



Republic of Serbia
Ministry of Public Administration
And Local Self Government



IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
REFORM STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2018–2020:
A THREE-YEAR OVERVIEW



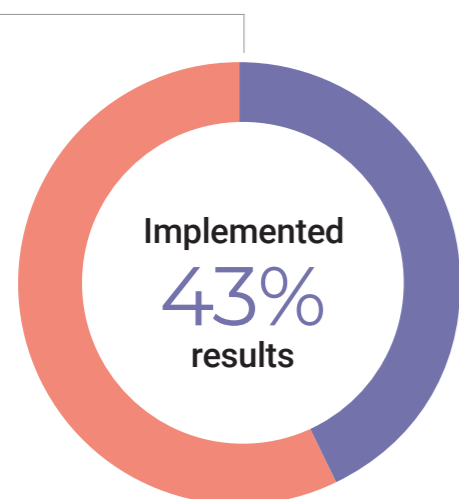
CONTENTS

4	STATISTICS FOR THREE YEARS (2018-2020.)
5	INTRODUCTION
8	MAJOR RESULTS
8	DIGITALISATION
10	PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
12	POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND COORDINATION
14	PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION TAILORED TO ALL USERS
16	CHALLENGES, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNT
18	HUMAN RESOURCE QUALITY AND CAPACITY
20	DIGITALISATION AND PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY AND ACCESSIBILITY
22	DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT
24	POLICY COORDINATION
27	CONCLUSION/SUMMARY
28	STATISTICAL OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVED RESULTS BY OBJECTIVES FOR THREE YEARS

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2018–2020: **A THREE-YEAR OVERVIEW**

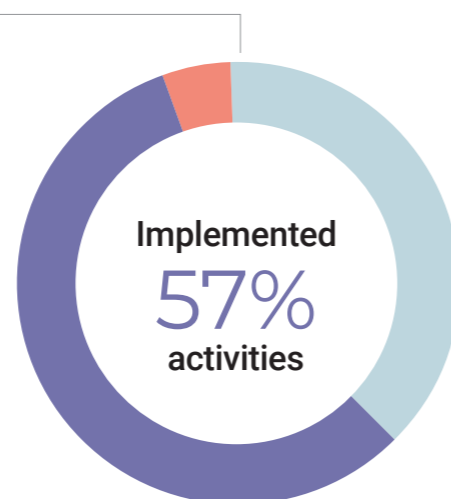
STATISTICS FOR THREE YEARS (2018-2020.)

RESULTS



Implemented	13	43%
Ongoing	/	/
Not implemented	17	57%

ACTIVITIES



Implemented	51	57%
Ongoing	33	37%
Not implemented	6	6%

BUDGET RSD in '000

BUDGET FUNDS

Planned
5,478,697 RSD

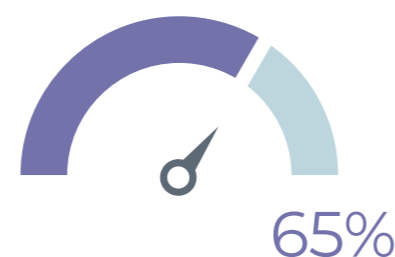
Spent
6,411,665 RSD



DONOR FUNDS

Planned
1,021,475 RSD

Spent
664,893 RSD



INTRODUCTION

A three-year overview of implementation of the Public Administration Reform Strategy Action Plan 2018–2020 (hereinafter: PAR AP 2018–2020) has been developed in order to identify **inspiring practices, major achievements, challenges and lessons learnt**. The overview does not go into details of individual activities described in three annual reports of the PAR AP 2018–2020 implementation, but aims to outline the most important achievements as well as challenges and recommendations, at the same time serving as introductory paper to the new PAR Strategy. The document was developed with assistance of the EU funded project *Support to Public Administration Reform under the PAR Sector Reform Contract* (EuropeAid/137928/DH/SER/RS) during February 2021.

As set out in 2014 Public Administration Reform Strategy of the Republic of Serbia, public administration reform, as a complex process, lived up to its continuity during the past three years (2018–2020). Much attention was paid to aligning strategic dimension with a holistic perspective, taking into account needs of the society, the business sector, institutions and individuals. With the significant results achieved during 2018–2020 in the area of digitalisation (Open Government Partnership, interconnection of state records, open data, new information technologies – ICT), multidisciplinary approach taken by the Serbian administration involved a **shift** from **working** in internal and isolated sectors (silos) to cross-sectoral, inter-institutional **citizen-oriented approach**. An important component of the transformation during the three-year period was further improvement of organisational culture through customer care, better access, work on increasing citizens' feedback, as well as strengthening efficiency and accountability in public administration. As strengthening human resources and gaining of important knowledge and skills (needed to increase the administration's efficiency) represent key success factors in this transformation process, legal and institutional frameworks have been improved, the latter being composed of the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government (MPALSG), the Human Resource Management Service (HRMS) and the newly-established National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA).

The 2020 COVID-19 crisis increased pressure on the administration in terms of adapting and accelerating the digitalisation process while experiencing major financial constraints, including limitations attributable to working from home, imposed epidemiological measures and a number of other factors not known prior to the pandemic. Apart from usual technical requirements and principles of

good HR governance, crisis management¹ had to be put into practice as well as the resilience measures. One of the key challenges pertained to the need of keeping relevant processes ready to proactively respond, especially in areas of co-creation (co-design), cooperation, timely response, inclusion of all target groups and innovation in extremely demanding conditions.

The European Union (EU), as a reliable partner, at the very beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic secured 7.5 million euros in grants to the Republic of Serbia to fight the crisis, but also provided funds **through the Sector Budget Support Programme – SBS** (i.e. through the **first SBS in the region** – 70 million euros as direct support, and 10 million euros allocated for technical assistance projects).² Following the EU model where member states took certain steps to mitigate COVID-19 socio-economic impacts, Serbia adopted number of economic measures to support citizens, business and other public sector segments (healthcare, services, etc.)³ aimed at protecting public health, job retention and support to the education system. Serbia ended 2018⁴ with an estimated real economic growth of 4.4%. A positive trend was maintained in 2019, which made it possible for the Standard and Poor's agency to estimate that, despite all current risks, Serbia would achieve significant economic growth of as much as 5% in 2021.⁵ Identified risks and trends enabled preventive and corrective institutional action for maintaining stability of the financial system.

Parliamentary, provincial and local elections held in mid-2020 triggered institutional restructuring that, once completed, shifted the focus back on strategic priorities.

Considering all aforementioned aspects, it is imperative that global trends (use of artificial intelligence, climate change, increasing reliance on behavioural sciences, use of new information technologies, etc.) are taken into account during implementation of PAR Strategy 2021–2030.

1 Statistics COVID-19 available at: <https://covid19.data.gov.rs/> (in Serbian) and <https://covid19.data.gov.rs/?locale=en> (in English).
2 Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II) 2014 – 2020, document available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/serbia/ipa/2015/pf_04_sector_reform_contract_for_public_administration_reform.pdf.
3 Economic measures as support for citizens and private sector, available at: <https://www.mfin.gov.rs/aktivnosti/ekonomske-mere-za-pomoc-privredi-i-gradjanima/> (in Serbian).
4 Team for Social Inclusion and Poverty reduction, link: <http://socijalnoukljucivanje.rs>.
5 Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Serbia (2020), Current Macroeconomic Trends, p. 34, available at: https://www.mfin.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/prezentacija_novo_sr-pdf.pdf (in Serbian) and https://www.mfin.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/prezentacija_novo_en.pdf (in English).

MAJOR RESULTS



DIGITALISATION



PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT



HUMAN RESOURCE QUALITY AND CAPACITY



DIGITALISATION AND PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY AND ACCESSIBILITY



POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND COORDINATION



PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION TAILORED TO ALL USERS



DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT



POLICY COORDINATION

CHALLENGES, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNT

MAJOR RESULTS DIGITALISATION

Why digital transformation was of the critical importance for Serbian Government advancement, and why it is still relevant? Which institutions and stakeholders contributed to the transformative process of the Serbian public sector digitalisation? And how did Serbia manage to secure effective and inclusive digital government?

