

United Nations Development Programme

**Regional Centre for Public Administration Reform
in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States**



**STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR THE UNDP / RCPAR PROGRAMME**

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Disclaimer:

This report is based on an independent analysis of the responses provided by RCPAR network members to the questionnaire circulated in early 2007. The views and recommendations included herein belong to the author and do not necessarily coincide with the official views of RCPAR.

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1. BACKGROUND

1. The purpose of this study is to provide advice on the possible activities of the UNDP Regional Centre for Public Administration Reform (RCPAR), based on suggestions from public administration practitioners and experts from Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. As some readers might not be fully aware of the background to this initiative, this initial chapter offers a few indications on its genesis and main features.

1.1. The UNDP/RCPAR project

2. The UNDP/RCPAR is an initiative launched by the United Nations Development Programme - Bratislava Regional Centre (UNDP/BRC) with financial support from the Government of the Hellenic Republic. Relying on its staff in Athens and Bratislava, and on cooperation with the UNDP country offices, RCPAR aims to act as the hub of a regional network of Public Administration Reform (PAR) practitioners and experts from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). As launched at its first meeting in Alexandroupolis, Greece on 20-21 November 2006, the network consisted of the Focal Points inherited from the now defunct United Nations Thessaloniki Centre for Public Service Professionalism, as well as of the members of UNDP's Regional Community of Practice on Public Administration Reform and Anti-Corruption (who are UNDP staff members).
3. With PAR efforts now going on for over a decade, Western advice is no longer the sole source of expertise for public administration professionals in CEE and the CIS. The more the reforms advance, in fact, the more the growing level of expertise within these same regions makes direct exchanges of experiences a potentially important resource. Interest in this sense is quickly increasing, showing a trend that deserves to be properly addressed and sustained. The Project aims at supporting transfers of knowledge amongst the administrations of the region through a twofold mechanism. On one side, RCPAR shall facilitate contacts and discussions amongst the network's members – both in direct meetings through on-line discussion groups hosted by the RCPAR on line resource and documentation centre. On the other side, such discussions shall be aimed at the identification of activities of common interest, to be implemented as regional PAR-related activities engaging mostly regional experts.

1.2. The Public Administration Reform Survey

4. In order to jump-start the process, and until the full establishment of the network and of its mechanisms for interactive discussions, RCPAR decided to undertake a survey as a basic manner to gauge interest and gather suggestions on practical initiatives for the initial phase of the Project. The questionnaire used for the survey (attached as Annex 1), was fairly simple. It listed, in an explanatory manner, 21 topics related to horizontal systems of public administration, asking respondents to

clarify the status of those issues with their national administrative system, stressing both unsatisfactory points and achievements. It also asked them to formulate any suggestions they may have for RCPAR activities in the same area.

5. As the questionnaire was circulated to network members in late January 2007, responses were expected to comply with some basic principles set at the Alexandroupolis meeting. These concerned:
 1. The regional cooperation nature of the project;
 2. The commitment to a demand-driven approach;
 3. The willingness to cover a range of PAR subjects;
 4. The preference for financially mid-sized interventions; and
 5. The willingness to cooperate, coordinate and avoid duplication with other agencies and donors involved in similar programmes.
6. In the following pages, the indications obtained from network members concerning the organization of RCPAR and its plan of activities will be considered using these principles as a constant reference.

2. PROPOSED INSTITUTIONAL SET-UP

7. This part of the study focuses on the institutional set-up necessary to implement the principles endorsed at the Alexandroupolis meeting. Starting from the elements currently in place, it reviews their performance in the process of completing the Survey, recommending possible improvements. In the first section the structure and functioning of the RCPAR Network - representing the beneficiaries - is commented upon, while the second section deals with the set up of RCPAR itself as the central structure in charge of Project implementation.

2.1. The RCPAR Network

8. Representatives of 24 countries of CEE and the CIS completed the survey questionnaire. Of the region's 30 countries, under the responsibility of UNDP/BRC, only 6 (or 20% of the total) did not participate - including three Eastern EU Members, as well as three CIS Members:

- Lithuania
- Poland
- Slovakia
- Azerbaijan
- Tajikistan
- Turkmenistan

9. These countries might have been absent because of poor contacts or responsiveness. However, they include some of the most widely recognized PAR success stories in the region (e.g. Lithuania, and Slovakia), as well as some of the countries most in need of assistance (e.g. Tajikistan and the other CIS members). For the future, it would be therefore important that representatives from these countries join the

network, both as potential sources of expertise for their colleagues and as participants in technical cooperation.

10. Concerning the 24 participating countries, responses came from different sources including personnel from the UNDP country offices, the previously established UNTC focal points (in principle, one government and one non-government representative for each country), as well as other government and non-government officials co-opted by the above groups. A summary table of the institutional affiliation of contributors (according to the contacts given in the end of the filled questionnaire) is provided in the table below:

		UNDP Country Office	UNTC Focal Point (GOV)	UNTC Focal Point (NGO)	Others (GOV)	Others (NGO)	Total engaged per country
1.	Albania		1		1		2
2.	Armenia		1		4		4
3.	Azerbaijan	-	-	-	-	-	-
4.	Belarus	3	1				4
5.	Bosnia & Herzegovina		1		1		2
6.	Bulgaria		1	1	1	2	5
7.	Croatia		1		2		3
8.	Cyprus		1		13		14
9.	Czech Republic		1	1	1	1	4
10.	Estonia	-	1	1	2	-	4
11.	FYR of Macedonia		1		8		9
12.	Georgia		1		6	2	9
13.	Hungary		1		1		1
14.	Kazakhstan		1				1
15.	Kyrgyzstan		1		3		4
16.	Latvia		1		1		2
17.	Lithuania	-	-	-	-	-	-
18.	Moldova	1	1		1		3
19.	Montenegro		2	1	3	1	7
20.	Poland	-	-	-	-	-	-
21.	Romania		2	2	6	1	11
22.	Russian Federation		1		1		2
23.	Serbia	4					4
24.	Slovak Republic	-	-	-	-	-	-
25.	Slovenia		1				1
26.	Tajikistan	-	-	-	-	-	-
27.	Turkey			1			1
28.	Turkmenistan	-	-	-	-	-	-
29.	Ukraine		1 (?)				1 (?)
30.	UN Adm. Prov. of Kosovo		1		5		6
31.	Uzbekistan	3			2 (?)		5
SUBTOTALS BY CATEGORY		11	22	7	64	7	TOT. 111

11. According to the data, at least 111 persons were involved, of which 11 were UNDP Country Officers (previously affiliated to the PAR CoP led by UNDP/BRC). About 22 were originally UNTC Focal Points (or participants to the Alexandroupolis conference) from the government's side, and at least 6 were UNTC inherited Focal

Points (or conference participants) of non-governmental affiliation. Those already close to RCPAR managed to additionally involve another 64 governmental and 7 non-governmental colleagues.

12. Considering individual countries the number of persons involved varied considerably. The countries involving the highest number of participants were Cyprus (14 participants, all governmental), Romania (11, from within and outside government), FYR of Macedonia (9 government experts) and Georgia (9 also, but again including non-government specialists). At the other extreme, at least 4 countries (Slovenia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, and Turkey) left the business to one person alone. The rest fell somewhere in the middle.
13. From these data it appears that the RCPAR initiative meets mostly the interest of government practitioners (77.5% of the respondents, covering 21 countries), with non-government experts being nearly 7 times less represented - sometimes in spite of attempts to involve them (according to the responses from Russia and Serbia, calls on non-government experts and academics were unsuccessful). However, it could be argued that the under-representation of the non-government sector may be due at least in part to the current membership composition of the network - thus, it should not necessarily be taken as an indication of lack of interest, but rather as an outcome of the methods, utilised thus far, in attracting Focal Points to join the network. A more targeted approach may be needed in the future to co-opt relevant non-governmental actors. The direct involvement of UNDP country officers, at least concerning the filling of the questionnaire, was even less substantial, and remained indeed limited to 4 countries only.

2.1.1. Government officials

14. In principle, government 'focal points' should have been the group with the easiest access to expertise on the full range of subjects covered by the Survey. Nevertheless, the exhortation to involve competent colleagues led only a few countries to produce exhaustive responses. Apart from a few notable exceptions, the majority of the additional staff co-opted into the exercise by governmental 'focal points' consisted of additional personnel from the same one or two institutions, which failed to appropriately broaden the expertise basis.
15. As a result, while most questionnaires looked complete, only a few actually covered all points in the survey - and even so, not always with quality information. However, answers to section I.4 of the Survey (on 'PAR coordination') clearly reveal that only a few governmental 'focal points' could claim within the administration of their countries a position suitable to solicit and coordinate PAR data and needs. Where this authority existed, not only the number of persons and institutions involved was greater, but also responses tended to be more exhaustive.
16. Selecting 'focal points' amongst the institutions with an actual PAR Coordination mandate, moreover, is essential if they are to act as representatives of their country's administrations. This was not entirely resolved in Alexandroupolis, where

contrasting indications emerged. On one hand, RCPAR was presented as based on CoP-like operating principles, which usually aim at knowledge transfers outside institutional allegiances. On the other hand, UNDP/BRC rightly pointed at the need for activities to match the actual needs of government institutions, being possibly supported by least minimum national co-financing, and having a readily measurable impact on administrative reform. Each of these features assumes a degree of official Government endorsement.

17. This suggests that the composition of the network should continue to rely on a limited number of governmental ‘focal points’ in each country, but take care they are selected amongst those with a mandate for PAR coordination. Such ‘focal points’ should be in charge of leading the programming of activities, conveying proposals based on government priorities. Apart from them, the network should of course include the highest possible number of practitioners from other institutions – but as ‘members’ rather than focal points.
18. These ‘members’ could be assumed to participate more in a personal capacity – still, their institutional allegiance is not without importance. The focal points alone, in fact, are clearly insufficient both to convey quality information in the programming mechanism, and to provide a beneficiary basis for all potential areas of activities (i.e. those in the Survey). A controlled and targeted widening of network membership should therefore be treated as a priority in the nearest future, targeting the positions within each national government that are the most relevant for each specific topic. While these might widely differ because of the specific administrative set-up, some indication is provided in the following table.

1.	FOCAL POINT (PAR coordination)	2	A representative and a deputy from the authority responsible for PAR coordination (central unit of ministry, if any)
2.	Policy-making and Strategic Planning	2	Two representatives from policy units (or legislative offices) in ministries, ideally one from a horizontal, and the other from a line ministry
3.	Policy Coordination	2	A representative and a deputy from the Government Secretariat (if there is a policy analysis / policy coordination unit, from that unit)
4.	Policy-making in EU integration	2	A representative and a deputy from the CoG structure/Ministry responsible for coordinating EU integration
5.	Policy Coordination (other areas)	2	A representative from authorities in charge of coordinating other policy areas, e.g. national development, anticorruption strategies, among others.
6.	Budget Preparation	2	A representative and a deputy from the budget department of the Ministry of Finance, Treasury or the like)
7.	Budget Execution	2	A representative and a deputy from the budget execution/Treasury department at the Ministry of Finance, Treasury or the like)
8.	Public Internal Financial Control	2	A representative and a deputy from the central harmonization unit/budget inspectorate (usually at the Ministry of Finance, Treasury or the like)
9.	Public Procurement	2	A representative from the authority in charge of setting procurement policy and standards; the same from the procurement review body
10.	External Audit	2	A representative and a deputy from the Supreme Audit Institution of the country, if it has been established
11.	Organization	2	A representative and a deputy from the Ministry in charge of the legislative bases of the PA (PA or Justice portfolio, could also be the same under point 1)
12.	Civil Service System	2	A representative and a deputy from the central personnel unit (civil service agency, unit at a ministry of public administration, interior or finance)
13.	Human Resources Management	2	Two representatives from the HR units (or general services sector) of two of the largest ministries or other organizations
14.	Human Resources Development	2	A representative and a deputy from the national training institution (if there is none, could be the same as under point 11)
15.	Integrity Frameworks (for PA)	2	In principle,, these should be the same persons under points 4 and 11. A representative and a deputy from an ombudsman institution could be added.
16.	Administrative Procedure	2	One representative of the ministry responsible for general public administration (e.g. an administrative inspector), and an administrative judge or equivalent
17.	Administrative Simplification	2	If there is a central unit dealing with general policy at the CoG or a ministry, two staff from that unit. Otherwise, two relevant persons from the economy portfolio
18.	Total Quality Management	2	If there is a central unit dealing with general policy at the CoG or a ministry, two staff from that unit. Otherwise, two persons from institutions implementing TQM
19.	e-Government	2	A Government IT unit representative (if there is one) or ministry responsible for ICT infrastructure, and from any Information Society or similar institution
20.	Decentralization	2	A representative and a deputy from the ministry in charge of supervision over local government (e.g. Ministry of Local Government, Interior, etc.)
21.	Public Private Partnerships	2	Two representatives from the main line ministries in charge of national infrastructures (e.g. Transport, Communications, Health, etc.).
22.	TOTAL	42 people	

2.1.2. Non-government actors

19. The survey relied also on the participation of a small number of non-governmental ‘focal points’, as already identified by UNTC. Civil society, the academia, and also business play an important role in public administration reform - both as independent sources of expertise, and as an expression of the community the administration is called to serve. The contribution of non-governmental organizations is therefore essential to prevent reforms to become ‘locked’ into the administration’s own corporate vision, contributing to keep a healthy client-bound orientation.
20. The manner to integrate non-government contributions, therefore, deserves attention. While according to UNTC’s arrangements each country would have had two equal focal points (from government, and outside it) this might be problematic within RCPAR’s proposed mechanisms. Parity is illusory: while a governmental ‘focal point’ (i.e., with PAR coordination functions) could involve a wide range of sources, this would not be the case with non-government counterparts. Coming from smaller and often issue-based organizations, these focal points usually have difficulties in covering all PAR areas in the same manner: in most cases, it would be unthinkable for them to be able to deploy a list of experts similar to the one in the previous page. Even at the present initial stage of the network’s development, data on survey participants speak clearly of this difference, with government sources outnumbering non-government ones by a ratio of nearly 7 to 1. Having said that, one may also recognise the value of non-governmental actors, who may contribute to shaping government policy choices. Input from independent actors, and fresh perspectives, may act as a catalyst in introducing new ideas and innovative ways in approaching critical PAR issues.
21. A related problem is that the system of ‘dual’ focal points does not address the issue of the value of proposals in relation to their alignment with government priorities - and therefore, of their potential short-term impact. As the target of the Project is the public administration, activities proposed by government focal points will in general have a better impact perspective than others formulated outside any government endorsement. With the possible exception of maverick countries in which the Government can be held to be totally uncommitted to PAR, RCPAR may therefore prefer to integrate non-government contributions not through a dual track, but by encouraging better interaction with non-governmental experts at the national level.
22. This considered, participation to the RCPAR network by experts from non-government organizations as ‘members’ should be encouraged (possibly with more than one organization per country), but not elevated to the same status as the RCPAR ‘focal point’ within the national administration. The latter, instead, should be required to integrate the views of non-government members in the input for the programming of RCPAR activities. Responses to the survey point clearly in the direction of this being feasible, as several countries presented the contributions of both government and non-government participants in an integrated manner. Overall, and keeping in mind the same rough ration of 7:1, this should take potential RCPAR membership in each country to a theoretical maximum number of 50 people. While

this will surely require much time, this would indeed be close to the size necessary for achieving visible impact.

2.1.3. UNDP country officers

23. From the launch of RCPAR at the Alexandroupolis meeting, the new initiative has been enabled to rely not only on UNTC's network of focal points, but also on capacity from UNDP/BRC and its PAR Community of Practice, comprising UNDP staff from the Country Offices. Still, while the new RCPAR has been at times presented as a merger of the UNTC and UNDP/RBC (PAR CoP) networks, it is obvious that Project mechanisms require these two components to play differentiated roles.
24. The need for a clarification emerges clearly from the diverse role played by UNDP Country Officers in compiling the Survey. In at least one case (i.e., Serbia) the Country Office deputized the national focal points by filling the questionnaire autonomously; elsewhere (e.g., Belarus, Moldova) the staff from the UNDP country office included separate comments to the input of national focal points. A third variant saw UNDP Country Office appearing as one of the contributors to the questionnaire, but without any distinction between their contribution and that of focal points. Finally, most questionnaires appear to have been filled by the 'focal points' alone, with the UNDP Country Office playing only a facilitating role. It is not however possible to distinguish between these cases, and those in which the Country Office might not have been involved at all.
25. It should be kept in mind that the Survey played a double role: while on one side it provided information on the status of PAR in each country, on the other it conveyed the participants' demands for future RCPAR activities. While UNDP Country Officers can contribute to the first objective, the demand informing RCPAR's work plan cannot come from within the UNDP itself. Even when Country Offices correctly identify needs, national focal points might hold different views, because of specific government priorities, political considerations, or simply commitments made to other donors. Sometimes, national focal points might also be interested in activities that the CO did not consider as worth prioritizing.
26. Maintaining a demand-driven approach requires national PAR communities to speak with their own voice, drawing a clear distinction between the roles of the two network components. As RCPAR will have no staff in the field, UNDP country officers will instead have an important role to play in collecting information and facilitating participation of national PAR communities in the programming of RCPAR activities - a role that might be especially important in those countries where PAR Coordination mechanisms are weak or non-existent. In addition, Country Offices might play an important advisory role to RCPAR in relation to the coordination with UNDP initiative at the national level.
27. It is obvious that besides the state of BRC's relations with individual COs, the positive involvement of their staff requires incentives. These however cannot

amount to UNDP officials' full membership in the network, as this would seriously blur the line between assistant and assisted. The alternatives include, at the corporate level, an offer of the RCPAR Network as a reservoir of relatively affordable expertise for UNDP CO activities; and programmatic opportunities for COs through linkages of country projects with RCPAR-sponsored activities. At the individual level, UNDP country officers should be invited to participate to all activities organized by RCPAR - thus providing valuable opportunities for professional development and contacts.

