

# PAR MONITOR METHODOLOGY

## I. Context and Rationale

### I.1 PAR Monitor rationale and the EU accession context

The first Public Administration Reform (PAR) Monitor Methodology has been developed in 2017 as part of the Western Balkans Enabling Project for Civil Society Monitoring of Public Administration Reform – WeBER – the initiative implemented by the Think for Europe Network (TEN), gathering think tanks from six WB countries focusing strongly on the EU accession process and good governance in the region. The PAR Monitor methodology is one of the main WeBER products, which seeks to facilitate civil society monitoring of PAR based on evidence and analysis. Since the beginning, WeBER has adopted a markedly evidence-based approach in its endeavour to increase the relevance, participation, and capacity of civil society organisations in the Western Balkans to advocate for and influence the design and implementation of public administration reform. In line with the TEN's and WeBER's focus on the region's EU accession process, the monitoring methodology has been redesigned in 2024 within the WeBER3.0 - *Western Balkan Enablers for Reforming Public Administrations* - with the view to further help guide the governments and societies in the region towards successful EU accession and membership.

Thus, the entire PAR monitoring approach has been from the onset devised around the PAR requirements defined under the EU's enlargement policy. The European Commission in 2014 defined, and in 2023 redefined the scope of PAR through six key areas:

I.	Strategy for PAR (formerly the strategic framework for PAR)
II.	Policy development and co-ordination
III.	Public service and human resource management
IV.	Organisation, accountability and oversight (formerly Accountability)
V.	Service delivery and digitalisation (formerly Service delivery)
VI.	Public financial management

This scope of PAR has been translated into the *Principles of Public Administration*, a framework for guiding and monitoring administrative reforms in the Western Balkan countries and Turkey.<sup>1</sup> The Principles of PA, developed by the OECD/SIGMA<sup>2</sup> together with the Commission, were first published in 2014 and then

<sup>1</sup> A separate document entitled *The Principles of Public Administration: A Framework for ENP Countries* has been developed for the countries encompassed by the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP): <http://bit.ly/2fsCaZM>.

<sup>2</sup> SIGMA (Support for Improvement in Governance and Management) is a joint initiative of the OECD and the European Union. Its key objective is to strengthen the foundations for improved public governance and hence support socio-economic development through building the capacities of the public sector, enhancing horizontal governance and

redefined in 2023.<sup>3</sup> According to OECD/SIGMA, the redefined version of Principles reflects the importance of fully embracing the potential of digitalisation, lessons learned in previous period, as well as the expectation that public administration contributes to addressing the environmental challenges. Since the first PAR Monitor Methodology was inspired by the SIGMA Principles, this revision gave additional push forward to redefine PAR Monitor approach methodology, following the same path. Moreover, completion of three PAR Monitor implementation cycles in the previous years has accumulated lessons learned and was also indicative of space for advancement.

In the redefined SIGMA framework, the 32 Principles outline values, behaviours and outcomes, while the 270 sub-principles provide more detailed guidance on how to achieve these results and ensure adequate administrative capacity. Based on these Principles, SIGMA conducts regular assessments of the progress made by the WB countries' governments in fulfilling them. Across-the-board assessments (for all the six key areas) are conducted once every two years, whereas in-between smaller scale assessments are done for specific chapters evaluated as critical by SIGMA. For more information on SIGMA assessments, visit [www.sigmaweb.org](http://www.sigmaweb.org).

## 1.2 PAR Monitor and Contribution of the Civil Society

As stated, the PAR Monitor Methodology was developed, and later redesigned, around the basic structure of six key PAR areas, using the “**by the civil society, for the civil society**” approach. This approach ensures that the methodology, and monitoring process, reflect the priorities and concerns of civil society organizations (CSOs) across the region. The selection of Principles for monitoring has been carefully aligned with issues of greatest relevance to CSOs, reinforcing their role PAR oversight (see *section on selection of Principles*).

Thus, a key strength of the PAR Monitor is its **inclusive approach**, involving a broad spectrum of civil society actors, in methodology development and its application, alike. Besides civil society members of the regional WeBER Platform, as well as members of the National Working Groups on PAR (NWGs) established in each WeBER country, the WeBER team extensively consulted all other, relevant WeBER stakeholders, such as national authorities associated to WeBER, SIGMA/OECD, the European Commission (DG NEAR), the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA), the WeBER Advisory Council. Moreover, through field research and direct engagement, CSOs contribute to data collection and analysis ensuring that **PAR Monitor reports**, primary outputs of the PAR Monitor Methodology, reflect on-the-ground realities. This participatory model strengthens the credibility of findings and enhances civil society's capacity to advocate for evidence-based reforms.

With this approach, the **PAR Monitor methodology not only provides valuable insights into public administration reform** but also establishes a sustainable and collaborative monitoring framework. By

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improving the design and implementation of public administration reforms, including proper prioritisation, sequencing and budgeting. More information available at: <http://www.sigmaweb.org/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Principles-of-Public-Administration-2023.pdf>

combining field research, expert analysis, and contributions from a wide network of CSOs, it creates a **credible evidence base**, strengthening civil society's role as a key stakeholder in public administration reform.

To further support this process, the **PAR Resource Centre** serves as an additional tool that enriches the PAR Monitor framework. It functions as a knowledge hub, compiling research, analyses, and other monitoring reports, and other publications produced by WeBER Platform and National Working Groups (NWGs) members, and other CSOs in the Western Balkans. By systematically organising and sharing this knowledge, the Resource Centre ensures that civil society's accumulated expertise is continuously available, contributing to long-term monitoring efforts and informed policy advocacy.

## II. Approach

As mentioned above, the overall approach to monitoring of PAR developed by WeBER is based in research and evidence. One of the main considerations underpinning the development of the methodology is to ensure complementarity with the monitoring work conducted by SIGMA/OECD. This approach acknowledges that SIGMA's comprehensive monitoring cannot and should not be replicated by local actors, as it already represents an independent monitoring source (in the sense of independence from governments in the WB). In that sense, WeBER does not seek to present a contesting (competitive) assessment of how the Principles are fulfilled in the WB administrations, but rather offer a complementary view, based on local knowledge and complementary research approaches.

Moreover, the resources available to SIGMA enable it to take a comprehensive approach to the Principles of Public Administration, monitoring all (or nearly all) aspects of the individual Principles across the six PAR areas. Local civil society actors in WB, however, do not have access to such extensive resources. Their projects and initiatives are typically segmented and rely on individual, ad-hoc approaches to PAR monitoring. WeBER aims to address this challenge through PAR Monitor, but also through the regional WeBER Platform for coordination among civil society actors in the region, and evidence based dialogue and exchange with regional governments and international stakeholders on PAR.

Finally, an important consideration in designing the monitoring approach lies in the understanding that, until the WB countries' EU accession moment, SIGMA/OECD will be engaged in the region, relying also on the hard EU conditionality as an external driving force of administrative reforms. In that period, the local civil society should deliver complementary, add-on findings in the areas of its strength, while gradually expanding the scope and seeking ways to continue with the external monitoring in a more holistic way once SIGMA is no longer there to perform its external assessments.

## II. 1 New approach in the same, but refreshed manner

Initially developed to align closely with the SIGMA framework, the PAR Monitor Methodology has evolved, both in response to updates in SIGMA's Principles and through insights and lessons learned gained from the past monitoring cycles.<sup>4</sup> These milestones have ultimately led to internal assessment within WeBER team, revealing room for further refinement and expansion.

By reassessing WeBER methodology in the context of SIGMA's updated Principles, WeBER team could incorporate more nuanced measures that align with the evolved standards. The updated SIGMA Principles brought fresh perspectives to areas, prompting us to strengthen our framework and address emerging needs within the PAR area. This deliberate recalibration aimed to ensure our methodology remains relevant, and responsive to both regional developments but also civil society needs in the region.

In line with the abovementioned considerations, the PAR Monitor Methodology maintains a basic structure which follows the six areas of the Principles of PA. However, it still does not attempt to cover all the principles, nor does it seek to cover them in a holistic manner. It adopts a more focused and selective orientation, which was defined at the very beginning of the process of PAR Monitor methodology development.