Now, more than ever, Serbia needs an agile administration⁶, capable not only to adequately respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and other global challenges, but also to continuously perform its regular operations in a rapidly changing environment. A clear strategic decision⁷ of the Serbian Government to take the digitalisation course,⁸ the focus being on the period 2018–2020, enabled rapid adjustment of the administration and sped up trends started in 2014 towards responding proactively to novel requests made by users. The above indicates that **timely reaction of the Serbian public administration system was a result of not only the pandemic, but also of previous decisions on cutting the red tape**, launching **innovative projects** and establishing **information infrastructure**. In the past decade, Serbia adopted the e-government **legal⁹ framework**. Its core element is the Law on Electronic Government, adopted by the National Assembly in April 2018.¹⁰ The strategic framework was rounded by the e-Government Development Programme of the Republic of Serbia 2020–2022 and Action Plan for its implementation,¹¹ the previous e-Government Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia 2015–2018 and Action Plan for its implementation 2015–2016,¹² the e-Communication Development Strategy 2010–

2020,¹³ and the Information Society Development Strategy 2010–2020.¹⁴

As of July 1 2020, all state bodies register their employees to take the state professional exam and registrars' exam online, through the new G2G information system developed by the MPALSG in collaboration with the Office for Information Technology and e-Government (OITeG). Since 2012, Serbia has been participating in the Open Government Partnership (OGP) initiative,¹⁵ and the most recent (fourth) OGP Action Plan¹⁶ is the result of consultative process with several stakeholders in Serbia, including those at the local level. The latest European Commission's progress report on Serbia indicated moderate preparedness in the area of public administration reform but recognizes further development of e-service delivery.¹⁷ In 2018 and 2019, EU reports noted the progress made in the area of service delivery and the adoption of, inter alia, a law governing e-government. The **institutional framework** was rounded with establishing of the Office for Information Technology and e-Government.¹⁸ In 2018, the State Data Centre was established in Belgrade, ranking among most modern ones in the region according to its technical and security standards. It houses Serbia's key ICT infrastructure.¹⁹ Another State Data Centre was opened in Kragujevac two years later.²⁰ These projects enhanced Serbia's chance to become a regional IT leader in the fourth industrial revolution era.²¹

Serbian Government's innovative ideas and responses to COVID-19 were also recognised by international organisations (ReSPA and SIGMA/OECD) by being awarded with one of the first prizes for adapting and responding to the COVID-19 crisis²².

In 2020, the **Central Population Register²³** was established as a centralised Serbian population database. The same year was also marked by establishing the interoperability between the **Address Register²⁴** and the Residence Register.

Address Register open data for a more efficient business sector

As a result of the activities of the Serbian Government for opening public administration data, the Address Register code list has become open and thus available for use to the widest circle of users without any restrictions. Resulting from the collaboration of the Republic Geodetic Authority and OITeG, the Address Register code list can be downloaded from the Open Data portal data.gov.rs as well as from the Geosrbija geospatial platform at opendata.geosrbija.rs.

Another achievement is that, as of 2020, **all relevant government bodies (100% of them) exchange data from official records electronically** (through the e-ZUP service bus), which helped exceed the target value for 2020 (90%) and record a further increase compared to previous years (71% in 2019 and 50% in 2018).²⁵ **90% of the data** held by the Republic of Serbia **was converted into electronic form** and transferred to the Central Data Processing and Storage System of the Ministry of the Interior, by which the target value for 2020 was achieved. This was preceded by an upward trend in 2018 and 2019 (80%).²⁶

The national Open Data portal – <https://data.gov.rs/sr/> – was launched in 2017 and contains 310²⁷ data sets, which is 58 more than in 2019²⁸ and nearly triple the number in 2018 (116). The main data sets contain **open public data** on transport, the environment and the health sector, e.g. data on traffic accidents, public transport system, environmental protection, statistical data, geospatial data, medication data, etc. Availability and reuse of open data makes Serbia **one of the leaders in the region** (according to the comparative ranking of open data use²⁹ where Serbia shares the 41st position with Israel). Thus, for example, open data is used to present financial data. Specifically, the Open Budgets platform³⁰ provides users with simple and easy-to-understand budget overviews for cities and municipalities in Serbia, with more than 90 cities and municipalities having opened their **data on planned budgets**, revenues and expenditures. The <https://covid19.data.gov.rs/> portal was launched in 2020 to present data on the number of citizens in self-isolation, the number of infected people and other relevant information. Using open data on the number of people infected with the COVID-19 virus in the territory of Serbia, the Centre for Investigative Journalism of Serbia designed the <https://www.cins.rs/virus-korona-u-srbiji-dnevni-preseci/> portal, and a map of COVID-19 outpatient units in Serbia, available at <https://www.cins.rs/mapa-pronadite-covid-19-ambulantu-u-svom-gradu/>.

²⁵ Annual reports on the implementation of the PAR AP 2018–2020 for 2018 (p. 11), 2019 (p. 8) and 2020 (p. 10).

²⁶ Annual reports on the implementation of the PAR AP 2018–2020 for 2018 (p. 11), 2019 (p. 8) and 2020 (p. 10).

²⁷ The data was taken from the Open Data Portal, last visited on 16 February 2021, <https://data.gov.rs/sr/datasets/> (in Serbian).

²⁸ Annual reports on the implementation of the PAR AP 2018–2020 for 2018 (p. 26), 2019 (p. 19) and 2020 (p. 28).

²⁹ Global Open Data Index, for more information, visit: <https://index.okfn.org/place/?filter-table=srbia>.

³⁰ Open Budgets platform, available at: <https://budzeti.data.gov.rs/> (in Serbian).

State Data Centres opened in Belgrade (2018) and Kragujevac (2020)

Prime Minister Ana Brnabić, OITeG Director Mihailo Jovanović, PhD, and Mayor of Kragujevac Nikola Dašić launched the State Data Centre in Kragujevac for a trial run in late 2020. The State Data Centre in Belgrade was opened two years earlier.

As part of the fourth industrial revolution, data centres provide a strong impetus for further development of the IT sector and innovation, technological development and Serbia's leadership in this part of Europe.

National portal³¹ for identification was established allowing citizens to identify themselves electronically when they want to use e-government services. A number of **e-services** of utmost importance for users have been developed in recent years, taking into account all target groups, from the e-Baby,³² through the e-Paper³³ and e-Cadastre,³⁴ to the e-Inspector³⁵. Equally important is the issuance of e-Building permits,³⁶ as well as the e-Postbox³⁷ on the e-Government Portal. The e-Delivery³⁸ service can be understood as having one's own postbox in the virtual world in place of paying visits to institutions and counters. The number of users of the national e-Government Portal is 1,026,347³⁹. In 2020 this number increased by 156,347 users compared to 2018.

Cadastre decisions arrive in e-Postbox on the e-Government Portal

From December 2020, decisions on the registration of property rights are delivered to users electronically, via the e-Postbox service on the e-Government Portal. The Republic Geodetic Authority has so far delivered electronically hundreds of registration decisions to citizens. The e-Delivery service is fast, free and reliable.

³¹ Portal for electronic identification, available at: <https://eid.gov.rs/> (in Serbian).

³² The Office for Information Technologies and eGovernment, for more information, visit: <https://www.ite.gov.rs/tekst/2689/ebaba.php> (in Serbian) and <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/tekst/en/129970/ebaby.php> (in English).

³³ ePaper service, for more information, visit: <https://www.ite.gov.rs/tekst/108/epapir.php> (in Serbian) and <https://www.ite.gov.rs/tekst/en/38/epaper.php> (in English).

³⁴ eCadastre service, for more information, visit: <https://katarstar.rgz.gov.rs/eKatarstarPublic/PublicAccess.aspx>.

³⁵ eInspector service, for more information, visit: <https://www.ite.gov.rs/tekst/2691/einspektor.php> (in Serbian) and <https://www.ite.gov.rs/tekst/en/39/einspektor.php> (in English).

³⁶ Electronic building permits, for more information, visit: <https://www.mgsi.gov.rs/cir/dokumenti/elektronske-gradjevinske-dozvole-uputstva> (in Serbian).

³⁷ ePostbox service, for more information, visit: <https://esanduce.rs/prijava> (in Serbian).

³⁸ eDelivery service, for more information, visit: <https://www.ite.gov.rs/vest/4985/dostavljanje-resenja-i-dokumenata-u-elektronsko-sanduce-na-portalu-epravva.php> (in Serbian).

³⁹ The data was taken from the e-Government Portal (<https://epravva.gov.rs/>), last visited on 6 February 2021.

⁶ Agile public administration implies the ability to adapt via iterative (repeating) and incremental (through gradual improvement) process and service design, which includes creating prototype solutions and their testing.

⁷ Keynote address by Serbian Prime Minister Designate Ana Brnabić, 2017, available at: https://www.srbija.gov.rs/view_file.php?file_id=2148&cache=sr (in Serbian) and <https://www.media.srbija.gov.rs/medeng/documents/keynote-address-pm-ana-brnabic280617.pdf> (in English).

⁸ Public Administration Reform Strategy in the Republic of Serbia, available at: <http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/Strategija-reforme-javne-uprave-u-Srbiji-preciscen-tekst.pdf?script=altt> (in Serbian) and <http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/Eng-STRATEGIJA-RJU.pdf> (in English).

⁹ Law on Electronic Government (The Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 27/18); Law on Electronic Documents, Electronic Identification and Trust Services in Electronic Business (The Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 94/17); Law on National Spatial Data Infrastructure (The Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 27/18); Law on General Administrative Procedure (The Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, Nos. 18/16 and 95/18); Law on Information Security (The Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, Nos. 6/16, 94/17 and 77/19); Law on Personal Data Protection (The Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 87/2018).

¹⁰ The Law sets a framework for the systematic development of e-government and introduces basic control mechanisms, including open data and information reuse.

¹¹ Programme for eGovernment development in Serbia for the period from 2020 till 2022 with the Action plan for its implementation, available at: <http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/Program-razvoja-eUprave-u-RS-2020-2022.pdf> (in Serbian) and <http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/e-Government-Development-Programme-2020-2022-FINAL-2.pdf> (in English).

¹² Strategy for development of eGovernment in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2015–2018 and the Action Plan for its implementation, available at: <http://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SIGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/vlada/strategija/2015/107/1/r> (in Serbian).