2.2. The RCPAR staff

28. Any evolution in the shape of the network has obvious consequences for the structure of RCPAR, as the institution expected to manage it. While it is excluded that RCPAR will ever be a large organization, distinguishing and fulfilling three separate roles might be useful.

2.2.1. Management team

29. The current RCPAR core team comes with the experience of UNTC, as well as the more recent one of organizing and managing the Alexandroupolis meeting and the Survey. It is certainly qualified for running RCPAR – although as the network and the activities gain in complexity, this will likely become a considerable task by itself.

30. For this reason, it appears advisable that the role of the current RCPAR core team of two (plus technical support of at least one staff) be re-focused around the key management tasks and the organization of activities. Apart from ensuring overall management (including financial management) the main tasks are likely to include:

- running the participatory programming mechanism and revise its results on an annual cycle, by keeping constant contact with the new Focal Points, directly or through the CoP Coordinators, and being responsible for formulating proposals of activities on behalf of each country;
- acting as a secretariat for RCPAR's decision-making structure - the Steering Committee – and provide constant updates to its key members - to the UNDP/BRC and the Hellenic Government as the main donor;
- with support by UNDP/BRC, keeping contacts and increasing the number of UNDP Country Officers supporting the activities of the RCPAR network, including through the organization of briefings and information packages specifically aimed at them;
- supervising the work of other RCPAR staff, in particular of the moderators in charge of facilitating the CoPs set up by RCPAR in the main areas of PAR practice (see below), and organize with them the annual and regional CoP meetings;

- leading the preparation of all activities, usually in cooperation with the Focal Points and other network members from the host country, and those of the other countries with a view to achieve a targeted selection of participants;
 - running the RCPAR's own publications programme and electronic library. The latter is expected to be substantial, both because resources are already available and because of the considerable amount of materials likely to be obtained through the annual surveys and other suitable means;
 - in cooperation with network members, ensuring evaluation of all activities, including not only participants' evaluation of individual events, but also proper *ex post* impact evaluation of the activities undertaken.
31. As it is apparent, it is unlikely that with such a burden to attend to, the Core Team will be capable of lending much of its attention on the discussions of specific substantive PAR subjects with the network members. Although the Core Team has relevant expertise in those areas, the volume of work advises for the recruitment of some additional specialist staff.

2.2.2. *The CoP Coordinators*

32. The choice for a demand-driven program within a widened network requires RCPAR to stimulate and manage interaction amongst a larger number of network members, which is likely to focus on specialized topics. Considering that at some stage RCPAR might deal with all five areas comprising the Survey (Policy-making & Coordination; Public Finance; Organization & Staffing; and Service Delivery) the top figure according to the calculations in the previous paragraphs would be of about 1,500 potential network members.
33. While figures of such size might never be reached, it is clear that in order to manage such a broad membership and its inputs, hiring ad-hoc consultants (as in the current case) is not a good solution. Rather, RCPAR could rely on UNDP/BRC's experience with CoPs, and associate network members of similar interests into professional CoPs, each of which would be facilitated by a CoP Coordinator. The CoPs would have a threefold purpose:
- They would be an activity in themselves, providing a channel for informal knowledge transfers amongst their members (through discussions, the preparation and updating of country profiles and the circulation of materials, to be included in the electronic library);
 - They would serve as a tool for programming further activities, serving as a permanent forum for elaborating new initiatives. Members would obviously rely on CoP discussions in feeding input to their Focal Points for the annual revision of RCPAR's program of activities.

- They would – last but not least – serve as the beneficiary basis for RCPAR activities, with the addition of UNDP country officers and possibly of other national specialists identified on an ad hoc basis by the members themselves, depending on the subject.
34. To keep interactions alive, the Coordinators should propose subjects, circulate materials and seek reaction from members by using a web-based platform, e-mail and some face-to-face interaction. The latter is essential, as not all community members may feel confident with the virtual environment and the number of ‘technological’ dropouts should be limited as much as possible. In this respect, one annual meeting of each CoP per sub-region (for instance, CE Europe, SE Europe, Western CIS, and Eastern CIS) should be sufficient to maintain contacts on a personal basis, with one of these events also providing a CoP plenary meeting for those interested.
 35. The number of CoPs might grow across time, with a possible medium-term objective consisting of one Community in each of the 4 areas of the original Survey. To achieve that, it would be important to rely on earlier UNDP work, including the recent initiative for SEE CoP on Human Resources (also supported by the BRC), which could easily become the core of a larger regional community. Synergies should also be explored with CoP-like networks launched by other international actors (e.g. SIGMA facilitated networks on External Audit and on Public Procurement, and NISPACE also has some experience). Consolidating initiatives would benefit coordination and allow RCPAR to progress quickly.
 36. Relying on synergies should be less difficult than one may think. UNDP/BRC is a leader in the establishment of CoPs and the technology would be appealing to other donors also. The fact that CoPs are largely virtual constructs, moreover, would allow their Coordinators to work as part of RCPAR’s mechanisms no matter where physically located (that is, even if physically sitting with a different organization). The virtual element is also important to contain costs, as Coordinators might be initially hired on a part-time basis outside RCPAR’s headquarters. Only as activities develop, a full-time facilitator based in Athens could be hired for those CoPs with the most significant volume of interaction.

2.2.3. The Advisory Board

37. The last issue concerning roles is about coordination with other donors, including UNDP itself, other institutions with regional cooperation programs, and technical assistance programs at the national level. Two or three survey respondents flagged concerns in this respect, pointing to the risk of overlapping with other existing programmes. While a degree of competition amongst donors might be unavoidable, duplication may result in confusing advice, as different initiatives might approach the same issues in a different manner. Besides, it is a known fact that the best specialists in the administrations of the region have limited time, and increasing the offer of similar ‘regional’ products might have the effect of discouraging their participation in RCPAR activities.

38. Cooperation and, if possible, coordination with other initiatives is therefore an essential issue for RCPAR – and one which the UNDP initiative could use to enhance its impact in the participating countries. Discussing its practical modalities, it might be desirable to draw a distinction between other regional initiatives, and national-level programs. As the scope for regional PAR programs is limited, it makes sense for coordinating efforts to be more intense in their case. In the case of national programs, coordination would be more difficult, though some could be achieved through the mechanisms built into RCPAR membership.
39. Concerning regional programs by other donors, a look at practice in organizations of similar purpose may be of inspiration. Two good examples are the NISPAcee network in Bratislava, and the Centre for Excellence in Finance in Ljubljana. While fully autonomous, both organizations maintain an Advisory Board including representatives of other donor and regional programmes (such as SIGMA, from EC/OECD). These arrangements are important, since board meetings allow these organizations to discuss their plans and agree on sharing some tasks, reducing competition and increasing the chances to achieve common objectives. Indeed, NISPAcee and CEF use to include in their activities contributions from other actors - including the OECD, the EU and the WB.
40. UNDP also has a tradition of cooperation with other organizations, which should make such an arrangement quite possible in the case of RCPAR. A few relevant organizations, such as NISPAcee, the Turin-based ILO/ITC and SIGMA/OECD were invited at the Alexandroupolis meeting, and it makes indeed sense for this cooperation to be institutionalized. As the Board would have an advisory function only, limiting its membership would not make much sense – so an invitation could be sent to most relevant institutions, including others besides those already mentioned, like for instance the Eurasian Training Centre in Astana, or the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) for the Western Balkans. The Advisory Board would probably meet once or twice a year, to comment on the progress of activities and provide advice on the work plan for the period ahead.
41. The coordination with national PAR programs is of course also important, although these are generally likely to be different in nature from RCPAR's. While our organization should focus on general standard setting, awareness, and technical assistance interventions of fairly limited size, the focus of national programmes is likely to be rather the opposite. The potential for overlap is therefore lesser than for regional programs: rather, RCPAR assistance could be regarded as playing a 'seeding' and facilitating role, opening the way for larger national-based programs – both at the level of UNDP CO, and by other donors.
42. In relation to such programs, the great number of potential donors (EU, WB, ADB, DFID, SIDA, USAID, etc.) across the many countries of the RCPAR Network makes it quite purposeless to build specific donor coordination mechanisms. It would be probably better to leave the network's members (including staff from the UNDP CO) and the national focal points in charge, assuming that they would signal relevant initiatives already ongoing or in the pipeline, and refrain from proposing

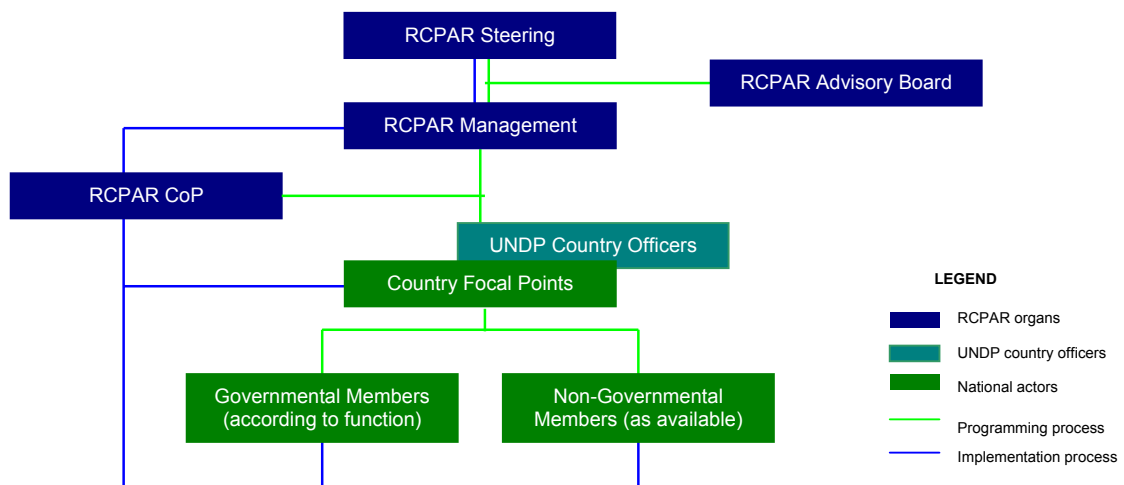
activities, which they know, would be already covered by others. This is easier to manage, although it should not prevent RCPAR from consulting from time to time with other agencies and donors, particularly in the phase of programming its annual activities.

2.2.4. The Steering Committee

43. Finally, it would be useful for the RCPAR staff to separate itself from the role of deciding which proposals are funded and which are not. This calls for a separate decision-making mechanism for selecting activities, as emerging from the CoP discussions and periodically presented for consideration by the countries' Focal Points. The simplest solution is to put RCPAR's own Steering Committee in charge of decisions, as UNDP/BRC and the Hellenic donor are represented there.
44. Concerning the need to have the countries of the network also represented, it should be noted that similar arrangements in other organizations (e.g. the CEF) appear to be nearly ceremonial in nature. As long as the programming mechanism will be truly run in a participatory manner, it makes sense for the two organizations conveying resources into RCPAR to decide on which spending priorities should be endorsed.

3. PROPOSED PROGRAMME MECHANISMS

45. Before entering the analysis of the substantive suggestions formulated in the Survey, some brief considerations will be devoted here to the operational mechanisms of the RCPAR programme. It is in fact obvious that, as any new organization (and moreover, of a new type) RCPAR will need to spend part of its first two years in setting up its basic business processes. If the organization has to become effective in the medium-term, part of the activities in its early work plans will need to be of this type. In this respect, two essential business processes are considered – the programming cycle, and the implementation of activities.



3.1. Enabling the programming cycle

46. The RCPAR programming cycle (green thread in the above scheme) is expected to rely on the CoP mechanism, as filtered by the proposing role of the new Focal Points, and commented upon by the Advisory Board before a Steering Committee decision. Looking at these elements, starting the Board is simple and the identification of the Focal points could perhaps wait (at least in the measure in which UNDP country officers will be ready to deputize). Enabling CoP discussions is instead essential, and work in that direction will have to start as soon as possible.
47. In this respect it should be borne in mind that starting one or more CoPs - ideally, one for each of the thematic areas of the Survey - is more than mere preparations, as CoPs are by themselves a valuable vehicle for the exchange of knowledge and experiences, which is the main objective of RCPAR. However, in order to function effectively, CoP members need to have proper tools and incentives to interact with each other. Providing these effective tools should be the very first set of RCPAR activities.
48. At the moment, UNDP/BRC has already commissioned a virtual platform that could provide an excellent basis for virtual interaction. It is however submitted that, by itself, this tool will not provide the desired results: if network members have to speak to each other, they need to have subjects to discuss. These subjects should most likely, take the form of horizontal analyses of basic country profiles, to be prepared by each CoP coordinator based of the information provided by the Network members.
49. The format of the profiles could be quite similar to the one used in the Survey – with a few basic questions and the possibility to attach additional documentation on specific items. In this respect, it should be noted that the vast majority of the participants to the survey did much better at describing the present state of their administrations, than at formulating proposals for possible RCPAR activities. The table below shows the percentage rates of responsiveness concerning the descriptive and prescriptive parts of the Survey. The average responsiveness rate for the descriptions of the *status quo* was 79%, while concerning actual proposal (most of them very general) the percentage rate was nearly half that, with 44% only.

#	Topic	Descriptions	Proposals
I.1.	Strategic planning & policy-making	79 %	75 %
I.2.	Policy coordination	92 %	46 %
I.3.	Policy coordination in specific areas (EI)	79 %	63 %
I.4.	Policy coordination in specific areas (PAR)	96 %	58 %
I.5.	Policy coordination in specific areas (others)	71 %	38 %
II.1.	Budget preparation	83 %	54 %
II.2.	Budget execution	54 %	17 %
II.3.	Public internal financial control	79 %	33 %
II.4.	Public procurement	67 %	29 %
II.5.	External audit	79 %	33 %
III.1.	Organization of the public administration	79 %	58 %
III.2.	Civil service system	92 %	58 %
III.3.	Human resources management	100 %	58 %
III.4.	Human resources development	96 %	63 %
III.5.	Integrity frameworks	88 %	54 %
IV.1.	Administrative procedure	83 %	38 %
IV.2.	Administrative simplification	63 %	29 %
IV.3.	Total quality management	71 %	42 %
IV.4.	e-Government	79 %	29 %
IV.5.	Decentralization	75 %	29 %
IV.6.	Public-private partnerships	54 %	25 %

50. This points to, on one side to the positive fact that network members, particularly in the hypothesis of an enlarged composition, might actually be both willing and able to produce viable country profiles, supported by interesting documentation made available to other network members. While the intervention of CoP Coordinators will be essential in this respect, it is a pleasure to admit that quite a few of the profiles provided (e.g. Bulgaria, Croatia, FYR of Macedonia, Latvia, Romania and Ukraine in particular) made already quite an interesting and thought-provoking reading.
51. On the other side, the evident lack of ideas on possible projects means that CoP members, even if provided with a good overview of others' experience, might not be ready to immediately draw initiatives for common projects. Rather soon after the completion of the first country profiles, therefore, the CoPs should have their first annual meeting, as the essential occasion to explain more in detail the content of the initiative, look at proposals already on the table, and agree on principles for further interaction. Web discussions, most likely, will come after that.
52. The early activities aimed at enabling CoPs and the programming cycle, therefore, should include the preparation of improved country profiles, and of an electronic library both of which should be easily accessible to all network members through the CoP portal. Once that is achieved, network members should be assigned to one or more CoPs, and invited for the first meeting of their Community, to be held in person within 18 months from RCPAR's launch (possibly in Greece).

3.2. Enabling the implementation cycle

53. Activities dealing with project implementation (blue thread in the scheme on the previous page) will be less complicated to start, as they will rely on the pre-identified set of activities (those in this study, or others) to be organized by RCPAR itself. It is however suggested that, rather than organizing all activities in Greece, RCPAR should consult with network members and identify from the start one willing ‘sponsor’ for each initiative. This is essential to improve project ownership, and may result in an early set of rules on co-financing (the “host’s obligations”) which would certainly have a positive effect on the quality and seriousness of activities. Similar work should be carried out in advance on ex-post evaluation criteria (an area that this study unfortunately does not address).

4. PROPOSED INITIAL PLAN OF ACTIVITIES

54. After institutional and process issues, this part of the Study deals with possible substantive activities. The time horizon is in principle 5 years, with an assumption of an average annual budget available for programming of US\$ 1,000,000 or more. However, a detailed plan is provided only for the first 2 years. After this period, only a list of other possible activities is provided, as it is assumed that the programmes’ institutional framework and mechanisms will be fully in place, and that work plans will be revised and detailed annually based on interaction within the Network.
55. Apart from the need to leave space for the demand-driven approach to develop and function, a second reason for the limited ambitiousness of this report stands in the quality of the data underlying its proposals. The Survey was a first attempt to operate a demand-driven programming mechanism amongst a small number of largely unaware participants, with no direct interaction and relying only on the analysis of their replies by this single author, in limited time. It is obvious that the quality of the data, the analysis and the conclusions is far from what longer-term programming would require. The result should therefore be best used for start-up purposes only.
56. Before examining any concrete proposal for activities as emerging from the survey, the following paragraphs contain some considerations that have been used to guide the selection of activities. They concern both horizontal criteria, concerned with how potential activities would be distributed and be received across the Network, and vertical ones exploring the mutual relation and potential synergies amongst activities with similar focus.

