are delivered on the "take it or leave it" basis, as PA has no competition, specific objective in communication is to promote and generate citizens' feedback, thus showing that their opinion will have tangible influence on continuous tailoring of PA services to citizens.</p>
<i>Young (16 – 26)</i>	<p>The first contact of this group with PA comes when they need to obtain personal ID, driving licence, etc. Currently, for the majority of them their parents are engaged in obtaining personal documents. The communication potential of approaching this group lies in the promotion of the services which have already been digitized and thus adapted to their preferred style of communication. They vote for the first time and obtain the civil right to elect and be elected. The communication of the modernization of the administration to them is important from the point of view that Serbia is slowly getting a modern administration, harmonized with the EU standards.</p>
<i>Young (27-35)</i>	<p>This group is specific in terms of 'fast' living and working and their contact with the PA has to satisfy their needs in terms of getting the best possible service in the shortest possible time. Members of this group predominantly use computers, smartphones and internet to get informed, communicate and do business. For them, the implementation of the e-Government Concept and accordingly all e-services is normal and welcome, as it offers multiple options to solve their problems. The greatest communication challenge is to be a step ahead of them and use "their" channels to timely provide information about the e-services available to them. They are often facing the decision of whether to leave the country or not, and it is advisable to communicate examples of good practice which show that the public administration in Serbia is more advanced than the administration in the EU member states in some respects and to emphasize the direction of development of the administration towards modern PA harmonized with EU principles and values.</p>
<i>36-55</i>	<p>This group is entering a period of harder adaptation to changes. They need to have coherent and fashionable PA service customized to their needs, and to satisfy their needs in the shortest time possible. Majority of them are parents, so their focus is on children – thus they are interested in all new service related to the parenting. The same as for 27-35 subgroup, the benefits of using the e-Government concept should be additionally promoted.</p>
<i>Urban population</i>	<p>This group includes all age sections, but they are separately presented as they are more informed and politically aware, and PA institutions are geographically closest to them. Accordingly, specific objective in communication with them is the promotion of transparent PAR measures in order to encourage trust, and</p>

Target Subgroups



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openness of the government, LSG and PA for active participation of citizens in policy and decision making.

*Rural communities and farmers*

This group includes all age sections, but they are separately presented as they are geographically dislocated from the PA centres and they have specific needs. One of their problems is that they have to travel to the city frequently and spend too much time to complete PA-related activities. Accordingly, specific focus in communication with them will be on promotion of “one stop shop” service which allows them to satisfy their needs and complete everything in one arrival to the town. For this target group it is also important to communicate a new electronic registration service for season workers.

*55+ including pensioners*

Specificity of this group is that they find it hard to adapt to changes and new technologies and therefore they need to have services adapted to their lifestyle. Also, since they have ‘more time’ to set aside for contact with PA, a specific objective in communication with them will be on building a two-way communication – so-called communication by asking. This approach can help them be better informed and increase their participation. In communication of one-stop shop services to this sub-group, focus has to be on those services which that are not e-Government based, as they have less trust in new technologies and use digital services much less than other sub-groups on average.

## Businesses

Communication needs to be improved in order to raise the awareness of the benefits of public administration reform measures for enterprises. The priority is to inform owners of the companies and employees about innovations for business sector in public services, and to promote participative process in the decision-making processes on policy-making. Also, raising the awareness of taxpayers about results in modernisation of financial control and procurement (e-Procurement system: “New features – new opportunities”) and increasing public money spending on domestic companies. This group should be seen as a group which views joining the EU as a step forward in creating a more transparent and business-friendly environment, with newly adopted EU standards facilitating trade in a more stable and predictable business environment.

*Business associations*

Business associations are designed as information exchange networks in the market. Their interest is to increase membership and secure better contact with PA for their members, which depends on the level of information they have about the results of PAR. The specific objective in communication with them is to include them in specific programmes for businesses and in-depth briefings on improved services further improvement plans. They should be treated as a partners in bringing PAR and reformed services to businesses, and support them by recognising the importance of their role and promoting their initiatives. For example, the reform of the attitude of the inspection towards businessmen leads to better conditions (predictability and fairness) and to the suppression of the grey economy. The PAR processes bring Serbia significantly closer to the EU, chiefly through the introduction of best European standards and practices.

*Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)*

SMEs, as a large community, need to be timely informed about changes which affect their business, but also provided with clearer guides for services and procedures which are sometimes complex by nature. This is a field in which a great shift in communication can be made if public administration is seen as modern and aimed at facilitating business processes and saving time. It is also important to emphasize that the reform of the inspection supervision improves the predictability of operations and suppresses unfair competition. It is necessary to focus on promoting one-stop-shop services and provide SMEs with more intensive information on reformed services, including tax, inspection and those covered by e-LGAP.

*Corporations*

Business corporations, beside all specificities of relations of businesses with PA, are paying attention to transparency of procedures and rules set by laws. Specific communication objective is to increase the level of their participation in public

Target Subgroups





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events / conferences / special briefings (with participation of PA officials) aimed at presenting new legislation and improved PA services.

## Media

Media have an important role to play in promoting the transparency of PA and all results achieved in this field. This group is the main channel for achieving an increased understanding of the meaning and content of reforms and a bridge linking the experiences of citizens and businesses with reform processes. Creating a positive attitude of citizens towards reforms and EU support, as well as increasing trust in the PA, depends largely on how the PAR is reported in the media. Besides approaching them as communication channels in the process of opening the PA to the citizens and business, the media should be treated as partners. The media influence public opinion and awareness raising about the modernization of public administration. Placing new information about 'attractive' improved services for the citizens, and more importantly, consistent reporting about the fact that PAR is a demanding, long and beneficial process for all target groups, strengthens both the role of the media and the role of public administration.

### Target Subgroups

*TV & Radio*

All different types of media will be treated as separate target sub-groups, as listed.

*Print media / daily*

They have same interest, to increase their media reach and to have easy access to accurate and up to date information.

*Print media / weekly*

Specific objective in communication with the media is to provide them with easy access to attractive and well drafted reliable information arising from PAR, in ready to use formats (written, photo and video materials).

*News portals*

### Influential journalists ("opinion leaders")

The objective is to create strong liaisons with opinion leaders in media who will actively support positive reflection on PAR.

*Journalists*

Building and maintaining a well-informed and active journalist community in the PAR process is one of the main objectives of this strategic framework. The communication goals are to improve their understanding of the role of public administration, the reform processes and the challenges brought by the reforms, and to create a database of journalists continuously dealing with this sector.

### Target Subgroups

*Media owners/ managers*

Specific interest of this target group is to have timely access to up to date information, as well as their exclusivity. Therefore, the specific objective in communication with them will be building stronger relationship between PA (MPALSG, MoF, IT Office), LSG Public Information Officers (PIOs) and this target group in order to secure proper placement of current news about the PAR results, initiatives and plans. They are led by interest of increasing their media reach and they want to feel that they are consulted on and informed about what is going on.

### CSOs, Academia and Expert Public

There is a need to encourage debate on EU values and raise important issues regarding the PAR process. Main communication objectives are to ensure the understanding of the PAR goals and support in informing this group about the significance of their active involvement. The participation of this group in design, delivery of and advocating reforms, and mainly in public policy making processes is of the great interest of the entire society. Increasing visibility of OGP results and initiatives is of key importance for achieving these goals. It is necessary to use NGO and Academia's communication resources to a greater extent as important channels.

### Target Subgroups

*Faculties and science institutes (Law, political, organisation sciences*

Creating strategic partnerships with universities and ensuring visibility within this target group through regular briefings can support the strengthening of this target group, which is by its nature close to public administration.

*NGOs dealing with transparency issue*

These NGOs want to be consulted on and informed about reform processes. This group has a high participation potential and usually a critical attitude toward the government. Accordingly, communication should be focused on creating strategic partnerships between these NGOs and MPALSG, MoF and independent monitoring bodies. Specific communication objective will be to strengthen the



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visibility of their joint initiatives and projects with government, especially in the field of open data.

*NGOs dealing with democratization*

These NGOs want to be consulted on and informed about reform processes. It is important to create strategic partnerships between these NGOs and MPALSG and the Serbian Parliament, and continue to promote OGP initiative.

*NGOs dealing with environmental issues, public utility-related issues*

These CSOs are in the closest contact with citizens because they deal with topics whose resolution yields visible results. Cooperation with these organizations has excellent communication potential as it is a channel for promoting management engagement in systematic problem solving. These CSOs can absorb and properly communicate to citizens the information that reforms are a long but multi-beneficial process.