Considering that empowering civil society in the region to monitor PAR was, and still is, a gradual process, the criteria for selecting the SIGMA principles were developed with three main considerations in mind:

1. Certain areas/aspects of the Principles are of greater interest to civil society, where its engagement is correspondingly higher.
2. To build momentum, the PAR Monitor must capture the attention of the wider public across the region.
3. The Methodology should complement SIGMA's work and avoid duplication.

Accordingly, the key criteria guiding the selection of principles for the Methodology are:

1. The relevance of the principle (and its sub-principles) to the work and interests of civil society;
2. The relevance of the principle (and its sub-principles) to the interests and concerns of the wider public (i.e., the extent to which the principle addresses an outward-facing element of the administration's work);
3. The potential for adding value to SIGMA's work by focusing on a specific principle (and its sub-principles).

<sup>4</sup> Before the PAR methodology revision, WeBER team has implemented three monitoring cycles for 2017/2018, 2019/2020, and 2021/2022.

## II.2. Summary table of key changes

INITIAL PAR MONITOR	REFRESHED PAR MONITOR
Multiple indicators per PAR area	Single indicator per PAR area, with sub-indicators
Weight assigned to indicator elements, based on their complexity (1 or 2)	No weights assigned. Introduction of element types: Strategy and Policy, Legislation, Institutional Set-up, Practice in Implementation, and Outcomes and Impact
Indicator value on a scale 0-5	A total of 100 points per area/indicator
Survey of CSOs	Key Informant interviews with non-state actors
Public perception survey results used almost exclusively for a single PAR area	Public perception survey results used for five PAR areas
Survey of civil servants	No survey of civil servants is implemented
Single National PAR Monitor report per country (6 in total)	6 National PAR Monitor reports per country, one per PAR area (36 in total)
Single Western Balkan PAR Monitor report	Six regional reports Western Balkan overview reports (6 in total)

## II.3 Selection and Approach to Individual Principles

For the development of the initial PAR Monitor methodology, a thorough expert evaluation of all SIGMA Principles and sub-principles was conducted. Although the SIGMA Principles were restructured afterwards, the WeBER team relied on this prior evaluation since it was fully applicable to the revised framework of Principles. In other words, though the numbering, formulations, and scope of Principles were subject to revisions, the same results could be used since the focus of the initial evaluation process was on those aspects of Principles that are relevant for civil society and the public, such as transparency, openness, and inclusiveness of public administrations, and which have undergone little no change in the revised framework.

The selection criteria were applied across the six areas, with each WeBER partner focusing on an assigned area based on their expertise. Testing confirmed the consistency of the criteria, enabling a sub-principle-level evaluation. Using online forms, 1–2 experts per WeBER partner scored each sub-principle on a scale of 1 to 5, with the results finalised in August 2016. Scores were compiled in Excel, where medians of 4 or 5 and averages above 3.5 guided the initial selection process. Researchers then reassessed these selections to ensure "added value," discarding Principles or sub-principles with limited civil society relevance compared to SIGMA assessments.

## II.4. Detailed Indicator Tables

Whereas this document, in the section V, provides the overview of the Principles of PA which the WeBER monitors and the titles of indicators with the basic methodological descriptions, the detailed information needed for the measurement is provided in separate methodologies for each indicator

(indicator tables). Each indicator table specifies the title of an indicator, the number and titles of sub-indicators (number of sub-indicators varies by area), as well as general methodological remarks. In addition, sub-indicators are broken down into elements (individual measurement units) with the following information for each element:

1. Number incl. reference to relevant SIGMA Principle
2. Formulation
3. Element type (Strategy and Policy; Legislation; Institutional Set-up; Practice in Implementation; Outcomes and Impact)
4. Data Sources
5. Detailed methodological criteria
6. Point allocation rules

Each indicator for a designated PAR area has a total possible score of 100 points. The points assigned to individual elements are aggregated to determine the country's final score in that specific area.

INDICATOR	Wording of indicator from methodology		
<b>General methodological remarks</b>	Wording for general methodological remarks for specific indicator from methodology		
<b>Sub-indicator 1</b>	Wording of specific sub-indicator from methodology		
<b>Element 1.1</b>	<b>Formulation</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Data source</b>
<i>SIGMA Principle reference (number)</i>	Wording of specific indicator element from the methodology	Chosen type from menu	List of data sources that will be used for assessing the element
	<b>Methodology</b>		<b>Point allocation</b>
	Concise, but detailed description of how the element will be measured, including the specific research approaches and criteria		Description how points are allotted for the element
<b>Element 1.2</b>	<b>Formulation</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Data source</b>
<i>SIGMA Principle reference (number)</i>	Wording of specific indicator element from the methodology	Chosen type from menu	List of data sources that will be used for assessing the element
	<b>Methodology</b>		<b>Point allocation</b>
	Concise, but detailed description of how the element will be measured, including the specific research approaches and criteria		Description how points are allotted for the element
<b>Element 1.3</b>	<b>Formulation</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Data source</b>
<i>SIGMA Principle reference (number)</i>	Wording of specific indicator element from the methodology	Chosen type from menu	List of data sources that will be used for assessing the element
	<b>Methodology</b>		<b>Point allocation</b>
	Concise, but detailed description of how the element will be measured, including the specific research approaches and criteria		Description how points are allotted for the element



## III. Process of Developing the Refreshed PAR Monitor Methodology

In September 2023, WeBER partners gathered in Petrovac, Montenegro, to discuss methodology revision, during which couple of key issues were discussed and decisions made.

First, the partners discussed whether to keep up with the approach of publishing a single PAR Monitor report for each national administration to or produce multiple thematic reports. After careful consideration, the agreement was to change the direction and go with **six thematic reports, each dedicated to one PAR area**. This would allow for more sequential and focused work on a single PAR area, as well as more relevant and timely publications. In addition, it will create space for more advocacy events. This would necessitate a revised monitoring timeline, that would allow at least a two to three months monitoring period per PAR area, followed by at least a month for report preparation. At the same time, it was noted that there will be overlaps in monitoring work between two different PAR areas for the most part, i.e., finalisation of work in one area, will go in parallel with monitoring in another. Adjustments to this timeline would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis, depending on the workload, data availability, or other objective factors.

Second, the partners also discussed the use of perception-based indicators. In the initial PAR Monitor, public perceptions were mainly used for assessments of service delivery performance in WB countries, and the mutual understanding was that the PAR Monitor would benefit from **reducing dependency in this PAR area on perceptions**. In the months that followed, it was decided to keep implementing such surveys but expanded to capture perceptions of different aspects of PAR, results of which will be used to complement assessments for multiple areas, beyond service delivery. On the other hand, concerns were raised about the survey on civil servants' perceptions, as similar surveys were being conducted by SIGMA and ReSPA in the recent years. The discussion has led to the decision later on to exclude surveying civil servants for the time being, so as to avoid duplication with similar activities in the WB region performed by regional stakeholders, and reduce chances of low quality results, or low survey turnouts, due to saturation. Finally, to manage the workload but also reduce dependency on perceptions, it was discussed to re-assess the approach on collecting opinions of civil society in the region, which has led to a proposal of excluding implementation of a region-wide survey of civil society organisations. To compensate for the exclusion of perceptions, key informant interviews with an array of non-state actors were proposed as an alternative (with representatives of civil society, media associations, academic and professional organisations, etc.), and later applied in the new PAR Monitor Methodology. It was established within the WeBER team that besides collecting perceptions of key informants on specific matters, these conversations will be used to enrich assessments with additional qualitative, real-life experiences. Given the magnitude of these changes, in relation to the use of perception data for PAR monitoring, WeBER team has committed to continually track their effects in the period ahead.

Third, a new approach to indicator design was discussed, leading to a conclusion of having a single indicator per PAR area, focusing on transparency and inclusiveness. It was also decided to align approaches

with new features in SIGMA's framework, such as introduction of types of criteria (in WeBER terminology "elements"), as well to follow the new SIGMA's scoring system, from 0 to 100, as explained earlier.

In weeks after the Petrovac workshop, CEP, as the WeBER lead organisation, developed a draft indicator for Strategy for PAR area to test the new approach, while partners shared their feedback. In the months that followed, an entire draft of the refreshed PAR Monitor Methodology was sequentially developed, area by area, with each of the WeBER partners assigned to develop a draft indicator for single area, based on their comparative advantage in terms of experience.