4.1. Horizontal selection criteria

57. The first main feature of RCPAR is that of being a regional cooperation project, covering a geographic area running from Tirana to Vladivostok. Part of its identity is based on the challenge to bring together PAR practitioners from such vastly

different cultures and backgrounds. Catering for this, the selection of proposals coming from the survey had to rely on three criteria:

- One main criterion was the capacity of each activity to attract a number of network members from the largest possible number of countries, not limited to one geographical sub-group (e.g. EU Members). The possibility of dividing RCPAR into sub-regional organizations was not considered, as this would require the establishment of sub-regional structures whose running costs would detract from available resources. The possibility to re-focus RCPAR on a single sub-regional context, while appealing, was also not considered, being contrary to the choices already made by UNDP/BRC and its Hellenic counterpart.
- The opportunity of a certain type of activity in relation to possible competition with other activities already undertaken by other, well established regional initiatives. In such cases, in fact, RCPAR should evaluate attentively its value added and “market niche”, as failing to do so might result in a loss of audience. For this reason, activities for which superior capacity is already available for regional initiatives from other sources were generally set aside, with the advice to look for other objectives of establish cooperation with other initiatives.
- Besides these two criteria, the selection was carried out keeping in mind the need to involve network members in all the four main areas addressed in the survey (i.e. policy-making & coordination, organization & staffing; financial management; and service delivery). This is an effect of the choice to frame the plan of activities on the existing network, and not vice versa. For instance, as some of the network members are from Finance ministries, early activities should also cater at least to a minimal extent for their interests. Unless this is done, enthusiasm for RCPAR may decline, affecting its status in the eyes of participating countries.

58. The criteria were not scored, but evaluated freely and in a discursive manner. This implies that the judgment expressed on individual items could be revised, also depending on, more detailed information becoming available.

4.2. Vertical selection criteria

59. In the instructions for filling the questionnaire, network members were explained that in order to qualify for RRCPAR funding, initiatives should include participants from at least three countries within this broad region. With 30 potentially involved, this may not appear too difficult: in practice, however, the number of compliant proposals received during the survey was quite small. Most proposals complying with this criterion, moreover, were activities of a ‘soft’ nature (seminars, workshops, study tours, publications, etc.) whose direct impact within the administrative systems of the region might be difficult to measure.

60. This difficulty to identify high-impact activities derives, to an extent, from the regional nature of the Project. Regional projects must deal with what is ‘common’ to their participants: but while the general need for administrative reform is shared by

all in the region, specific reform actions differ considerably depending on political, economic, cultural and other factors. Even within the densely regulated European integration process, public administration reforms are not one-size-fits-all: while information about other experiences can be inspiring, actual solutions need usually to be cut on measure at the national level. The activities of other regional projects in the same geographical area confirm this: the potential impact of their interventions decreases in fact with the increasing of their ‘regional’ dimension – with a basic typology possibly as follows:

Soft impact activities	<p>1. Awareness rising - This is usually the first level of activities of a regional programme, whose impact is usually limited to widening the beneficiaries’ perspective on the subject matter. The most used means are events (conferences, seminars, workshops - but also study visits) exposing beneficiaries to new topics and approaches. More virtual forms of interactions can be also be used, including online discussions and the translation and distribution of literature and materials related to other national experiences. While these activities imply a transfer of knowledge, skills or attitudes this is not at a level to allow direct application in the workplace. Usually, these initiatives simply convey opportunities for new approaches worth applying within the national system. Most events organized by UNDP/BRC, EC/OECD SIGMA, the Ljubljana based CEF and other regional programmes aim at this level of impact.</p>	<p>2. Standard setting - Somewhat higher impact requires additional work, usually involving comparative research and standard setting. Building on awareness, such activities aim at setting ‘good practice’ references to guide future reform actions. The approach can be more or less normative, but in general, it relies on the preparation and comparison of standardized case studies, the circulation of questionnaires, interactive workshops as well as reliance on existing comparative work. The results of standard-setting activities take usually the shape of comparative literature (e.g. the SIGMA Papers series), manuals and training materials (e.g. UNDP/NISPACEE’s ‘How to be a better policy advisor’), formal guidelines (e.g. OECD Guidelines on Regulatory Management), baselines (e.g. the SIGMA baseline questionnaires) or even benchmarks (e.g. e-Europe 2007 indicators). These documents provide a reference against which national systems can be considered.</p>
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Hard impact activities	<p>3. Peer evaluation - While not all regional programmes take the step from general awareness to standard-setting, few get directly involved in a judgemental application of set standards to the analysis of individual national systems. Where this is done, the activity is usually a regional one because of the need to involve more than one foreign evaluator, in order to neutralize possible national bias. This tends to create a network of reciprocal evaluations, which adds to the trust of beneficiaries in the mechanism. Regional organizations conducting reviews with peer elements include INTOSAI and its regional branch EUROSAI (on external audit), the Council of Europe's supported GRECO and OECD's Anti-Corruption Network (both in the anticorruption area) and the EC/OECD SIGMA project, which in recent years has increasingly introduced peer elements in the implementation of its baseline assessment methodology (weighting the progress made by EU-bound countries in improving their general administrative capacity).</p>	<p>4. Expert advice - Finally, there is here the mainstay of 'technical assistance': the provision of expert advice for the design of specific national solutions. While such interventions require a degree of awareness by beneficiaries, are often triggered by external evaluations and rely on internationally accepted good practice, regional PAR programmes are rarely involved. The main reason is practical: being involved into detailed work at the national level requires a protracted presence and can be resource-intensive, while providing benefits to a single national system. In the rare cases in which this type of assistance is provided (e.g. the occasional direct advice provided by SIGMA to governments), actions are generally as brief as possible, and can be considered 'regional' only in the sense of the advice being produced by experts of more than one nationality. Nevertheless, expert advice is the sort of intervention that, being carried out close to the problem, has actually the best perspective of producing measurable results.</p>
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61. It is suggested that this rough categorization of activities by regional PAR programs should be kept in mind while designing RRCPAR's initial work plan. As much as possible, activities should not be conceived as stand-alone initiatives, but being vertically integrated following roughly the order in the above scheme. In the following paragraphs, the results of the Survey are analyzed, drawing conclusions on possible activities based on the above criteria.

I. Policy-making and coordination

62. The first part of the questionnaire dealt with policy-making and coordination – with five topics for discussion: policy-making and strategic planning capacity at the ministerial level; the general policy coordination mechanisms at the centre of government; and more specifically policy frameworks and coordination in selected areas including Public Administration Reform, European integration, as well as others such as Development Policy and Anti-Corruption. This is the part of the questionnaire that received the most attention - both for the descriptions of the *status quo* within national systems, and in terms of proposals for RRCPAR activities (not many, but more than for other subjects). Though one must keep in mind that the high response rate might have to do with this being the questionnaire's opening chapter, policy-making and coordination seem to be a main area of interest for network members.

I.1. Strategic planning & policy-making

63. This item was one of those receiving the most attention: possibly, also because of being right at the opening of the questionnaire, representatives of 19 countries out of 24 taking part in the Survey replied to it, 18 of which also provided at least basic indications about possible RRCPAR activities. The subject was the role of ministries in formulating policy within the framework of Government programs, including their capacity to develop sectoral strategies pointing at objectives and related measures over a period of several years. Such strategic plans should be prioritized and linked to budget - usually through a medium term expenditure framework (MTEF) - in order to ensure their feasibility. Ministries should implement them by elaborating individual policy instruments (including but not limited to laws), based on impact evaluation and extensive consultation with stakeholders. Following Government approval, ministries should monitor implementation, evaluating and reporting on the results so achieved.

64. This, of course, was the theoretical expectation. In practice, several respondents did not actually focus so much on the policy role of ministries, but rather on the starting contribution of the Government (e.g. the political organ comprising ministers, supported by their political parties) in setting out the program for their mandate. This misunderstanding confirms a known handicap of ministerial structures in CEE and the CIS: before the transition, their policy role was in fact minimal, since their tasks were conceived as essentially limited to implementing instructions from the political level – as broad and general as they might have been.

65. The survey clearly showed this to be often still the case. The lack of a central leadership willing and capable to assist ministerial structures in building up policy capacity is obviously the main shortcoming. Respondents from the Czech Republic, for instance, explained how the limited role of the government secretariat leaves ministries essentially alone in sorting out how to create strategies and policies. Without clear requirements and common methodologies, even when some policy is developed, its link to stated government priorities and to the budget is fairly loose.

66. There are, however, also positive experiences. Apart from the case of Cyprus, where a Planning Bureau located at the Ministry of Finance cooperates with ministries in the delineation of their strategic goals and policies, some CEE countries made visible progress. The clearest case is Latvia, where the State Chancellery has long acted as a facilitator for Ministries willing to develop their policy role. After a few years of voluntary trial, since 2006 the strategic planning and policy-making system so developed was extended to all institutions. It is closely linked to the budget process - enforcing fiscal discipline, but also ensuring that the system is actually used (budgetary requests must elaborate on the policy background). The FYR of Macedonia offers a similar example: strategic planning was introduced a few years ago, and from the start, the 3-year span of the plans was linked to the MTEF. The strategic planning system (complete with methodology documents issued by the government secretariat) was from the start built into the budget process.
67. These examples - together with possible similar others - are a good starting point for a positive trend. Other countries such as Estonia, in fact, have also recently introduced legislation making strategic planning compulsory for all institutions. Romania is pursuing a similar pattern, consciously inspired by the Latvian model: there, a central service helps policy units in ministries to build up capacity, as necessary to run the (now compulsory) strategic planning process in each sector. Moldova also established policy units in pilot ministries and is moving in the same direction - and even Bosnia is experimenting with policy units at the ministerial level, at least in the justice and home affairs sectors, with some parallels from the FYR of Macedonia experience.
68. Looking at requests for RRCPAR assistance, most countries went for some general exchange of experiences and dealt with the form of this general assistance rather than its substantive focus. Several forms of awareness and standard-setting activities were mentioned, such as workshops, publications, study tours and 'trainings', as well as high-level events for political decision-makers and an exchange scheme ('twinning') for senior civil servants. The only specific request in this larger group was from Uzbekistan, asking RRCPAR to finance delivery of the UNDP / NISPACE module "*How to be a better policy adviser*".
69. A minority of respondents, however, pointed also at specific topics. These were from administrations with a more developed policy culture (e.g. Latvia, Estonia, and FYR of Macedonia). The Latvians, in particular, pointed to the link between policy-making and budgeting as a priority area, which had been already indicated along with Romanian colleagues in Alexandroupolis. The representative of the FYR of Macedonia also pointed at the policy-budget link as a priority concern. Other issues mentioned were the use of regulatory impact assessment and consultations in policy making (2 requests) and the choice and use of indicators for the monitoring of policy implementation (also 2 mentions).
70. Overall, it appears that the two groups of requests might be easily connected into a single programme. Countries that are more advanced should be selected to run for the less advanced a set of awareness and standard-setting activities (probably a

study on good practices in building policy capacity). As part of this, further activities might be devised - including actual technical cooperation - with the role of participants differentiated according to the success achieved. As some of the interested members have already established a contact, the details could be sorted out and the activities start reasonably fast.

I.1. Strategic planning & policy-making

Rate of interest in providing data: 79%

Rate of interest in formulating proposals: 75%

Priority activities:

A stream of activities including an awareness-rising workshop on policy capacity at ministerial level (launch of study); a comparative study on good practice in building policy capacity at the ministerial level, and actual technical assistance based on the transfer of 'success stories'.

Other activities:

none

I.2. Policy coordination

71. This item received excellent feedback, with 22 countries out of 24 providing data. Still, most of the contributions were limited to a sketch of the status quo, and only 11 countries made proposals or at least offered some hint for RRCPAR activities. One reason is probably that the item was complementary to the previous one (on the policy role of individual portfolios) and some respondents might have felt they had already conveyed all their needs there.
72. One or more institutions acting as the 'centre of government' normally carry out policy coordination. While there can be additional coordinating organs for specific policy areas, day-to-day coordination is usually the job of a government secretariat or similar organ (a rare exception seems to be Cyprus, where these tasks are at least partly with the Planning Bureau of the Ministry of Finance). The secretariat usually acts as 'gatekeeper' in the government's decision-making process, dealing with the formation of the annual work plan and of the agendas for individual sessions, as well as controlling the application of requirements for the submission of items, organizing their discussion and their later follow-up. While all or at least some of these functions are usually present to some extent, there are of course differences in the thoroughness, and in the manner in which they are carried out.
73. In those countries where policy coordination is the least developed, government secretariats perform little more than administrative tasks. They form the annual work plans and individual agendas for the meetings just by 'stapling together' the materials received by the ministries. In systems with weak policy coordination capacity - which are many, including by admission some EU members such as the Czech Republic - the role of the secretariat does not encompass a substantive analysis of the items, and does not entail a judgement on their internal coherence, harmonization with related issues and conformity with government's priorities. In general, the secretariat very rarely returns items as underdeveloped and unripe for discussion.

74. The thoroughness of supporting documentation, in particular, is in general a good practical indicator of the level of policy coordination, as its purpose is to provide elements for the analysis of the relevant policies. Although it is possible for a large array of supporting documents being simply the result of an over-bureaucratic approach (as currently being overcome in Romania), most often, complex supporting documentation assumes the capacity of the Government secretariat to check it. With differences from country to country it can include explanatory memoranda; accounts of consultations with stakeholders and interest groups; statements of harmonization with EU legislation; fiscal impact statements; analysis of the likely economic, social, environmental or other impact (also called 'regulatory impact' analysis); etc.
75. The process through which the items so argued are actually discussed is also managed by the government secretariat, and can be of varying complexity (sometimes this workflow can even have automated IT support, as in Slovenia). Before discussion, there is usually a requirement to present a draft to other portfolios (all, or just some) for feedback; and formal opinions might be required from some, especially concerning fiscal and other horizontal issues. In the case of legislation, a separate technical review by a central legislative office is a possibility. Having obtained these elements, the item is preliminarily discussed in specialized commissions of the Government acting as a filter in specific policy areas; following which an item can be inserted in the agenda and be discussed at a Government session. Of course, as for accompanying documentation, a complicated procedure does not automatically stand for a high level of policy coordination (again, the case with Romania's 'social dialogue commissions' could be an example).
76. Ultimately, however, the single element most essential for good policy coordination is the capacity of the staff at the 'centre of government' to include themselves in the process, carrying out a substantive but neutral review of the materials presented by ministries, and providing it to political office holders as a basis for discussion. Where this capacity exists, the quality of decision-making can greatly benefit; otherwise, it will have to rely on the contribution of political office-holders and their advisers only, resulting in a formal and mechanical decision-making process. The matter, therefore, is also largely one of relations between political office-holders and the civil servants in the government secretariat, which may vary depending on the prevailing administrative culture. In general, countries that have joined (or have perspectives to join) the EU devoted considerably more space to this item than their CIS colleagues did.
77. This was reflected in suggestions for RRCPPAR activities, which came mostly from countries with an already developed policy coordination culture (e.g. Latvia, or FYR of Macedonia as two of the most advanced and tested systems), or from those making at least quick progress (e.g. Romania, or UN Administered Province of Kosovo where policy coordination is being successfully established, but capacity at the level of portfolios is still insufficient). Most proposals were of a general nature - including workshops, study tours and the (Romanian) idea of temporary postings of senior civil servants. Several countries also required comparative overviews. Others with lesser familiarity with policy coordination provided even lesser input although

some - like the Czech Republic - added a desire for high-level awareness initiatives addressing the political level.

78. This considered, it is suggested that while dealing with the general machinery for policy coordination is important, it should not be pursued as an independent stream of activities at this stage. The need to strengthen the coordination capacity of government secretariats should instead be regarded as a parallel concern of activities dealing with strategic planning and policy-making at the level of individual ministries. From this starting point, more detailed proposals for activities could emerge at a later point. The capacity to respond to requests in this area should be there, taking into account the work already done by UNDP/BRC in the past (peer reviews of Centres of Government) and the possibility of a partnership with other programs active on the same subjects (particularly the EC/OECD SIGMA programme).

I.2. Policy coordination

Rate of interest in providing data: 92%

Rate of interest in formulating proposals: 46%

Priority activities: none

Other activities: The topic of policy coordination should start being treated together with the activities under I.1. above (policy capacity at ministerial level), until more detailed proposals are advanced in CoP.

I.3. Coordination in specific areas (European integration)

79. Overall, 19 countries out of 24 responded to this item - somewhat surprising considering that even less belong to the EU or have a concrete membership perspective. And still, while activities in this area should in principle leave out CIS countries currently accommodated under the EU's Neighbourhood Policy, some of the westernmost CIS members (Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia) have EU membership ambitions and started a process of voluntary approximation. Besides, even the Russian respondent presented a clear interest of his government to build up knowledge in this area - although for purposes other than actual membership. Only the Central Asian Republics would therefore remain outside the purpose of potential activities.
80. While RRCPAR is not directly linked to the EU, it is important for it to keep the European perspective in mind while designing its activities supporting PAR in the region. Currently, European integration is the single biggest incentive to PAR in the majority of the countries covered by the network. Cutting across most policy areas, the European integration process compels them to improve their policy coordination mechanisms - and at the early stages of the process, it is indeed not unusual for policy coordination related to European integration to be more developed than for to day-to-day government business.