¹³ Strategy of e-communication development in the Republic of Serbia from 2010 till 2020, available at: <https://mtt.gov.rs/download/3/Strategija%20razvoja%20elektronskih%20komunikacija%20u%20RS%202010-2020.pdf> (in Serbian).

¹⁴ While the former defines the key guidelines for the development of electronic communication in Serbia, the latter concerns the Digital Agenda for Serbia, aligned with the (past) Digital Agenda for Europe, and is available at: https://mtt.gov.rs/download/3/Strategija_razvoja_informacionog_drustva_2020.pdf.

¹⁵ Open Government Partnership Action Plan 2018-2020 available at: <http://mduls.gov.rs/reforma-javne-uprave/unapredjenje-transparentnosti-uprave/partnerstvo-za-otvorenu-upravu/partnerstvo-za-otvorenu-upravu-akcioni-plan-2018-2020/> (in Serbian).

¹⁶ OGP AP 2020–2022, available at: <http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/AP-OGP-2020-2022..pdf?script=lat> (in Serbian) and https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Serbia_Action-Plan_2020-2022_EN.pdf (in English).

¹⁷ Serbia 2020 Report, available at: https://www.mei.gov.rs/upload/documents/eu_dokumenta/godisnji_izvestaji_ek_o_napretku/serbia_report_2020_SR.pdf (in Serbian) and https://ec.europa.eu/neighborhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/serbia_report_2020.pdf (in English).

¹⁸ Office for Information Technology and e-Government was established under the Regulation governing its establishment (The Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, Nos. 73/17 and 8/19). For more information, visit: <https://www.ite.gov.rs/tekst/149/kancelarija-za-it-i-epravu.php> (in Serbian).

¹⁹ Government Data Centre, information available at: <https://www.ite.gov.rs/tekst/93/drzavni-data-centar.php> (in Serbian) and <https://www.ite.gov.rs/tekst/en/24/government-data-center.php> (in English).

²⁰ News on the City of Kragujevac website, available at: <https://www.kragujevac.rs/otvoren-drzavni-data-centar-u-kragujevcu/>.

²¹ News on the City of Kragujevac website, available at: <https://www.kragujevac.rs/otvoren-drzavni-data-centar-u-kragujevcu/>.

²² ReSPA and SIGMA- OECD awarded best cases of the Western Balkans administration in 2020, available at: <https://www.respaweb.eu/0/news/371/meet-the-winners-of-the-first-western-balkans-public-administration-award-contest>

²³ Central Population Register, available at: <https://epravva.gov.rs/proverite-podatke-crs>.

²⁴ Open Data Portal, available at: <https://data.gov.rs/sr/posts/adresni-registar/>.



PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Efficient Public Financial Management Reform Programme in 2018 and 2019 resulted in Serbia's improved fiscal position. **Macroeconomic and financial system stability** was intensified due to a reduced share of public debt in GDP (52.9% at the end of 2019); economic growth rate was 4.2% (in 2019) and fiscal deficit -0.2% of the GDP (in 2019), i.e., a national budget surplus was recorded (RSD 67 billion and 12.8 billion in 2018 and 2019, respectively). Official data also point to significant unemployment rate decline (9.5% in 2019) and increase in foreign direct investment inflows due to achieved stability and **structural reform positive outcomes**.⁴⁰ However, the 2020 pandemic crisis caused a global slowdown, although Serbia was **less affected** compared to the EU member states thanks to previously achieved fiscal and macroeconomic stability and a comprehensive package of introduced (crisis) mitigation measures. As per the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia preliminary estimates, GDP declined by 1.1% in 2020,⁴¹ which was confirmed by the Ministry of Finance estimations (1.0%)⁴². The unemployment

Increased number of LSGUs preparing their budgets in line with the Programme Budgeting Methodology

(in 2020, the achieved value was 78% against the target value of 73%).

rate in the first three quarters of 2020 fell to 8.7%.⁴³ Fiscal deficit in 2020 was 8.3% of the GDP,⁴⁴ and the latest data from the Ministry of Finance indicate that, at the end of that year, public debt reached 55.5% of the GDP.⁴⁵ Stability of public finances was supported by introduction of the **programme and capital**⁴⁶ budgeting as well as increase (in percentage terms) in local self-government (LSGUs) whose budgets were prepared in line with the Programme Budget-

ing Guidelines⁴⁷ and relevant methodology and instructions. In accordance with the Law on the Budget System, gender responsive budgeting (GRB) was gradually introduced in LSGUs operations,⁴⁸ with 47 national and 25 provincial institutions, applying GRB during 2019 in their 2020 budget planning process (compared to 35 national and 18 provincial level bodies, respectively, in 2018).⁴⁹ **Capacities of LSGUs for preparing development plans were further strengthened** in areas requiring the planning process aligned with the Law on the Planning System⁵⁰, thus focusing on connecting programme budget information with planning documents, as well as on adjusting with the Law on the Planning System bylaws.⁵¹ The EU support through the grant scheme of the Exchange 5 Programme – Component 1 contributed to increased number of LSGUs that established public property registers and improved public property management in 2019 and 2020 (48 LSGUs).⁵²

Throughout 2019, the budget cycle was aligned with the budget calendar, and practice of **presenting key information to the public** by publishing a simplified Citizens' Guide to the Budget was continued.⁵³ Activities planned to improve operations of the budget inspection were fully implemented during the reporting period by adopting the Budget Inspection Methodology (in 2019) and strengthening capacities of the inspection by hiring new staff.

47 Instructions for drafting the budget for program (updated in September 2020), available at: <https://www.mfin.gov.rs/dokumenti/uputstvo-za-izradu-programskog-budzeta-2/> (in Serbian).

48 Source: Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, available at: <http://www.skgo.org/strane/225> (in Serbian).

49 Source: UNDP – UN WOMEN, available at: https://www.undp.org/content/dam/unct/serbia/docs/Publications/UNW_GRB_%202019_SRB%20Layout%20DIGITAL.pdf (in Serbian) and <https://serbia.un.org/en/download/1315/11839> (in English).

50 Law on Planning System of the Republic of Serbia (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 30 /2018, available at: <https://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/skupstina/zakon/2018/30/1/reg> (in Serbian) and <https://rsjp.gov.rs/wpcontent/uploads/Law-on-Planning-System.pdf> (in English).

51 Source: Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, available at: <http://www.skgo.org/strane/225> (in Serbian).

52 Source: Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, Exchange 5 Programme – Component 1, under which 18 projects (48 LSGUs) were supported through the grant scheme, whereas at least 20 LSGUs received property management support (note: the Programme is still ongoing). For more information, visit: <http://www.skgo.org/strane/341>, <http://www.skgo.org/projekti/detaljno/47/program-exchange-5> and <http://www.skgo.org/vesti/detaljno/2087/pocela-grant-sema-programa-exchange-5-u-oblasti-upravljanja-imovinom> (all in Serbian).

53 A central-level example available at: <https://www.mfin.gov.rs/dokumenti/gradjanski-vodic-kroz-budzet-republike-srbije/> (in Serbian); some local-level examples: <http://www.beograd.rs/lat/gradska-vlast/1771100-gradjanski-vodic-kroz-budzet-za-2020-godinu-i-brosura/> (in Serbian), https://www.ruma.rs/portal2/jupgrade/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7831&Itemid=299&lang=en (in Serbian), <http://www.lajkovac.org.rs/gradjanski-vodic-kroz-budzet/> (in Serbian), <http://www.novisad.rs/lat/gradanski-vodic-kroz-budzet-grada-novog-sada-za-2020-godinu> (in Serbian).

40 The data was taken from annual reports on the implementation of the PAR AP 2018–2020; the 2018 Annual Report is available at: http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/1_PAR_report_fin.pdf?script=lat (in Serbian) and http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/PAR_report_28022018_english-1.pdf (in English); the 2019 Annual Report is available at: <http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/Godisnji-izvestaj-za-2019.-godinu-o-implementaciji-AP-RJU-2018-2020.-final.pdf> (in Serbian) and <http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/par-visibility-annual-report-2018-2020-eng-17-09.pdf> (in English).

41 Macroeconomic Developments in Serbia, National Bank of Serbia, February 2021, available at: https://www.nbs.rs/export/sites/NBS_site/documents/finansijska-stabilnost/prezentacije/prezentacija_invest.pdf (in Serbian) and https://www.nbs.rs/export/sites/NBS_site/documents-eng/finansijska-stabilnost/presentation_invest.pdf (in English).

42 Source: Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Serbia, Macroeconomic and fiscal data, published on 4 February 2021, Table 1 – Basic macroeconomic indicators, available at: <https://www.mfin.gov.rs/dokumenti/makroekonomski-i-fiskalni-podaci/> (in Serbian) and <https://www.mfin.gov.rs/en/documents/macroeconomic-and-fiscal-data/> (in English).

43 The data refers to the period January–September 2020. Source: Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Serbia, Macroeconomic and fiscal data, published on 4 February 2021, Table 1 – Basic macroeconomic indicators, available at: <https://www.mfin.gov.rs/dokumenti/makroekonomski-i-fiskalni-podaci/> (in Serbian) and <https://www.mfin.gov.rs/en/documents/macroeconomic-and-fiscal-data/> (in English).