**Social media activists & bloggers**

The main communication objective is to increase the interest of this group for reporting on topics related to the PAR process and results and for increasing the level of knowledge in order for them to be able to disseminate information properly. The communication potential lies in greater engagement and involvement in the promotion of PAR results through key topics and initiatives related to ecology, business, transparency, anti-corruption, etc. This group is an excellent resource for the demystification of public administration as it uses an understandable language, adapted to followers. This group also includes influential users of social networks, who have gained their reputation with constant interest in social topics and readiness to voice both critical and constructive opinion.

**Target Subgroups**

*YouTube and Instagram activists*

Sub-groups within this target group were selected per social media channel. Their common interest is to increase the number of followers to maintain their influence. These groups use the language of their followers and this is why the specific communication goal is that the information they receive corresponds to the language and formats they can easily transfer and thus influence the creation of the opinions of these groups. The youngest PA target group is on YouTube and Instagram, Facebook covers older population, while critically oriented citizens are mainly on Twitter; Twitter influencers should be partners in alleviating the negative impact this community easily creates, by offering reliable timely and comprehensible information.

*Twitter influencers*

*Facebook activities and influencers*

**Line ministries, state agencies, inspection and coordinating structures**

Raising the level of knowledge and awareness of administration employees about the PAR process, general efforts invested in reforming the administration and the results of PAR is one of the main goals of the Republic of Serbia. This target group is the main agent of change and therefore it is quite important for it to become more open for communication with the public and thus enable the participation of interested public in decision making processes for public policy creation. The most accessible communication channels used by this target group are the webpages of the institutions in which they work and therefore it is important to put the focus on greater visibility and quality of contents of each webpage which communicates PAR, through clear branding and more prominent presence of key PAR messages.

*Key decision makers*

They are focused on an efficient PA, administrative reform process and positive feedback from the citizens.

## Internal public

**MPALSG**

As the agent of PAR, MPALSG has specific focus on increasing the level of involvement of institutions and general public in the PAR, coordination of activities and timely

Specific goals include:  
- organizing detailed briefings on PAR;



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<p><b>MoF</b></p>	<p>implementation of PAR. MPALSG employees are quite engaged in increasing the visibility of the reform and a more efficient internal and external PAR communication.</p> <p>As the agents of PFM reform and internal financial control, MoF staff is responsible for budget transparency and budgetary spending.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- better knowledge about PAR of all employees in institutions</li> <li>- better knowledge about PAR and communication skills of PR officers (PIO's) in these institutions</li> </ul> <p>stronger internal communication and coordination inside these institutions via application of new communication tools.</p>
<p><b>IT Office</b></p>	<p>This new institution is the fruit of the PA reform and it is responsible for overall digitalization of PA and introduction of e-services; these are the main tools for the implementation of PAR measures targeted at improving the services, transparency and openness of PA.</p>	
<p><b>Inspection Supervision</b></p>	<p>In charge of implementation of the new Law on Inspection Supervision and ensuring the conditions for business to work in accordance with legislation.</p>	<p>Strengthening internal communication between line ministries and inspections services.</p> <p>Building the capacity of inspection personnel for efficient communication of new procedures and electronic services, etc.</p>
<p><b>Target Subgroups</b> <i>Heads and managers</i></p>	<p>The main interest of this target subgroup, in charge of the implementation of LGAP, is a more efficient implementation of administrative procedures and better communication towards citizens and businesses on LGAP / e-LGAP.</p>	<p>Improved quality of communication with citizens to allow more efficient implementation of administrative procedures. They need to be properly informed about PAR.</p>
<p><b>Independent supervisory bodies</b></p>	<p>Strengthening control mechanisms – this was recognized by PAR Strategy as a contribution to raising the level of citizen trust and support to PA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Audit Institution</li> <li>• Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection</li> <li>• Commissioner for the Protection of Equality</li> <li>• Ombudsman</li> </ul> <p>Anti-corruption Agency</p>	<p>Their visibility and openness are an imperative set in the Public Administration Reform Strategy (objective 5), and the specific goal will be to strengthen and promote in the public their internal communication capacities. According to the Serbian Constitution, these bodies are completely independent from the executive authority.</p>
<p><b>Local self-government units – LSG units</b></p>	<p>Increasing the openness of LSG units enables more involvement of interested public in the decision-making process and public policy development. Involvement and transparency depend on good communication with the citizens and interested public, which requires continuous strengthening and modernization of communication.</p>	
<p><b>Target Subgroup</b> PIO</p>	<p>Responsible for visibility of LSG leaders and results of the work of LSG units; have an important role in the communication of LSG services which represent a product of PA reform.</p>	<p>Increasing the knowledge about PAR, PAR results, PAR effects on the local level and the LSG services. It is also important to increase knowledge about the</p>





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Heads of municipality administrations

Professionals with continuity in their work are focused on full compliance of laws with valid legislation at local and regional level and the directives of line ministries.

importance of internal and external communication and improve coordination and communication skills.

This target group should be supported in communication with citizens, especially in strengthening citizen participation, which is stipulated in laws and PAR Strategy.

## 6. Communication Approach

Public support to reforms is very high, according to a survey conducted by the Ministry of European Integration - "European Orientation of Citizens of Serbia", in December 2018. Out of the total number of respondents, 75% think that "reforms need to be implemented regardless of the fact that they are a condition for membership in the European Union"<sup>8</sup>.

It is, however, necessary to switch the image and context of the reform from the general and the political to the concrete: simplified procedures, better and faster services, and the results in the fight against corruption. Citizens need and want to be informed about key issues that they can identify with, along with examples of how their life will be easier, better or simpler. The dominant and preferred channels for the public are TV and the internet, which provide space for the development of adequate and effective content.

The strategic communication framework suggests an approach focusing primarily on:

- **More efficient use of existing channels and tools and**
- **Improving the capacity of communicators.**

The proposed approach relies on the following principles of communication:

- Comprehensible, simple and effective, so that citizens can form an opinion on PAR and use all the benefits;
- Meaningful from the point of view of everyday life, the importance and benefits for citizens;
- Visible, while avoiding "neutral" (technical and protocolary) content in the media;
- Balanced and logical, linking current and future activities in this area;
- Clearly linked to the results and achievements of reforms and personal experiences of citizens;
- Well planned and coordinated, given the complexity of stakeholders' roles.

Expected results of the communication approach:

- Improving reputation: credibility and trust
  - PAR communicators (management) should use every opportunity to strengthen confidence in public administration reform by sending relevant messages - modern, knowledgeable, executable and verifiable
- Awareness raising: impact on changing the perception
  - Selecting the right channel helps empowering the target groups with the information they need to make informed decisions
- Greater understanding and knowledge
  - Positive attitude in public
  - A supportive environment

<sup>8</sup>[http://www.mei.gov.rs/upload/documents/nacionalna\\_dokumenta/istrazivanja\\_javnog\\_mnjenja/javno\\_mnjenje\\_decembar2018.pdf](http://www.mei.gov.rs/upload/documents/nacionalna_dokumenta/istrazivanja_javnog_mnjenja/javno_mnjenje_decembar2018.pdf)



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- Less misunderstanding and misinterpretation
- Change of the image of public servants: people who are proud of their work.

Based on the SWOT analysis conducted within the SA, four categories of strategies or tactics were defined using strengths and opportunities:

### 1. Using internal strengths (S) to take advantage of external opportunities (O).

Stronger co-operation and more regular meetings of the already established coordination mechanisms; the establishment of a Working Group for PAR Communication, consisting of representatives of the Public Relations Department, media advisers and other civil servants dealing with communications in MPALSG, MoF, MEI, PPO, IT Office, OCCSO and NAPA. Consequently, using the network of PR managers in the LSG units, conducted by the SCTM.

### 2. Using external opportunities (O) to overcome internal weaknesses (W).

Make maximum use of the capacity of complementary support under the Sector Reform Contract funded by the EU under IPA 2015 to improve internal capacity for implementation and promotion of PAR implementation. Three out of four complementary support contracts have a capacity-building component. By involving trainings in the field of communication in most of the planned trainings, a synergistic effect is achieved.

### 3. Using internal strengths (S) to avoid or reduce external threats (T).

Consistent implementation of the recommendations of this strategic framework on how to inform the public, better use of all media channels (internet, press, TV and social networks) and the application of a proactive instead of reactive communication strategy will enhance the understanding of the meaning and content of reforms in the field of public administration and PFM and create a more positive public attitude towards the EU, which financially supports reform processes in Serbia.

### 4. Strategies to minimize internal weaknesses (W) and possibly reduce external threats (T).

Implementation of recommendations for improvement of internal communication through sets of training is aimed at contributing to improvement of the reputation of public servants and consequently to the credibility of the entire administration. On the other hand, the change in the communication approach focusing on the citizens and responding to their needs contributes to improving the perception of the essence of the administration reform and restores otherwise shaky confidence in public administration.

Conclusions in the TOWS chart represent a guide, and the actual communication tools depend on the available resources (human capacities, funding and technical capacities).