81. As for the forms of EU-bound coordination mechanisms, different trends are noticeable, as an expression of the double nature of the EU integration process - supranational, but requiring widespread reform of national institutions and legislation. Approaches by different countries include those entrusting leadership to the diplomatic element (e.g. the ministry of foreign affairs), besides others relying more on domestic policy coordination mechanisms (e.g. processes led by offices for EU integration as part of the 'centre of government' structures). Some countries (e.g. Bulgaria, Romania, Bosnia, and partly Croatia) indeed experimented with both trends, ending up with a combination. After accession, mixed solutions appeared to prevail, with foreign ministers conveying coordinated positions to Brussels, while EU-bound reforms at home are coordinated through 'centre of government' arrangements. To this, a specific post-accession element is added, comprising the arrangements for managing Structural and Cohesion Funds.
82. These developments are reflected in the references (a dozen, not all relevant) to possible RRCPAR activities. To start with, some member and candidate countries (e.g. Latvia, Estonia, Romania, and Croatia) offered less advanced colleagues their experience with EU coordination mechanisms. There was some matching interest from the Western Balkan, though mostly related to specific aspects (e.g. Serbia and Bosnia on EU units in ministries and capacity building; UN Administered Province of Kosovo on the management of EU assistance). The westernmost CIS countries could also be interested. In order to build 'regional' activities out of this, however, some standard setting would be advisable: in spite of abundant academic legwork, there are few practical overviews of 'good practice'. SIGMA's work in this area, while excellent, is now nearly a decade old; and a more recent attempt by NISPACEE (with UNDP/BRC funding) produced an only partially satisfactory Guide and a training module. The perspective for RRCPAR in this area is conditional on the capacity to deliver a better product.
83. This apart, the second set of proposals came from EU members (Latvia, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania), which focused on the possibility of exchanging experiences in the management of Structural and Cohesion Funds. This is indeed an essential issue for post-accession administrations, as the achievement of sufficient administrative capacity of the type required to manage the funds is a main force driving their commitment to PAR; it should be also become progressively relevant for EU candidate countries, in the run-up to accession. However, while the issue is of indubitable importance, it is clear that a contribution in this area would require close partnership with EU institutions, and embrace a limited number of countries. Much of the expertise, moreover, would come from outside the RRCPAR network (e.g. Greece, Ireland, Portugal, etc.).

I.3. Coordination in specific areas (European integration)

Rate of interest in providing data: 79%

Rate of interest in formulating proposals: 63%

Priority activities: none

Other activities: A possible stream of activities (workshop/study visits, study, and technical assistance) on EU integration coordination models aimed at 'beginner' countries, provided RRCPAR have the capacity to produce better materials than already existing.

A second possible stream of activities study (workshop/study visits, study, and technical assistance) on Structural Funds management, aimed at 'advanced' countries, provided RRCPAR can run a significant part of activities on a regional cooperation basis.

I.4. Coordination in specific areas (Public Administration Reform)

84. Item I.4 dealt with special policy coordination arrangements related to PAR strategies. It was the single item in the survey receiving the most attention: out of 24 countries, 23 countries commented, with half mentioning a formal strategy in place, and another quarter reporting completion of a reform cycle, or plans for establishing a policy framework in this area. Even in the few countries that did not have or plan to adopt a formal strategic document, the need for a structured approach to PAR appeared to be generally felt.

85. Activities in this area, moreover, would not just answer one of the key interests of network members, but would also greatly benefit the functioning of RRCPAR itself, helping to identify priority activities and the network of 'focal points'. This is already evident by looking at the compiled questionnaires: in cases where inputs were well coordinated amongst the institutions in the same country, making sense of the information was relatively easy. When instead respondents from the same country came forward in sparse order (up to three different questionnaires) information was often contradictory, and generally less complete. The lack of PAR strategies and coordination mechanisms entails clear drawbacks in terms of effective RRCPAR membership.

86. As for the content of PAR strategies, the survey made clear how a varying scope of activities could be fitted under this label. All respondents, however, acknowledged horizontal management systems to be the core, and especially their application to central, rather than local government level. Within central government, the survey also showed trends worth some reflection on how large the scope of PAR strategies should be. The impact of external actors encouraging the reformers' ambitions should not be underestimated. In the Western Balkans (e.g. Bosnia, UN Administered Province of Kosovo, possibly FYR of Macedonia) external advice contributed to very 'comprehensive' PAR strategies aiming simultaneously at all horizontal systems (e.g. policy, financial and HR management, service delivery as well as crosscutting concerns such as anticorruption). Implementing such all-

inclusive documents requires considerable political backing, as well as analytical and coordination capacity.

87. As this is not always available, it is useful to note that elsewhere the scope of PAR has been more limited. Responses from Cyprus, Montenegro and others spoke of PAR strategies limited to issues of organization and civil service reform plus, sometimes, administrative decision-making. Such a limited scope can result from the preference of administrative culture for these 'legal' topics, but can also be part of a conscious step-by-step approach. Countries such as Latvia, Moldova, and partly Romania, appear for instance to have invested in a cyclical approach, starting from a limited set of priorities (typically organization as well as policy, financial and HR management) and adding elements at later stages (Latvia and Romania are at the 3rd PAR round).
88. Differences in the scope of PAR strategies go often along with different institutional mechanisms to coordinate implementation. In general, strategies of a broader scope (i.e. covering also policy and financial management) are led from a unit at the centre of Government - either within its secretariat (as in Latvia or Moldova), or besides it as in Bosnia. Elsewhere, and apart from the British-like case of the Ministry of Finance in Cyprus, a ministry may take the PAR coordination role. This may include a specialized Public Administration portfolio (e.g. Slovenia, Bulgaria, and Serbia), a Ministry of Interior (e.g. Czech Republic, Montenegro, and lately Albania) or others (e.g. Russia, and Georgia). Sometimes, the same ministry also has responsibility for local government, which acts as an incentive to coordinate the approach to PAR across government levels.
89. A further dimension to PAR coordination is that of political support, which is the most essential precondition for successful reforms. Here also different models were apparent. Sometimes a PAR coordination unit can be backed-up by an inter-ministerial coordination mechanism (e.g. Czech Republic, FYR of Macedonia), or even by the establishment of a specialized parliamentary committee. In other cases, quite at the opposite, political complexity and divisions within the government can take their toll on PAR coordination tasks: countries such as Ukraine and Bosnia and Herzegovina, for instance, maintain multiple coordination mechanisms of different types, often in competition with each other and in clear need of streamlining.
90. When political support is short in supply, donors' support becomes often essential. Still it is surprising that the topic has commanded little interest from the main international organizations dealing with PAR in the region, including those (e.g. WB, EU) that more insistently promote the adoption of PAR Strategies as a standard reform component. It bears however, mention that the Regional School of Public Administration for the Western Balkans (ReSPA, currently under EC/OECD tutelage) will hold, in autumn 2007, its first annual conference on the subject '*Making Strategies Work*'. The conference will be held in Albania, where the WB is currently pressing for the adoption of a new PAR strategy. It is submitted that the participation of RRCPAR to this event could be used as a starting point for launching a set of activities, and also a good occasion for establishing a fruitful partnership with the EU, the OECD and the WB.

91. It is therefore suggested that activities on PAR strategies and PAR coordination mechanisms should be the first area of substantial engagement by RRCPAR. After some general awareness activities (e.g. a workshop), the beginning might be a simple knowledge product - a comparative study on PAR Strategies and their impact on the countries of the region (explicitly requested by Estonian and Czech respondents; and also hinted at by Croatians, Macedonians, Kosovars and Kyrgyz). This should be run in an inclusive manner and presented with some high-level marketing within UNDP/RCPAR's first year. The conclusions could later be taken as the basis from some transfers of knowledge through peer reviews and small technical cooperation programs for interested countries in the region (UN Administered Province of Kosovo and Montenegro being already interested). This is a relatively inexpensive, but high-visibility set of activities that would also bring considerable benefits to the RCPAR's own institutional framework.

I.4. Coordination in specific areas (Public Administration Reform)

Rate of interest in providing data: 96%

Rate of interest in formulating proposals: 58%

Priority activities: A stream of activities (workshop/study visits, study, and peer reviews/technical assistance) focusing on PAR Strategies and PAR coordination mechanisms. This is intended to be the first and top priority for RCPAR activities in the nearest future (possible synergies with EU/ReSPA, OECD, and WB to be explored asap).

Other activities: none

I.5. Policy coordination (other areas)

92. This was not a matter of much attention: network members on behalf of 17 countries answered this questionnaire item, with 9 of them providing some hints on RCPAR activities (still, most of these were not really relevant to the topic). The item aimed at probing the level of fragmentation of policy coordination mechanisms in the countries of the region.

93. This is a known tendency: the weakest the general policy coordination mechanisms are (usually, revolving around the government secretariat), the stronger is the tendency to establish separate policy coordination units for specific areas. In general, good policy management would require concentrating the overall coordination of the many specialized policy frameworks into a single structure at the centre of government (which could of course comprise of specialized units). This is the simplest way to minimize institutional competition and secure overall coherence. A clear example in this sense is the State Chancellery of Latvia, acting as the overall coordinating organ based on a clearly set hierarchy of policy documents.

94. Several respondents, however, revealed a preference for parallel arrangements. As seen in the case of EU and PAR units, their establishment is also the result of external pressure: as the general policy coordination system is too weak to answer the concerns of donors, IFIs and Brussels for a specific area of horizontal policy, a

special unit is created outside the general system. At times, the better solution may be politically or timely unfeasible, but a proliferation of separate policy units should in general not be encouraged – especially in relation to horizontal concerns bearing an influence on most other policy areas.

95. The coordination of the implementation of National Development Plans (NDPs) is a clear case in point: for a transitional economy (as most countries of the region still are), development policy is often tantamount to a large share of economic policy *tout-court*. Nevertheless, quite a few respondents (e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina, UN Administered Province of Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan) entrusted the coordination of the implementation of their NDP to a special unit working outside the general institutional framework for day-to-day policy coordination. The example of other countries going in the opposite direction (e.g. Moldova, currently in the process of consolidating its CoG) should be worth following.
96. Another area of cross cutting policy that came under attention in a similar manner is that of Anticorruption – particularly relevant for RCPAR, which, as part of its original set-up, comprises a CoP of UNDP country officers specialized on Anticorruption matters. While more in depth discussions might certainly reveal scope for RCPAR activities in this area, it must be borne in mind that this would better avoid to encourage the establishment of separate policy coordination mechanisms. Rather, the successful implementation of international anticorruption commitments (e.g. for countries parties to the UN Convention Against Corruption) is better served by developing these concerns as part of day-to-day policy coordination.
97. Coming finally to requests for assistance under this item, most plainly misunderstood its correct orientation, and asked for exchanges of experiences and assistance in the creation of more special policy units. It is therefore suggested that this item should not be regarded as a separate source of possible RCPAR activities, but as a pointer to a need to include efforts at policy integration into any activities resulting from point I.1 to I.4 above.

I.5. Policy coordination (other areas)

Rate of interest in providing data: 71%

Rate of interest in formulating proposals: 38%

Priority activities: none

Other activities: The topic of policy integration should start being treated together with the activities under I.1. and I.2. above (policy capacity at ministerial level, policy coordination).

II. Financial management

98. The second part of the questionnaire dealt with financial management, and particularly with budget preparation, budget execution; public internal financial control, and external audit. With the exception of the opening item on budgeting, (which is strongly connected to policy management issues), this was the part of the questionnaire that received *the least* attention. Considering the importance of fiscal policy in global PAR discourse, it is possible for this not to be expressing a lack of interest by the countries of the region, but at least partly a bias in the audience: already in Alexandroupolis, financial management specialists were a minority, so there might have been too few of them amongst respondents. On the other hand, the lack of contacts on the financial side of PAR is also an expression of RCPAR's lack of familiarity with these issues, which advises against them taking a large share of RCPAR's work plan – at least initially.

II.1. Budget preparation

99. This was the 'most voted' item of the Financial Management cluster: out of 24 countries, 20 provided at least some information about the status quo and 13 added some comment on possible RCPAR activities. From the data, most appeared to have developed budget processes responding to the basic features of the democratic process - although in a few cases, there could still be room for improvement (e.g. one request from Uzbekistan, and possibly some interest for Belarus).

100. This apart, most proposed activities concerned the application of performance-based budgeting techniques (Estonia, Russia, Georgia, Serbia, and Romania), with one voice mentioning the opportunity of a seminar on Medium Term Expenditure Frameworks (Czech Republic, possibly also interesting for others adopting such an instrument - e.g. Cyprus). All requests focused on general budget methodology, and only in one case (Kyrgyzstan), they insisted on the specificities of application at the local government level. Also in a single case – Bulgaria – the request for assistance focused on the specifics of budget procedures for the use of EU Structural and Cohesion funds (although this could be of interest for other new EU members and for all candidate and potential candidate countries as well).

101. Amongst those mentioned, the area of activities that clearly deserves prioritizing is the one focusing on the link between policy and budgeting. The use of Medium Term Expenditure Frameworks and of performance-based (or at least programme-based) budgeting has been long advocated by international financial institutions and appears to have entered practice in most transitional countries (although some of the most advanced economies - such as Cyprus, or Slovenia - started deploying such instruments only recently). In this respect, the survey registered no less than 5 express requests in this sense, including a Romanian appeal to Latvian expertise, and the similar interest of Serb respondents for the Russian experience. While activities might focus on the budgetary aspects of performance systems in general, it would be important to focus on methodologies for the setting of goals and indicators, as well as on reporting mechanisms.

102. While assistance in these areas is usually also provided by the WB and other donors (such as the Ljubljana-based CEF), it is a fact that UNDP already delivers technical assistance on performance-based budgeting (for instance in Russia, which was quoted with interest by Serbia). Besides, already at the Alexandroupolis meeting the interest for projects exploring the link between policy and budgeting was voiced by the Romanians and the Latvians participants (the latter have a very interesting experience in this area, along with their absent neighbours from Lithuania). It appears therefore advisable that activities dealing with strategic planning are enlarged to the anchoring of policy planning to the budget process, with specific attention to the application of performance (or simply programme)-based budgeting techniques.

103. Considering synergy with other activities, it would however be appropriate to envisage this stream of activities not as a self-standing ‘financial’ cluster, but as part of the activities dealing with policy-making and coordination. In this respect, it would be particularly valuable if the project could bring together both policy management and financial management specialists from the same system, in order to explore the essential interaction between these topics.

II.1. Budget preparation

Rate of interest in providing data: 83%

Rate of interest in formulating proposals: 54%

Priority activities:

Activities should be integrated in the stream under I.1. (along with I.2. and I.5), dealing with strategic planning and policy-making at the ministerial level. It is important that a large dimension of these activities focus on the link between policy management and budgeting.

Other activities:

none

II.2. Budget execution

104. Interest for budget execution issues was obviously less than for those pertaining to its preparation. Out of 25 respondents, only 13 dealt with this part of the survey, and of these just 4 provided substantive clues about possible RCPAR activities in this area.

105. The few data on the status quo indicate that at this point in the transition, nearly all countries introduced or are about to introduce (e.g. Bulgaria) a single treasury account system. Requests in this sense from the IFIs clearly facilitated the widespread adoption of this key reform, and very few countries remain where it did not start yet (e.g. Belarus). By now, it can be assumed that single treasury account systems allow better monitoring and stricter budgetary discipline, as well as better reporting and enhanced transparency in most countries of the network.

106. This does not of course mean that such systems are not to be perfectible. Their relevance, for instance, is often reduced by the scope of the funds included in the treasury (sometimes large off-the-budget funds remain uncovered). In addition,

although most countries already entrenched the use of the single treasury account through an electronic ledger accessible to budget users, some users (especially the local government level) are often still not covered. The familiarity of users with the system also varies, depending on the training made available.

107. Apart from problems related to the completion and fine-tuning of treasury reforms, the problem most often quoted concerns the type of accounting underlying the new ledgers. Aspects of the transition from cash to accrual accounting are a most common problem, mentioned by respondents from Cyprus, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Georgia, but that may concern most countries using modified cash systems with some accrual elements (e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina and some of the other countries in South Eastern Europe).
108. However, as pointed out by respondents from Ukraine and Georgia, the main difficulties in improving the outcome of budget execution come from the way the budget itself is formed. A poorly structured budget will allow only superficial monitoring, elude fiscal discipline and remain non-transparent no matter how punctually the treasury system operates. This, as well as the presence of better-equipped regional organizations such as Ljubljana-based CEF, suggests that RCPAR may devote less attention to technical issues in budget execution and focus instead on issues of higher impact – such as strengthening the link between policy and budgeting.

II.2. Budget execution

Rate of interest in providing data: 54%

Rate of interest in formulating proposals: 17%

Priority activities: none

Other activities: There is insufficient interest for any activities on budget execution. This topic should be opened for discussion in a CoP setting, until acceptable proposals for activities might emerge.

II.3. Public Internal Financial Control

109. The third point mentioned in the questionnaire in relation to public expenditure management concerned Public Internal Financial Control (PIFC) systems. 19 countries provided an answer, which locates the item amongst those just half-popular. Of those, only 8 offered a mild indication of the activities expected, which is little. This might in part be a result of the choice to approach the concepts of risk management, internal controls and internal audit from a financial perspective. While their relevance goes beyond it, however, it is in this area that they are the most standardized, due to their relevance to the management of EU funds and their codification under chapter 32 of the EU *acquis*.
110. Nevertheless, the PIFC concept seemed to be still elusive to a significant number of respondents – even those with EU membership ambitions. At least four of which misunderstood the topic entirely and focused instead either on the auditing of commercial entities or on external public sector audits. By converse, it is remarkable

that some CIS countries (e.g. Ukraine, Moldova, and Kyrgyzstan) not only correctly identified the core issues involved, but also showed to have strategies in place for the introduction of PIFC in the near future.