External stakeholders were also involved through a broad consultation process throughout 2024 - experts from SIGMA, the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA), the WeBER Advisory Council, and the national authorities - project associates. These experts played a crucial role in shaping the methodology, ensuring that it was aligned with best practices and tailored to the specific context of PAR in the region. Through this collaborative approach, the methodology was continually refined and enhanced, benefiting from the diverse expertise and insights provided by the WeBER partners and external experts. The WeBER team carefully reviewed the comments provided during the consultations and proposals were adopted or rejected based on their alignment with the objectives of the new methodology. WeBER team has compiled the consultation report, with detail information on participation of external stakeholders.

## IV. Limitations

As with every research endeavour, the evidence-based PAR Monitor Methodology also has its limitations. The main limitation stems from the fact that – for reasons which were elaborated above – **it does not cover the entire framework of Principles**, but adopts a selective approach based on the outlined criteria. In that sense, the Methodology does not attempt to enable the monitoring of all reform processes covered by the Principles of PA, but only those in which the interest and the added value of the civil society is the strongest in the pre-accession period.

Moreover, the Principles which are targeted by the Methodology are not always covered in all of their facets, i.e. the Methodology does not approach them necessarily in their entirety but rather covers specific aspects which have been determined by the authors as the most relevant from the perspective of civil society monitoring. In all such cases, the specific WeBER approaches to coverage are transparently described in the detailed indicator methodologies.

Introduction of interviews with a minimum of three key informants for the assessment of outcome and impact type of indicator elements can represent a limitation due to the small number of participants. However, this limitation does not significantly impact the overall indicator scores, as these elements have a relatively minor influence on it. Also, it allows for a more targeted assessment, focusing on individuals directly involved in observed processes, which enhances the quality and relevance of insights. The shift from surveying CSOs towards key informant interviews was also informed by consistently negative feedback across PAR monitoring cycles which reflected general sentiment toward governments rather than providing



an opinion of the quality of individual PAR processes. By engaging informants with firsthand experience, the intention is to gain a more nuanced understanding of specific issues.

Finally, monitoring work will be implemented over a period of 18 months, due to the adopted pattern of monitoring and reporting on an area basis, but also capacities within the WeBER research team. These timeframe related limitations will be clearly stipulated with the publication of results.

## V. Monitoring methodology

### Area 1: Strategic Framework of PAR

<i>Indicator</i>	<b>TRANSPARENCY AND INCLUSIVENESS OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF THE PAR AGENDA</b>
<i><b>SIGMA principles and sub-principles</b></i>	<p><b>P1. A comprehensive, credible and sustainable public administration reform agenda is established and successfully implemented, fostering innovation and continuous improvement.</b></p> <p>c. PAR is co-ordinated at political and administrative levels; sufficient resources are allocated, and the planned reforms are effectively implemented and monitored.</p> <p>d. All relevant stakeholders are regularly consulted and involved in PAR planning and monitoring; PAR is effectively communicated, and values of good public administration are promoted.</p>
<i><b>General methodological remarks</b></i>	<p>PAR planning documents include official strategies/strategic plans (and their action plans), plans/programmes (and their action plans), and any other type of PAR planning document developed for an implementation period of at least two years, formally approved/adopted by the Government and/or the parliament. Only those planning documents with a clear connection to the overall PAR planning document through monitoring and coordination structures will be included in the sample.</p>
<i><b>Sub-indicator 1</b></i>	<p><b>Transparency and inclusiveness in developing PAR planning documents</b></p> <p>The following elements are combined:</p> <p>E1.1 Regulations envisage transparency and inclusiveness of PAR planning documents development process</p> <p>E1.2 Consultations with non-state actors are conducted during the development of PAR planning documents</p> <p>E1.3 Invitations to non-state actors to participate in the consultations are open</p>

	<p>E1.4 Responsible institutions are proactive in ensuring that a wide range of external stakeholders become involved in the process</p> <p>E1.5 Responsible institutions provide complete information in preparation for consultations</p> <p>E1.6 Responsible institutions publish their feedback on the comments received in the consultation process</p> <p>E1.7 Public debates are organised during the development of PAR planning documents</p> <p>E8. Key informants consider that PAR planning documents development process is transparent and inclusive</p>
<b>Research Methodology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data collection and analysis;</li> <li>• Official reports from public consultations;</li> <li>• Websites and official data of responsible government bodies (institutions);</li> <li>• Key informant interviews</li> <li>• FOI requests</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-indicator 2</b>	<p>■ <b>Transparency and inclusiveness of PAR monitoring and coordination structures</b></p> <p>The following elements are combined:</p> <p>E2.1 Participation of civil society in monitoring and coordination structures is envisaged in the PAR agenda</p> <p>E2.2 Format of CSO involvement in administrative structures for PAR coordination and monitoring enables their regular and substantive participation</p> <p>E2.3 Format of CSO involvement in political structures for PAR coordination and monitoring enables their regular and substantive participation</p> <p>E2.4 Involvement of CSOs is achieved based on an open competitive process</p> <p>E2.5 Meetings of the PAR coordination and monitoring structures are held regularly with CSO involvement</p> <p>E2.6 The work of PAR monitoring and coordination structures is communicated transparently</p> <p>E2.7 Key informants consider that they can meaningfully contribute during the meetings of monitoring and coordination structures</p>
<b>Research Methodology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data collection and analysis;</li> <li>• Official meeting minutes;</li> <li>• Websites and official data of responsible government bodies (institutions);</li> <li>• Key informant interviews FOI requests</li> </ul>

## Area 2: Policy Development and Co-ordination

<i>Indicator</i>	<b>TRANSPARENCY &amp; INCLUSIVNESS OF POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND COORDINATION</b>
<b>SIGMA principles and sub-principles</b>	<p><b>P2. Public policies are coherent and effectively co-ordinated by the centre of government; decisions are prepared and communicated in a clear and transparent manner</b></p> <p>c. Government decisions are prepared, approved, and followed up in a transparent, effective, and timely manner, based on clear rules and procedures, through the relevant decision-making structures, including government sessions.</p> <p><b>P3. The government plans and monitors public policies in an effective and inclusive manner, in line with the government fiscal space.</b></p> <p>d. Policy planning documents meet quality requirements and contain adequate analysis and information, including on policy objectives, indicators with targets and monitoring framework. They are developed in a participatory manner and are publicly available.</p> <p>f. Performance and results, including achievement of policy objectives and outcome indicators, are regularly monitored, and reported on; monitoring reports are published on time to enable public scrutiny.</p> <p>i. The government effectively implements EI plans through prioritising and costing of EI related commitments, taking into consideration the available resources and capacities of the administration</p> <p><b>P4. Public policies are developed based on evidence and analysis, following clear and consistent rules for law making; laws and regulations are easily accessible</b></p> <p>a. A whole of government policy to promote better regulation, evidence-based and inclusive policymaking is established and applied in practice during policy development and legislative drafting.</p> <p>c. Regulatory impact assessment (RIA), or other similar tool(s), is adopted and systematically used to support policy development, facilitate consultation, and inform decision-making at all key stages of policymaking, covering both primary and secondary legislation, including the impact on the environment and climate where necessary.</p>

i. All primary and secondary legislation, including consolidated versions, is easily accessible and available free of charge through a central online database(s). Administrative guidance documents, forms, and materials essential for complying with regulations are easily available for businesses and citizens.

**P5. All key external and internal stakeholders and the general public are actively consulted during policy development**

a. Procedures are in place and consistently applied and monitored to enable proactive and effective public consultations with stakeholders and the general public, allowing businesses, non-governmental organisations and citizens, including from vulnerable groups to participate in and inform government policymaking.

b. Consultation with the general public is conducted in an accessible and transparent manner.

c. Ministries hold constructive dialogue with key external stakeholders and collect, analyse, and use all responses when finalising the policy proposal. They transparently report on the outcome of the public consultation process and how consultees' views have shaped and influenced policy.

**P6. Public policies are effectively implemented and evaluated, enhancing policy outcomes, and reducing regulatory costs and burdens**

b. Businesses and citizens receive advance notification about upcoming changes in the rules and regulations that will affect them, and sufficient time is allowed for the affected groups to adjust to and align with the new regulatory framework.

c. The responsible institutions effectively monitor policy implementation and ensure regulatory compliance, based on robust and relevant data, including evidence gathering through direct feedback and consultations with affected stakeholders.

d. Ex post evaluation of major laws and policies is an integral part of the better regulation agenda and is linked to the analysis conducted during the development of the policy. The public administration makes evaluation results publicly available and uses them to inform future policy.

g. Compliance with existing regulations is promoted through provision of information, guidance, checklists, and other tools. Enforcement actions take into account the profile and behaviour of specific regulated entities.

