Executive Summary

The International Public Management Association for Human Resources conducted its 2019 Benchmarking Survey to gain an understanding of the current state of employee engagement practices in public sector human resources and to offer HR professionals suggestions for engaging and retaining employees. Key findings from the survey include the following:

- Sixty-five percent of respondents to IPMA-HR's 2019 Benchmarking Survey reported that they have carried out efforts to engage their employees.

- Agency-wide communication and action plan development are the next steps IPMA-HR members most often take after receiving results from an employee engagement study.

- Involving staff in decision-making (45%) was the most frequently cited effort to engage employees, followed by increasing communications (24%), particularly interdepartmental communication and communication from the top of the organization to the bottom.

- IPMA-HR members from large organizations reported carrying out employee engagement efforts (71%) more often than did members from medium-sized organizations (68%) and small organizations (60%).

- Although a third of IPMA-HR members indicated that it is too early to determine which improvements have been made since their organization started measuring employee engagement, 24% cited a more-collaborative workplace, 22% mentioned an increase in communication, and 19% cited higher retention.

- Lack of resources (time, staff, etc.) and a nonconductive organizational culture were identified as the main barriers to conducting employee engagement studies.

- The highest barrier to conducting employee engagement studies varied by organization size. IPMA-HR members from small organizations cited a lack of resources as their greatest challenge, and member from medium-sized organizations cited an organizational culture that did not support such studies. At large organizations, lack of support from leadership holds back the conduct of engagement studies.

- Across all organizations, leadership support was cited as the most helpful factor in initiating an employee engagement study.

Data come from the responses of 417 IPMA-HR members to a survey that was sent to all 7,206 Association members during June and July 2019.