111. For the rest, most respondents appeared still at some phase in the transition from a traditional budget inspection to proper internal audit. This was evident, for instance, in the solutions adopted by EU Members such Slovenia or Bulgaria. In the former the budget inspection function survives within the tasks of the PIFC ‘central harmonization unit’ at the Ministry of Finance, while in the latter the Ministry’s inspectorate has been directly transformed into a central internal audit centre, securing its services to other institutions by way of secondments.
112. For all, the main problems still appear to consist of absorbing PIFC into administrative culture, including by securing sufficient training - especially for internal auditors, which are a rare profile throughout the region (even Cyprus, while more familiar with the system, pointed at training being the weak point). One proposal pointed to the creation of a regional degree in audit, which to an extent might be worth promoting, while others required training on specific aspects of risk management. In general, the same conclusions drawn for budget execution apply here: while there might be a potential for some activities in the future, currently the topic is too much outside the area of RCPAR expertise, and too much inside those of other actors (e.g. CEF, SIGMA, and WB).

II.3. Public Internal Financial Control

Rate of interest in providing data: 79%

Rate of interest in formulating proposals: 33%

Priority activities: none

Other activities: There is insufficient interest for any activities on PIFC. This topic should be opened for discussion in a CoP setting, until acceptable proposals for activities might emerge.

II.4. Public procurement

113. While the procurement of goods and services is a basic activity of the administration, this area also received low attention. Only 16 countries out of 24 provided elements of a description of the status quo, with as little as 7 including also some hints at possible activities.
114. In countries that are already EU members or have a membership perspective, the management of public procurement has converged on the requirements in chapter 5 of the *acquis*. While a few struggling latecomers are still adjusting their legislation, nearly all countries in that group reported basic institutional features as required by the EU directives, including devolution of procurement responsibility to each budget user; the establishment of a central agency in charge of setting procurement policy, monitoring, and training; and the presence of a review body in charge of processing complaints. Although nuances remain significant (for instance, the review body can be fully independent and linked to parliament - as in Slovenia - or remain dependent

on the agency - like in Serbia) the presence of clear EU standards obviously contributed to put reforms on track.

115. Outside the EU-bound area, the availability of other models of procurement management (e.g. UNCITRAL model law) appears to have brought benefits that are more limited. Apart from cases where legislation might still be lacking (e.g. Uzbekistan), answers to the survey by most CIS countries indicated - with a few possible exceptions like Georgia - an enduring reliance on central procurement bodies (e.g. Moldova and Kyrgyzstan), central control though a system of authorizations to procure (e.g. Belarus), or simply a set of confusing arrangements that, while in principle aiming at improving procurement practice, ultimately weaken it through a maze of overlapping responsibilities and ineffective controls (e.g. Ukraine).
116. Activities requested in this area through the compilation of the questionnaire include the Czech idea of establishing a network of procurement professionals to circulate experiences and publications (possibly including also western countries, with Finland mentioned as a role model); awareness and training on public procurement legislation at the local level (Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan); assistance with the implementation of e-procurement (Georgia), as well as general and legal advice on how to improve the present, poorly regulated situation (Uzbekistan).
117. None of these proposals seems to be a strong candidate for RCPAR activities, at least for the moment. The reason is not only that none of them is yet supported by a significant number of countries, but also that similar activities are already supported by other organization (OECD/SIGMA has established and supports a professional network of procurement specialists, and produced standard training materials adaptable for national training formats. It is therefore suggested that procurement issues are left to CoP discussions, until new proposals may emerge.

II.4. Public procurement

Rate of interest in providing data: 67%

Rate of interest in formulating proposals: 29%

Priority activities: none

Other activities: There is insufficient interest for any activities on public procurement. This topic should be opened for discussion in a CoP setting, until acceptable proposals for activities might emerge.

II.5. External audit

118. The situation of external audit was the last point raised in this part of the Survey. This is something with which most all network members were familiar, although the item was also not highly popular. Out of 24 countries, 19 provided at least a minimal reply, but only 8 included also some reference to possible RCPAR activities.

119. Apart from rare exceptions (e.g. Belarus and Serbia) all responding countries have a Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) or at least some organ performing relevant functions. While the oldest SAI of the region is probably in Cyprus (since 1960), most of the others are just a few years old or just started evolving into a SAI typology. A proper audit culture, therefore, is still to develop. In EU members and countries with membership perspectives, the most recurrent problem is that of limited capacity, due to a deficit of trained auditors and a parallel increase of work linked to the use of EU funds (as pointed out by Croatia). Besides this, it appears that the EU requirements of a functioning and independent SAI protected these institutions from outright political influence, but could not provide a political audience: there is often little follow up by parliament on SAI's reports.
120. Elsewhere, and particularly in the CIS (again with some exceptions, such a Georgia), 'Chambers of Accounts' or institutions of similar denomination provide some degree of control over financial reports by other institutions, although the findings they transmit to the President and Parliament are usually limited to the accountancy aspects. These institutions appear in general more far away from the SAI typology than their CEE counterparts, and indeed often do not apply international accepted INTOSAI audit standards (e.g. by admission, Moldova). While the lack of constitutional entrenchment affects the status of SAIs in CEE too, the CIS area offers also examples of audit institutions not entrenched in ordinary legislation either (e.g. Uzbekistan). In general, the political preconditions for developing external audit work are less favourable in these countries.
121. Proposal for RCPAR activities referred to a comparative study on the possibility to attach sanctions to audit reports (proposed by Czech respondents, in order to overcome parliamentary inaction); seminars and training either in general (Georgia and others) or specifically on INTOSAI standards (Cyprus) or the specifics of auditing EU funds (Bulgaria); as well as cooperation and exchanges of experience through less specific channels. Overall, however, these proposals do not appear as a good candidate for RCPAR activities in the medium term: not only this questionnaire item was not amongst those raising the most interest, but also the issue is already covered by other organizations (e.g. SIGMA, which created a SAI network, and obviously INTOSAI with its regional branches). Therefore, it appears preferable for these topics to be left to CoP discussions, until better proposals emerge.

II.5. External audit

Rate of interest in providing data: 79%

Rate of interest in formulating proposals: 33%

Priority activities: none

Other activities: There is insufficient interest for any activities on external audit. This topic should be opened for discussion in a CoP setting, until acceptable proposals for activities might emerge.

III. Organization and staffing

122. The third part of the questionnaires dealt with organizational models in the public administration and human resources issues (including the institutional framework, HR management systems, HR development and integrity frameworks as applied to personnel in the administration). Together with the opening chapter on policy management, it was amongst the most popular parts of the Survey. This mirrors the emphasis on civil service reform that was typical of the initial phase on PAR efforts in most CEE and CIS countries.

III.1. Organization

123. The first item of part III dealt with organizational models. Out of 24 countries represented, 19 provided indications on the *status quo*, 14 of which also included some indications on possible RCPAR activities. In general, three issues were dealt with: the general macro and micro organizational criteria; the way of attributing specific responsibilities to organs; and the practice of functional analysis as an instrument to review and improve existing organizational arrangements and allocation of responsibilities.

124. Concerning the basic criteria of administrative organization, these are set most often in a law of parliament. Amongst CEE countries, only in rare cases (e.g. Czech Republic) a full standardization of organizational criteria is still missing. Some countries, such as Latvia, developed instead a remarkably coherent approach to macro organization, including a mapping of typical subordination and reporting relations amongst state organs. Elsewhere, as for instance in Bulgaria, much effort was put into standardizing micro-organization, even by making public through an on-line database the organizational schemes of all organs, thus adding to administrative transparency.

125. Respondents from the CIS countries (with the exception of Georgia), on the other hand, did not focus on the basic macro and micro organizational criteria, as if these issues were not strictly regulated in their systems. Instead, they focused on legislation creating specific administrative organs and investing them with specific responsibilities. In nearly all countries - both CEE and CIS - this appears to be done by way of parliamentary legislation, with the consequence of making administrative organization fairly rigid and difficult to reshuffle. Only in the case of Montenegro, it was expressly mentioned that ministries and other state organs are created and dissolved not by law, but by simple government decision.

126. Modifications in the distribution of responsibilities and set-up of the state organs were the third topic, and the one that was the most commented upon. Of 19 respondents, as many as 14 identified functional analysis as the basic set of techniques for carrying out successful administrative re-organization - both in relation to horizontal management systems, and for specific policy sectors. It is evident that thanks to donors' interventions, a considerable number of respondents

already had some experience in applying these techniques, while the rest considered or even already planned to launch a functional review programme in the near future.

127. Concerning proposals for RCPAR activities, the item raised a number of proposals, generally converging on the two topics of functional review methodology, and criteria of administrative organization. Activities dealing with functional reviews were the most popular (requests from Estonia, Bulgaria, Albania, Serbia, Kyrgyzstan, and Belarus - with a possible additional interest from Georgia and Montenegro). The angle varies: some asked for RCPAR-financed experts to train review teams (Kyrgyzstan), others for expert advice to be offered for designing the reviews (Estonia), while some wanted awareness-raising events for top managers and politicians (Serbia), or just a simple comparative study or exchange of information (Bulgaria, Albania, and Belarus).
128. This could be a good topic for RCPAR: not only there are many requests on behalf of a diverse range of countries, but RCPAR could also rely on in-house expertise. Earlier in this decade, in fact, UNDP/BRC was involved in functional review programmes and published what remains to date the most authoritative study on review methodology. UNDP country offices also supported functional reviews in individual states (e.g. recently, Moldova). The topic, moreover, is scarcely practiced by other donors: while some (e.g. WB, EU, and DFID) finance reviews relatively often, none has devoted much study to the development of methodology and its dissemination. The impact of activities could therefore be high, and also relatively easy to measure. Finally, as functional review is about holistic analysis of the administration, there would surely be synergies with other RCPAR activities.
129. On how exactly to design the activity, the different elements suggested by network members could be combined in a sequence. A good start could be an update to the 2001 publication, based on experience from the last half-decade; based on it, a one-day module for high-level seminars could be prepared, aimed at decision-makers interested in launching a review programme. Further, RCPAR could contribute to the design of reviews by producing methodological packages for data collection and analysis (role of mixed teams, documentary evidence, structured interviews, SWOT analysis, etc.) aimed at administrations engaged in reviews. All activities could be carried out with expertise from the countries of the network, which could also be lent for actual review tasks.
130. Besides activities dealing with functional review methodology, a second type of suggestion made in the Survey concerns the opportunity of a study on organizational standards. The non-governmental Czech respondents (ILEI) mentioned this, with other participants pointing at specific aspects of macro or micro organization (Latvians interested on the financial aspects of agency subordination; Bulgarians in the leadership structure of ministerial portfolios). Other countries such as Georgia and Belarus also mentioned something in this style, and some work on improving organizational criteria is in any case essential to the implementation of most functional review recommendations. To date, however, there is extremely little literature available on issues of comparative administrative organization - so that

such a study would fill an important gap. As the issue is of universal interest, finding capacity from within the network should be possible.

III.1. Organization

Rate of interest in providing data: 79%

Rate of interest in formulating proposals: 58%

Priority activities:

There is evident interest in a stream of activities on functional review methodology. This could include some initial awareness activities (e.g. a conference), followed by a study updating and completing the findings of the 2001 BRC publication, and the production of a more hands-on package of general materials for practitioners involved in review programmes. On these bases, technical assistance could be also provided through experts from the network.

Other activities:

There is also some clear interest in a stream of activities on comparative organizational models for public administration (micro and macro aspects). As above, this could include some initial awareness activities (e.g. a conference), followed by an original study based on the solutions adopted in CEE and CIS countries, and matched against good practice examples elsewhere. Direct technical assistance is however harder to imagine on this topic.

III.2. Civil service system

131. This was one of the most popular items (22 out of 24 countries taking part in the survey), and a prolific source of ideas for RCPAR activities, with indications provided on behalf of 14 countries. While some started civil service reforms nearly a decade ago, progress is often still unsatisfactory, and nearly all respondents expressed an interest in more comparative analysis and assistance. While countries still at the beginning (e.g. Kyrgyzstan, Belarus, and Armenia) formulated their requests in a general manner, others relied on their experience to focus on specific topics. As a result, requests for activities under this item and the rest of those in chapter III are the most detailed.

132. Within this detailed wish list, the selection of topics made below focuses on those on which the largest number of requests converged, while at the same time focusing on gaps in the assistance previously delivered. This, however, would present the inconvenience of RCPAR activities acquiring a fragmentary outlook - e.g. dealing with isolated topics in civil service reform while ignoring related ones on which there is less interest and on which enough work might have already been done. To prevent fragmentation, RCPAR might consider completing activities on selected items with the consolidation of existing knowledge in a manual format. While reference manuals summarizing options for good practice do exist in other areas (e.g. in financial management, thanks to the work of the Asian Development Bank and SIGMA), this is not the case with civil service management. It is submitted that such an initiative, while admittedly time consuming, might provide a medium-term framework for more specific RCPAR activities dealing with isolated specific subjects in this area.

133. With this premise concerning the need for a framework in which to insert individual activities on civil service reform, the paragraphs below review selected issues for possible initial activities. Focusing on the issues of institutional set-up dealt with under item III.2 of the survey, they deal with the role of Central Personnel Units (CPU), as well as the scope of the civil service they are called to manage, as summarized by the establishment of central personnel registries. The same approach has been followed for the choice of activities under the following items III.3 to III.5.

1. Central personnel units

134. One reason of the only partial success of civil service reforms in the region is the relative weakness of the institutional set-up and particularly of the Central Personnel Units (CPUs) put in charge of setting and implementing uniform HR management policies across the administration. The Survey shows a variety of approaches to CPUs' location and mandate, ranging from 'centre of government' solutions (at the government secretariat, as in Latvia, or as 'independent' agencies, such as in Croatia, FYR of Macedonia or Bosnia), to others more strictly linked to a ministry (of Finance in Cyprus; of Interior in the Czech Republic and recently in Albania; or of Public Administration such as in Slovenia and Bulgaria). Systems without a proper 'centre' were also represented (e.g. Estonia). Mandates also differ widely: some CPUs are just personnel policy units, not carrying out services centrally; others deal with centralized recruitment, training delivery, or other services.

135. Often, the choice of the initial set-up has simply relied on the politics of the moment, if not on the background and inclination of early advisers responsible for the design of the system. In the course of the last decade, this generated somewhat of a debate as to what set ups would better fit the general features of a transitional democracy, and it has not been rare for the same countries to experiment with different formats and mandates. Some comparative work and mild standard setting on the possible location, form and mandate of CPUs would therefore be of interest for a number of network members - including those still expected to make their choice (e.g. some interest from Belarus). The initiative, moreover, could also have the advantage of providing a fresh look at priorities with CPUs' mandates, as too often their work remained focused on administrative-type tasks, failing to fulfil the basic mission of formulating a policy for the civil service.

2. Scope of civil service

136. The scope of the civil service, both horizontal (what organizations) and vertical (who within those organizations) is another basic feature that varies considerably from system to system, with two trends clearly at work. One is to simplify the picture and spread the status' benefits as widely as possible: for instance, by covering as civil servants local government staff and positions of a political nature (e.g. ministerial advisers). At the opposite, another trend is to reduce costs and increase workforce's flexibility, which requires applying the civil service status only to the core professional positions within the central administration, excluding the

disciplined services and devolving all lower ranking, support staff to the ordinary labour regime.

137. While often overlooked, considering the possible solutions concerning the scope of the civil service is an essential starting point in any reform in this area. Even in systems apparently close to each other, the 'civil service' can in fact include a portion of public employment varying from nearly 100% (e.g. in UN Administered Province of Kosovo) to little more than 10% (e.g. in FYR of Macedonia) or even less. In the course of the survey, at least 4 countries mentioned scope issues as something on which they might appreciate some assistance, both in general (Albania) and in relation to specific issues or segments (e.g. Czechs are interested in positions protected by full tenure; Macedonians about the status of political advisers, Uzbeks about the diplomatic service).

3. Central personnel records

138. Apart from reasons connected to administrative culture and institutional set-up, one significant factor standing in the way of a policy role of CPUs has been the lack of reliable data. In most countries central personnel records, as the most basic tool for analyzing the workforce needs and plan future developments, were created only recently - or are still in the planning phase. In the survey, several respondents stressed the practical importance of central personnel records, with at least 3 of them (Estonia, Bulgaria and UN Administered Province of Kosovo) expressing an interest to know more about "*the necessary prerequisites, the issues to take into account, the possible mistakes, etc*". Others might be also interested, because of either planning for their first central registry (e.g. Cyprus, and Moldova), having just established it (e.g. Montenegro), or interested in improvements and upgrades (e.g. Latvia, as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina and Ukraine according to information received).

139. While several donors fund projects for the establishment of central personnel records (an high-impact activity, functional to lustration or redundancy programs, and the clean-up of payrolls), the know-how related to this as a topic has until now evaded all attention: there is nearly no comparative study on the role, architecture and practical use of civil service registries. The range of subjects to be covered would include the different options in terms of functionalities - e.g. simple personnel registries, more complex systems including automated support to certain HR functions (e.g. recruitment, appraisal, etc), or also applications integrated with payroll management. The relation between paper and electronic records, and the process for establishing them should be reviewed, as well as - above all - the practical manners to put such instruments to profit.

III.2. Civil service systems

Rate of interest in providing data: 92%

Rate of interest in formulating proposals: 58%

Priority activities:

There is evident interest in several sub-topics in the field of civil service reform. While RCPAR could devote its immediate attention to individual sub-topics, it is advised that these isolated initiatives be linked by a more general one aiming at the production of a comparative-based manual on civil service management practice.