	<p><b>P7. The parliament effectively scrutinises the government policymaking and ensures overall policy and legislative coherence.</b></p> <p>b. Parliamentary committees debate and scrutinise legislative initiatives, with active participation of government ministers and senior public servants, and ensure consultation with key stakeholders, while also minimising any risks of undue external influence</p> <p>h. The parliamentary services provide expert advice and support to members of parliament for initiating and drafting new laws based on evidence and with input from key stakeholders.</p>
<i>General methodological remarks</i>	<p>The scope of the entire indicator is limited to service delivery and digitalization in the central state administrations in the Western Balkans.</p> <p>For the Practice type of elements based on a sample, unless specified otherwise in the methodology of individual elements, the same 7 administrative services are observed to allocate points.</p> <p>For the Outcome and Impact type of elements, 3 interviews with key informants are envisaged as a rule. Unless specified otherwise in the methodology of individual elements, the same interviews with key informants should be used to allocate points in all such elements.</p> <p>If no information which is critical for point allocation can be obtained either through the review of websites stated in the data sources, or through the submission of FOI requests, research should hold interviews with central state administration bodies responsible for service delivery and digitalization, or responsible institutions to obtain missing data (unless it is clear from point allocation guidelines that points are allocated solely on public availability of required information).</p>
<i>Sub-indicator 1</i>	<p><b>Transparency and inclusiveness of government decision-making process</b></p> <p>The following elements are combined:</p> <p>E1.1 There is a strategic document in force that envisages improvement of transparency of government decision-making process</p> <p>E1.2 Regulations stipulate transparency of government decision-making process</p> <p>E1.3 Government regularly publishes agenda items, minutes, and press releases from its sessions online</p> <p>E1.4 Government regularly publishes decisions from its sessions online</p> <p>E1.5 Government uses social media to communicate decisions taken at its sessions</p> <p>E1.6 Key non-state actors consider the Government's decision-making process as transparent</p>

<p><b>Research Methodology</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data collection and analysis:</li> <li>• Websites and official data of responsible government bodies (institutions);</li> <li>• Government social media accounts</li> <li>• Key informant interviews FOI requests</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sub-indicator 2</b></p>	<p><b>Transparency and inclusiveness of government planning and reporting</b></p> <p>The following elements are combined:</p> <p>E2.1 There is a strategic document in force that envisages improvement of government planning and reporting practice</p> <p>E2.2 Regulations stipulate public availability of government planning documents and reports on their implementation</p> <p>E2.3 Regulations stipulate public availability of government's European integration plans and reports on their implementation</p> <p>E2.4 Government regularly and timely publishes its annual work plans</p> <p>E2.5 Government publishes its programme in a timely manner</p> <p>E2.6 Government's programmes and work plans contain performance indicators for monitoring achievement of results</p> <p>E2.7 Government regularly and timely publishes reports on the implementation of its work plans</p> <p>E2.8 Government regularly and timely publishes reports on the implementation of its programme</p> <p>E2.9 Government regularly and timely publishes its European integration plans</p> <p>E2.10 Government regularly and timely publishes reports on implementation of its European integration plans</p> <p>E2.11 Government's reports on implementing its programmes and work plans include assessments of achievement of key results and performance indicators</p> <p>E2.12 Government's reports on implementation of the government's European integration plans include assessments of achievement of key results and performance indicators</p> <p>E2.13 Government plans and reports are citizen friendly</p> <p>E2.14 Data contained in the government's reports on implementing work plans are available in open format</p> <p>E2.15 Key non-state actors consider the Government's planning and reporting activities as transparent, timely and citizen friendly</p>
<p><b>Research Methodology</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data collection and analysis:</li> <li>• Websites and official data of responsible government bodies (institutions);</li> <li>• National open data portal</li> <li>• Freedom of information requests</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key informant interviews FOI requests</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-indicator 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Transparency and inclusiveness of policy making and legislation development process</b></li> </ul> <p>The following elements are combined:</p> <p>E3.1 There is a strategic document in force that envisages improvement in transparency and inclusiveness of policy making and legislation development process</p> <p>E3.2 Regulations envisage transparency and inclusiveness of policy making and legislative development process</p> <p>E3.3 Regulations stipulate minimum consultation requirements</p> <p>E3.4. There is a designated government institution for checking compliance with consultations requirements</p> <p>E3.5 Regulations stipulate mandatory application of ex ante impact assessments during policy making, and publication of reports</p> <p>E3.6 Regulations envisage online and free of charge access to consolidated versions of all policy documents and legislation</p> <p>E3.7 Ex ante assessments are consistently applied during the development of policy documents</p> <p>E3.8 Ex ante assessments is consistently applied during the development of primary legislation</p> <p>E3.9 Reports on implemented ex ante assessments during the development of primary legislation are regularly published online, together with the draft documents</p> <p>E3.10 Published reports on implemented ex ante assessments during the development of primary legislation contain key information</p> <p>E3.11 Non-state actors participate in the Government-led working groups for policy and legislative development</p> <p>E3.12 Transparency of procedures and decisions of working groups</p> <p>E3.13 Public consultations on policy documents and primary legislation are regularly held</p> <p>E3.14. Public consultations are conducted in an early phase of policy development</p> <p>E3.15 Reports on public consultations on policy documents are publicly available</p> <p>E3.16 Reports on public consultations on primary legislation are publicly available</p> <p>E3.17 Public consultation reports contain all elements of the implemented consultation process</p> <p>E3.18 Online, central consultation portal for the implementation of consultations is regularly used</p> <p>E3.19. Designated government institution regularly checks compliance with public consultation requirements</p> <p>E3.20 Lead ministries proactively inform on public consultations</p> <p>E3.21 Consolidated versions of primary and secondary legislation are easily accessible online, and available free of charge</p> <p>E3.22 Key non-state actors consider the work of the Government-led working groups as transparent and inclusive</p> <p>E3.23 Public consultation results have impact on final policy and legislative proposals</p>

<p><b>Research Methodology</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central e-consultation portal</li> <li>• Qualitative data collection and analysis:</li> <li>• Websites and official data of responsible government bodies (institutions);</li> <li>• Freedom of information requests</li> <li>• Social media of the government institutions</li> <li>• Online media</li> <li>• Official Gazette website</li> <li>• Key informants' interviews</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sub-indicator 4</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Transparency and inclusiveness of policy implementation, evaluation, and parliamentary scrutiny</b></li> </ul> <p>The following elements are combined:</p> <p>E4.1 There is a strategic document in force that envisages transparency and inclusiveness of policy monitoring and evaluation practices</p> <p>E4.2 Regulations envisage sending advance notifications to affected groups on the upcoming changes to the legal framework</p> <p>E4.3 Parliamentary rules of procedure envisage participation of interested parties in parliamentary discussions, in the form of public hearings</p> <p>E4.4 Lead ministries publish advance notifications to the affected groups on the upcoming changes to the legal framework</p> <p>E4.5 Lead ministries regularly publish monitoring reports on implementation of policy documents</p> <p>E4.6 Monitoring reports on implementation of policies are citizen friendly</p> <p>E4.7 Lead ministries publish ex-post evaluations on implementation of policies</p> <p>E4.8 Ex-post evaluations on implementation of policies use external data and information produced by non-state actors</p> <p>E4.9 Parliament involves stakeholders, affected groups, and other non-state actors in public hearings</p> <p>E4.10 Online transparency of the work of parliaments</p> <p>E4.11 Key non-state actors consider involvement of stakeholders in public hearings as effective</p>
<p><b>Research Methodology</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data collection and analysis:</li> <li>• Websites and official data of responsible government bodies (institutions);</li> <li>• Freedom of information requests</li> <li>• Key informants' interviews</li> </ul>

