



7th ReSPA Annual Conference

18 - 19 April 2013

Effective Policy Making: How to Ensure Desired Changes through Successful Implementation of the Policies

Concept Paper

(Final Draft)

1. Introduction

ReSPA as a regional school for public administration and regional center for cooperation has great opportunity to communicate and gather the information from its member countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia) and Kosovo*, recognizing the occurrences of some of the major problems in the public administration institutions and their relation to the processes of policy making and policy implementation. ReSPA Annual Conferences with its holistic approach tries to tackle different national (WB countries) and EU public administration systems and division of problems which occur out of it as a consequence of non adequate communication and lack of interconnection with the different target audiences. It brings to the attention of the audience fresh cases of best practices in the relevant areas which are treated and addressed by high level speakers from the WB region, EU and wider. Moreover, the ReSPA Annual Conferences disseminate important information on public administration improvement and establish a platform within which the participants can interact, discuss and learn from each other.

This year, ReSPA is organizing its 7th Annual Conference which is scheduled to take place on 18 - 19 April 2013 at ReSPA premises, focusing on the issues related to policy making and policy implementation in the area of the public administration reforms and related fields. The rationale behind the selection of this topic is based on the importance of the effective policy making which is one of the fundamental phases of the policy cycle and which shall go hand in hand. From EU perspectives, the conference will focus also on the need of designing policies that can be implemented in practice, drawing on a wider range of views and expertise. The conference will aim at the need for policy making to improved in all its cycles, especially in the momentum of problem and priorities identification and formulation followed with adequate set up of the indicators for policy Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). Having said this, ReSPA next Annual Conference will be devoted to this respective topic exploring different approaches and modalities related to the effective policy making and particularly focusing on evidence based policy making - ensuring that the policy decisions tackle real and evidenced problems compiled with the very identification and analysis of policy options based on principles of effectiveness and efficiency.

In addition the Conference will be addressing the issues on how to raise the awareness, and transfer best practices into capacities of the public administration and by this contributing to all generic principles of the public administration reform and EU integration process of the WB region. The Conference will refer to the phases of the policy cycles which are required for having good policies and results oriented and effective implementation. This approach will enable the audience to understand the complexity of all related stages of the policy cycles, in particular emphasizing that policy making is strengthened by the planning, design and consultation processes, followed by M&E, and policy revision based on obtained outputs and outcomes from M&E stage with particular policies which aim at enhancing the public administration reforms and related areas The following phases of the policy cycle will be put forward during the conference:

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and it is in line with UNSCR and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration on Independence.

- ✓ Agenda setting: defining priorities between the political agenda and strategic planning, ensuring that measurement of effects is possible by setting result and target indicators;
- ✓ Policy formulation including coordination and consultation processes with all related stakeholders;
- ✓ Policy decision
- ✓ Policy implementation; and last but not least;
- ✓ Monitoring and evaluation of the implemented policies

This approach will offer a framework for assessing and developing the role of ministries and other state bodies in the policy cycle process.

2. Conference Objectives

The overall objective of the 7th ReSPA Annual Conference is to discuss and raise awareness of the public administration reforms in the Western Balkan (WB), to have the right approach to all policy cycles, in particular the top-down approach from the effective policy making to the processes of the Monitoring and Evaluation of the implementation of the policies as well as policy revision. In addition, the Conference will foster exchange of experiences and learning from the good practices of the WB and the EU regarding latter mentioned issues.

The above approach will help the process itself to advocate in a more rational and systematic way. The outcomes from the Conference will be based on the policy decision principles serving as available evidence and rational analysis for Public administration and related governments as well founding the basis for further capacity building of civil servants in this respective field.

The specific objectives of the ReSPA's Conference will be as following:

- ✓ To enable decision makers better understand benefits of Effective policy making for the decision makers and society as whole. To ensure better insight of the key phases and challenges of policy cycle; (*Agenda setting: defining priorities between the political agenda and strategic planning, ensuring that measurement of effects is possible by setting result and target indicators*); Policy formulation (*including coordination and consultation processes with all related stakeholders*); Policy development, Policy implementation and Monitoring and assessment evaluation of the implemented policies.
- ✓ To present best examples of effective policy making and benefits obtained from those practices;
- ✓ To generate thinking and to initiate innovative approaches towards Improvement of policy making practices in the region;
- ✓ To enable policy makers to understand the correlation between the effective policy making processes, public administration reforms and the EU integration process;
- ✓ To enable the platform of experiences and ideas exchange and support further networking in the relevant areas.

3. Conference Themes

The structure of the conference will be conducted along the lines of relevant phases of the policy cycles. The conference themes will be as follows:

Theme I: Policy Development - The role of the government agenda's in the problem identification, policy formulation, policy making and policy adoption

Under this theme, the speakers, experts and contributors of the conference will be invited to tackle the issue of the effective policy making from the point of view of the government agenda, policy formulation up to policy development. This will be explored from two perspectives, regional as well as from EU level. Several specific issues will be matter of interest under the Theme I which shall answer the following answers:

- ✓ What should be the role of the government agenda's in the process of effective policy making?
- ✓ How the policy goals are developed (evidence based data or other approach) in terms of participation (stakeholders' involvement - participative approach vs. top down approach, whether all concerned parties were involved timely and sufficiently) and whether alternative policy options were considered before its final formulation;
- ✓ Does the policy discussion explored resources required for its implementation (financial, human, administrative capacities and how the estimation is done: on evidence basis or differently);
- ✓ How and whether the cross cutting sectorial and inter-institutional issues were addressed at the policy development phase;
- ✓ Whether sufficient clarity in the statement of the policy goals and desired outcomes has been ensured and how clearly they are communicated to the implementing authorities;
- ✓ To which extent formulated policy leaves freedom to the implementing authorities to interpret, facilitate or otherwise influence proper implementation.