#### SO strategy

*Using internal strengths (S) to take advantage of external opportunities (O).*

**SO1 Use existing capacities to improve coordination**

**SO2 Use the new beginning to take advantage of the new website**

**SO3 Use all 4 strengths (S1-S4) for increasing local, regional and central coordination**

#### WO strategy

*Using external opportunities (O) to overcome internal weaknesses (W).*

WO1 Use activities envisaged in this Strategic Communication Framework to address all internal weaknesses W1-W8 - insufficient capacities, structure, hierarchy, lack of interest and involvement of the management, absence of procedures, deficiency of general information, absence of central PAR point, coordination, under-informed state and public administration, inadequate language)

*Using external opportunities (O) to overcome detected external weaknesses (W).*



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**SO4 Use all 4 strengths (S1-S4) to implement the actions envisaged with the Strategic Communication Framework and the Action Plan**

WO2 Use activities of the SCF to improve the negative image of administration

WO3 Use activities of the SCF to increase interest, knowledge, social responsibility of media

WO4 Use all Opportunities (O1-O6) to address politicisation

WO5 Use Opportunities (O1-O6) to change habits and introduce professionalism

### ST strategy

### WT strategy

*Using internal strengths (S) to avoid or reduce external threats (T).*

*Strategies to minimize internal weaknesses (W) and possibly reduce external threats (T).*

**ST1 Use the new beginning, enough finance and favourable environment to avoid and reduce threats from political developments**

WT1 Use all strengths (S1-S4) and all opportunities (O1-O6) to minimize internal weaknesses and reduce threats i.e. employ all SO, WO and ST strategies

**ST2 Use the new beginning, enough finances and favourable environment to reduce the effects of the lack of coordination**

**ST3 Use the new beginning, enough finances and favourable environment to speed up the implementation of the reform**

**ST4 Use the favourable environment to minimize the slow-down in reforms during election campaign**

**ST5 Use enough finance to train the workforce in order to minimize fluctuation impact**

## 6.1 Visual Identity

A large number of actors have an active role in communicating reforms in public administration and public finance management. This is why a coherent approach to communication is needed, which will visually and narratively integrate activities into a whole and shape a consistent and consolidated picture of the reforms.

By applying the visual identity of PAR, an easily identifiable basis for internal and external communication is achieved. Therefore, in communication of individual initiatives which are part of the public administration and PFM reform all actors should apply a unique and recognizable PAR visual identity, which includes a logo, a colour scheme and other elements, in order to achieve a consistent character of all aspects of sectoral communication. This approach does not require giving up on the individual identity of an institution or organization, but only a complementary use.

In order to achieve more effective communication, it is necessary to find a way to identify activities and results with a common denominator. In this way it ceases to be a series of individual activities and becomes a common theme with a common goal, and each individual event / activity additionally promotes the whole.



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Public administration reform has a negative connotation (both the syntagm and individual notions). It is therefore necessary to create a name which is brief, effective and clearly communicates the values we promote, and (if possible) does not contain (all) the above terms.

Also, having in mind the importance of communication over the internet (websites and social networks), it needs to be short and clear enough that it can be a good .rs domain as well as a #hashtag.

In the consultative process that followed the preparation of this Strategic Communication Framework, it was concluded that the current slogan "The administration we all deserve", which the MPALSG has been using for several years to communicate public administration reform, should continue to exist. But for the branding of public administration, it is necessary to use more positive terms which at the same time reflect the achievements so far and contribute to understanding the significance of reforms for every citizen, which call for action and associate with positive experiences. Therefore, the Action Plan accompanying this SCF envisages the development of a brand and a new visual identity which should "revitalize" the processes behind the administration which are aimed at modernizing and professionalising administration and providing better services for the money the citizens direct to the national budget, but the benefits of these processes have not been adequately communicated so far. Situation Analysis has shown that it would be more appropriate to develop "good governance" as a brand than the "public administration reform", because citizens not only have resistance to the concept of "reform", but the entire syntagm causes less than positive emotions and does not depict the essence of the process, i.e. the fact that the public administration changes its face for a better life of all citizens. Without a clear answer to the questions "Why is the PAR being implemented?" And "What is actually in the changes / reform processes in administration for me as a citizen?" it is difficult to create a brand which will cause a positive emotion among the citizens. Alternatively, and complementary to good administration, the term of "better services" for citizens and businesses can be used.

### **6.2 The Language, Tone and Style**

Among the most important directions is overcoming theoretical concepts and creating an accessible and attractive concept of PAR results. Instead of vague messages concerning administrative, technical and professional formulations that have nothing to do with everyday life, communication should focus on highlighting practical benefits for citizens and society as a whole. Expressing complex issues clearly and directly will not make them less meaningful or worthwhile.

Special attention should be devoted to using adequate vocabulary and terminology in various communication channels. For example, administrative vocabulary simply cannot be used on social networks, so we need to use everyday language, enriched by visualizations.

The tone and terminology should reflect the following:

- Human aspect: The most important thing is that the starting point of communication has people/citizens at the centre of attention. It is crucial to change the focus of communication from data and descriptions to answering the question of why this is important for citizens. Reforms are not being implemented either for the state of Serbia, or for the European Union, they are implemented in order to improve the quality of life. Whenever possible, communication should be from the perspective of citizens and show the positive effects of reforms on people, and the stories should be accompanied by data.
- Answers to the following questions:
  - Why? – Easier access to services
  - How? – By increasing the efficiency of the administration
  - What? – Professional training of employees



- Who? – Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government and other institutions responsible for PAR, with financial support of the European Union.

Infographics representing data, procedures, perspectives and benefits for citizens should be developed as a standard way of describing the developments. By using the form of infographics, photos and videos, data and information become more visible and more comprehensible.

### 6.3 Messages

The narrative connection of the overall initiatives being communicated is achieved using precisely and clearly defined messages. People generally do not have enough time, and often lack the knowledge to deal with research, assessments, checks, so they naturally focus on communication and messages which are clear and in which they recognize the sense of everyday life.

Communication about reforms is in fact communication about a better life of citizens and the development of society. Thus established communication is of great personal significance because it responds to the needs of people, is verifiable in personal experience, people find meaning in such communication, they have the need to talk about the topics raised, to relate their own positive impressions. The consequence of this kind of communication is that the topics related to public administration reform become more present in the public, and then they increasingly influence attitudes and behaviour.

The foundation of key messages - All key messages and statements need to be clearly supported by the data, facts, activities and results that have been achieved or the opportunities that exist. It is important to describe the essence of benefits for a particular community, group of people or individuals, since this kind of data is more relevant to the citizens, and the message needs to be supported by the facts and data.

- The key message to citizens: **A modern, professional administration oriented to citizens and businesses.**

*The foundation of the message: Good services as an adequate response to the needs of citizens and businesses are the essence of public administration reform. Transformation in the service of citizens!*

- The key message to CSO: **Citizens have the right and duty to monitor and control the work of the public administration**

*The foundation of the message: Partners in the process of improving citizen confidence in institutions. The public administration builds a partnership by including civil society organizations in policy-making processes, which simultaneously supervise the work of the administration.*

- The key message to institutions: **Public administration reform is a difficult but necessary process by which we create a better and more efficient system for the citizens and economy of Serbia.**

*The foundation of the message: The administration has the duty to be open and accountable to the citizens of Serbia and the businesses.*

- The key message to the business sector: **A reformed public administration saves time and money to businesses.**

*The foundation of the message: Improvement of the business environment and equal treatment of all business entities (regulations, public procurement system, inspection supervision, etc.)*

- The key message to EU partners: **Efficient and good governance is a strategic priority of the Government, in line with the standards of the European Union.**

*The foundation of the message: Public administration reform is the basis for all reforms being implemented in the country, as well as for the process of Serbia's accession to the European Union.*





In addition to the overall message and key messages, specific messages should also be created (tailored to the needs of certain initiatives).

### **6.4 Coordination, Planning and Integration of Communication**

The inter-sectoral nature of the public administration reform process involves numerous institutions and stakeholders. A comprehensive framework for guidance, management, coordination and monitoring has been established at the following levels:

#### **Policy coordination:**

- The Public Administration Reform Council is the central strategic body for PAR.

#### **Professional coordination:**

- MPALSG has a leading role - Coordination is provided by the PAR Management Group, which plays an important role in the drafting of PAR and OGP action plans and continuously provides technical support to the Public Administration Reform Council and the Inter-Ministerial Project Group (IPG).

The inter-ministerial project group consists of representatives of ministries and government organizations and services, as well as the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM) as a link with local self-government and representatives of civil society organizations.

#### **PFM Management Structure:**

- The PFM coordination includes three levels: The Steering Committee (high level political coordination), the Technical Secretariat and the Working Group for the preparation and monitoring of the Public Finance Management Reform Programme.