## Area 3: Public Service and Human Resource Management

<i>Indicator</i>	<b>TRANSPARENCY, OPENNESS AND MERITOCRACY OF CIVIL SERVICE AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT</b>
<b>SIGMA principles and sub-principles</b>	<p><b>P8. The employment framework balances stability and flexibility ensure accountability of public servants and protects them against undue influence and wrongful dismissal</b></p> <p>a. The government has a clear policy on public service, and the political-level responsibility for the area is established</p> <p>e. Public servants can only be dismissed or demoted based on objective criteria regulated by law, following a due process and subject to judicial review.</p> <p>f. The public administration uses temporary employment in justified situations and within reasonable time limits.</p> <p>g. A central body, sufficiently empowered, effectively leads and co-ordinates the human resource management (HRM) system for the public service, provides support to public administration bodies, and monitors implementation.</p> <p>h. Public administration bodies have sufficient capacities for professional HRM.</p> <p>i. An effective information system supports HRM processes and provides data allowing for evidence based public service policy.</p> <p><b>P9. Public administration attracts and recruits competent people based on merit and equal opportunities</b></p> <p>a. The public administration analyses human resources (HR) and prepares and implements HR plans aligned with the budget to ensure the appropriate workforce size, mix of competencies, skills and expertise to fulfil its mission, considering both current and future needs.</p> <p>b. Public servants are recruited through transparent and open competitions, based on merit.</p> <p>c. Inclusive recruitment policies and practices support diversity and equal opportunities in the public administration.</p> <p>e. Recruitment is based on accurate job descriptions providing the required candidate profile (experience, knowledge, skills, competencies) for effective performance, reflected in vacancy announcements, along with work and salary conditions.</p>

f. Selection committees are composed of members qualified to perform the assessment of candidates against the job requirements, without any conflict of interest, and free from political influence.

g. Selection methods provide fair and valid assessment of the experience, knowledge, skills and competencies necessary to perform the job and enable the selection of the most suitable candidates.

h. Recruitment and selection processes are efficient, timely, user-friendly and supported by digital tools

i. Applicants are informed of recruitment decisions in a timely manner and have the right to ask for justification and appeal through administrative and judicial channels.

**P10. Effective leadership is fostered through competence, stability, professional autonomy and responsiveness of accountable top managers**

a. The law establishes top managers as a specific category. The scope of top management is adequately defined, ensuring that senior managerial positions in ministries and agencies are not treated as political offices.

b. Top management positions are made attractive through fair recruitment, competitive remuneration, professional challenges, autonomy and mitigation of career risks.

c. Recruitment procedures are merit-based, professionally led, impartial and transparent, allowing selection and appointment of top managers with sufficient high-level experience, knowledge, skills, and competencies to perform their job well against predefined standards.

d. Recruitment policies and practices support equal opportunities, gender balance and non-discrimination in top managerial positions.

e. Top managers in public administration have clearly defined objectives, aligned with the mission of the organisation and objectives of the government, and their performance is regularly assessed.

f. Top managers in public administration have sufficient professional and managerial autonomy, enabling them to assume responsibility for the management of staff, resources, and work.

**P11. Public servants are motivated, fairly and competitively paid and have good working conditions**

a. The public administration offers a competitive package of financial and non-financial compensation: remuneration and benefits, development and career

	<p>opportunities, job security, and a respectful and inclusive work environment, to attract, motivate and retain employees and teams with the required skills and competencies.</p> <p>d. The salary system is transparent to employees and the public, while ensuring a sufficient degree of protection of sensitive personal data.</p>
<b>General methodological remarks</b>	<p>The scope of the entire indicator is limited to civil service and central state administrations in the Western Balkans, meaning it does not cover sub-national administrations (local, provincial, regional etc.). For certain elements, and only exceptionally, wider public sector is referenced and should be considered to the extent it is methodologically covered.</p> <p>For the Outcome and Impact type of elements, 3 interviews with key informants are envisaged as a rule. Unless specified otherwise in the methodology of individual elements, the same interviews with key informants should be used to allocate points.</p>
<b>Sub-indicator 1</b>	<p><b>Transparency of statistics and reports on civil service</b></p> <p>The following elements are combined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E1.1 Strategic framework envisages improvements in transparency of basic information on civil service</li> <li>E1.2 Regulations stipulate that data on civil service and employees in the central state administration are publicly available</li> <li>E1.3 The Government regularly publishes reports pertaining to the civil service</li> <li>E1.4 Published reports include data on employees other than civil servants in the central state administration</li> <li>E1.5 Published reports segregate data based on gender, age, and education</li> <li>E1.6 Civil service data is available in open format(s)</li> <li>E1.7 The government comprehensively reports on the key elements of civil service policy and HRM</li> <li>E1.8 Key non-state actors consider reports on civil service policy as transparent and comprehensive</li> </ul>
<b>Data sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data collection and analysis:</li> <li>• Websites and official data of responsible government bodies (institutions);</li> <li>• National Open Data Portal</li> <li>• Key informant interviews FOI requests</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-indicator 2</b>	<p><b>Transparency of temporary hiring in the civil service</b></p> <p>The following elements are combined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E2.1 Regulations stipulate conditions and limitations for hiring temporary staff</li> <li>E2.2 Regulations stipulate openness and application of merit-principle when hiring temporary staff</li> <li>E2.3 Procedure for hiring temporary staff is open and transparent</li> </ul>

	<p>E2.4 Temporary hirings are limited in practice</p> <p>E2.5 Key non-state actors consider the use of temporary hiring as transparent, limited and purposeful</p>
<b>Data sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data collection and analysis:</li> <li>• Websites and official data of responsible government bodies (institutions);</li> <li>• Central institutions responsible for HRM</li> <li>• Freedom of information requests</li> <li>• Key informant interviews FOI requests</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-indicator 3</b>	<p><b>Transparency and merit principle of recruitment process</b></p> <p>The following elements are combined:</p> <p>E3.1 Strategic framework envisages improvements of openness, transparency and merit principle of the recruitment process</p> <p>E3.2 Regulations stipulate openness, transparency, and merit principle of the recruitment process</p> <p>E3.3 Vacancy announcements for public competitions are made broadly publicly available</p> <p>E3.4 Vacancy announcements for public competitions are presented in a way to motivate and attract external candidates</p> <p>E3.5 Responsible institution provides support and guidance to applicants</p> <p>E3.6 There are no unreasonable barriers for external candidates which make public competitions more easily accessible to internal candidates</p> <p>E3.7 The application procedure imposes minimum administrative/paperwork burden on candidates</p> <p>E3.8 Candidates can supplement missing documentation within a reasonable timeframe</p> <p>E3.9 Decisions and reasoning of the selection panels are made publicly available, with due respect to the protection of personal information</p> <p>E3.10 Information about annulled public competitions, including reasoning for the annulment, is made publicly available</p> <p>E3.11 Key informants consider recruitment into civil service as transparent and merit-based</p>
<b>Data sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data collection and analysis:</li> <li>• Websites and official data of responsible government bodies (institutions);</li> <li>• Freedom of information requests</li> <li>• Websites of five sample central state administration bodies;</li> <li>• Websites of the central institutions responsible for HRM</li> <li>• Key informants' interviews</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-indicator 4</b>	<p><b>Merit based selection and protection of top managers from undue political influence</b></p> <p>The following elements are combined:</p>



	<p>E4.1 Strategic framework envisages strengthening of professionalism of the civil service top management</p> <p>E4.2 Regulations stipulate competitive, merit-based procedures for the recruitment of civil service top management</p> <p>E4.3 Regulations stipulate that acting appointments to top management positions are only made from within the civil service, for a limited period</p> <p>E4.4 Regulations stipulate objective criteria for the termination of hiring of top management positions</p> <p>E4.5 Existence of procedures on appointments to top management positions outside of the scope of the civil service legislation</p> <p>E4.6 The merit-based recruitment for top management positions is applied in practice</p> <p>E4.7 Acting appointments are, in practice, only made from within the civil service</p> <p>E4.8 Ratio of eligible candidates per top managerial-level vacancy</p> <p>E4.9 Share of non-merit-based appointments to top management positions</p> <p>E4.10. Key non-state actors consider that the selection and appointment process of top managers is merit-based and that they are protected from undue political influence</p>
<b>Data sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data collection and analysis:</li> <li>• Websites and official data of responsible government bodies (institutions);</li> <li>• Websites of five sample central state administration bodies;</li> <li>• Websites of ministry responsible for civil service, of central institution responsible for HRM in civil service, or of responsible body for selection of top managers;</li> <li>• Freedom of information requests</li> <li>• Key informants' interviews</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-indicator 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Transparency and clarity of information on the civil service remuneration</b></li> </ul> <p>The following elements are combined:</p> <p>E5.1 Regulations define a simply structured remuneration system</p> <p>E5.2 Information on civil service remuneration system is available online</p> <p>E5.3 Citizen friendly explanations or presentations of the remuneration information exist</p> <p>E5.4 Key informants consider information on the civil service remuneration system as transparent and clear</p>
<b>Data sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data collection and analysis:</li> <li>• Websites and official data of responsible government bodies (institutions);</li> <li>• Websites of five sample central state administration bodies;</li> <li>• Websites of ministry responsible for civil service, of central institution responsible for HRM in civil service, or of responsible body for selection of top managers;</li> <li>• Key informants' interviews</li> </ul>