44 Source: Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Serbia, Notice from December 2020, available at: <https://www.mfin.gov.rs/dokumenti/makroekonomski-i-fiskalni-podaci/> (in Serbian).

45 Source: Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Serbia, Macroeconomic and fiscal data, published on 4 February 2021, Table 6 – Comparative review of the public debt level in December 2020 – General government gross debt (EU methodology – Maastricht criteria), available at: <https://www.mfin.gov.rs/dokumenti/makroekonomski-i-fiskalni-podaci/> (in Serbian) and <https://www.mfin.gov.rs/en/documents/macroeconomic-and-fiscal-data/> (in English).

46 It refers to the improvement of selection and prioritisation for capital infrastructure projects.

Public procurement's role in increasing efficiency and effectiveness of public spending is essential and as such was not disregarded, but is viewed as the second important public finance management factor. This is related to the Public Procurement Development Programme (2019–2023)⁵⁴, where advances in **improvement and modernisation of the public procurement system** are evident. During the three-year period, 100% of planned activities for this area were implemented (some of results pertain to development and adoption of the Public Procurement Development Strategy 2019–2020 and Green Procurement Guidelines).⁵⁵ This greatly contributes to encouraging the small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector to take part in public procurement protection of rights in public procurement procedures and reduced risk of irregularities and corruption in conducting the procedures. Given the achievements during the reference period, fulfilment of criteria for closing Chapter 5 accession negotiations with the EU could consequently be expected.

54 eCatalogues design, for more information, visit: https://gizsr.visualstudio.com/Uputstva/_wiki/wikis/Uputstva/1853/Verzija-1.5 (in Serbian).

55 The data was taken from the online monitoring tool of the Ministry of Public Administration and Local self-government available at: <https://monitoring.mduls.gov.rs/statistike.html?tab=overall&depth=3&sid=9480> (in Serbian).

<https://jnportal.ujn.gov.rs>

The new Public Procurement Portal has been in place since 1 July 2020. Communication and data exchange in the public procurement procedure is carried out electronically via the Portal, in compliance with EU requirements. The number of visits to the Public Procurement Portal keeps growing and data access is possible in a machine-readable and processable format (open data).



POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND COORDINATION

The Regulatory Reform and Improved Public Policy Management Strategy 2016–2020⁵⁶ established a public policy management system in Serbia. Institutional framework for managing the public policy system includes, inter alia, the Public Policy Secretariat (hereinafter: PPS).⁵⁷ The Law on the Planning System of the Republic of Serbia⁵⁸ was adopted in 2018 as a result of Regulatory Reform implementation and Improved Public Policy Management Strategy 2016–2020, the aim being to establish a legal framework for development planning, policy planning and medium-term planning.

The following achievements were made in the area of public policy coordination and regulatory reform:

- The Law on the Planning System, Decree on the Methodology of Public Policy Management, Policy and Regulatory Impact Assessment, and Content of Individual Public Policy Documents, Decree on the methodology for drafting medium-term plans were adopted;⁵⁹
- Designed and published: Manual for a medium-term plan drafting, Manual for managers for Law on Planning System implementation - How to make better decisions, Manual for determining the costs of public policies and regulations, Manual for analysing the effects of public policies and regulations and Guidelines for LSGUs⁶⁰ development plans design;
- Civil society organizations are involved in the process of preparation of public policy documents and regulations, from the earliest stage (in the form of participation in working groups and consultations) to the determination of proposals, i.e. draft documents (in the form of public hearings), as follows: changes on the Law on Public Administration and Local Self-Government,

the Law on the Planning System and the Decree on the Methodology of Public Policy Management, Analysis of the Effects of Public Policies and Regulations and the Content of Individual Public Policy Documents, as well as the Rulebook on good practices for public participation in the preparation of draft laws and other regulations and acts⁶¹ from 2019, Guidelines for the inclusion of civil society organizations in working groups from 2020⁶² and previous Guidelines for the involvement of civil society organizations in the regulatory process⁶³.

- Unified Information System for public policy planning, monitoring, coordination and reporting (hereinafter: UIS) was established and public policy documents have been entered into it since January 2019;⁶⁴
- Public policy documents database was published on the PPS website.⁶⁵

⁵⁶ Strategy on regulatory reforms and improvements of public policy management systems for the period 2016–2020. Years, available at: <https://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/vlada/strategija/2016/8/1/reg> (in Serbian).

⁵⁷ Public Policy Secretariat, for more information, visit: <http://rsjp.gov.rs/mapa/> (in Serbian) and <https://rsjp.gov.rs/en/sitemap/> (in English).

⁵⁸ The 2018 Annual Report on the implementation of the PAR AP 2018–2020, p. 12.

⁵⁹ The 2019 Annual Report on the implementation of the PAR AP 2018–2020, p. 18.

⁶⁰ The publication is available on the Public Policy Secretariat website, link to the page: <https://rsjp.gov.rs/cir/dokumenti-kategorija-cir/prirucnici-cir/>

⁶¹ Правилник о смерницама добре праксе за остваривање учешћа јавности у припреми нацрта закона и других прописа и аката ("Службени гласник РС", број 51/2019), линк ка документу: <http://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/ministarstva/pravilnik/2019/51/5/reg>

⁶² Guidelines for the inclusion of civil society organizations in working groups from 2020, available at: <https://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/vlada/zakljucak/2020/8/1/reg>

⁶³ Guidelines for the Involvement of Civil Society Organizations in the Legislative Process (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 90/2014), link to the document available at: <https://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/vlada/zakljucak/2014/90/1/reg>

⁶⁴ The 2018 Annual Report on the implementation of the PAR AP 2018–2020, p. 13, available at: http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/1_PAR_report_fin.pdf (in Serbian) and http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/PAR_report_28022018_english-1.pdf (in English).

⁶⁵ The 2018 Annual Report on the implementation of the PAR AP 2018–2020, p. 13, available at: http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/1_PAR_report_fin.pdf (in Serbian) and http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/PAR_report_28022018_english-1.pdf (in English).



PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION TAILORED TO ALL USERS

Important reform developments took place as regards to ensuring conditions for delivery of quality services and transforming the administration to become a citizen- and business-oriented service, while not losing sight of state institutions themselves (G2C, G2B and G2G). Strategic commitment to provision of services tailored to all target users' needs is a cross-cutting theme, covering the above-mentioned aspects of digitalisation and public finance management.

Findings of the 2019 SIGMA Monitoring Report⁶⁶ noted **positive developments in the functioning of the administration**, with surveys indicating a more positive attitude of citizens towards the work of civil servants. Putting emphasis on development of e-government and relevant ICT solutions while applying the "user centric" approach⁶⁷ helps strengthen cross-sectoral cooperation between government institutions, but also ensures more accessible public services for citizens and businesses. Important achievements were made at the local level – where vast majority of (administrative) services to citizens and businesses are delivered – through opening of one-stop shops (OSSs) across Serbia (14 so far).⁶⁸ Fostering inter-municipal cooperation aimed at achieving common interests of LSGUs in order to deliver better services to citizens, respond to local communities' needs and optimise existing financial and human resources resulted in six contracts linking a total of 42 LSGUs⁶⁹.

66 Monitoring Report: The Principles of Public Administration, Serbia, May 2019, p. 33, available at: <http://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Monitoring-Report-2019-Serbia.pdf>.

67 In Serbian: pristup "orijentisanosti na korisnike".

68 The 2020 Annual Report on the implementation of the PAR AP 2018–2020, p. 5.

69 The 2019 Annual Report on the implementation of the PAR AP 2018–2020, pp. 10, 12, 16 and 32, available at: <http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/Godisnji-izvestaj-za-2019.-godinu-o-implementaciji-AP-RJU-2018-2020.-final.pdf> (in Serbian) and <http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/par-visibility-annual-report-2018-2020-eng-17-09.pdf> (in English).

Digitalisation strongly supports improvement of service delivery, which is best visible through development and modernisation of numerous portals and introduction of new e-services.

Many offer innovative solutions such as **e-Taxes**, **e-Enrolment**, **e-Kindergarten**, **UIS LTA**, in addition to opening the Serbian-Korean Information Access Center (**SKIP Center**) i.e. a free access centre for citizens and the administration. The Western Balkan Civil Society Empowerment for a Reformed Public Administration project (WeBER 2.0) conducted two comparative analysis⁷⁰ in 2017 and 2020, measuring **citizens' perceptions** of, inter alia, the **quality of services**.

Analysis show that Serbian citizens' perception of administrative simplification has a positive upward trend i.e. grew from 23% in 2017 to as much as 70% in 2020. Citizens also perceived the administration as improved in terms of user orientation – on a scale from 1 to 5, the value increased from 4 (in 2017) to 5 (in 2020). In addition, annual Balkan Barometer⁷¹ surveys, coordinated by the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), showed that **citizens' perception of public institutions and public services in Serbia had a positive upward trend** by comparing the following values: time required to obtain information from the public sector (data held by public authorities, such as documents, registers, records, etc.) received the score of 2.6 (in 2020) vs. 2.3 (in 2019); treatment of citizens in the public sector (police, health system, judiciary, township, etc.) 2.5 (in 2019) vs. 2.8 (in 2020); time required to obtain public services (police, health system, judiciary, municipality, etc.) 2.4 (in 2019) vs. 2.7 (in 2020); and price of public services (e.g. issuance of personal documents, judiciary costs, etc.) 2.2 (in 2019) vs. 2.3 (in 2020) – on the scale from 1 to 3.