MDULS is also responsible for the obligations of OPG in Serbia. In order to develop the Action Plan and realize Serbia's participation in the OPG initiative, an Inter-Ministerial Working Group was formed, with representatives of state bodies, government agencies and organizations, independent state bodies, the National Assembly, the Chamber of Commerce and representatives of civil society organizations.

Coordination of activities in each institution and the whole sector will lead to more efficient targeting and dissemination of information on achievements in the implementation of reforms. In addition, opportunities for joint activities will be created through pooling of resources and exchange of best practices and experiences. Mutual cooperation between stakeholders should be effective in order to ensure a smooth flow of timely information:

1. Within institutions
2. Among the institutions in the sector (at central and local level)
3. Between institutions, EUD, EU-funded projects and other donors and actors,

It is very important to determine how key actors will cooperate in the process of communication about activities. Their cooperation can be improved through the following instruments:

- Regular meetings on specific topics (analysis of progress, planning of joint / complementary events and other activities, development of shared materials (e.g. video), challenges management and media);
- By e-mail and using other applications (Viber, WhatsApp...) by sharing important information and material relevant to the activities;
- Integration of communication plans and activities;
- Evaluation and selection of best communication practice examples;
- Using the planning and implementation tools (intranet event calendar);
- Monitoring activities.





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### Communication hierarchy

At the highest level in the hierarchy, the tasks of initiation, coordination, evaluation and monitoring are carried out by the Government of the Republic of Serbia (the PM Cabinet), MPALSG and MoF. Bearing in mind the strategic commitment of the Republic of Serbia to join the European Union and the EU support to this process through all available instruments, the roles of the Delegation of the European Union in Serbia and the Ministry of European Integration are also important.

At this level, there is a common understanding between the Government and the EU Delegation on the need to unify communication and a single communication approach (one ton, one voice) needs to be adopted.

At the inter-institutional level, it is necessary to create a coordination mechanism which will ensure smooth implementation of the new coordination and communication policy.

- It is recommended that the Government and MPALSG should establish a Working Group for Communication of the PAR, involving the representatives of the public relations department, media advisers and other civil servants dealing with communications in the institutions involved in the communication of PAR (MPALSG, MoF, MEI, Public Policies Secretariat (PPS), NAPA, IT Office and OCSO), an OGP representative and a representative of the PAR Management Group. The establishment of the Group should be followed by relevant procedures for its functioning. The work of the Group should be coordinated by a representative of MPALSG, the institution responsible for the implementation of PAR.
- Establishment of the PAR Communication Working Group will enable harmonized implementation of communication activities in the PAR sector, implementation of the Strategic Communication Framework and integration of communication components of EU projects dealing with PAR.
- The working group should coordinate all the communication activities of all project beneficiaries horizontally, including:
  - Improving the knowledge and skills of communication officers.
  - More efficient planning and coordination of financial and human resources for communication and visibility.
  - Establishing a single page on the MPALSG website with information on PA services which are functional, easy to use, attractive and interactive.
  - Establishing an intranet tool (Notice board) within the MPALSG website which contains an interactive platform for planning, preparing and implementing communication activities as well as examples of best practice.
  - Introduction of the corporate and brand communication style focusing on citizens.
  - Connecting to the network of communicators from the LSG units, in order to transfer the coordination model to the local and regional level.

From this level, communication extends to the level of individual institutions.

- At the operational level, individual institutions and organizations should adopt a new approach to communicating reform processes and implement communication plans which are integrated into the strategic communication framework.

In addition to the MPALSG, the PPS should be more actively involved in coordination, as an institution at the state level responsible for planning, analytics and coordination.

This Strategic Framework envisages the integration of communication at the following levels:

- Communication efforts are coordinated with political measures such as introducing new fees, taxes, legislation or policy changes. E.g. the e-Enrolment promotion campaign will be more effective if a rule has been introduced beforehand to ensure that, in addition to birth certificates



and residence certificates, institutions also obtain the other two certificates required for enrolling a child in the first grade: a certificate of attendance of a pre-school programme and evidence of the child's medical examination. The campaign "enrolment from a chair" or "one-click" then gets a full meaning.

- Integration of topic and / or institution communication through programming and planning of activities, implementation of communication plans, institutional relations with the public and public opinion polls. Specialists from different fields work together in a team with clearly divided roles and responsibilities, e.g. when different institutions are talking about the same topic at the same time, communicating from "their" own specific point of view, or when public relations officers cooperate on developing and realizing communication. Good examples are events organized by one institution, relating to a topic of broader social importance - starting from the creation of the agenda, all institutions contributing to the public understanding of the unity of messages should be involved, avoiding fragmented information which is currently often the case.
- Communication should focus on the target public, precisely formulated. E.g: the promotion of amendments to the Law on Local Self-Government, which provides for cooperation among municipalities in order to resolve regional issues, should involve, in the first phase, the communication capacities of municipalities through the MPALSG Department for Development of Local Governments, civil society organizations through the OCSO, and the OPG. Only when the benefits of such initiatives are clearly communicated at this level, the information is transmitted to the regional and local level. The media, as a special target group, should be included from the beginning.
- Integrating communication through own, earned and paid media<sup>9</sup> - The Strategic Media Framework and the accompanying Media Plan intend to exploit and connect all types of media into a logical and consistent system, so that each channel has a defined role.

Cooperation between institutions is very important, but without cooperation with international organisations which participate in PAR/PFM processes, better understanding of reforms cannot be fully achieved. It is recommendable to use the following mechanisms and tools:

- Create a list of all current projects being implemented with the support of the EU;
- Create a list of state institutions which implement EU projects, as well as a list of international institutions, domestic and foreign CSOs with whom they cooperate on the realization;
- Identify partner institutions which have a good public image and use their channels and resources to place messages (define a common communication procedure).

## 7. Recommendations for the improvement of PAR/PFM communication

Based on the findings of Situation Analysis, this chapter presents recommendations for improvement of functionality and efficiency of existing channels and tools of internal and external communication, but also provides proposals for the new ones.

### ***7.1 Internal communication***

Internal communication is a way to build relation and understanding between employees at all levels. It should ensure that all employees understand their role in the overall PAR process. Communication

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<sup>9</sup> More information about own, earned and paid media is provided in the Annex 3 – Strategic Media Framework



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is also influencing knowledge, attitude and behaviour of employees, their responsibility, loyalty and innovation.

Good internal communication empowers employees to become an important factor of external communication efforts. Therefore, planned and coordinated approach to the internal communication is the key thing for facilitation of daily activities in public administration, especially having in mind that employees should be oriented towards citizens.

One of the most important Situation Analysis findings is lack of human resources in the field of communication, as well as different level of knowledge about public administration reform but also about communication.

Clear examples of good practice and improvement of functionality and communication clarity on PAR at internal level are needed. Bearing in mind the limit of new employment that has been in force for years, it is recommended to identify and train existing employees, both at central and local self-government level, in order to create a competent communicator network, based on recommendations from TNA developed under this project.

Recommendations:

- Integration of internal and external communication practices, followed by standardized procedures
- Improvement of internal communication within the administration, with special emphasis on two-way communication
- More frequent consideration of initiatives from the level of local self-government and the establishment of regular channels of communication
- Improvement of internal and external communication coordination
- Establish a central online location for all PAR / PFM information, to be accessed by all levels of administration, which will facilitate easier sharing of data and information.

At this stage, the main issues to be addressed are the following:

1. Who will communicate PAR internally and externally, with what level of knowledge, skills and experience?

Identification of competent communicators includes people in charge of PAR communication, but also employees who are capable, competent and willing to engage in communication.

In cooperation with MPALSG, communication capacities / resources at the local level are identified (as illustrated on the map).



2. How to transform internal and external communication in a way that civil servants and LSG servants can connect in a more personal way (in order to strategically support the current practice of oral communication).

For example, trainings as a place for mutual acquaintance and exchange of thinking, creating personalized virtual platforms / groups.

3. How to provide common and unified knowledge about PAR and PAR communication?



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When it comes to trainings, general and specialized trainings in public relations and communication tools and techniques are proposed. Generic trainings are targeted at officers at the central and local level in order to acquire common (generic) knowledge and skills: recognizing the importance of the presence of PAR in the public, communicating EU support to reform processes, working with the media, using modern communication tools (social media). Specialized, advanced trainings are directed at public officials in relation to specific competencies and requirements of their work. Specific trainings also provide knowledge on how to train others – training of trainers.

Also, through interactive approach – a series of workshops designed and adapted to communicators, with the following goals:

- Establishment and development of sufficient level of knowledge about PAR
- Raising awareness on how many communication flows are present at the same time
- Expand experiences on how to be on each side of the public administration reform process - central, local and civic. In this way, it is necessary to emphasize and strongly support identification with their roles as communicators, as well as their responsibility towards each other in the process
- In conducting workshops, participants should be from both local and central level in order to build trust, mutual respect and contact.