Theme II: Policy Implementation – To present best examples of effective policy implementation and benefits obtained from those practices

The second theme will focus on the policy implementation and all circumstances which shall be in place in the process of implementation in order expected results at the government agenda's are achieved. Under the Theme II, the following issues will be tackled:

- ✓ Lessons learned and best practices in the area of policy implementation for the region and wider;
- ✓ Identification of the key factors and crucial elements of the successful implementation (management, accountability, resources, engagement, commitment, innovation and leadership)
- ✓ Does the policy development envisaged sufficient resources for the implementation (how the estimation is done: on evidence basis or differently);

- ✓ Is it relevant to design good policies without having effective and efficient implementation?
- ✓ Skills, knowledge and the administrative capacity of the public servants needed for successful implementation of the policies.

Theme III: Policy Monitoring and Evaluation and Revision of the Policies

The third theme of the conference will be focused on policy evaluation and monitoring which is considered as absolutely critical stage since most often the state budget determines the possibility to implement the process of the regulatory impact assessment. The determination of the effect of the policies will be discussed in light of result-based methodology contributing to the government projects and programmes management.

It explores some practical ways of demonstrating that M&E with a focus on impact assessment is not a mere primary means of collecting and analyzing information, but should be used more as a mechanism which will verify and conclude whether the objectives and indicators set at the beginning are achieved or not. In more details, in this part, the following will be examined:

- ✓ What are the main functions of M&E and key deliverables?
- ✓ Has the M&E conceptual platform provided adequate been well designed (relation between the design and evaluation phases);
- ✓ Through evaluation process, policy's effects can be determined and measured whether the policies are intended or unintended and whether the results are positive or negative for the target population and society as a whole.

Round-table: The role of the National and EU Assemblies in the policy decision process (problems evolving from non effective Policy Decision process) as well as the citizen's participation at the policy making processes

In accordance with one of the Conference objectives, the round table will enable the representatives of the National the EU Assemblies to discuss the correlation between the effective policy making processes and the EU integration process.

Secondly, the alignment process of EU integrating with the national policy framework impacts on the inclusion of organized interests of all related stakeholders in policy making including all levels of Government, civil society and private sector. During the round table discussion particular emphasis will be given to different models of policymaking in European and national parliamentary systems. The Members of European Parliament, Members of National Parliaments as well as the policymakers from the region and wider will be invited to take part in this respective event which will be moderated by a professional moderator with extensive experience in related subjects. Moreover, the round-table will be focusing on the following issues:

- ✓ The crucial role of Parliaments as political institution for the promotion of the co-decision in the policy making processes;

- ✓ How (whether) EU and the national assemblies can concretely contribute to the effective policy implementation, improvement of the coordination process between national and EU agenda by adequate policy cycle implementation, monitoring and policy evaluation.

4. Target Audience

The 7th ReSPA Annual Conference will target diverse audience including high level civil servants working at the central national administrations and dealing with policy making, civil servants working for central state bodies responsible for strategic planning and coordination, Assistant Ministers, advisors to the Ministers and advisors to head of the institutions are being also considered as an appropriate target for the conference. The expected target audience will be as follows:

- ✓ Representatives of the Governmental Institutions from the Line Ministries of the ReSPA member countries (*Senior officials and decision makers involved in PAR reforms, especially in its relation to policy development, policy implementations and policy monitoring and evaluation*);
- ✓ Representatives of the national and the EU Assemblies
- ✓ Representatives of the International organizations (*EU - DG Enlargement, UN, OSCE, OECD-SIGMA, NISPAcee, EU Schools of Public Administration, etc.*) dealing with policy making, policy design issues;
- ✓ Representatives of the Foreign Donor organizations (*GIZ, WB, SIDA, SDC, USAID, etc.*);
- ✓ Representatives of Academic sector;
- ✓ It is expected that Conference will gather approximately 50-70 participants.
- ✓ Particular CSO organizations from the region related to the Conference topic

5. Conference Proceedings

The presentations that will be basis for the 7th Annual ReSPA Conference will provide opportunity to all participants to get acquainted with the updated trends and novelties in all cycles of the policies and will contribute to the have fruitful discussions with respected speakers. In order to sustain the dialogue with the wider target audience, ReSPA will prepare and publish Conference proceedings, which will contain conclusions and guidelines for the key policy makers on how to reach the Effective policy making.

The Conference proceedings will accumulate all presentations and case-studies in order to serve as resource not exclusively for attendees but also for other interested individuals and organizations.

6. Expected Results

It is expected that the conference will enable the share of the information on the policy development, implementation and Monitoring and Evaluation between different stakeholders.

It is expected that after the conference, the policy makers will impose holistic approach towards policy cycle and by that will take into account most important cross-cutting issues such as partnership principle (inclusive or participatory approach) in the policy making process, links with policy research centers and think-tanks in the policy making system (*research and analysis, identification of policy options*).

In addition it is believed that the Conference will enable policymakers to understand that they must invest adequate time, resources and commitment in building adaptable legal, policy and institutional frameworks, develop appropriate tools to evaluate their own performances by engaging all relevant stakeholders from the scratch

The conference will result also on empowering policy makers to understand the correlation between the effective policy making processes and the EU integration process through discussions, exchanges as well as joint conclusions

This platform of exchange of experiences and networking possibilities is clear result which is an indication that the outcomes from the organization of the conference will not be limited only with the participation at the conference but will impose a long-lasting and multiplying effect that each participant will generate in their future work.