As far as individual sub-topics are concerned, the one of the highest interest appears to be a small stream of activities focusing on the establishment of central personnel records. Typically this would include an awareness workshop with interested country representatives, followed by a comparative study (possibly containing some good practice guidelines), which would then be part of the growing manual. Technical assistance based on these materials and the circulation of success stories within the network would be possible.

Other activities:

As with personnel records, there is other possible sub-topic, which appears to be of interest and could be treated in the same manner. These include in particular the typology and role of central personnel units, and the scope (vertical and horizontal) of the civil service status. Other similar sub-topics of interest will probably emerge in CoP discussions, and could progressively be treated and inserted into the Manual.

III.3. Human Resources Management

140. Although some issues were anticipated under point III.2, respondents dealt with the main elements of human resources management practice under point III.3 of the Survey. Confirming the popularity of issues related to civil service reform, the item was answered on behalf of all countries taking part in the Survey (24 out of 24), with 14 of them providing at least some indications for possible RCPAR activities. As for the previous point III.2, requests were somewhat fragmented and referred often to details: for planning early activities, a selection of ‘most voted’ subjects has been made below.

III.3.1. Job analysis, description and grading

141. A first set of matters discussed and earmarked for possible assistance concerned the management of positions - in particular the preparation of standardized job descriptions and the criteria for their grading. A diverse group of five countries (Latvia, Bulgaria, FYR of Macedonia, Ukraine, and Georgia) stressed these aspects as critical in their accounts of the current situation, although the same are likely to be a weak point for a much larger number of civil service systems. In fact, while job classification and job grading methodologies are usually not covered by primary legislation on the civil service status, they determine much of its practical application.

142. The adoption of a new civil service law might per se bring limited innovation if not followed by the introduction of detailed job descriptions and of a uniform grading system. The participants’ requests concerning these matters, however, vary

depending on the degree of maturity of the system. Latvia, for instance, sought support for the introduction of a competency-based HR model, while FYR of Macedonia and Georgia did not point to a specific model and required more generally assistance in the design and implementation of training in job analysis, the preparation of job descriptions and job grading. As these essential actions can be covered through different techniques, any work by RCPAR would have to start with their review and comparison.

III.3.2. Selection & recruitment

143. A second set of issues concerned selection and recruitment into the civil service. This was the most widespread HRM concern, mentioned in the description of the status quo by representatives of 16 countries out of 24. While the introduction of competitive recruitment is in principle amongst the most visible innovations stemming from the adoption of civil service legislation, the actual capacity of recruitment systems to promote merit-based access depends on a number of organizational and procedural details often left to secondary legislation and practice. Apart from the possible mentions of decentralized or centralized (at least of the top positions) selection, mentioned topics comprised recruitment planning, the application process, the combination of written tests and interviews, their focus (e.g. knowledge, skills, attitudes), as well as the manner of ranking the results and their effects on actual recruitment.

144. These issues are essential to secure a merit-bound outcome, and at least five countries (Albania, Montenegro, Ukraine, Belarus, and Uzbekistan) requested that RCPAR assist them in getting access to good practice in these areas. Currently, there is relatively little accessible material on these topics, although the SIGMA programme organized in 2006 a seminar and a collection of national case studies, focusing on selection and recruitment practice in a number of chosen EU administrations (including a short synopsis of the new Members). Moving from the work already done, a more systematic exposition of the alternatives available could be of considerable interest for network members, and provide a basis for further, more country-specific interventions

III.3.3. Appraisal, promotion and advancement

145. Similar considerations apply to performance appraisal and promotion. Eight respondents out of 24 referred to this topic, although with different emphasis: apart from the appraisal procedure, some stressed the link with performance-related salary (e.g. Cyprus, Hungary, and Montenegro) or with the development of promotion patterns allowing formal career planning (e.g. Latvia). Performance appraisal was also touched upon in the HR Development section of the Survey, because of its use in some systems as a source to assess training needs.

146. While the topic is certainly important, it has however to be recognized that the reason why performance management mechanisms did not prove always effective in

the civil services of the region, has often little to do with the quality of appraisal mechanisms. Poor job descriptions, insufficient capacity to set individual objectives and indicators, and the limited availability of incentives in the form of career progression or salary advancements contribute to reduce the practical impact of performance appraisal schemes. In this sense, activities aiming at improving the preconditions for a successful appraisal should, rather, be given priority.

147. This fits with the relatively small number of respondents indicating performance appraisal and promotions as a priority area for RCPAR activities (UN Administered Province of Kosovo, on the full range of issues related to the appraisal process, and Latvia, limited to enabling career planning). While these topics should also be dealt with, they should not be amongst the first included in RCPAR work plan.

III.3. Human Resources Management

Rate of interest in providing data: 100%

Rate of interest in formulating proposals: 58%

Priority activities:

There is evident interest in several sub-topics in this field, which is a practical extension of point III.2 on civil service reform. As far as individual sub-topics are concerned, the one of the highest interest appears to be a small stream of activities focusing on good practice and methodologies in job analysis, description and grading. Typically this would include an awareness workshop with interested country representatives, followed by a comparative study (possibly containing some good practice guidelines), which would then be part of the growing manual. Technical assistance based on these materials and the circulation of success stories within the network would be possible.

Other activities:

Other sub-topics that could be treated in the same manner have also been identified, including in particular selection and recruitment systems, and performance appraisal and its consequences on career development. Some of these sub-topics could be already ripe for work along the same lines outlined above, although there is a question of how much RCPAR could really do at one time.

III.4. Human Resources Development

148. The item on Human Resources Development got responses from 23 countries of 24 (all participants apart from Romania): of these, 15 included also some comments on possible RCPAR activities in this area. In their description of the status quo, nearly all countries (with the exception of Georgia) presented the concern for staff development as entrenched in the institutional set-up governing the civil service status. The prevalent understanding of staff development measures, however, was sensibly different in CEE and in the CIS, as most of the countries in the latter group retained an approach based on formal educational qualifications (e.g. Masters, PhDs), and a delivery system that only recently started re-orienting its offer towards non-degree, non-academic courses.

149. As a general trend, the weakness of many CEE and CIS administrations at policy planning meant that identifying training needs is the main difficulty to overcome - both in relation to horizontal knowledge, skills and attitudes (i.e., needed by all institutions) and vertical ones (i.e., specific of individual sectors). While a number

of countries adopted medium-term training strategies (e.g. Kazakhstan already in 2000 and still in use; others such as Hungary, Bulgaria, FYR of Macedonia and Montenegro more recently and for shorter periods) these were not always easy to translate into annual HR development programmes matching the specific situation in each institution.

150. Apart from cases like Latvia, in which the assessment of training needs is built in the normal process of performance appraisal, most institutions do not practice in-depth training needs assessment (TNA). The presentation by Cyprus was of particular interest in this respect, as it showed a national training institution (Academy of PA) proactively assisting the creation of 'learning units' in individual organs, and the building of their assessment capacity. For the rest, some countries (e.g. Hungary and Bulgaria) beefed up weaker assessments by introducing compulsory training schemes linked to career progression. These automatisms, together with induction training (e.g. for entrants and new managers in Bulgaria) and minimal training requirements (e.g. at least once a year in Bosnia and for senior staff in Bulgaria, or every three years in Armenia) help to allocate resources to training independently from in-depth assessments of specific needs.
151. The impact on financing is clear. In principle, making each institution pay for its training would have a positive effect in terms of responsibility and impact. However, most countries in the Survey were shown to rely on central resources at least for horizontal, if not for all training measures. The new system just created in Croatia, for instance, relies on central financing; and Montenegro, which opted for a decentralized model at the start, is now moving to central financing at least for horizontal training activities. In Bulgaria and UN Administered Province of Kosovo, while individual institutions are expected to produce TNAs, the Ministry responsible for the civil service is in charge of reviewing them before allocating funds. A few countries such as Estonia or Bosnia, which stuck to a decentralized financing system, did not manage to build a coordinated national training system and still lack, to date, a true national training institution.
152. Indeed, the presence of central institutions with training responsibilities is a feature of most national systems. In a number of countries (e.g. Hungary since 2007, FYR of Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia, Serbia, as well as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and possibly Armenia), training tasks are vested in the same organ acting as CPU. That organ is in principle in charge of both training policy (strategy, TNA coordination, central financing, *ex post* evaluations) and implementation, with the delivery of actual courses and other training products. Depending on training volume, this combination can be very demanding, so that a number of countries maintain separate institutions specialized in training delivery (e.g. Latvia, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Albania, or UN Administered Province of Kosovo – as well as the PA Academies of Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus).
153. Looking at specific suggestions for RCPAR activities in this area, it must be stressed that most of them were general in nature: respondents from half of the 14 countries providing suggestions pointed only at a general need for exchanging experiences – mostly through study visits, and the possible establishment of a

network of national training institutions (an Estonian proposal). Another five countries, instead, picked each a single aspect of HR development systems, focusing on the elaboration of a medium-term training strategy (FYR of Macedonia); comparisons on the dimensions and efficiency of financing (Czech Republic), the creation of a national training institution (Georgia); the separation of training policy and training delivery roles (Ukraine); and methodologies for *ex post* training impact evaluation (Montenegro). Another two countries (Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan) focused on specific national projects (ToT on management and TQM; and establishment of distance-learning centres respectively).

154. While these topics are of potential general interest, the fragmentation of demand and the preference for more general-purpose interaction seems to advise against RCPAR planning early activities in this area. Rather, human resources development systems should be earmarked as a priority topic for CoP discussion, in order to obtain more detailed indications on specific activities. Proceeding in this manner will also provide better opportunities for coordination with existing networks of national training institutions (e.g. NISPAcee region-wide, and ReSPA specifically for the Western Balkans) in order to avoid overlaps and explore synergies.

III.4. Human Resources development

Rate of interest in providing data: 96%

Rate of interest in formulating proposals: 63%

Priority activities: none

Other activities: While it is clear that HR development is one of the topics commanding most attention amongst network members, the focus of that attention is presently either too general or too divided to identify sub-topics ripe for immediate work along the lines proposed in points III.2 and III.3. The impression is that RCPAR might have considerable activities in this area in the future; more immediately, CoP discussions and cooperation with existing regional networks of training institutions will be essential to identify specific activities.

III.5. Integrity Frameworks

155. Twenty-one out of 24 participating countries dealt with the item of the Survey concerning integrity frameworks, and 13 provided suggestions on activities. While pervasive corruption is a persistent concern in the region, in recent years integrity frameworks for the civil service were brought at the forefront of PAR by multiple international factors. Apart from UNDP's own action, the fight against corruption was made an overarching objective and conditionality item by the WB, and is now stressed by the EU as the main angle of scrutiny for the civil services of countries applying for membership (i.e., new chapter 23 of the EU *acquis*).

156. Along with domestic indignation against the corruption of public officials, this contributed to persuade a number of governments to adopt comprehensive anticorruption strategies (e.g. Romania, but also Montenegro, Georgia, etc.). While a considerable part of such documents deals actually with corruption in politics, there are also a few specific examples of strategies aimed at eradicating corruption

in the civil service (e.g. Bulgaria). Measures there envisaged are usually both preventive and repressive in nature.

157. Preventive measures include awareness campaigns and anticorruption training for the employees, as well as other measures aimed to introduce more transparency in administrative action (such as ‘freedom of information’ legislation), or diminish opportunities for corrupt behaviour. Amongst the latter, it bears mentioning indirect measures securing the adequacy of public service salaries (mentioned as a major problem by Kyrgyzstan), and establishing a rotation of the staff in sensitive positions (as practiced to some extent in Latvia, and recommended by the EU *acquis*).
158. Repressive measures, instead, usually entail administrative or criminal sanctions for specific situations or actions. Most of the relevant provisions are built into the criminal code, as well as civil service legislation or laws on administration, but are increasingly also found in special regulations on conflict of interest (provided they deal also with the civil servants and not mainly politicians, as for instance in FYR of Macedonia and Bosnia). Amongst the most common measures of this type, one can include the obligation of patrimonial disclosure, exclusions from certain activities of the employee and closest relatives, the acceptance of gifts and, possibly, the use of benefits.
159. The Survey revealed various elements of such legislation already in place (e.g. Cyprus, Latvia, Slovenia, FYR of Macedonia, Albania, Georgia, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan), including a Code of Conduct/ Ethics. The practice concerning such codes is interesting, since in their original Anglo-Saxon version they are preventive measures, informing the staff and public about expected standards of behaviour (as still typically in Cyprus). In CEE, instead, several of the Codes have a repressive purpose, effectively establishing a set of disciplinary sanctions. In the Survey, a dozen different countries reported experience in this respect, and four (Hungary, but also Georgia, Russia and Belarus) expressed an interest for comparative insight on such instruments.
160. The latter could be included under the medium-term activities under the ‘Organization and Staffing’ cluster, taking also into account the lack of previous works covering these aspects. There are of course other interesting topics (like staff rotation, which Latvia expressed an interest to clarify), but these are for the moment too little shared by other network members to justify collective work.

III.5. Integrity frameworks

Rate of interest in providing data: 88%

Rate of interest in formulating proposals: 54%

Priority activities: none

Other activities: There is some interest in a sub-topic that could be accommodated under the same HRM Manual project presented under III.2 – this is the role and use of Civil Service Codes of Ethics. The scheme of activities in this respect should be the same as for all other sub-topics to be entered in the Manual (see the points above). Other subjects for more activities in this area should be identified via CoP discussions.

IV. Service delivery

161. The last part of the Survey dealt with systems for service delivery. Somewhat against expectations, this was not amongst the most popular areas of the survey (it ranked overall 3rd, after part I on policy management, and part II on organization and staffing). One of the possible reasons is that service delivery systems, while relying on horizontal tools and methodologies, are strongly linked to the vertical portfolios responsible for their application - and in this sense, are less close to the interests of an audience coming prevalently from horizontal ministries and 'centre of government' background. In any case, this part of the questionnaire also provided some useful suggestions.

IV.1. Administrative Procedures

162. A total of 20 countries provided information under this item; however, in at least 6 cases the respondents appeared to misunderstand the subject and spoke of either managerial style, or the legislative process, or other issues.

163. Of the remaining 13 countries, 9 reportedly have legislation on the general administrative process in place. This legislation is for the most extremely recent (2004 or later) and experience with implementation is limited. The main exceptions are the former Yugoslav Republics, where there is a long-standing tradition in this area and legislation is (in some cases, e.g. Montenegro, and Croatia) being modernized.

164. There was one clear request from Albania, which still lacks a general law on administrative procedure and litigation, and limited interest from other countries (e.g. Georgia, and Czech Republic). Similarly, Turkey has a law in draft form, but for the moment, the only relevant piece of legislation in force is a Freedom of Information Act, containing some provisions on administrative transparency (and on the implementation of which a sub-regional meeting is proposed). In general, however, while there is no comparative material on administrative procedure, the fact that the topic was still widely misunderstood would advise for clarifying CoP discussions to be held before deciding on activities in this area.

IV.1. Administrative procedures

Rate of interest in providing data: 83%

Rate of interest in formulating proposals: 38%

Priority activities: none

Other activities: Most countries in the network are already set on this matter, so activities to the advantage of those still needing basic work on general administrative procedure might not involve enough network members to justify costs. CoP discussions could identify other topics.

IV.2. Administrative Simplification

165. Concerning administrative simplification and de-bureaucratization to the advantage of citizens and businesses, 15 out of 24 respondents dealt with this item of the questionnaire, with half of those providing also some indication for possible RCPAR activities.
166. Besides general legislation on administrative decision-making, most governments also undertook steps to simplify specific administrative procedures involving private or corporate customers. In some countries (e.g. Slovenia, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Croatia, and FYR of Macedonia) such efforts took the form of full programs for the reduction of bureaucratic burdens. The most complete of them, often designed in a participatory manner through the involvement of customers themselves, involved both a detailed review of existing regulations - e.g., through the Standard Cost Model (Czech Republic) or 'Guillotine' processes (Moldova, FYR of Macedonia, and Republika Srpska in Bosnia) and the adoption of Regulatory Impact Assessment techniques to address the establishment of possible additional burdens by new legislation (e.g. Latvia, and FYR of Macedonia). Specific measures undertaken to reduce administrative burdens under these programs included the simple elimination of unnecessary regulations or their consolidation, the streamlining of procedures and shortening of response times, the introduction of silent assent, and the modification of administrative procedure in order to allow electronic transactions, and the establishment of one-stop-shops.
167. The latter is perhaps the most popular measure, sparing costumers the burden of having to tour around many offices to obtain registrations, permits, licenses and the like. The extent to which one-stop-shops are used can vary of course in intensity; in countries such as Cyprus or Croatia, the government followed a formal policy of providing each main municipalities with a service centre offering a range of products - from enterprise registration to the registration of workers, cadastral services and others. Elsewhere, even if the policy on one-stop-shops is there (e.g. Moldova, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan) its actual application varies and is often limited to individual procedures (e.g. Georgia) and municipalities (e.g. Bulgaria).
168. Proposals for activities in this area were not too numerous (7 overall) and focused partly on the desirability of exchanges of experiences and methodologies for the evaluation of the costs of regulation (Latvia and Romania). Apart from the evaluation of the burdens, Bulgaria and FYR of Macedonia required assistance for the review of specific regulations – either through the elaboration of a manual or even by the provision of actual expertise. Finally, Croatia offered its experience in setting up multi-purpose customer service centres, and Bulgaria the experience of its municipalities in creating one-stop-shops – which may indeed be of interest for others. FYR of Macedonia, alone, focused also on the systematic analysis of possible burdens in new legislation, by requiring assistance in developing a more through system of Regulatory Impact Analysis.
169. Overall, the area appears of interest for RCPAR activities, but may not be ripe as a starter. Not only there are not many proposals, but also the number of countries

actively interested is still too small, and too much concentrated in the western part of the region. While these preconditions are improved through CoP discussions, it is also suggested that RCPAR gathers sufficient expertise on these subjects by taking contact with the OECD, as the leader organization on such issues. While some participants (Czech Republic) expressed reservations about RCPAR getting at all involved in this area, one can think that cooperation with OECD might indeed be a good idea, as it would provide that organization with a channel to extend activities with non-member countries.