#### 4. How to ensure the application of what was learned?

The efficiency of application is ensured through regular monitoring, evaluation and support of communicators. This will demonstrate additional commitment of the Government to the implementation of PAR and support the belief that it is possible to create significant changes. In addition, officials will not feel left to themselves with their problems; instead, they will be able to exchange experiences and find solutions at the common level.

As with other change management processes, work with resistance to changes is present. It is therefore necessary to include examples of good practice and further support, bearing in mind that PAR is a complex and lengthy process. It is particularly important to emphasize that all those working in PA should be in the service of citizens.

## 7.2 Websites

### 7.2.1 Existing websites

Within Situation Analysis, the web pages of following institutions were assessed: MPALSG, MF, MEI, PPS, NAPA, OCSO and IT Office. In addition to them, the following websites were also analysed and are an important part of the public administration reform: Monitoring of reforms (<http://www.pracenjereformi.info>), Open Government Partnership (<http://ogp.rs/pou-srbija>), e-Government Portal (<https://www.euprava.gov.rs>), Open Data Portal (<https://data.gov.rs/sr>), Coordination Commission for Inspection Supervision (<https://inspektor.gov.rs>).

The results of the Situation Analysis show that preferred communication channels (other than television), are web pages and social networks. In order to fully use the communication potential, below are presented the recommendations for improving the security and functionality of web pages.

- Implementation of strategic approach
- Collecting all information distributed over multiple locations on the internet in one place, either in the form of an aggregator or at one location



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- Application of security certificates on all web pages
- Establishment of visual and organisational web page standards
- Optimisation of content and performance
- Simplified structures
- Creation of original written content
- Application of metrics and analytics – introduction and use of tools for monitoring of statistical visits and later studying these data
- Visually clearly branded posts tagged to access everything that is related to the topic in a transparent way
- Adjusting web pages to portable devices – responsive web design.
- Structuring texts in the whole and formatting using heading tags for titles and subtitles
- Format images using relevant image names and alt tags
- Linking from new texts to other relevant texts on the website
- Adjusting texts through increased frequency of keyword use.

Besides this, it is also recommended to use some of the following activities:

- Analysis of existing information and search engine guides for specific topics. When a procedure changes or improves, contacting the author with the request that the text should be updated and/or linked to the MPALSG website – PAR section.
- Collaboration with relevant media / specialized portals / bloggers / influencers – specifically, on the case where there is an activity that promotes the work of accountants – testing with a few of them the entire pre-launch system, then preparing instructions, collecting questions and preparing responses, and placing them immediately upon launching the system. If it is, for example, faster and better company registration, then the process should be tested, described in detail, then passed on, documented and explained. If it is something for the IT public - prepare with the relevant media a mini-strategy to communicate it. Some of these target groups have their own places where they are gathering - for example, accountants have a large and very lively Facebook group, the IT community has its own groups and several sites they follow (Startit, Netokracija, etc.).
- Before and after examples – it is necessary to compare, i.e. to communicate the comparative improvements that have been achieved with introduction of new regulations, rules, procedures, etc. Alternatively – look for suitable metaphors and compare how much time is needed for an activity (cooking coffee) and point out that now for the same amount of time you can do something that was once a seriously long venture.

### **7.2.2 Defining PAR website**

#### **7.2.2.1. What is the PAR central info point?**

In a broad consultative process with the beneficiaries of the PAR Visibility and Communication Project and interested parties, as well as through research conducted during the situation analysis among public administration employees and among citizens, the initial assumption that a central information point on public administration reform is needed was confirmed and it was decided to develop a special PAR Info page on the existing MPALSG website.

The Public Administration Reform info page is going to be the central information point of all targeted audiences: primary (citizens) and secondary (internal) employees in public administration. In the visual and organizational sense, the info page will be a separate entity, but at the same time it will be well integrated into the existing design and functionality of the website.





### 7.2.2.2. Why is a central information point needed?

Currently, a large percentage of information which should be placed on the central information site - the website of public administration reform, is already located on the websites of institutions. Content is not everywhere attractive, but it exists. However, when information fragments are located on a multitude of different sides, it is very difficult to have a good overview and form a wider picture. Also, it is necessary for citizens to make additional efforts to follow all the current issues and to get the feeling that they are sufficiently informed about all the steps they need to take to "complete a job". It is very similar to the situation with the employees, because there are no clearly defined internal communication procedures, unified and timely distributed information on PAR measures and results, so it is difficult to follow the entire process.

If all this information is collected in one place, without unnecessary repetition, and presented in the right way, including the vocabulary and visual presentation suited to target audiences, it will be much easier for all stakeholders to be updated, and more importantly:

- Employees will know that there is one address where they can always check whatever they are interested in regarding the public administration reform;
- Citizens will be given the opportunity to receive in one place either full information about the services provided by the administration and/or their rights and obligations, or a clear roadmap to information (referring to the websites of the competent institutions where appropriate information is to be found).

In order for the PAR info page to be sustainable, it is necessary to improve the cooperation of all institutions which communicate public administration reform and make better use of the potential of all existing cooperation mechanisms established on the basis of recognized common interest.

The info page will be developed on the existing MPALSG website because this is the Ministry in charge of coordinating the Public Administration Reform.

### 7.2.2.3 Content formats

Cisco, as an absolute leader in the production of network equipment, says that by 2021 more than 80% of all internet traffic will be video. Video is everywhere - horizontal, vertical, high resolution, live or recorded. The reason for the expansion is that the video content is easy to use and gives a large amount of information in a short period of time. It is available on all devices, and although it requires high speed internet, today it is a standard on all devices, including portable devices.

Precisely because of all of this, video formats are currently something that provides the best results by far, in almost all channels of communication. Algorithms favour it in the sense that organic content is seen by a greater number of people than is the case with other formats, but it is also cost-effective - the same amount of money invested for promotion reaches a significantly larger number of people. Recommendations regarding video formats are elaborated under 6.7.

## 7.3 Social networks

Situation analysis has shown that social networks are among the preferred channels of communication (with television and internet sites). The analysis also provided an overview of communication through social networks of MPALSG, MEI, MF, IT Office, OCSO and OGP, taking into account published content, interaction with followers and other parameters.





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Number of followers (December 2018):

	<b>MPALSG</b>	<b>MEI</b>	<b>MF</b>	<b>IT Office</b>	<b>OCSO</b>	<b>OGP</b>
<b>Facebook</b>	15,865	8,219	71	2,704	7,649	8,777
<b>Instagram</b>	1,526		81			908
<b>Twitter</b>	3,676	2,899		8,734	7,669	10,242
<b>YouTube</b>	193	78			29	128

There is an extremely high potential for communication through social networks, to tens of thousands of followers, which needs to be streamlined to produce a more powerful effect. The content needs to be revised and adapted to reach the target audience, and the financial resources and technical expertise necessary to significantly improve the effect of communication through social networks are not too demanding.

Every social network has its own users who expect that content will be presented in a way specific to that social network. It means that, for example, a post about an event can (but often does not have to) be placed on each social network, but it is necessary to be customized for each one individually. It is necessary to adjust the dimensions of photographs, infographics, visuals and video materials, the tone of speech, the hashtags used, whether and what text will be placed on the picture / illustration of the post, whether the post will be featured on the timeline or as a story, whether there will be more successive posts that make up the whole or not.

Beside this, recommendations for social media communication improvement include:

- Consistent and regular content posting (based on a weekly / monthly release plan)
- Use of hashtags
- Creating visual and short video content
- Development of more original content
- Improvement of content writing
- Posting information on the work of the institution and the benefits it provides to citizens in real time
- Encourage greater interaction and two-way communication with followers
- Adapting the posts to each network separately
- Development of the strategies for certain social networks.

### 7.4 Media

The findings of the Situation Analysis show that media coverage of the PAR topics is not lacking. On the contrary, there are thousands of articles related to topics in this field, but the information is insufficient and it does not reach the public adequately.

Therefore, additional efforts are needed to make media reporting more adapted to the needs of citizens. A shift in the presentation of content related to reforms and their benefits is needed to help citizens connect with their own experiences. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to revise the way information is provided to the media, to make it more focused on the benefits for citizens.

As TV is a preferred source of information for citizen, it should be used more intensively when communicating reforms.



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Instead of writing a media release using technical language, it is necessary to improve writing by introducing new rules that focus chiefly on people, their well-being and broader context, rather than on the information of minor importance to the general public.

In addition to the presence of different styles, communication lacks clarity and focus, which can be improved by defining clear messages of relevance to the target audience.

Instead of communication that relates to the institution and procedures, it is necessary to focus on results and on an individual rather than on the institution, which will increase the interest of citizens in the topic.