## Area 4: Organisation, Accountability, and Oversight

<i>Indicator</i>	<b>ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY OF STATE ADMINISTRATION</b>
<b>SIGMA principles and sub-principles</b>	<p><b>P15. Public administration is transparent and open.</b></p> <p>a. The government has established strategic objectives to promote openness and transparency of public administration, assigning clear responsibilities to specific actors</p> <p>b. Individuals, including non-residents, and legal persons have the legal right to access public information without justifying their request.</p> <p>c. Public information encompasses all information recorded in documents held by the public administration, individuals or legal persons who exercise public authority. Exceptions exist only when there are compelling reasons for classifying information; they are set down precisely in law.</p> <p>d. The public administration helps parties to identify the requested information and provides it promptly in the requested format and free of charge, except for the cost of reproduction and delivery.</p> <p>e. The public administration communicates the grounds for refusal of access to public information, and parties have the right to appeal this decision to an independent body or the courts.</p> <p>f. Responsibility for monitoring compliance with the legislation on public information, providing guidance and imposing sanctions is clearly assigned and implemented.</p> <p>i. Public administration bodies proactively disclose public information, which is relevant, complete, accurate and up to date, accessible, understandable, machine-readable, in open-format and reusable.</p>
<b>General methodological remarks</b>	<p>For the sub-indicator 1, the entire body of FOI requests submitted during the entire PAR Monitor cycle is used as a sample at the country level.</p> <p>For the sub-indicator 2, the same sample of central administration bodies is used for point allocation under Elements 2.2-2.11. The sample consists of five central state administration bodies: three line ministries (1 large, 1 medium, 1 smaller, in terms of thematic scope); a ministry with general planning and coordination function; and a central-level service provider that is not a ministry, and who delivers public services to citizens (or citizens and businesses). Unless specified otherwise, general criteria for the</p>

	<p>assessment of proactive transparency practices of sampled bodies under Elements 2.2-2.11 include availability, accessibility, citizen friendliness, and whether information is up to date.</p> <p>For the Outcome and Impact type of elements, 3 interviews with key informants are envisaged as a rule. Unless specified otherwise in the methodology of individual elements, the same interviews with key informants should be used to allocate points in all such elements.</p> <p>If no information which is critical for point allocation can be obtained either through the review of websites stated in the data sources, or through the submission of FOI requests, research should hold interviews with the responsible central state administration bodies to obtain missing data (unless it is clear from point allocation guidelines that points are allocated solely on public availability of required information).</p>
<b>Sub-indicator 1</b>	<p><b>Reactive transparency - freedom of information (FOI)</b></p> <p>The following elements are combined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E1.1 There is a strategic document in force that envisages improvements in transparency of state administration</li> <li>E1.2 Regulations stipulates legal right of individuals and legal persons to access public information without justifying their request</li> <li>E1.3 Regulations stipulate submission of responses to FOI requests in requested format, within prescribed deadlines, and free of charge</li> <li>E1.4 Regulations stipulate obligatory disclosure of grounds for refusal of access to information</li> <li>E1.5 Regulations stipulates sanctions, as preventive measures against non-compliance with FOI</li> <li>E1.6 Regulations establish a supervisory authority that is mandated to monitor FOI and reports on its implementation</li> <li>E1.7 Responses to FOI are provided in requested format</li> <li>E1.8 Responses to FOI are provided within legally stipulated deadlines</li> <li>E1.9 Responses to FOI are provided free of charge</li> <li>E1.10 Public authorities submit information that was requested</li> <li>E1.11 Public authorities communicate grounds for refusal of access to information</li> <li>E1.12 Supervisory authority regularly publishes annual reports on application of freedom of information</li> <li>E1.13 Supervisory authority's annual reports include information on imposed and executed sanctions</li> <li>E1.14 Supervisory authority proactively publishes up-to-date citizen-friendly resources and fill-in forms for freedom of information</li> </ul>

	<p>E1.15 Key non-state actors consider supervisory authority's sanctions as transparent and effective</p> <p>E1.16 Key non-state actors consider that public authorities adequately respond to requests with sensitive information and properly act when refusing access to information</p>
<b>Data sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data collection and analysis:</li> <li>• Freedom of information requests</li> <li>• Website of supervisory authority for FOI</li> <li>• Key informant interviews</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-indicator 2</b>	<p><b>Proactive transparency</b></p> <p>The following elements are combined:</p> <p>E2.1 Regulation stipulates proactive transparency obligations</p> <p>E2.2 State administration bodies publish relevant, up to date, easily accessible, and citizen-friendly information on scope of work</p> <p>E2.3 State administration bodies publish relevant, up to date, citizen-friendly and easily accessible information on policy documents and legal acts under their competence</p> <p>E2.4 State administration bodies publish relevant, up to date, easily accessible and citizen friendly information on public services</p> <p>E2.5 State administration bodies publish relevant, up to date, easily accessible and citizen friendly information on impact assessments and evaluations</p> <p>E2.6 State administration bodies publish relevant reports on their work in a timely, accessible and citizen-friendly manner</p> <p>E2.7 State administration bodies publish relevant, up to date, easily accessible, and citizen friendly budget information</p> <p>E2.8 State administration bodies publish relevant, up to date, easily accessible and citizen friendly contact information</p> <p>E2.9 State administration bodies publish relevant, up to date, easily accessible and citizen friendly information on organisational structure</p> <p>E2.10 State administration bodies publish relevant, up to date, easily accessible and citizen-friendly sections dedicated to public consultation processes</p> <p>E2.11 State administration bodies publish data in open, machine-readable format</p> <p>E2.12 Public administration publishes high-value open datasets</p> <p>E2.13 Key non-state actors consider proactively published information as citizen-friendly</p>
<b>Data sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data collection and analysis:</li> <li>• Freedom of information requests</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Websites of sampled bodies and government website, and other relevant government websites</li> <li>• National open data portal</li> <li>• Key informant interviews</li> </ul>
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## Area 5: Service Delivery and Digitalization

<i>Indicator</i>	<b>TRANSPARENCY &amp; CITIZEN-CENTRICITY OF SERVICE DESIGN AND DELIVERY</b>
<b><i>SIGMA principles and sub-principles</i></b>	<p><b>P19. Users are at the centre in design and delivery of administrative services</b></p> <p>a. The government establishes and co-ordinates a whole-of-government policy to continuously improve design and delivery of public administrative services, based on evolving user needs.</p> <p>b. Public administration bodies engage users to understand their needs, expectations and experiences and to involve them actively in the (re)design of public administrative services (co-creation).</p> <p>d. When designing and implementing new policies and services, the public administration ensures that unnecessary administrative burdens and costs are not being created.</p> <p>e. The public administration establishes service standards, defines them with users, communicates them to users, and regularly updates them to reflect changing circumstances and expectations.</p> <p>f. The public administration regularly monitors service quality against delivery standards and other metrics, to learn lessons and improve service design and delivery.</p> <p><b>P20. The public administration delivers streamlined and high-quality services</b></p> <p>a. The public administration ensures that service delivery is streamlined for the maximum convenience of the service users.</p> <p>b. The public administration organises and offers public services in the form of “life events”.</p> <p>d. Users have the legal right to provide the public administration with information and documents only once. The public administration applies this right consistently.</p>

**P21. Administrative services are easily accessible online and offline, taking into account different needs, choices and constraints**

a. The public administration applies omni-channel service delivery, combining online and (digitally-assisted) offline channels, so users have a seamless user journey with the possibility to interact digitally with any part of administration, if desired.

b. All potential users have physical access to high-quality public services within reasonable distance, through collaboration of involved public administration bodies and co-ordination across and within levels of government.

c. The public administration takes account of the diverse needs of different user groups in delivering services (including with respect to physical and intellectual ability, digital skills and language) and ensures there are no barriers to service access.

d. The public administration ensures that users can easily find their preferred channels and have easy access to information about their rights, obligations, services and the institutions providing them, for example through a service catalogue.

e. In their communication tools (websites, leaflets, forms, etc.) and in the context of administrative decisions, public administration bodies use concise and understandable language that conveys all relevant information in a manner appropriate to the diverse circumstances of service users (minority languages according to the law, visual and hearing impairments, etc.).