Second important area in this category is **administrative simplification** process through the government programme for reducing administrative burdens. The afore-mentioned e-Paper Programme is

70 The data was taken from the WeBER portal, What do citizens tell us about administrative services? The second public perception survey in the Western Balkans survey report, pp. 2 and 4, available at: <https://www.par-monitor.org/weber-reports/#>.

71 Balkan Barometer 2019 - Public Opinion - Analytical report (p. 91) and Balkan Barometer 2020 - Public Opinion - Analytical report (p. 95), available at: <https://www.rcc.int/balkanbarometer/publications>

an example of a system-wide approach to the public administration reform towards increased efficiency in administrative procedures implementation i.e. increased quality of public service delivery to businesses. The Programme envisages optimisation, digitalisation and cancelling of redundant procedures, including establishing of the Public Administrative Procedures Register.⁷² This was a step further towards creating a favourable and secure business environment and an accountable public administration. **Merging inspection supervision** through the **e-Inspector** portal is part of the initiative for reducing administrative burdens to businesses and citizens through the establishment of a transparent framework for coordinated data exchange between inspection services. Based on the latter mentioned, the official records connection was improved by the adoption of the Law on Electronic Government (2018) which created the conditions for e-connection of the largest holders of state databases and for overcoming the challenges of various IT systems of public administration entities. **e-ZUP**⁷³ is the data exchange information system, established to support implementation of the Law on General Administrative Procedure and used by authorities to exchange state-held data, which facilitates their further usage. By the end of 2020, all state bodies used this portal to exchange data contained in their official records.

72 News on adoption of the 2020-2021 action plan for the implementation of e-paper program to reduce burden of administrative procedures and regulations, available at: <https://rsjp.gov.rs/cir/vesti-cir/usvojen-akcioni-plan-za-sprovođenje-programa-za-pojednostavljenje-administrativnih-postupaka-i-regulative-e-papir-za-period-2020-2021-godine/> (in Serbian).

73 Support to the employees for using eGAPA, for more information, visit: <http://mduls.gov.rs/reforma-javne-uprave/reforma-upravnog-postupka/podrska-zaposlenima-u-korisrenju-ezup-a/> (in Serbian).

Entry into force Law on eGovernment and the Regulation on the Mode of Operation of the Open Data Portal⁷⁴, enabling and facilitating data exchange between institutions, was the final step in completing the legal framework for state-held data opening and publishing.

Having a "state as an accountable, transparent, efficient and quality public service serving citizens and businesses" ecosystem implies introducing and embracing the change management concept, and deployment of a **more comprehensive organisational culture concept in the public sector** in order to implement reforms. Steps in integrating the approach marked a significant shift in reforms focus on both citizens and businesses (as public service users) and civil servants and their capacities. Progress was observed in staff professionalization, focus on mitigating resistance to change (through NAPA training programmes), staff retention policy, and "opening" of the public administration to citizens and civil society. As part of the public policy management reform in recent years, there were more proposals for public policy documents aligned with the Public Policy Management Methodology, training in public policy management was delivered, and involvement of citizens and businesses in development and adoption of new (public policy) documents was increased.

The citizen- and business-oriented approach has received the necessary impetus which should be exploited towards increasing satisfaction of all public service users.

74 Regulation on Open data portal maintenance, available at: <https://www.ite.gov.rs/extfile/sr/2974/Uredba-o-nacinu-rada-portala-otvorenih-podataka-c.pdf> (in Serbian).

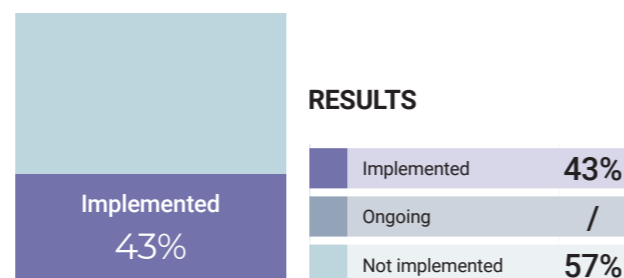
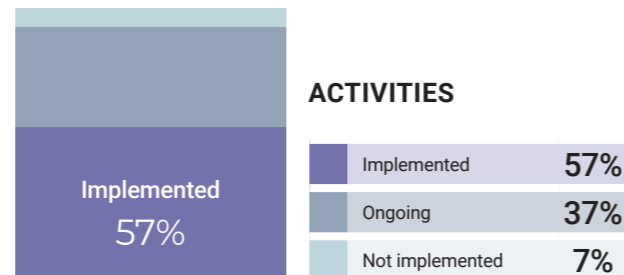


CHALLENGES, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNT

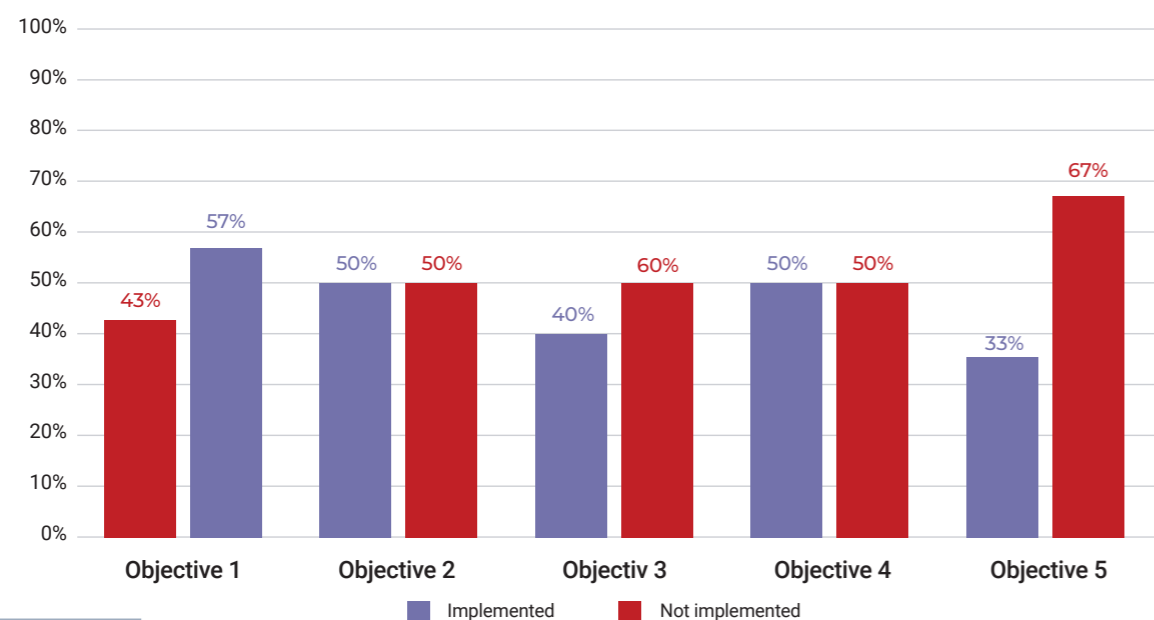


Public administration reform is one of the three core pillars of the EU enlargement policy and is, therefore, of utmost importance in the EU accession process. Functional public administration encourages other systemic reforms and affects public services, economic growth and increased living standard. In line with the OECD/SIGMA Principles of Public Administration,⁷⁵ public administration reform includes increased transparency, accountability and efficiency, but also improved policy coordination, public finance management and human resource management, as well as citizen-oriented public services.

This chapter summarises the challenges and lessons learnt during the past three years of the PAR AP implementation (2018–2020) and points to key areas needing further improvements for creating the enabling environment that recognises needs for change and introduction of efficient administration tailored to all users. It also draws a parallel with Draft PAR Strategy 2021–2030. To begin with, the structure of the Draft PAR Strategy 2021–2030 shows **additional alignment** with the OECD/SIGMA Principles of Public Administration (in relation to the 2014 PAR Strategy) and combines **general courses of action** that will steer and direct public administration reform processes in the next decade.



RESULTS



⁷⁵ SIGMA OECD Public Administration Principles, available at: <http://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Principles-Public-Administration-Overview-Serbian.pdf> (in Serbian) and <http://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Principles-Public-Administration-Overview-Nov2014.pdf> (in English).

Cumulatively, results in terms of implemented activities in the past three years clearly indicate critical public administration functioning areas. In spite of numerous outstanding achievements, during the three-year reference period (2018–2020) only 39% of planned results (measures) were achieved. The same percentage was not implemented, while 22% is still in progress. Specific objectives result further highlight **non-optimal planning and inadequate reforms alignment with existing capacities** in public administration (human and financial) and indicate that only two specific objectives (Objective 2 – 60%, Objective 4 – 50%) exceeded the 50% expectation threshold in (measures) implementation process compared to all other objectives (Objective 1 – 43%, Objective 3 – 20%, Objective 5 – 20%).