The analysis showed that there is a lack of clear understanding of PAR and what it is all about, which can be partly due to the fact that the content is mostly neutral, it does not link to the broader narrative and the context of the reform, and it often lacks practical examples to testify about the reform processes.

When communicating about EU support, it is important to emphasize the full range of EU assistance to PAR in the process of Serbia's EU accession.

When it comes to media relations, it is recommended to establish strong partnerships in order to help the media inform the public in a better way. In addition, one of the important elements is to introduce the principle of providing national and local media with simplified structured information.

The main recommendations are the following:

- Define the areas and / or specific topics that the Ministry / Institution wants or is obliged to communicate;
- Topics should be in line with public policies and priorities of the Serbian Government and there has to be a political will to implement a change with them, which the citizens / business will potentially recognize as a personal benefit;
- The topics / areas that most citizens do not understand or do not consider useful for society and which can cause a crisis situation should be considered and the key messages that would be sent in case the crisis arises should be prepared in advance;
- Topics with the highest potential to be processed from the perspective of citizens or businesses - (e-Government, open data, improvement of inspection supervision, openness of the institutions, e-LGAP, training of civil servants, local self-government ...);
- The topics that the Ministry is obliged to communicate but cannot be presented from the perspective of citizens: These are mostly topics targeting a narrow target group, e.g. the topic of public servants' salaries.

When it comes to the content, insight into the "civil" themes and data available for each of them should provide enough information to assess which content has the potential for what kind of media - print, tv, web portals - and a communication plan and appropriate content should be created. It is desirable to prepare accompanying visuals (infographics and info sheets) for print and web portals, while for tv, video statements, graphs and animations should be submitted. Additionally, it is necessary to:

- Define the key terminology which will be used in the promotion of reforms, which is easily understood by the media and the general public.
- Define the communication tone and categories for delivery of messages (do not use passives, do not use negative statements such as "there is no", "it does not work" ...)
- Build the image of the Ministry / institution as an expert organization which has adequate staff (include in the media statements the Assistant Ministers, Department Managers, Heads of Services).



### **7.5 Organization of events**

Organizing various events such as conferences, workshops, round tables, seminars, consultations or trainings is a regular activity within the framework of the public administration reform. Events serve as an opportunity for communication and visibility: some of them will be suitable for media reporting, most will be adequate for publishing on the internet, and some may be the basis for the development of publications.

Events should be carefully planned with other relevant partners, in order to enhance messages and coordination. Resources should be pooled in organizing events that will bring together similar, if not the same, stakeholders, and thus fully utilize the potential of sectoral coordination in the PAR sector.

In addition to the events which are part of the annual plan, with already planned timing and resources for realization, there are also *ad-hoc* events, most often in response to a sudden change or a new situation. The risk of these events is that they can present a serious threat to reputation due to lack of preparation time and omissions that may consequently arise. It is therefore important to have a pre-defined procedure for such events, which includes a team which can quickly mobilize to determine the exact target group and adjust communication messages. Ideally, reserved funds should be available for such occasions.

The PAR Communication Working Group, the establishment of which is recommended in this SCF, should be involved in the organization of all events and provide great support in the organization of ad-hoc events.

### **7.6 Printed and online formats**

Infographics, brochures, manuals, etc. can be effective communication tools. Publications addressing the general public should be simpler, tailored to the needs. Publications should be available online, while selected ones will be printed and distributed to target groups.

Examples of formats:

- Textual guidelines (manuals) made using SEO recommendations, so that people who are looking specifically for information on how to do something can easily find them. It is necessary to identify concrete procedures which are not clear to users, and then explain them step by step. If there is information available on other websites, use it, contact – correct and update.
- Graphic, visually attractive presentation of relevant individual information. From time to time, there is a need to present some information of particular interest to various public. For the use of this format, timely information is needed, and the best approach is in placing important dates in the calendar (usually known a year ahead), significant data (number of users, number of exchanged documents, number of minutes saved / hours / seconds, number of registered babies, etc.). When annual reviews are prepared, there are formats where more such data can be put together as a whole, which is especially useful for anniversaries.
- Interactive calculators and data visualization. Microsites that show real-time performance improvements, cost reductions and similar indicators.
- News and reports, clear and concrete, written in accordance with good journalistic practices.

### **7.7 Video formats**

Having in mind the directions and approach to communication, it is recommended to use video formats that can be used on several communication channels:



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- An animated “explainer” video format - in fact, cartoons through which an activity is explained. They are often used to explain to users how the devices or software are used, because they are more interesting than dull instructions. There are many different styles, but for the public - this is the best way to transfer information and retain attention.
- Visual instructions and knowledge base for employees - can often replace the training which requires someone to leave the workplace, which is both timely and logistically demanding. Also, these formats can be tracked with an adequate system, and it is easy to check how many employees saw the article, and even see who did not specifically go through instructions, with an option to remind them automatically, through the system (notifications are already part of reality and general expectation is that a reminder would come for everything...). In this way, we help users develop a habit and consequently, we obtain better informed employees.
- Video infographics - ideal for displaying quantitative data and reporting on progress. The communication potential of classic infographics, which once belonged to online communication, now has a greater use in offline information exchange. Since they are most adapted to print communication channels, they can be an informative and attractive solution for all situations in which procedures need to be explained (a central information point is the best example).
- Stories from the field - an interview format. The goal is to go around and promote local stories, good practice examples and positive experiences through recommendations made by citizens so that the local population can connect more easily.

## 8. Communicating EU support

Support to Serbia's accession to the EU continues to grow. If a referendum was held tomorrow with the question "Do you support Serbia's membership in the EU?", 55 percent of Serbia's citizens would vote in favour, 25 percent would vote against it, while 10 percent would not vote at all or do not know how to answer the question; this is the result of the public opinion poll "European orientation of the citizens of Serbia"<sup>10</sup> conducted by the Ministry of European Integration in December 2018. Researches from previous years show that support has been lower: in 2017<sup>11</sup>, 52% of citizens would vote for joining the EU, while in 2016<sup>12</sup> this percentage was even lower – 47%.

The public in Serbia generally supports EU membership, however, a deeper knowledge of the EU and its assistance to Serbia is limited.

When it comes to development assistance to Serbia from 2000 to the present, the same survey shows that 25% of respondents recognized the European Union as the largest donor to Serbia, second is Russia with 23%, and third is China with 19%. More than a third of respondents are interested in finding out more about specific projects financed through EU funds. At the same time, 33% heard of some of the projects funded by the European Union, and out of these 33% respondents, 9% have heard of EU-funded projects in the field of public administration reform.

The EU is by far the largest donor to Serbia, providing support in achieving EU standards and values, assisting reforms in fostering development, improving living standards and strengthening public services. The financial assistance that the EU provides in the area of public administration reform and public finance management is significant. Over the years, this support has been widely communicated by various beneficiaries (central level institutions and organizations, local self-government units, civil

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<sup>10</sup> [www.mei.gov.rs/upload/documents/nacionalna\\_dokumenta/istrazivanja\\_javnog\\_mnjenja/javno\\_mnjenje\\_decembar2018.pdf](http://www.mei.gov.rs/upload/documents/nacionalna_dokumenta/istrazivanja_javnog_mnjenja/javno_mnjenje_decembar2018.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.mei.gov.rs/upload/documents/nacionalna\\_dokumenta/istrazivanja\\_javnog\\_mnjenja/javno\\_mnjenje\\_decembar\\_17.pdf](http://www.mei.gov.rs/upload/documents/nacionalna_dokumenta/istrazivanja_javnog_mnjenja/javno_mnjenje_decembar_17.pdf)

<sup>12</sup>

[http://www.mei.gov.rs/upload/documents/nacionalna\\_dokumenta/istrazivanja\\_javnog\\_mnjenja/istrazivanje\\_javnog\\_mnjenja\\_decembar16.pdf](http://www.mei.gov.rs/upload/documents/nacionalna_dokumenta/istrazivanja_javnog_mnjenja/istrazivanje_javnog_mnjenja_decembar16.pdf)



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society), EU Delegation, dozens of EU-funded projects, the Government of Serbia and other actors. Despite all these communication efforts, citizens' awareness of EU financial support is not at a satisfactory level, which is also confirmed by the results of the Situation Analysis - 15% of respondents stated that the EU is the largest donor of Serbia, and at the same time 19%, 18% and 15% respondents put China, Germany and Russia ahead of the EU, respectively.

The guidelines and methods proposed in this Strategic Communication Framework are fully in line with the new sectoral communication approach, aimed at improving the communication relevance and content effects of EU support to public administration reform and public finance management.

The new direction of communication implies a sectoral approach that places emphasis on coordination, resource pooling and a defined identity of EU support. It emphasizes the need for unique but targeted messages and a clear and understandable language that focuses on the human / personal aspect.