**P22. Digitalisation enables data-driven decisions and effective, efficient and responsive policies, services and processes in the whole of government.**

a. The public administration ensures leadership, co-ordination and capacity for the creation of effective, integrated and digital government strategies and services.

b. Public registries are digital by design, and data governance is coherent and systematic, to ensure the trustworthiness and high quality of data and access to it, with active use and sharing of data within the public administration and beyond.

d. User-friendly digital identity, digital signature and trust services, digital payment and digital delivery solutions are easily available to everyone, legally enacted, technically functional and widely used.



	<p>g. Mitigation of cyber security and privacy risks ensures data protection, in particular personal data protection, and builds public trust by applying prevention frameworks and building sufficient capacities.</p> <p>i. The public administration actively collaborates with relevant stakeholders to enhance the re-use of digital solutions developed with public budget to boost a collaborative ecosystem for the provision and use of digital services economy-wide.</p>
<b>General methodological remarks</b>	<p>The scope of the entire indicator is limited to service delivery and digitalization in the central state administrations, meaning it does not cover sub-national administrations (local, provincial, regional etc.).</p> <p>For the Practice type of elements based on a sample, unless specified otherwise in the methodology of individual elements, the same 7 administrative services are observed to allocate points. These sample service includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Property registration</li> <li>2. Company (business) registration</li> <li>3. Vehicle registration</li> <li>4. Passport issuance</li> <li>5. ID card issuance</li> <li>6. VAT declaration</li> <li>7. VAT payment.</li> </ol> <p>For the Outcome and Impact type of elements, 3 interviews with key informants are envisaged as a rule. Unless specified otherwise in the methodology of individual elements, the same interviews with key informants should be used to allocate points in all such elements.</p> <p>If critical information for point allocation is unavailable through website reviews or FOI requests, researchers should conduct interviews with relevant central state administration bodies or institutions to gather the missing data, unless the guidelines specify that points are based solely on publicly available information.</p>
<b>Sub-indicator 1</b>	<p><b>Citizen-centric service delivery</b></p> <p>The following elements are combined:</p> <p>E1.1 There is a strategic document in force that envisages the provision of citizen-centric service design and service delivery</p> <p>E1.2 Regulations stipulate citizen-centric service design and service delivery</p> <p>E1.3 Regulations stipulate an obligation of service providers to keep and publish metrics of users' participation in service design</p> <p>E1.4 Regulations stipulate application of 'once-only principle'</p>

	<p>E1.5 Institutional responsibility for steering and continuously improving service design and service delivery at the central administration level is assigned</p> <p>E1.6 Service providers collect and publish information on users' participation in service design</p> <p>E1.7 Service providers collect and publish users' feedback on their experience with service delivery</p> <p>E1.8 The administration uses citizens' feedback to improve administrative services</p> <p>E1.9 Public service providers implement the once-only principle during service delivery</p> <p>E1.10 Key non-state actors consider service design and delivery as citizen centric</p>
<b>Data sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data collection and analysis:</li> <li>• Official government (service providers') websites</li> <li>• E-governmental portal on administrative services</li> <li>• Freedom of information requests</li> <li>• Key informant interviews</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-indicator 2</b>	<p><b>Service accessibility and availability of information on services</b></p> <p>The following elements are combined:</p> <p>E2.1 The strategic framework envisages enhancement of accessibility of services and availability of service delivery information</p> <p>E2.2 Regulations stipulate service provision through one-stop shops</p> <p>E2.3 Regulations stipulate that service providers keep key metrics on the use of services</p> <p>E2.4 Regulations stipulate provision of services in the form of life events</p> <p>E2.5 Regulations stipulate mandatory adaptation of service delivery to the needs of vulnerable groups</p> <p>E2.6 Service providers publish basic procedural information on how to access public services online</p> <p>E2.7 Service providers publish citizen-friendly guidance on accessing public services online</p> <p>E2.8 Service providers publish information on services they offer as life events</p> <p>E2.9 Information on services is available in multiple formats to meet diverse users' needs</p> <p>E2.10 Information on public service delivery is available in multiple languages to meet diverse users' needs</p> <p>E2.11 Service providers publish information on the prices of their services</p> <p>E2.12 Service providers publish information on the rights and obligations of users</p> <p>E2.13 Service providers publish precise contact information for service provision</p> <p>E2.14 Data on administrative services are available in open formats</p>

	<p>E2.15 Service providers train their staff on how to treat vulnerable groups</p> <p>E2.16 Service providers ensure adequate territorial distribution of service delivery</p> <p>E2.17 Key non-state actors consider service delivery as accessible</p>
<b>Data sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data collection and analysis:</li> <li>• Freedom of information requests</li> <li>• Websites of sampled bodies and government website, and other relevant government</li> <li>• Websites e-governmental portal on administrative services</li> <li>• National open data portal</li> <li>• Websites of responsible ministry, central institution responsible for trainings, and for HRM</li> <li>• Key informant interviews</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-indicator 3</b>	<p><b>Digitalisation of service delivery</b></p> <p>The following elements are combined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ E3.1 There is a strategic document in force that envisages digitalisation of service delivery</li> </ul> <p>E3.2 Regulations stipulate provision of digital services, digital signature and e-payment in digital service delivery</p> <p>E3.3 Institutional responsibility for steering the digital service delivery at the central administration level is assigned</p> <p>E3.4 Online central platform for digital service delivery is established and user-oriented</p> <p>E3.5 Digital signature and digital payment are available to all users</p> <p>E3.6 Key non-state actors consider digital services as easy to use</p>
<b>Data sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data collection and analysis:</li> <li>• Websites of sampled bodies and government website, and other relevant government</li> <li>• Websites e-governmental portal on administrative services</li> <li>• Key informant interviews</li> </ul>

## Area 6: Public Financial Management

<i>Indicator</i>	<b>TRANSPARENCY AND OPENNESS OF PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT</b>
<p><b>SIGMA principles and sub-principles</b></p>	<p><b>P23. The annual budget is comprehensive and formulated within a credible and rolling medium-term framework, balancing policy needs with fiscal constraints.</b></p> <p>f. The annual budget documentation is comprehensive and includes all public expenditures and revenues, fiscal risks, tax expenditures and multi-annual commitments.</p> <p>g. The budget is presented in administrative, economic, functional, and programmatic terms, and makes use of non-financial performance information. Expenditures related to policies such as green transition and gender equality are tracked to assess the impact of initiatives where there are relevant targets or goals.</p> <p>j. The government stimulates citizen engagement in the budgeting process by making a complete set of budget documentation publicly available, preparing a citizen budget and using open budgeting tools.</p> <p><b>P25. The government implements the budget in line with estimates and reports on it in a comprehensive and transparent manner, allowing for timely scrutiny.</b></p> <p>b. The ministry of finance monitors the execution of the budget throughout the financial year and regularly publishes budget execution information to enable effective decision-making and transparency.</p> <p>e. The annual financial report of the government is comprehensive and based on an appropriate financial reporting framework, is in a format mirroring the format of the budget, explains variations from the budget figures, includes an analysis of state assets and liabilities, and contains non-financial performance information comparing results with performance targets.</p> <p>f. The government provides information on capital investment in its annual financial report or a separate report.</p> <p>g. The government, in its annual financial report or a separate report, provides information on the significant economic, social and environmental impacts of its policies, procurements and operations.</p>

i. The government publishes its annual financial report no later than six months after the end of the financial year. The supreme audit institution audits the report, and the parliament discusses it before the next budget debate.