One of important lessons learnt in the PAR process pertains to the need for **more effective communication and cooperation** not only between state bodies, but also with citizens, businesses and other stakeholders. **Building trust** is a must in this process, as is the reform course of action.⁷⁶

PERFORMANCE BY INSTITUTIONS

	Implemented	It hasn't started	Ongoing	Total	Percentage
Anti-Corruption Agency	1	1	0	2	50%
State Audit Institution	0	1	1	2	0%
General Secretariat	0	0	1	1	0%
Public Procurement Office	6	0	0	6	100%
The Office For Information Technologies And eGovernment	3	0	1	4	75%
Ministry Of Public Administration And Local Self Government	17	1	22	40	43%
Ministry Of Labor, Employment, Veterans And Social Policy	0	0	1	1	0%
Ministry For Human And Minority Rights And Social Dialogue	1	0	1	2	50%
Ministry Of Interior	1	0	0	1	100%
Ministry Of Justice	3	0	0	3	100%
Ministry Of Finance	8	0	2	10	80%
National Training Academy For Public Administration	3	0	0	3	100%
Commissioner For Information Of Public Importance And Personal Data Protection	0	0	1	1	0%
Republic Geodetic Authority	1	1	1	3	33%
Republic Public Policy Secretariat	1	0	1	2	50%
Human Resource Management Authority	2	1	1	4	50%
Administration For Joint Services Of The Republic Bodies	0	0	1	1	0%

⁷⁶ Public Administration Reform in Europe: Conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations for future EU policy, 2018, p. 34, [Document download link](#).

⁷⁷ Public Administration Reform in Europe: Conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations for future EU policy, 2018, p. 33, [Document download link](#).



HUMAN RESOURCE QUALITY AND CAPACITY

Important steps were made in terms of regulating the human resources area. Analyses, however, indicate that, despite the results, mechanisms for merit-based recruitment remain underused, appointment of acting senior civil servants continues, and data and analyses tied to structure of all public administration bodies and optimal staffing levels are missing.⁷⁸ Generally, in this area **focus was mainly put on legal framework adoption, while its implementation stands as a challenge in the coming period.**

Human resource management is still not adequately transparent and requires additional efforts in terms of staff professionalization. One of the main recommendations in the European Commission's Serbia 2020 Report⁷⁹ emphasises the need of merit-based recruiting and reduction of excessive number of acting senior manager positions. This consequently implies that (senior) civil servants should be the core of professional, competent and politically independent staff and, preferably, key change management drivers in the public administration reform process.

⁷⁸ Assessment of Serbia's Progress in Meeting Political Criteria in Negotiations with the EU (original title in Serbian: Procena napretka Srbije u ispunjavanju političkih kriterijuma u pregovorima sa EU), Part V, CRTA, 2019, p. 63, available at: https://crt.rs/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/CRTA_Javna-uprava-u-Srbiji-dzin-na-staklenim-nogama.pdf (in Serbian).

⁷⁹ Serbia 2020 Report, p. 14, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/serbia_report_2020.pdf.

The principles of **change management** have been officially accepted and even became part of regular NAPA training programmes; full understanding of this concept remains to be evidenced.

In terms of **civil servants' professionalization**, practice shows that real professional development needs are to be better identified (the focus being on digital and leadership skills development, lifelong learning and development, change management, etc.) and aligned with competencies and tasks of relevant jobs positions, while applying staff motivation mechanisms, including the staff retention policy.

In line with current EU trends, recommendations for PAR processes in EU member states emphasise, as one of key lessons learnt, for political support, credible leadership throughout all phases of the reform, long-term and strategic planning and focus on scope of the reforms.⁸⁰ In its Serbia 2020 Report, the European Commission outlines that political support to PAR was in place through the **PAR Council** chaired by the Prime Minister,⁸¹ but indirectly points to the

⁸⁰ Public Administration Reform in Europe: Conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations for future EU policy, 2018, p. 33, [Document download link](#).

⁸¹ Serbia 2020 Report, p. 14, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/serbia_report_2020.pdf.

need for **increased political will**, especially in addressing the issue of excessive numbers of employees in public administration.

Human resources is a separate thematic area in the Draft PAR Strategy 2021–2030, which indicates positive direction towards **establishing adequate resources** and staff retention throughout the entire reform process. Weaknesses formerly identified in this area are to be addressed under three specific objectives (out of a total of eight) seeking, inter alia, to improve the **merit-based recruitment (senior position filling)**. Such recruitment process positively affects performance, motivation and integrity of civil servants.



DIGITALISATION AND PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Areas of service delivery and digitalisation are largely interconnected, but also intertwined with human resources quality and capacity in public administration. Reforms in the area of **service delivery** took two directions: development of e-government and e-services, and regulatory reform and simplification of administrative procedures. Key challenges pertained to lack of satisfactory quality in service delivery, harmonisation of regulations and lack of unified service delivery processes, lack of systemic approach to service delivery policy (non-standardised services at central and local levels), as well as partial introduction of the quality management system in service delivery, such as **CAF**, a horizontal tool for

total quality management and quality control of delivered services. These are attributable to the fact that there is no **umbrella service delivery policy or central policy coordination mechanism in this area**. User centricity needs to be extended to vulnerable groups (minority and other vulnerable groups, people with disabilities, population in underdeveloped areas) while insisting on their participation in development of relevant policies. It is also necessary to establish mechanisms for measuring user satisfaction with both e-services and those still delivered in direct contact with public administration bodies at all levels, which again raises the issue of capacity of civil servants to deliver quality public services.

With e-government and many e-services introduced, further challenges encompass **digitalisation** which requires additional focus on strategic approach to digital literacy of citizens, i.e., their education on possibilities and ways of using e-government services. **E-services need to increase user-friendliness, particularly in the service accessibility sphere**. These challenges inspired the Serbian Government, who, along with the International Telecommunication Union, the United Nations specialised agency for information and communications technologies, initiated a project entitled Leav-

ing no one behind in the digital era⁸² in late 2020. The expected result of the project is the **National Study on the Assessment on Digital Accessibility in the Republic of Serbia**. The need for making e-government services fully electronic⁸³ and improving data quality is also evident. It is further necessary to find solutions in helping citizens use e-services, given that these should be available to everyone, but are not exploited to the desired levels, as confirmed by the 2020 Balkan Barometer survey⁸⁴ (less than 10% of Internet users actually use of e-services in Serbia). Security and privacy of data exchanged through e-services was least in focus. This refers not only to technical capacities, but also to capacities of civil servants processing these data (which points to the need for additional training). Citizens should be educated about and encouraged to use available protection tools (electronic signature, two-factor authentication, etc.), whereas access to such tools should be facilitated or simplified. In terms of strategic planning in this area, it is necessary, first and foremost, to review and analyse the actual situation, needs and capacities (human and financial) to ensure implementation of planned measures and activities within set deadlines, and then to improve mechanisms for evaluating the implementation of strategic goals (through periodic progress assessments) and their synchronization with current achievements.⁸⁵

The **organisational culture** model that promotes individual responsibility, role of individuals within the organisation and their role as professionals in public administration is yet another challenge encountered in practice. This is because organisational culture, as a **cross-cutting theme**, implies a long-term investment in building individual and institutional capacities and requires commitment and patience, while providing sustainable development core at the same time.

Finally, optimisation of processes needs to take priority, as quite often old systems and processes are digitalised which causes delays, increased costs and compromises good ideas (that are put in practice inadequately).

As the new PAR Strategy outlines, improvement of (e-)services is one of the top priorities in the upcoming period, putting the spotlight on users (such improvements show citizens and businesses that the Government contributes to their well-being, which, in turn, increases their trust).

As stated in the Draft PAR Strategy 2021–2030, strategic commitments in the area of **service delivery** imply an **adaptable public administration** that delivers (e-)services in a timely manner and at reasonable costs and takes into account needs of minority and other vulnerable groups. The need to **optimise processes/services** and improve **service quality control** systems is also identified. This consequently reassures users that their well-being matters, and increases trust in the reform process and public institutions (as service providers).

⁸² The news and data were taken from the website of the Government of the Republic of Serbia: <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/504371/vazno-da-svi-gradjani-budu-ukljuceni-u-digitalne-tokove.php> (in Serbian).

⁸³ The intention is to complete the e-government services cycle. Some e-services have been digitalised only to the level of their initiation, i.e., submission of the request.

⁸⁴ Balkan Barometer 2020 - Public Opinion - Analytical report (p. 66), available at: <https://www.rcc.int/balkanbarometer/publications>.

⁸⁵ Country Report and Roadmap for Digital Agenda Advancement in the Republic of Serbia, CRTA, 2020, pp. 40-41 (Serbian version), pp. 41-42 (English version), available at: <https://crt.rs/nacionalni-izvestaj-sa-preporukama-za-unapredjenje-digitalne-agende-u-republici-srbiji/> (in Serbian) and <https://crt.rs/en/country-report-and-roadmap-for-digital-agenda-advancement-in-the-republic-of-serbia/> (in English).



DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL SELF- GOVERNMENT

The need for the local self-government system reform was acknowledged in the PAR AP 2018–2020 through envisaged development of a strategic document (programme) that would determine clear direction of reforms, but reports indicate delays in implementation (the document is yet to be developed).⁸⁶ Public administration reform at the local level took a slower pace than the one at the national level, largely due to centralisation, lack of organisational and financial efficiency of LSGs, and uneven regional development.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ The data was taken from the 2020 Annual Report on the implementation of the PAR AP 2018–2020.

⁸⁷ Assessment of Serbia's Progress in Meeting Political Criteria in Negotiations with the EU (original title in Serbian: Procena napretka Srbije u ispunjavanju političkih kriterijuma u pregovorima sa EU), Part V, CRTA, 2019, p. 63, available at: https://cрта.rs/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/CRTA_Javna-uprava-u-Srbiji-dzin-na-staklenim-nogama.pdf (in Serbian).

In addition to decentralisation, key challenges at the LSGU level during the three-year period were: uneven capacities, lack of adequate human resources, lack of staff interest in professional development, non-standardised services delivered to citizens and businesses at local level,⁸⁸ insufficiently developed system of supervision of local self-government operations, etc. In its Serbia 2020 Report, the European Commission pointed out at lack of progress in implementation of anti-corruption measures at local self-govern-

⁸⁸ 48th General Assembly of the SCTM, Panel discussion Potentials and Challenges in the Development of Local Self-Government in the Next Decade, news posted on 18 December 2020, available at: <http://www.skgo.org/vesti/detaljno/2563/48-skupstina-skgo-panel-diskusija-potencijali-i-izazovi-u-razvoju-lokalne-samouprave-u-narednoj-dekadi> (in Serbian) and <http://www.skgo.org/news/details/2563/48-skupstina-skgo-panel-diskusija-potencijali-i-izazovi-u-razvoju-lokalne-samouprave-u-narednoj-dekadi> (in English).

ment level.⁸⁹ Many AP activities concerning the local level still have the “in progress” label. The Draft PAR Strategy 2021–2030 covers six thematic areas, and singles out the local self-government system as a separate priority area. The document envisages development of the **Local Self-Government Reform Programme** with four courses of action addressing accountability, finance, capacity organisation and quality of (administrative, communal and public) service delivery to all relevant users.

⁸⁹ Serbia 2020 Report, p. 28, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/serbia_report_2020.pdf.



POLICY COORDINATION

Strategic public administration management is based on coordination and situation analysis (assessment) in all relevant areas. Therefore, in order to improve the system, it is necessary to upgrade **management and public administration reform coordination system** through a more adequate definition of roles (responsibilities) of institutions in various policy areas. It is necessary to use the UIS and raise capacities of those involved in the process. Key areas for improvement are related to the Serbian Government functioning to ensure overall quality of decisions made and their alignment with priorities. Some of the key challenges in the area of policy development and coordination are as follows:

- Quality of strategic planning process needs to be improved;
- Staffing level is low, i.e., number of officers preparing public policy documents and regulations is inadequate;⁹⁰
- Public administration is still not focused on measuring impacts and outcomes;⁹¹
- The above is linked with the human resource challenge in terms of lack of knowledge in using analytical tools in preparing analyses;⁹²
- The UIS, envisaged by the Law on the Planning System, has yet to live up to its intended purpose, i.e., any new deviations (e.g.

⁹⁰ The 2018 Annual Report on the implementation of the PAR AP 2018–2020, p. 14, available at: http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/1_PAR_report_fin.pdf (in Serbian) and http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/PAR_report_28022018_english-1.pdf (in English).

⁹¹ Serbia 2019 Report, p. 10, available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20190529-serbia-report.pdf>.

⁹² External Evaluation of the Serbian Public Administration Reform Strategy, 2019, p. 69 (Serbian version), p. 64 (English version), available at: <http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/190524-Final-Evaluation-Report-SR.pdf> (in Serbian) and <http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/190524-Final-Evaluation-Report-EN.pdf> (in English).

documents and their monitoring indicators) will need to be entered in the system in a form of aggregated information;⁹³

- Inconsistency of the planning framework makes it difficult to distinguish priorities and objectives, which affects financial planning;⁹⁴
- Statutory medium-term plans for 2020, which had to be adopted by all institutions by the end of January 2020, were actually adopted by three institutions only; therefore, the effectiveness of quality control by the PPS needs to be improved, including the costing of strategies and their links to medium-term fiscal planning.⁹⁵

⁹³ Serbia 2020 Report, p. 14, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/serbia_report_2020.pdf.

⁹⁴ Public Administration Reform Strategy of the Republic of Serbia 2021–2030, p. 64, available at: <http://mduls.gov.rs/javne-rasprave-i-konsultacije/pocetak-javne-rasprave-o-predlogu-strategije-reforme-javne-uprave-za-period-2021-2030-i-ap-za-period-2021-2025/?script=lat> (in Serbian).

⁹⁵ Serbia 2020 Report, p. 14, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/serbia_report_2020.pdf.

CONCLUSION/ SUMMARY

Challenges identified during the past three-year of AP PAR 2018–2020 implementation helped in reaching a **more realistic planning** and **introducing adequate mechanisms for measuring** achievements against desired objectives and results.

Draft PAR Strategy 2021–2030 reveals that **analytical approach in development of new strategic framework** has improved, covering six thematic areas which follow the Principles of Public Administration:⁹⁶

- policy planning and coordination,
- human resource management,
- service delivery,
- accountability and transparency,
- public finance management and, as a separate priority area,
- local self-government.

Given the **global trends**, i.e., anticipated ever-increasing use of artificial intelligence and other modern information technologies, changes in job descriptions due to digitalisation, possible disappearance of certain jobs in parallel with emergence of completely new ones, rising influence of and reliance on behavioural sciences, innovation labs and knowledge accelerators, strategies for the fu-

ture and smart specialisation, Serbian administration is expected to respond comprehensively. All achievements, challenges and lessons learnt discussed above create confidence that, in the course of implementation of the PAR Strategy 2021–2030, organisational culture will be institutionalised in administration and administrative services along with integration of agile management for, as much as possible. This shift will, therefore, rely heavily on design innovation and IT-based delivery and accessibility of public services, with citizens' experience (their perspectives and needs) taking the central place. In this context, a **balance** will be sought **between processes and services optimisation products**, communication mechanisms and service delivery methods, while relying on balance between traditional and digitalised processes and services.

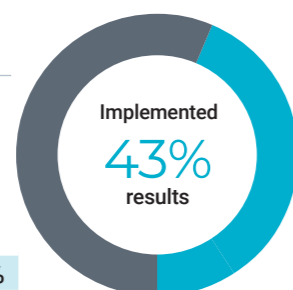
Despite inevitable obstacles to reform implementation and adjustments to various external and internal factors during the process, Draft **PAR Strategy 2021–2030 builds upon results achieved in the previous period and focuses on users**, thus completely deviating from the "state as a regulator" long-established. As such, it lays foundations for a different management structure that is capable to respond to challenges in a timely manner and take appropriate steps (measures) for their successful implementation.

⁹⁶ SIGMA OECD Public Administration Principles, available at: <http://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Principles-Public-Administration-Overview-Serbian.pdf> (in Serbian) and <http://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Principles-Public-Administration-Overview-Nov2014.pdf> (in English).

STATISTICAL OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVED RESULTS BY OBJECTIVES FOR THREE YEARS

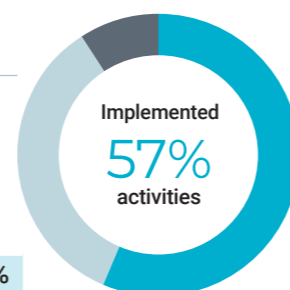
Objective 1. Improvement of organisational and functional public administration subsystems

RESULTS



Implemented	3	43%
Ongoing	/	/
Not implemented	4	57%

ACTIVITIES



Implemented	13	57%
Ongoing	8	35%
Not implemented	2	9%

Indicators for specific objective	Baseline value (2017)	Achieved value (2018)	Achieved value (2019)	Target value (2020)	Achieved value (2020)
Clarity and comprehensiveness of official typology of central Government bodies (PAR)	4	Data wasn't measured since 2017.	Data wasn't measured since 2017.	5	Data wasn't measured since 2017.
Mechanisms for managerial accountability in the regulatory and legislative framework (PAR)	1	Data wasn't measured since 2017.	Data wasn't measured since 2017.	2	Data wasn't measured since 2017.