IV.2. Administrative simplification

Rate of interest in providing data: 63%

Rate of interest in formulating proposals: 29%

Priority activities: none

Other activities: There are still too few convergent proposals to identify a good stream of activities, and their distribution is too much focused on one part of the network. It is however suggested that, if more interest could be raised through CoP discussions, this could be a major area of future interest for RCPAR, possibly in partnership with organizations such as the OECD.

IV.3. Quality Management Systems

170. “Total quality management” systems are the essential elements of organizational strategies aimed at building an awareness of quality at all levels of a production process. They are usually deployed by organizations to improve their customer orientation, and ultimately the degree of customer satisfaction. Out of 24 countries participating in the Survey, 17 provided some information about their efforts in this area, with 10 providing also input concerning RCPAR activities.

171. While quality management culture originated in the private sector, since the early nineties it also became popular in public administration. Across a decade, various standardized quality management methodologies started to be used in the European public sector (e.g. ISO 9000, Balanced Scorecard, Six Sigma, European Foundation for Quality Management model, Speyer model, etc.). In the UK, the same period saw the emergence of Citizens’ Charters, as a means to commit institutions to a high level of service delivery. Finally, in 2002, the European Union started promoting the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) as a basic tool evaluating the application of the different approaches to quality management in the public administration.

172. The Survey shows how these developments had an impact also on Eastern European administrations. All respondents reported a very considerable, if not widespread, use of TQM systems by individual organizations (at least at the local government level). In most cases, the adoption of quality management systems was also the result of a government-wide policy, centrally coordinated or facilitated. While this central role is mild in a few systems (e.g. Latvia, planning only a central web page) in a few cases like Slovenia and Bulgaria this meant a specialized unit providing methodology and monitoring, as well as training on TQM systems.

173. Amongst countries with EU membership or a perspective of it, there is a clear convergence of models. At least six of them (Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Bulgaria), started applying the CAF, usually in conjunction with other established instruments. Amongst those, the most practiced appeared to be Citizens' Charters (at least 4 cases, with Bulgaria being an impressive example); as well as the EFQM and ISO models (at least 2 cases each, with Slovenia as the most developed). ISO standards remain largely popular also in the CIS, with Ukraine having a government-wide TQM policy based on that model, and Kazakhstan interested. Additionally a few countries (e.g. Slovenia, and FYR of Macedonia) also gauge feedback from the users of public services through customer satisfaction surveys (Balanced Scorecard method). Some also have a Quality Award for best performing organizations.

174. In spite of this wealth of initiatives, however, proposals for RCPAR activities in the Survey were not very punctual: the 10 countries commenting in that respect stressed nearly exclusively a general need for exchanging experiences - in the application of both the CAF (e.g. Romania, interested in assistance for a pilot at the Ministry of Justice) and other instruments (e.g. FYR of Macedonia, interested in municipal Citizens' Charters). It is open to question whether general-purpose events would be appropriate, since, as pointed out by a representative of the Czech Republic, conferences and seminars, as well as comparative materials on these topics are already available. This is the case, for instance, with the annual European Conferences on Quality for Public Administrations and the activities of the CAF Resource Centre maintained at the European Institute of Public Administration in Maastricht. It is therefore suggested that the possibility of a partnership is considered, and that TQM issues are left to CoP discussions until more precise proposals will emerge.

IV.3. Quality Management Systems

Rate of interest in providing data: 71%

Rate of interest in formulating proposals: 42%

Priority activities: none

Other activities: For the moment, requests are limited to general exchange of the type already covered by other organizations (e.g. EIPA CAF Resource Centre). It is therefore suggested that CoP discussions are undertaken in order to come up with more specific proposals, possibly to be implemented in partnership with other organizations.

IV.4. E-government

175. Out of 24 countries, 19 responded to this item – but only 7 provided indications as to possible RCPAR activities. The difference between the two figures makes apparent the relatively high interest for the potential delivery of services through electronic means, but also clearly illustrates the difficulties in its concrete realization, especially in the least developed areas of the region.

176. Nearly all respondents presented their administration as implementing some sort of e-government policy framework, either specific to the public sector (e-government strategy and action plan in, e.g. Cyprus, Slovenia, and Bulgaria) or as part of a developmental vision of the “informatization” of society as a whole (e.g. FYR of Macedonia, Serbia, and Bosnia). The implementation of such strategies, however, is satisfactory only in those countries that were able to secure the prerequisites for the effective delivery of electronic services (e.g. Estonia, as the perennial example, but also others like Slovenia and newcomers like Croatia seem to be doing particularly well).
177. Elsewhere, the partial lack of necessary prerequisites left e-government ambitions out of reach. The main concerns are for insufficient computer literacy in the administration (Bulgaria), insufficient internet penetration amongst customers (Romania), scarce presence of adequate ICT infrastructure (including broadband connectivity) and lack or incompleteness of a regulatory framework allowing full equivalence of paper-based and electronic transactions (still lacking in places like Bosnia, and Belarus, and insufficiently implemented elsewhere). Back-office automation is often also insufficient to support fully automated transactions (and it is for instance significant that Serbian respondents focused indeed mostly on back-office-type applications).
178. Another factor that is often underestimated concerns the institutional set-up for ICT governance. While most administrations in the region have limited ICT capacity, the organs put in charge of driving e-governance efforts are often mere policy coordinators (e.g. ministries without portfolio for the information society), and cannot make available the basic technical resources (e.g. connectivity capacity) and the basic core of technical skills (e.g. know-how on systems’ architecture) that would be essential to assist other institutions with the planning and realization of their e-government programmes. Each institution tends thus to proceed by itself with limited capacity, which leads of course to unsatisfactory results.
179. As a consequence, several respondents evaluated most of their web portals and web applications as falling just within the initial two steps of the conventional 4-step benchmarking system popularized by the European Commission for the e-Europe 2005 programme. The first step - web pages providing information - is easily accessible for nearly any institution: and still content is not always regularly updated (e.g. the vivid admission from Uzbekistan). Countries such as FYR of Macedonia, Bosnia and Ukraine do only a bit better, with few examples reaching the 2nd step of the benchmark with some one-way interaction (e.g. submission of requests, for instance for recruitment in the civil service in FYROM). However, it is only by looking at eastern EU members and current candidates that one finds a significant number of 3rd-step, two-way applications (e.g. tax declarations) and even fully interactive, 4th-step ones (e.g. online payment of traffic fines).
180. From this starting point, one can see why requests for RCPAR assistance were not particularly specific. Countries that felt less successful at their e-government efforts (e.g. Belarus, and FYR of Macedonia, but also Czech Republic and Latvia) simply expressed a desire to exchange experiences with more successful ones – the

most often quoted desire being to learn Estonia's 'secret'. While this is not a specific activity, RCPAR inherited from UNTC a solid competence on e-government and ICT issues and could use the occasion to fill a gap on current knowledge in this area. UNDP has also relevant experience and can access regional expertise in this area through the e-Government Academy of Estonia, which it helped establish. As international assistance (including under the e-Europe programmes) focused for the most on advancing specific interactive applications, there has still been little reflection about the priorities, sequencing and methods for building electronic service delivery capacity in a premature environment, while a number of requisites might not be there. A comparative study and guidelines on "e-Government for beginners" could be a very valuable starting point for further activities.

IV.4. E-government

Rate of interest in providing data: 79%

Rate of interest in formulating proposals: 29%

Priority activities:

While the topic was not very dense of proposals, it should be possible for RCPAR to launch activities in the service-delivery area through a stream of activities exploring lessons learned for advancing e-Government in under-developed and under-regulated environment (*e-Government for Beginners*), as indeed those of most countries in the network. Activities would follow the typical sequence starting with some awareness initiatives (e.g. workshops associated with study tours to Estonia or Slovenia), followed by a comparative study based on the countries of the network, which may produce some 'good practice' guidelines. Based on the latter, some forms of technical assistance involving network members could be envisaged.

Other activities:

none

IV.5. Decentralization

181. Out of 24 countries, only 18 answered to this item, with just 7 providing comments relevant to possible RCPAR activities. Before providing a short analysis of the responses of network members, it should be noted that the item had been designed as a probe, to explore the question of whether RCPAR should focus on central administrations, or deal also with the local level to answer a possible interest of network members. Overall, apart from the respondent from Turkey, from which RCPAR received answers only in relation of the decentralization and local government aspects of the questionnaire, most of the others mentioned local government issues (e.g. Czech Republic, Croatia, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan) seeking assistance for integrating these aspects into a comprehensive PAR approach (an experience already attempted by some countries, e.g. the FYR of Macedonia). Their answers, therefore, confirm the strategic choice made by UNDP/BRC: while references to local government reform are possible, this should not be a major focus in the immediate future.

182. This much said, in the part related to the description of the *status quo*, respondents were nearly all pointing at the strengthening of local self-government as the preferred option, with the notable exception of two countries (Slovenia and

Cyprus) opting instead for entrusting service delivery functions to territorially de-concentrated offices of the central administration. Apart from these two cases, the only countries remaining outside the general trend towards decentralization are a few coming from a former Soviet model of outright centralization, which had the longer way to go in this respect. However, also in Belarus, and in theory even in Russia, a strengthening of local governments is - if not a trend - at least part of current political discourse.

183. At the most general level, in all countries that choose to pursue further decentralization, the main problem has been to ensure that the process of devolving further responsibilities to local (or regional) governments is matched by an increased capacity of that level to carry out the new functions in an efficient manner. If sufficient capacity is lacking, the theoretical increase of local responsibilities might easily result in decreasing service levels. The key actions in this respect concern obviously the financing of municipalities (often lagging behind the transfer of responsibilities, with Turkey as the clearest example) and the professionalization of the municipal civil service (a much less frequent priority, with Croatia being the only country pointing at the opportunity of a special training institution).

184. As a conclusion, on the basis of the network's limited feedback so far and given the already extensive involvement of UNDP in capacity development at the decentralised level, it is suggested that RCPAR should not, for the moment, pursue decentralization and local government issues as a separate cluster of activities. This would exceedingly widen the range of potential expertise necessary to manage the network, and be in contrast with the relatively minor interest met by these issues in the Survey. It is however suggested that the local government dimension might need to be taken into account when dealing with other issues under the 'service delivery' chapter – as many of the actions relevant to service delivery are indeed performed at the local level.

IV.5. Decentralization

Rate of interest in providing data: 75%

Rate of interest in formulating proposals: 29%

Priority activities: none

Other activities: The interest for this topic was not very high. It is suggested that, in order not to overstretch RCPAR, activities dealing with decentralization and local government are not included in the work plan for the foreseeable future, although individual aspects of relevance to other topics (particularly in the service delivery area) could receive some attention.

IV.6. Public Private Partnerships

185. Perhaps also because of coming last, this was amongst the least popular items in the Survey: it was dealt with only by 13 respondents out of 24, with as little as 6 adding some pertinent remark on possible activities. With a summary definition, a Public Private Partnership (PPP) is intended as any contractual arrangement between the public and private sectors for the purposes of delivering a service

traditionally provided by the former. These practices are based on the recognition that both sectors have advantages in the performance of specific tasks. By allowing, each sector to do what it does best; public services can be provided in the most economically efficient manner.

186. In transitional economies, infrastructures (highways, seaports, hospitals, schools, transport) are the main case in point: private entrepreneurs are allowed to invest in the facilities and run the public services (plus often additional commercial ones) based on contractually agreed prices and service standards. In this sense, PPPs are therefore often seen as a ready manner to secure services requiring large capital investments, while keeping the state on a lean budget. In reality, however, the benefits of PPPs need to be considered against the risks of mismanagement arising from an imperfect regulatory framework, and insufficient capacity of the administration to monitor the implementation of complex contractual schemes.

187. The data from the survey bore a clear warning in this same direction. The respondents from the new EU members were the most concerned with establishing a clear regulatory framework (pending the transposition of the EU Green Book into Community legislation), and were also those more prudent in actual practice. At the opposite, respondents from the countries claiming the largest and most successful application of PPP schemes (some in the Western Balkans and most in the CIS, with Russia as a major success) could offer a wealth of real-life PPP applications, but little reference to any specific regulatory safeguard apart from those applicable to common concessions.

188. Apart from this general suggestion for prudence, the expertise of the author is insufficient to point at whether PPPs should be regarded as a priority area for RCPAR's activities in the immediate future. One aspect that should probably be considered is that most of the valid national European experiences with regulatory frameworks for PPPs (e.g. United Kingdom, and Spain) are outside the area of RCPAR membership, so that the assistance could not be delivered on a regional cooperation basis. As UNDP has considerable experience in this area, however, it is suggested that the opportunity should be re-examined as soon as regulatory options on the EU side (which is the reference for the majority of network members) will be fully settled.

IV.6. Public-private partnerships

Rate of interest in providing data: 54%

Rate of interest in formulating proposals: 25%

Priority activities: none

Other activities: The interest for this topic was not very high. It is suggested that CoP discussions are held in order to identify a precise scope for possible RCPAR activities in this area, keeping particularly in mind the need to develop the normative framework for PPP management.

5. DRAFT PLAN OF ACTIVITIES AS SUGGESTED

Based on the considerations in this study, the following table contains the outline for a proposed starting work plan for RCPAR, limited to the next two years. Besides the activities listed here, those labelled as non-priority in the previous chapter could be added in case of sufficient funding and capacity. The same activities could probably also be added at the end of the second year, as their subject will probably still be contemporary at that time. However, from month 12 onwards the participatory programming mechanism is assumed to be active: other activities will therefore be added to the work plan, as needed.

	0 to 6 months	6 to 12 months	12 to 18 months	18 to 24 months	After 24 months
Build-up activities	Recruitment of CoP coordinators, improvement of country profiles, establishment of electronic library, launch of CoPs web	Network members assigned to CoPs; First inaugural meetings of all CoPs in Greece. Web interaction within the CoPs starts	RCPAR participatory programming cycle active; end of the first annual work plan and approval of the plan for the following year	Continuation of CoP discussions and programming cycle Second annual meetings of all CoPs (a different location than the year before).	Continuation of CoP discussions and programming cycle
Policy-making & coordination	Awareness workshop: 'PAR strategies and PAR coordination mechanisms: CEE and CIS experiences'; launch of study on the same topic.	Study tour of research group. Cases for a study and good practice guidelines on building policy capacity are prepared; first draft of study Awareness workshop: 'Good practice in building policy capacity'; launch of the study on the same topic	The RCPAR's 'Guidelines for building policy capacity' is published. Roll of experts established Study tour of research group. Cases for a study and good practice guidelines on building policy capacity are prepared; first draft of study	Experts from the network are available for peer reviews or for technical assistance by the guidelines The RCPAR's 'Guidelines for building policy capacity' is published. Roll of experts established	Experts from the network are available for peer reviews or technical assistance by the guidelines Experts from the network are available for peer reviews or technical assistance by the guidelines
Financial management		Awareness workshop: 'Good practice in programme-based budgeting'; launch of a partial study.	Study tour of research group. Cases prepared for a study on programme-based budgeting, converging with policy capacity study		
Organization & staffing	Awareness workshop for the launch of the manual: 'Managing the Civil Service: a Practitioner's Handbook'; with focus on 'Establishment and use of Central Personnel Records'	Study tour of research group. Cases are prepared for a study on central personnel records, as part of the developing manual; first draft Awareness workshop: 'Good practice in Personnel Selection & Recruitment into the Civil Service'; launch of a partial study.	The section of the manual on central personnel records is published. A roll of experts on this subject established Study tour of research group. Cases are prepared for a study on recruitment & selection, as part of the developing manual; first draft	Experts from the network are available for peer reviews or technical assistance by the manual The section of the manual on section and recruitment is published. A roll of experts on this subject established	Experts from the network are available for peer reviews or technical assistance by the manual Experts from the network are available for peer reviews or technical assistance by the manual
Service delivery		Awareness workshop: 'e-Government for Beginners: Views from CEE and the CIS'; launch of a study.	Study tour of research group. Cases are prepared for a study on e-Government for beginners; first draft of study	The RCPAR's 'e-Government for beginners' is published. Roll of experts established	Experts from the network are available for peer reviews or technical assistance by the manual

ANNEX I: Survey Questionnaire



**UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
REGIONAL CENTRE FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM**

**FIRST SURVEY
OF POTENTIAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS
IN THE PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES**

JANUARY 2007

1. The purpose of the survey

The United Nations Centre for Public Administration Reform (UNRCPAR) is an initiative launched by the United Nations Development Programme - Bratislava Regional Centre (UNDP/BRC) with financial support from the Hellenic Government. Relying on its staff in Athens and Bratislava and on cooperation with the UNDP country offices, UNRCPAR acts, among other activities, as the hub of a regional network of Public Administration Reform (PAR) specialists from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), South Eastern Europe (SEE) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

The network consists of UNDP's Regional Community of Practice on Public Administration Reform and Anti-Corruption, as well as of the Focal Points inherited from the United Nations Thessaloniki Centre for Public Service Professionalism. The two networks were joined in the meeting that took place in Alexandroupolis, Greece on 20-21 November 2006. At present, approximately 20 countries are represented with up to two specialists from either the government or the academia. Participation in the network is informal, based on interest, competence and the availability to work together.