**P26. Public administration bodies manage resources in an effective and compliant manner to achieve their objectives**

b. A single ministry co-ordinates implementation of internal control, reviews progress and reports annually to the government on the development of internal control in the public sector.

**P28. Public procurement legislation, including public-private partnerships and concessions, is based on principles of equal treatment, non-discrimination, transparency, proportionality and competition, and supported by a sound governance framework.**

a. Public procurement legislation, including public-private partnerships (PPPs) and concessions, reflects internationally recognised principles, such as value for money, free competition, transparency, non-discrimination, equal treatment, mutual recognition and proportionality.

c. The public administration has clear and comprehensive policies in place for the longer-term development of the public procurement system, including PPPs and concessions.

e. A body with a clear political and legal mandate at central level is entrusted with a policy-making function to steer and manage public procurement reform. The key functions and responsibilities to implement the public procurement system are clearly distributed among central procurement institutions, which have the necessary authority and resources.

f. A central procurement body monitors, oversees and evaluates the procurement system and identifies possible improvements. It provides public access to consolidated data on public procurement operations (including both contract award and performance).

**P29. Contracting authorities conduct public procurement operations, including public-private partnerships, efficiently and economically.**

a. Contracting authorities develop annual or multi-annual procurement plans, aligned with budget planning, and publish them on time. A thorough needs analysis and market research guide the preparation of individual procurement, including definition of desired outcomes.

	<p>b. Competitive procedures are standard procurement methods, and contracting authorities use other procedures only in duly justified exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>d. Contracting authorities widely use e-procurement, which covers all stages of the procurement process.</p> <p>i. The public procurement market is competitive and attracts interest of domestic and international economic operators, especially small and medium-sized enterprises.</p> <p>l. Civil society has adequate and timely access to information in each phase of the public procurement process, including planning and contract performance, to monitor public procurement and act as a safeguard against non-transparent and un-competitive practices and inefficient and ineffective use of public resources.</p> <p><b>P31. All public funds are effectively audited by an independent auditor that provides assurance on the use of public resources and helps improve the functioning of the public sector.</b></p> <p>g. Audit reports are concise and contain relevant and useful recommendations, and procedures are in place to follow up on audit reports.</p> <p>h. The SAI communicates widely on its activities and audit results through the media, websites and other means and makes its reports publicly available, in a timely manner.</p>
<b>General methodological remarks</b>	<p>The estimated duration for monitoring in the PFM area is approximately two months and half. This period encompasses data collection through desk research, interviews, and FOI requests.</p> <p>For the Outcome and Impact type of elements, 3 interviews with key informants are envisaged as a rule. The same 3 interviews with key informants should be used to allocate points in Elements 1.5, 2.14, and 4.7. For other two Outcome and Impact elements, 3.14 and 3.15, separate interviews need to be organised in line with stated methodological instructions.</p> <p>If no information which is critical for point allocation can be obtained either through the review of websites stated in the data sources, or through the submission of FOI requests, research should hold interviews with responsible institutions to obtain missing data (unless it is clear from point allocation guidelines that points are allocated solely on public availability of required information).</p>
<b>Sub-indicator 1</b>	<p><b>Inclusiveness and transparency budget formulation process</b></p> <p>The following elements are combined:</p>



	<p>E1.1 There is a strategic document in force that envisages the improvement of inclusivity and transparency of the budget formulation process as a goal</p> <p>E1.2 Regulations stipulate citizens' involvement in the budget formulation process</p> <p>E1.3 External stakeholders are provided with complete information in advance, giving them sufficient time to prepare for consultations in the budget formulation process</p> <p>E1.4 Responsible government bodies are proactive in ensuring that a wide range of external stakeholders become involved in the budget formulation process</p> <p>E1.5 Key non-state actors consider the budget formulation process as inclusive and transparent</p>
<b>Data sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data collection and analysis:</li> <li>• Ministry of Finance website and other relevant websites</li> <li>• Website of the body responsible for cooperation with civil society</li> <li>• eConsultation portal</li> <li>• Key informant interviews</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-indicator 2</b>	<p><b>Availability and comprehensiveness of budgetary documentation</b></p> <p>The following elements are combined:</p> <p>E2.1 There is a strategic document in force that envisages improvement of the transparency of budgetary documentation</p> <p>E2.2 Enacted annual budget includes a medium-term perspective illustrating how revenue and expenditure will develop beyond the next fiscal year</p> <p>E2.3 Budget documentation presents the budget implications on the priority policy areas</p> <p>E2.4 Citizen Budget is regularly published online</p> <p>E2.5 In-year budget execution reports are published in a timely manner and are easily accessible online</p> <p>E2.6 Mid-year budget execution reports are published in a timely manner and are easily accessible online</p> <p>E2.7 In-year and mid-year budget execution reports contain data on budget spending by different expenditure classifications</p> <p>E2.8 Year-end budget execution reports are published in a timely manner and are easily accessible online</p> <p>E2.9 Year-end budget execution reports contain data on budget spending by different expenditure classifications</p> <p>E2.10 Year-end budget execution reports or separate reports contain information on the significant impacts of the budget implementation on the priority policy areas</p> <p>E2.11 Year-end budget execution reports or separate reports contain information on capital investment</p> <p>E2.12 Consolidated annual reports on internal financial control and internal audit are timely published and easily accessible online</p>

	<p>E2.13 Budgetary data is published in open data format</p> <p>E2.14 Key non-state actors consider the budgetary documentation as publicly available, easily accessible and comprehensive</p>
<b>Data sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data collection and analysis:</li> <li>• Freedom of information requests</li> <li>• Government website, Treasury Administration website, Parliament website and Ministries websites</li> <li>• Websites e-governmental portal on administrative services</li> <li>• Key informant interviews</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-indicator 3</b>	<p><b>Transparency and competitiveness of the public procurement system</b></p> <p>The following elements are combined:</p> <p>E3.1 There is a strategic document in force that envisages improvement in transparency and competitiveness of the public procurement system</p> <p>E3.2 Regulations stipulate transparency and competitiveness as the key principles of public procurement processes</p> <p>E3.3 No special legislation creates exceptions from the general law on public procurement</p> <p>E3.4 There is a designed central procurement body that supports transparency and competitiveness of public procurement processes</p> <p>E3.5 Central procurement body regularly reports to the public on the implementation of overall public procurement policy</p> <p>E3.6 Reporting on public procurement policy by the central procurement body is citizen-friendly</p> <p>E3.7 Central review body regularly reports to the public on procedures for the protection of the rights of bidders in public procurement</p> <p>E3.8 Public procurement portal is user-friendly</p> <p>E3.9 Central-level contracting authorities regularly publish up-to-date annual procurement plans that are easily accessible online</p> <p>E3.10 Central-level contracting authorities regularly publish annual procurement reports that are easily accessible online</p> <p>E3.11 Open procedures represent a standard public procurement method</p> <p>E3.12 Public procurement processes are competitive</p> <p>E3.13 Public procurement data is available in open format(s)</p> <p>E3.14 Key non-state actors consider public procurement system as competitive and transparent</p> <p>E3.15 Key non-state actors consider exceptions from public procurement law as adequately regulated and applied in practice</p>
<b>Data sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data collection and analysis:</li> <li>• Official website of the central procurement authority</li> <li>• Public procurement portal</li> <li>• Websites of contracting authorities</li> <li>• Freedom of information requests</li> <li>• National open data portal</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key informant interviews</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-indicator 4</b>	<p><b>Openness and transparency of State Audit Institution's work</b></p> <p>The following elements are combined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ E4.1 There is a strategic document in force that envisages enhanced communication and cooperation of SAI with external stakeholders</li> </ul> <p>E4.2 Regulations stipulate the transparency of the SAI's work</p> <p>E4.3 SAI's annual activity reports are regularly published and easily accessible online</p> <p>E4.4 SAI's audit reports are citizen-friendly and easily accessible online</p> <p>E4.5 Data contained in the external audit reports are available in open format(s)</p> <p>E4.6 SAI uses a variety of channels for external communication and promotion of its activities and reports</p> <p>E4.7 Key non-state actors consider SAI's work as transparent and SAI's reports as easily accessible</p>
<b>Data sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data collection and analysis</li> <li>• SAI's website</li> <li>• Websites of sampled budget users</li> <li>• National open data portal</li> <li>• SAI's social networks and other relevant media</li> <li>• Key informant interviews</li> </ul>