Measure level indicators	Baseline value (2017)	Achieved value (2018)	Achieved value (2019)	Target value (2020)	Achieved value (2020)
Optimised, coherent and rational structure of public administration - % of measures planned for 2018 from the AP for HFA	0	0	0	50-70%	0
Strategic document adopted defining decentralisation policy and reform of local self-Government	0	0	1	2	0
Number of new inter-municipal cooperation arrangements to jointly discharge local self-government responsibilities	0	0	4	8	6
The share of the number of proposed strategies and action plans aligned with the public policy management methodology in the total number of strategies and action plans adopted by the Government per calendar year.	67.9%	50%	85.5%	90%	100%
Share of bodies which electronically exchange data from official records	20%	70%	71%	70%	100%
Share of bodies using data from the Central Population Registry	0	0	0	60%	0
Share of data from records of citizenship of the Republic of Serbia transferred electronically to the Central Data processing and Storing System	0	50%	80%	90%	90%

BUDGET RSD in '000

BUDGET FUNDS

Planned 706,142



Spent 259,402

37%

DONOR FUNDS

Planned 226,903

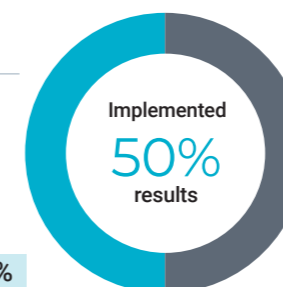


Spent 117,589

52%

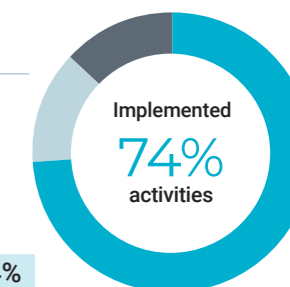
Objective 2. Establishment of a coherent, merit-based public service and improvement of human resource management

RESULTS



Implemented	3	50%
Ongoing	/	/
Not implemented	3	50%

ACTIVITIES



Implemented	11	74%
Ongoing	2	13%
Not implemented	2	13%

Indicators for specific objective	Baseline value (2017)	Achieved value (2018)	Achieved value (2019)	Target value (2020)	Achieved value (2020)
Extent to which the civil service system, the public service system at local level and public employee system are harmonised	4	5	5	5	5
Adequacy of policy framework, legal framework and institutional setup for professional human resources management in public administration	2	Data wasn't measured in 2018.	3	3	Data wasn't measured in 2020.
Professional development and training of civil servants	3	Data wasn't measured in 2018.	5	4	Data wasn't measured in 2020.

Measure level indicators	Baseline value (2017)	Achieved value (2018)	Achieved value (2019)	Target value (2020)	Achieved value (2020)
Share of appointed positions posts filled by competitions relative to the total number of appointed positions filled in state administration bodies and services of the Government	31%	33%	37%	50%	41%
Share of public administration employees to whom a fair and transparent salary system applies	0	0	0	100%	0
The average capacity of LSG units to manage human resources according to the SCTM index	54	Data wasn't measured in 2018.	Data processing is ongoing.	70	50.94
Extent to which the competences framework is being used in state administration bodies and services of the Government	0	0	2	3	3
Share of public administration employees who successfully completed professional development programmes offered by the NAPA	0	9.5%	15%	15%-30%	27%
Share of delivered training courses implemented by the NAPA in accordance with annual work plan	0	82%	88%	80%	99%

BUDGET RSD in '000

BUDGET FUNDS

Planned 21,705



Spent 12,434

57%

DONOR FUNDS

Planned 299,775

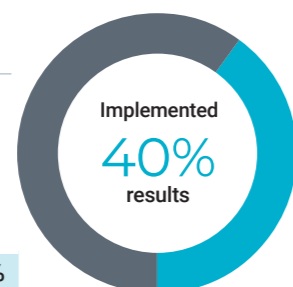


Spent 68,545

23%

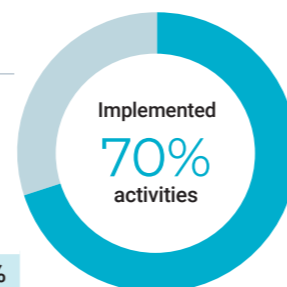
Objective 3. Improvement of public finance management

RESULTS



Implemented	2	40%
Ongoing	/	/
Not implemented	3	60%

ACTIVITIES



Implemented	14	70%
Ongoing	6	30%
Not implemented	0	0%

Indicators for specific objective	Baseline value (2017)	Achieved value (2018)	Achieved value (2019)	Target value (2020)	Achieved value (2020)
Percentage of implementation of the Public Finance Management Reform Programme	0	47%	/	100%	/

Measure level indicators	Baseline value (2017)	Achieved value (2018)	Achieved value (2019)	Target value (2020)	Achieved value (2020)
Number of LSG units which have established their register of public property, data base, and framework for effective and transparent management of public property	30	43	43	85	81
Percentage of LSG units whose budgets are prepared according to the programme budget methodology, measured annually	60%	67,65%	78%	80%	81
Number of annual reports on the state of PIFC and IA submitted by beneficiaries of public funds to the Ministry of Finance - CHU	1,125	1,390	1,546	1,200	the data will be available after 31.03.
Number of conducted controls by budget inspectorate	19*	15	42	23	27
Value of contracts signed based on framework agreements in one fiscal year (in billion RSD)	42.7* billion RSD	29.86** billion RSD	44.5 billion RSD	35.5 billion RSD	the data will be available after 31.03.

* baseline value from 2016

** in half a year

BUDGET RSD in '000

BUDGET FUNDS

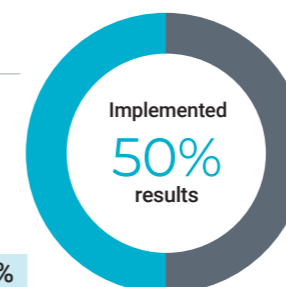


DONOR FUNDS



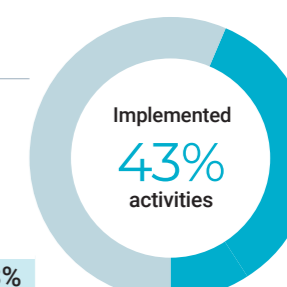
Objective 4. Increasing legal certainty and improving the business environment and quality of public service delivery

RESULTS



Implemented	3	50%
Ongoing	/	/
Not implemented	3	50%

ACTIVITIES



Implemented	6	43%
Ongoing	8	57%
Not implemented	0	0%

Indicators for specific objective	Baseline value (2017)	Achieved value (2018)	Achieved value (2019)	Target value (2020)	Achieved value (2020)
Provision of citizens-oriented services	3	Data wasn't measured in 2018.	3	4	Data wasn't measured in 2020
Fair and efficient administrative procedures	3	Data wasn't measured in 2018.	4	4	Data wasn't measured in 2020

Measure level indicators	Baseline value (2017)	Achieved value (2018)	Achieved value (2019)	Target value (2020)	Achieved value (2020)
The percentage of laws aligned with the General Administrative Procedure Law	1.5%	1.56%	13.33%	100%	54.4%
Share of special laws harmonised with the Law on Inspection Supervision	0	18%	23%	95%	44%
Share of reviewed check-lists for inspection and plans for joint inspections (full predictability in the work of inspections)	9.6%	75.3%	39%	95%	100%
Number of inspections using the unified inspection supervision system (e-Inspector)	0	4	36	33	36
Number of reports compiled based on surveys of citizens' satisfaction with the services received from state administration bodies and bodies of LSG	0	0	0	173	0
Average quality ranking of training provided at the SKIP centre	0	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5

BUDGET RSD in '000

BUDGET FUNDS

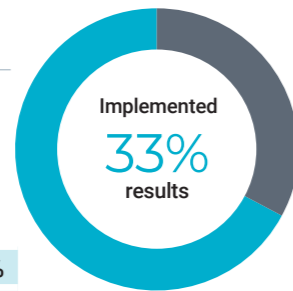


DONOR FUNDS



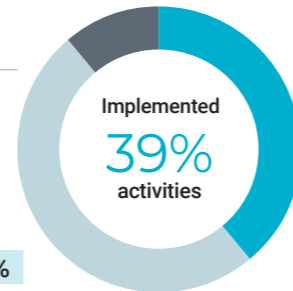
Objective 5. Increasing citizens' participation and transparency, improving ethical standards and accountability in performing public administration tasks

RESULTS



Implemented	2	33%
Ongoing	/	/
Not implemented	4	67%

ACTIVITIES



Implemented	7	39%
Ongoing	9	50%
Not implemented	2	11%

Indicators for specific objective	Baseline value (2017)	Achieved value (2018)	Achieved value (2019)	Target value (2020)	Achieved value (2020)
Effectiveness of control by independent oversight bodies over authorities	3	Data wasn't measured since 2017.	Data wasn't measured since 2017.	4	Data wasn't measured since 2017.
Accessibility of information of public interest	4	Data wasn't measured since 2017.	Data wasn't measured since 2017.	5	Data wasn't measured since 2017.

Measure level indicators	Baseline value (2017)	Achieved value (2018)	Achieved value (2019)	Target value (2020)	Achieved value (2020)
Share of information bulletins published by the uniform IT system for access to, processing and presenting Information Bulletins by 2020.	0	0	0	50%	0
Share of laws which during the preparation stage were subject to consultations according to the Law amending the Law on State Administration	0	0	46.9%	70%	0
Share of implemented recommendations of the Anti-Corruption Agency to remove corruption risks from proposed laws by 2020.	24%	13%	30%	40%	/
Share of accepted recommendations of the Ombudsman by administration bodies	88.88%*	84%	83.22%	91.88%	77.03%
Share of implemented recommendations made by the State Audit Institution	70.35%	73%	78%	75%	87.6%
Share of cases where legal and natural persons acted upon recommendations issued to them by the Equality Protection Commissioner	77.7%	78.2%	82.7%	80.7%	87.2%

* baseline value from 2016

BUDGET RSD in '000

BUDGET FUNDS

Planned 400,140



DONOR FUNDS

Planned 7,119