The idea behind the establishment of the UNRCPAR network is rather simple. With PAR efforts now going on for over a decade, Western advice is no longer the sole source of expertise for public administration professionals in CEE, SEE and the CIS. The more the reforms advance, in fact, the more the growing level of expertise within these same regions makes direct exchanges of experiences a potentially important tool for further improvement. Interest in this sense is quickly increasing, showing a trend that deserves to be properly addressed and sustained.

The Project aims at supporting transfers of knowledge amongst the administrations of CEE, SEE and the CIS through a twofold mechanism. On one side, UNRCPAR shall facilitate contacts and discussions amongst the network's members. On the other, discussions should not be an end in themselves, but be directed at the identification of activities of common interest. This shall result in the implementation of regional PAR-related activities, in which regional experts will be mostly engaged.

Channels for discussion shall include meetings at the level of the full network, and others on a sub-regional or issue-related basis. Discussion groups on a more permanent basis will be soon hosted on the UNDP/RCPAR website (www.rcpar.org). Until the mechanism for such discussions is developed, this survey is conceived as an instrument to gauge interest and gather suggestions on practical initiatives that the Programme could support. After the Alexandroupolis kick-off in early winter, starting such activities fast is UNDP/RCPAR's main priority.

What sort of proposed activities are we looking for? Proposed UNRCPAR activities can take different forms such as seminars, study visits, technical cooperation, comparative research, publications, etc. As a general rule, proposed activities should:

- deal with a topic relevant to public administration reform, of the type touched upon in the survey;
- involve network members from at least 3 countries covered by UNRCPAR, including if possible in an expert capacity;
- be feasible with a budget in the range of US\$ 50,000 to 100,000.

All proposals formulated through the survey will be analyzed and compared (if necessary, more information on specific intended activities will be required). This will result in a set of recommendations about possible projects to be financed in the near future, as well as in an indicative work plan for the five-year Programme, which is under formulation, at the moment - both of which are subject to consideration and approval of the UNRCPAR's Steering Committee. With your help, the objective is for UNRCPAR to start implementing some activities in the first half of 2007.

2. How to fill in the questionnaire

The survey gauges interest in activities supporting PAR, in particular with regard to horizontal systems of public administration. It is mostly aimed at central government administrative structures, without excluding other levels of government. This survey does not cover sectoral reforms in areas such as public health, education, etc.

The questionnaire is simple; in order to make it easier to fill, PAR issues have been grouped in four broad clusters (the same ones considered at the meeting in November 2006). This is however not rigid, and a fifth (empty) cluster has been added in case the respondent would like to explore cooperation in different areas that are not explicitly mentioned in the survey. If this is your case, just follow the instructions in the form and create a new subject area for your proposed activities.

In the form as provided, there are several subject areas under every cluster, ranging from policy coordination mechanisms to civil service training, and from external audit to e-government. Each subject area bears a minimal description, informed to generally accepted good practice. Issues mentioned are meant merely as a reminder of what may be covered by UNRCPAR activities, and respondents are not expected to elaborate on every one of them.

No elaborate answer is required if an indication refers to aspects on which you think that UNRCPAR support is not needed or not relevant. Otherwise, a suggested format is shown in the text box: keep the text short and to the point, using the first part to justify the request for assistance in the second.

There is no need to be very detailed: just explain the main issue in simple words. For the background information, you can also attach documents (e.g. government reports, academic articles, legislation, etc.) You can also refer the reader to a web page containing relevant data. The documentation you provide will contribute to the development of a virtual library to be included in the UNRCPAR on line resource centre.

In principle, both your text and all documents should be in English (the network's working language). If this is not possible, please contact UNRCPAR to evaluate the possibility of a

III.2. Civil service system - The regulations on the status of employees should provide the core staff (i.e. the civil service) with secure tenure. A central unit (e.g. ministry, agency) should set common standards across the civil service, monitor their application and hold a central personnel registry (besides other possible functions). The possibility for independent review of decisions concerning employment status should be provided.

- Is the current state of affairs satisfactory? Attach any relevant documents.

A new Law on Civil Service came into force in November 2005, establishing a clear division between civil servants and other public employees (e.g. health, education and other sectors). The Law created the Civil Service Department as a central personnel unit under the Prime Minister, responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Law and its regulations by all organs, advising them in their recruitment, appraisal, promotion and other HRM practices. However, the delay in the creation of a central registry of personnel means that the Department has little capacity to systematically collect and analyze information on HRM in other organs, which is currently a handicap.



The Law on Civil Service



The Department of Civil Service

- Can you think of any UNRCPAR activity that could assist with this?

Our main interest in this area would be for other experiences with the establishment of central personnel registries - what are the necessary prerequisites, the issues to take into account, the possible mistakes, and of course the costs. If possible, we suggest that UNRCPAR finances a workshop hosted by the Department of Civil Service, open to representative of other countries in the network with relevant experiences (we have heard about civil service registries in Bulgaria and Montenegro but there might be more cases). Based on the workshop, we would also appreciate one or more colleagues to assist in preparing the plan for our own central registry.

translation, depending on the importance of the information and on the resources available.

When presenting your suggested activity be concise, but try to:

- explain the intended impact on PAR in your country. That is, what would be practically achieved if the activity is successful;
- (if applicable) suggest any other countries that you wish to participate in the activity besides your own. If you are aware of an interesting experience, feel free to mention it.

Of course, what you are asked to express is only a starting idea. None of this is final, and the design of all activities selected by UNRCPAR's Steering Committee will be finalized with the assistance of UNRCPAR's staff.

Do expect competition from other proposals, and do your best to include relevant proposals in as many areas as possible. Of course, there will be areas in which you are not an expert: while the questionnaire will be initially forwarded only to present network members, you are actively encouraged to involve other colleagues from both government and academia in your country, and cover in this way other areas. Anybody competent and with good ideas is welcome to contribute. Individuals interested in contributing to this effort will be considered as potential members of the expanding network of PAR practitioners and experts.

At the end of the questionnaire there is a space for including your name and contact details, and those of any other colleagues you have involved in the process. These contacts are important for the development of UNRCPAR's network, which would ideally include at least one specialist for each PAR area, in all countries. As membership is a condition for participating to activities (including in an expert capacity) we trust that involving others should not be too difficult.

3. Deadlines for delivery

The deadline for compiling the questionnaire and return it to UNRCPAR is **30 days** (i.e., 5 March 2007) from the date it was forwarded to you. During this period, for any clarification or assistance you may need, you should not hesitate to contact us:

- **Anne Caroline Tveoy**, Public Administration Officer
UNRCPAR, Athens
anne.caroline.tveoy@undp.org

- **Panos Liverakos**, Chief Technical Advisor
UNRCPAR, Athens
panos.liverakos@undp.org

- **Dan Dionisie**, Policy Analyst - Public Administration Reform
UNDP, Europe and the CIS, Bratislava Regional Centre
dan.dionisie@undp.org

Wishing you a good work, we sincerely hope that you will find the initiative worthy and interesting. Let us know what you think of the survey and of the whole programme, so that we can improve our programme at the advantage of all network members.

Yours sincerely,

Panos Liverakos
RCPAR Chief Technical Adviser
Specialist

Dan Dionisie
UNDP/BRC PAR Policy

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- V.1. (to be filled according to needs)

Contributors to the survey

PART I - POLICY-MAKING AND COORDINATION

I.1. Strategic planning and policy-making - Individual ministries (or other institutions with a policy mandate) need to have sufficient capacity to set priorities and establish strategies for their sectors, including through consultations with stakeholders. Such priorities and strategies should be linked to budget plans spreading across several years. Ministries should be able to implement these strategies by selecting and elaborating policy instruments (including legislative measures), and by evaluating their impact.

Is the current state of affairs satisfactory? Attach any relevant documents.
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Can you think of any UNRCPAR activity that could assist with this?
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I.2. Policy coordination - The government’s role in policy coordination requires that legislative and other measures proposed by line ministries are effectively discussed. This process is usually supported by a government secretariat (and/or units providing overall strategic advice) and needs to be clearly regulated (e.g. planning of the agenda, preliminary consultations across portfolios are carried out, conflict resolution mechanisms, etc.).

Is the current state of affairs satisfactory? Attach any relevant documents.
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Can you think of any UNRCPAR activity that could assist with this?
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I.3. Coordination in specific areas (EI) - For governments identifying European Integration as a key policy objective, one organ (ministry, office etc.) has to be responsible for coordinating the various aspects of the process, including support to negotiations with the EU, legal approximation to the EU *acquis*, coordination of EU programs and management of EU Funds. Measures for building capacity in EU issues within individual institutions are also necessary.

Is the current state of affairs satisfactory? Attach any relevant documents.
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Can you think of any UNRCPAR activity that could assist with this?
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I.4. Coordination in specific areas (PAR). The reform of the Public Administration is better approached through a government-wide strategy, covering different areas treated in this survey (e.g. policy coordination, human resources, service delivery, etc.) and spreading across several years. If a PAR strategy is in place, one organ (ministry, office, etc.) should be responsible for coordinating the various aspects of public administration reform.

Is the current state of affairs satisfactory? Attach any relevant documents.
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Can you think of any UNRCPAR activity that could assist with this?

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I.5. Coordination in other specific areas - Other areas that might be subject to special policy coordination mechanism include National Development Plans (or Poverty Reduction Strategies), and Anti-corruption Strategies. While their implementation should be coordinated with general government policy, specialized units/agencies can be created to monitor and nurture implementation.

Is the current state of affairs satisfactory? Attach any relevant documents.

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Can you think of any UNRCPAR activity that could assist with this?

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PART II - FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

II.1. Budget preparation - The budget has to cover all public funds, fitting within a mid-term expenditure framework setting spending priorities across several years. It should include a presentation of the macroeconomic framework, fiscal policy objectives, and main risks. Its formation needs punctual regulation of several aspects (calendar, instructions to users, analysis of requests, negotiation and arbitration mechanisms, and parliamentary approval). Performance-based budgeting requires the development of results frameworks (targets, indicators) consistent with national policy frameworks.

Is the current state of affairs satisfactory? Attach any relevant documents.

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Can you think of any UNRCPAR activity that could assist with this?

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II.2. Budget execution - Proper budget execution needs accurate monitoring of cash flow forecasts, the operation of expenditure ceilings, control over budget reallocations and sound debt control. A single treasury account system is likely to be adopted for carrying out payments, supported by an electronic information system. Consolidated financial statement prepared for each year, in line with international accounting standards.

Is the current state of affairs satisfactory? Attach any relevant documents.

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Can you think of any UNRCPAR activity that could assist with this?

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II.3. Internal control and audit - Effective internal controls usually require regulation, paired with the establishment of an internal audit function to provide the management with reassurance on the functioning of internal control systems. Internal auditors need functional independence within their institutions, and should apply internationally recognized internal audit standards. A central unit monitoring and advising their work might be established

Is the current state of affairs satisfactory? Attach any relevant documents.

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Can you think of any UNRCPAR activity that could assist with this?

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II.4. Public procurement - Public procurement is usually regulated following international standards (UNCITRAL model law, EU directives). A central unit (ministry, agency, etc.) is in charge of setting public procurement policy and standards, and procurement officers undergo specific training and/or certification. Special arrangements are needed to ensure the review of tender awards or other aspects of the procedure upon complaint.

Is the current state of affairs satisfactory? Attach any relevant documents.

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Can you think of any UNRCPAR activity that could assist with this?

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II.5. External audit - A Supreme Audit Institution should be in charge of auditing the accounts and financial management systems of all budget users, covering all public resources. The SAI should be in a position of independence (access to sufficient resources, setting its work plan, publishing work results) and apply international audit standards (INTOSAI). SAI findings should be reported to parliament, and considered by legislators.

Is the current state of affairs satisfactory? Attach any relevant documents.

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Can you think of any UNRCPAR activity that could assist with this?

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PART III - ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING

III.1. Organization - The organization of the public administration should rely on a clear division into standard organizations (ministries, secretariats, agencies, etc.), with the relation between ministries and executive agencies precisely determined. The responsibilities of each organization should be clearly defined, and functional reviews might be carried out to set the bases for rationalization and restructuring.

Is the current state of affairs satisfactory? Attach any relevant documents.

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Can you think of any UNRCPAR activity that could assist with this?

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III.2. Civil service system - The regulations on the status of employees should provide the core staff (i.e. the civil service) with secure tenure. A central unit (e.g. ministry, agency) should set common standards across the civil service, monitor their application and hold a central personnel registry (besides other possible functions). The possibility for independent review of decisions concerning employment status should be provided.

Is the current state of affairs satisfactory? Attach any relevant documents.

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Can you think of any UNRCPAR activity that could assist with this?

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III.3. Human resources management - The system for recruiting civil servants should allow equal access to all applicants, and be objectively based on the candidates' merit. Civil servants should be appropriately and transparently compensated, and have chances to progress in their career depending on their performance. Rules concerning the disciplinary and other responsibility of civil servants shall be clear and independently enforced.

Is the current state of affairs satisfactory? Attach any relevant documents.

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Can you think of any UNRCPAR activity that could assist with this?

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III.4. Human resources development - There should be a budget for the professional development of civil servants (centrally, or from each organ), invested according to a clear assessment of training needs, within a strategy with priorities for the whole administration. It should cover both horizontal skills and sectoral concerns. Training should be delivered through a specific institution or supervised outsourcing, and its quality and impact evaluated.

Is the current state of affairs satisfactory? Attach any relevant documents.

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Can you think of any UNRCPAR activity that could assist with this?

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III.5. Integrity frameworks - Preserving the civil service from the danger of corruption requires usually a set of measures ranging from rotation in sensitive positions, assets disclosure to the adoption of codes of civil service ethics dealing with issues such as conflict of interest and the acceptance of gifts. Other measures related to civil service compensation, but also to public procurement, audit and others should also be regarded as contributing to this objective.

Is the current state of affairs satisfactory? Attach any relevant documents.

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Can you think of any UNRCPAR activity that could assist with this?

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PART IV - SERVICE DELIVERY

IV.1. Administrative decision-making: Deciding effectively on cases involving the interests of private parties requires a law on general administrative procedure, or at least a set of principles on the validity of decisions, deadlines, notification and consultation requirements, the right to access relevant documents, and the responsibilities of those deciding. Parties should be able to appeal against decisions, including judicially.

Is the current state of affairs satisfactory? Attach any relevant documents.
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Can you think of any UNRCPAR activity that could assist with this?
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IV.2. Administrative simplification: In order to diminish the burden imposed on business or citizens in their dealings with the administration, a government can adopt ‘better regulation’ programs aiming streamlining administrative procedures, as well as measures such as the elimination of requirements to produce documentation, one-stop-shops acting as a single interface with private parties for several administrations, and others.

Is the current state of affairs satisfactory? Attach any relevant documents.
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Can you think of any UNRCPAR activity that could assist with this?
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IV.3. Total quality management - In order to improve the client orientation of the administration, a government can embrace the use of ‘citizens’ charters’ setting quality standards for the provision of services, or the application of full quality management systems (e.g. EFQM, ISO, CAF, etc.). This can be limited to individual institutions, or can be the result of consistent government policy, assisted by a central coordinating body.

Is the current state of affairs satisfactory? Attach any relevant documents.
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Can you think of any UNRCPAR activity that could assist with this?
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IV.4. e-Government - Service delivery by electronic means needs a coordinated strategic approach to improvements in connectivity, hardware, software, the administration’s IT skills, automation in back-office procedures (e.g. records management, workflow systems) and legislation (on electronic signature and commerce). Further, actual services can be delivered at various levels, e.g. only information and submission of requests, full two-way transaction, etc.

Is the current state of affairs satisfactory? Attach any relevant documents.
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Can you think of any UNRCPAR activity that could assist with this?

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IV.5. Decentralization - Decentralization (or as an alternative, deconcentration) is an obvious mean to bring services closer to business and citizens. Thus, your government might have considered decentralization to local or intermediate governments levels as service delivery, which has manifold dimensions including financial aspects and some supervision over local government.

Is the current state of affairs satisfactory? Attach any relevant documents.

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Can you think of any UNRCPAR activity that could assist with this?

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IV.6. Public-Private Partnerships – Provision of public services through the active involvement of the private sector is a way to increase efficiency and effectiveness by transferring risk to the private sector and enhancing the investment environment. In order to facilitate PPPs, a legal framework enabling and safeguarding PPP schemes must be in place; administrative bodies (such as PPP committees) may be created to support the management of PPP projects; and public institutions should have the capacity to manage PPP schemes, evaluating proposals and supporting and monitoring their implementation. Examples of PPPs include projects where end-users pay a fee directly to the private partner (i.e. infrastructure projects) and projects where the public sector reimburses the private sector.

Is the current state of affairs satisfactory? Attach any relevant documents.

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Can you think of any UNRCPAR activity that could assist with this?

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PART V – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

V.1. - If your concerns relate to an area of public administration reform different from those listed in the previous sections of this questionnaire, feel free to add your concern here. You can follow the same format as for the listed areas, explaining what the concern is about, what the state of the issue is, and how UNRCPAR could help.

Is the current state of affairs satisfactory? Attach any relevant documents.

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Can you think of any UNRCPAR activity that could assist with this?

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Persons contributing to this survey

Please provide here the contacts of the persons contributing to the survey, including both already established network members and other colleagues consulted on specific topics. As UNRCPAR is in the process of widening its network, we hope they may join the programme and benefit from its activities in the near future.

- Established network members.....
e-mail.....tel.....
e-mail.....tel.....

- Others consulted.....
e-mail.....tel.....