In addition to the complicated language that is usually used to communicate public administration reform, EU support in this field is also mostly using administrative and technical terminology. However, people better understand and accept the familiar terminology, so "translation" is required.

When communicating EU support to PAR, it is important to emphasize the whole information. In order to facilitate the transmission of basic information, when preparing communication materials, a standard paragraph (boilerplate) on overall support to the sector should be prepared and placed at the bottom of the text:

*Example:*

*Shorter version: The "PAR Visibility and Communication" project is being implemented in the framework of the Sector Reform Contract between Serbia and the European Union, which supports the reform of public administration and public finance management reform with EUR 80 million in grants. Public administration reform is the basis for all reforms implemented in the country, as well as for the process of Serbia's accession to the European Union.*

*A longer version can also include the following: EU assistance is used to provide a stable macroeconomic framework, efficient public finance management, transparency of the budget and improve the visibility of digitalisation of public administration, introduction of electronic services, professional development in public administration and improvement of other criteria for achieving professional and modern public administration in accordance with the universal principles of good administration and EU standards, as defined in the 2014 Public Administration Reform Strategy.*

Sectoral approach to communication is particularly important given the different forms of assistance in which the EU supports Serbia. When it comes to individual projects, summaries can be developed to describe concisely and clearly the activities and effects.

Also, having in mind that there are programmes in the PAR sector jointly funded by the EU and other international organizations, the rules regarding communication and visibility activities should be adapted to specific programmes.

It should be pointed out that the EU financially supports Serbia also through budget support, where individual activities are not so clearly defined, so consistent communication of the sectoral approach is of great importance for improving the visibility of EU support for reforms.

It is therefore important to:

- Communicate EU support in a coherent, clear, sufficient, comprehensible and consistent way, in order to improve citizen awareness of the scope and specific details of EU assistance
- Focus on the results of EU support, and not on processes;





- Clearly highlight that the EU supports certain initiatives, linking them to personal experiences of citizens;
- Constantly communicate good practice examples from the EU, which need to be adjusted to the local context;

The Action Plan, which is an integral part of this SCF, envisages a campaign which will

- Promote joint efforts of Serbia and the EU to achieve functional administration;
- Ensure visibility of the increased capacity of the government to provide public services, thanks to technical/administrative and financial support from the EU.

## 9. Crisis Communication

Crisis communication is based on the management of crisis situations, media relations, and communication with stakeholders, management of expectations within the institution itself and management of citizens' expectations.

A crisis situation forces the institution to formulate accurate and competent information and provide dissemination as soon as possible, as it suddenly finds itself at the centre of attention with a multitude of questions to be answered immediately.

A crisis situation is an unusual event or series of events that badly affect the integrity, reputation or stability of the institution and have the potential to spread easily and affect a much wider community. Therefore, for a crisis situation, the most important thing is that it is managed by competent communicators who are capable of perceiving the trends and, based on knowledge and previous experiences, predicting events and outcomes.

Proactive and open communication prevents the occurrence of the crisis and reduces negative effects.

In crisis communication the most important things are the speed, timeliness and accuracy of information.

Addressing the media in crisis situations:

- Before giving any statement, it is necessary to determine what should be communicated to the public
- It is necessary to evaluate the attitude of the public towards the event and adjust the statement
- Public should not be left "without comment" because it can leave the impression that something is hidden from the public.

Recommendations:

- Information to be made public must be accurate and verified
- It is necessary to provide a constant inflow of information, even when the situation is unchanged or moves in an unwanted direction
- A fair attitude towards the media and their representatives - do not exaggerate, do not alleviate or hide information
- It is necessary to select a person whom the media believe and who is competent to speak on behalf of the institution.
  - Independent communication with the media is not allowed. Communications with the media are preceded by permits, serious preparation and consultations with the management
- Associates / employees must monitor events and provide all information





- Maximum precaution. Too many apologies and confused responses can lead to a missed opportunity to put emphasis on what is important to say.

Behaviour during the crisis will be remembered and could be misused:

- The greater the crisis, the public will be remembering it longer
- Organizational behaviour during the crisis has a major impact on public reactions
- The public in most cases trusts more the witnesses or "third parties" rather than representatives of institutions
- If an institution loses its reputation in the public, it directly affects the reputation deterioration
  - When the crisis is over, the institution faces the needs for revitalization in the post-crisis period. The most important activities will be regaining the public trust that has been lost, as well as the additional building of the image.

The media play a key role in crisis situations. The more they are exploring what is happening and looking for the cause of the problem, the public becomes more dependent on the media. Representatives of the institution must meet the needs of the public for information, using the media.

Prevention of crisis situations:

- The crisis communication team includes trained public relations officers, media advisers and management representatives whose task is to define the steps for a crisis response;
- Identified topics that have the potential to provoke a crisis situation;
- Assessing whether there are topics among EU projects that have the potential to provoke a crisis situation;
- Internal procedures for steps and methods of communication in crisis situations including communication with the media, writing denials, sending press releases, statements or other;
- Internal procedures for preparing communication with the public, which should provide timely review of potential topics that can cause the crisis and, therefore, steps for dealing with crises can be an integral part of plans for the promotion of all innovations coming from the institution.

## 10. Monitoring

Change management is a challenging task because it requires system upgrades, while retaining functionality during changes. Therefore, major changes are usually not possible and it is necessary to reach the goal through a series of smaller steps. In order to determine if these steps are going in the right direction, monitoring, measurement, analysis and reporting are required, and these are the recommendations per channel.

Relevant indicators for monitoring and reporting are those monitored in the Situation Analysis, more precisely in the Baseline Survey conducted in November and December 2018:

1. percentage of people who know what public administration reform is (24%),
2. awareness of public finance reform (20%),
3. percentage of those who are satisfied with how public administration reform is being communicated (49%) and
4. awareness that the EU is the biggest donor (15%).

In light of the creation of procedures for systemic monitoring of the PAR/PFM communication, as well as for their evaluation, public servants in charge of communication will obtain new tasks which they



have not encountered before. The goal of this SCF is, among other recommendations, to help public servants to properly monitor the efforts they put into better visibility of reforms.

This section contains the basic findings of the situation analysis and recommendations for:

- monitoring of quantitative and qualitative parameters of websites,
- monitoring of posts on social networks, and
- monitoring of media reporting

### **10.1 Websites**

#### **10.1.1. Quantitative parameters**

Potentially relevant quantitative parameters on the internet are currently difficult to track, as most websites of institutions that communicate public administration reform have no tools for tracking traffic on the internet - Google Analytics. The condition to start monitoring is the implementation of this free and relevant tool. The general practice is to keep track from one year to another, which means to compare the month of one year with same month of the previous year, because there is seasonality (often summer and, for example, spring months are not the same in terms of activity and interest), which is reflected directly on the visit. It is desirable that the period for comparison is long enough so that short-term anomalies do not have too much effect on the result (recommendation - a minimum of one month). Also, there are often circumstances that substantially change the user's use cycle. For example, elections, new regulations and laws, which often increase or diminish interest in a topic.

However, it is recommendable to track the available data, or see if they improve over time, as each of them indirectly affects the results. The most important parameters are the following:

- Website load speed – it is extremely important for users because a significant percentage of them quits after waiting longer than two (2) seconds. Also, this is one of the factors in ranking on search engines.
- Adaptability to portable devices is also an important parameter of ranking, and as about 40% of all internet traffic in Serbia is consumed from portable devices, it is important that users have a good user experience.
- The application of security standards - in addition to being considered good practice, when it comes to state institutions, security is especially important; this is the parameter Google uses in the ranking.
- Application of SEO standards when writing content (statistical evaluation) - The application of SEO standards requires a deeper analysis, but there are a number of tools that analyse many of these recommendations and criteria and give a result in the form of a number that indicates the quality of implementation. SEO results can be fixed. Google monitors the rate of fulfilment through a coefficient that improves or worsens the position of the institution's site on this browser.

#### **10.1.2. Content quality**

The content can also be tracked through quantitative and qualitative parameters. For example, a large number of articles in a unit of time does not necessarily have a greater and better effect. On the contrary, very often the effect will be better if the quality of the content itself is improved and the frequency is lower. Situation analysis has determined that communication noise is created partly because there is not enough relevant content. Parameters that look as potentially interesting, but often are irrelevant when the big picture is considered, include the following:



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- Bounce rate - Although often used as an indicator of success, bounce rate represents the rate of people who came to the site, visited only one page and left. The specificity of the topic and the change of communication methods suggested by this Strategic Communication Framework directly affects the bounce rate to become irrelevant because one of the goals may be to improve the user experience by bringing people directly to the site for solid and complete information.
- The number of opened pages as a parameter of progress is relevant for the websites where the goal is that user opens as many pages as possible. Here, the goal is for the user to get timely information in as few steps as possible.
- Time spent on the site should also be taken with caution. It is a great indicator to show which content is interesting to users, especially if a section contains plain text, and the retention time is high, so it is clear that users respond well to those texts. However, since the priority is proper information, the ideal scenario is that the information arrives quickly and without complications.

For all of these reasons, these parameters should be monitored and included in the reports, with a clear note that the priority is providing proper information to the public, and not simply the number of visits.

It should be noted that monitoring and reporting should be done in parallel, with the public and internally, with different parameters. The reason for this is that every indicator which does not meet expectations represents a potential risk, and they are not individually essential for the implementation if the general directions are good and if the planned activities are carried out according to the plan.

### **10.2 Social networks**

Social media has changed the way we present information to the public and interact with our target groups. However, no matter what we want to achieve, the audience can have their own way of understanding and interpreting. Social media monitoring allows us to:

- find out if we are addressing our followers in a way that suits them
- monitor the fluctuation of the followers and their reactions
- determine the trends in their behaviour
- interact with followers
- find out their opinion about a particular topic.

For all social networks that ministries and other institutions are using (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn), the same statistics should be monitored. This practice makes it easy to determine the success of the performance and to compare performances to each other in order to determine whether particular attention should be paid to the performance on one of the social networks.

Social media provide a wealth of statistical information, but it is actually quite enough to follow some of the key things to see if communication is on the right track or some changes to the course need to be made. Monitoring is recommended for:

- The number of posts per day – in this way an optimal number of posts per day can be determined.
- Subjects in posts, as well as the number of likes and shares – the goal is to determine which subjects draw the least interest and to make a strategy for a different approach if needed, as well as to determine the types of subjects to be favoured in future work.



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- Number of comments per post and their content – to determine if they are positive or negative; also, the types of comments, whether they are regularly answered and how quickly. This can be a pre-emptive action in order to avoid situations where negative comments or profanities (even if they are written in a foreign language or a language of national minorities) remain without a valid response and undermine the credibility of the ministry/office itself.
- The reach of the post depending on the type – to determine whether the audience responds better to posts containing a video, photo, illustration or infographic, what kind of content is the most important, what type of expression and tone are most suitable for communication.
- Hashtags – it is necessary to determine if the audience is using hashtags used in posts and in which context, as well as if there are hashtags which at the moment have greater popularity and if they can be used in posts.
- Demographic characteristics of the audience - it is necessary to determine whether the audience of a particular age is leading in interactions with published posts or an even distribution is achieved. By customizing the way in which posts are created, they can be made more attractive to a specific target group, which is very helpful in targeting specific groups for some of the posts. The same information can be communicated to different target groups in different ways. Although this is an additional job, in some cases it can prove to be quite effective.
- Number of followers and number of engaged followers in percentages - if a page on a social network has a large number of followers, but only a small percentage of them (from 0 - 5 percent) interacts with posts, the algorithm and social network will reduce the organic reach of future posts. This is why the number of engaged followers is of great importance and one of the indicators is whether the social networking is in a downward, stagnant or upward path.

It is advisable to keep track of data on a weekly (especially Instagram), monthly, quarterly, semi-annual and annual base (or at least monthly, semi-annual and annual base) and compile comparative reports.

The tools needed to track statistics are provided by all social networks for free. Also, for this purpose, a paid SocialBakers tool saves time and facilitates the process of monitoring several accounts on different social networks.

It is advisable to cross-correlate the data obtained by monitoring of social networks with the data obtained by monitoring of the websites. In this way, we get significant additional information about the behaviour of the audience and guidelines for further performance. For example, if a link to a single text posted on a website is posted on Facebook, we will see the number of interactions and comments on the Facebook, but we will not know how many people actually read the text on the site. However, monitoring the site will give us the exact information about how many people came through Facebook and how much time they spent on the text, or whether they stayed long enough to read the text, shorter or longer. If they spent too little time on the text, we can conclude, for example, that it was not interesting to them and that they therefore quickly left the site, and if they stay too long, we can conclude that the particular topic is very interesting to them, but that text is not understandable enough for them.

When monitoring social networks and interpreting data, the following should be kept in mind:

- Each of the social networks has its own separate algorithm that can be changed without any prior notice.
- Each network tries to keep the profiles on it active, which is why the practice of deleting false or inactive accounts is applied.



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- Since social networks generate profit from advertising, decreasing the organic reach of site releases is part of their tactics and business policies.
- The reach of posts is strongly influenced by the entire activity from the moment of opening the page on the social network to date.

The aforementioned options may give false alarm signals. However, this needs to be confirmed, and therefore continuous monitoring is invaluable:

- If the page loses a great number of followers in a short period of time, it can be due to two possible reasons: posting the content which is extremely disliked or deleting inactive profiles by social network. The first option is negative for the page (if this is the case, the page probably records a larger number of negative comments. Therefore, there will be additional indicators). The other option is good for the page because profiles whose inactivity was sending negative algorithm about page performance are disappearing. Therefore, in this case the number of engaged followers will be increased, which is an important factor for better ranking of all social network pages.
- Reducing the natural (organic) reach of a post can be a consequence of a new change in the social network algorithm or caused by a weaker audience interaction with page posts.
- Weaker interaction with posts (weaker than average in given period), except possible change in algorithm can be caused by different things:
  - use of visuals which are disliked by the audience
  - topics which are not interesting, fun or useful to the audience
  - use of language which the audience does not understand
  - some posts are not adequately targeted to the target group
  - too many or not enough number of posts on daily basis
  - share of inappropriate content for certain social network.

At any rate, reduced interaction is a signal that it is necessary to investigate more closely where the problem arose and create a tactic to overcome this. The tactics should be harmonized with the procedures which will be established; they should require from the MPALSG as the coordinator of PA reform to inform the PAR Communication Working Group about the reduced interaction and initiate mitigating actions.

### **10.3 Media**

Situation analysis has shown that the vast majority of institutions which communicate PAR use the services of professional media monitoring agencies. Certain institutions, depending on the capacity, additionally perform media analysis in order to get a better picture of media reporting. The goal of the monitoring is to have a continuous monitoring of media reporting in order to continuously improve the quality of reporting on the results of public administration reform and contribute to the understanding of the media regarding the importance of these topics and the benefits that the reform processes bring.

Media monitoring methodology focuses on:

- Topics reported;
- Time and space devoted to these topics;
- Institutions which publish texts;
- Tone used to present the themes and institutions;
- Manner of reporting;
- Deep analysis of the presented contents.



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Media monitoring is measuring:

- The coverage of topics / institutions in media publications that are subject to analysis;
- The way they are presented: directly or indirectly; positive, negative or neutral;
- Type of media content - news, reports, stories and interviews;
- Media release format (with photo, graphic, etc);
- Assessing whether the media inform, research, analyse or promote public administration reform;
- The presence of institutions in media reports and how they report on their activities.

Engaging a clipping agency involves the daily sending of press releases and announcements to the e-mail addresses of PR officers (pdf versions in the case of press releases, links and pdf contents of online postings, audio and video transcripts in electronic media). This possibility gives room for timely reaction in case announcements are marked as negative or have the potential to create a crisis situation. There is also an online platform with a log-in form enabling access to the database of all media posts. The platform enables easy and efficient posting management in one place and, according to the following criteria, provides a possibility for monitoring and analysis:

- Insight into the number of posts per day or for a certain period (month, quarter, year, manually selected period from-to)
- Search for posts by model of advanced search by keyword with filter options by type of media, themes, media name, author (for one day or for a certain period from-to)
- Creating pdf collection of post or exporting data into excel forms
- E-mailing of posts
- Creating charts with export options in multiple formats (jpg, pdf, excel)
- Insight into the value of posts by type of media, by author
- Insights into the reach of media posts (for each individual, as well as the reach of postings in a particular media, or reaching the post of a particular author...)
- Insights into posts categorized as neutral, negative or positive
- Graphic presentation of the posts by month and insight into the milestone posts

### Recommendations

For a better analysis of media coverage, the following is recommended:

- In addition to the regular analytics provided by the press clipping agency, it is recommended that an additional content analysis is carried out at a weekly level, which, together with the criteria followed by the agency (positive, neutral and negative content) will monitor "critical" contents, but also more carefully analyse the neutral content which is currently predominant. The aim is to achieve a higher trend of positive content on public administration reform.
- Revise the current list of topics monitored by the agency in order to monitor the content specifically related to public administration reform more easily, including the key messages and sentence constructions most commonly found in press releases (e.g. European integration, public debate, support to inspection supervision, central registry population and the like...)
- More carefully analyse the content of donors, partners and projects with which MPALSG is intensively cooperating (EU Delegation, European Union, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development...).