

Terms of Reference

Request for Services

Senior specialist in Digital Transformation for analysing use of emerging technologies in the public administrations of the WB

1. Background

The Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) is an inter-governmental organisation for enhancing regional cooperation, promoting shared learning and supporting the development of public administration in the Western Balkans. ReSPA Members are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, while Kosovo*¹ is a beneficiary. ReSPA's purpose is to help governments in the region develop better public administration, public services and overall governance systems for their citizens and businesses and prepare for membership in the European Union.

ReSPA establishes close cooperation with Ministers, senior public servants and heads of units in Member countries. ReSPA also works in partnership with the European Union, specifically Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), other regional actors such as OECD/SIGMA and Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), as well as agencies and civil society organisations. Since its inception, ReSPA, as an international organisation and a key regional endeavour in Public Administration Reform, has contributed to capacity-building and networking activities through on-demand support mechanisms, peering and the production of regional research materials.

The European Commission (EC) provides directly managed funds for the support of the ReSPA activities (research, training and networking programmes) in line with the EU accession process. Currently, ReSPA is implementing its fifth EC Grant Contract "Support to the Regional School of Public Administration for implementing PAR Agenda and facilitating EU accession process in the WBs" which is active as of 1 January 2023.

ReSPA works primarily through regional networks which operate at three levels: Ministerial, Senior Officials, and networks/working groups of experts and senior practitioners. There is one network – Programme Committee composed of the senior civil servants representing the ministries responsible for the Public Administration, ministries of Finance, and institutions in charge of the European Integration process coordination of the ReSPA Members and four regional thematic groups: (1) Policy planning, better regulation and coordination of Centre of Government, (2) European integration and accession negotiations; (3) Human Resources Management and Professional Development; (4) Service Delivery (digitalisation and quality management).

¹ * This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and ICJ Advisory opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of independence.

2. Description of the Assignment

One of the programme thematic areas for ReSPA work in the period 2023-2025 is Service Delivery which includes the programme section related to the **Digitalisation of public services** and have a focus on using emerging digital technologies as a driver for innovation in public settings.

The use of emerging technologies in public administration offers numerous benefits that can significantly improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of government operations. Here are some key reasons why incorporating emerging technologies is essential:

- **Enhanced Efficiency:** Emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, automation, and data analytics can streamline administrative processes and reduce bureaucratic inefficiencies. Tasks that were once manual and time-consuming can be automated, freeing up resources and enabling public servants to focus on more strategic and high-value activities.
- **Improved Service Delivery:** By leveraging emerging technologies, public administration can deliver services to citizens more quickly, accurately, and conveniently. Digital platforms, online portals, and mobile apps can enhance public access to government services, making interactions more user-friendly and responsive.
- **Data-Driven Decision-Making:** Big data analytics and AI can provide valuable insights from large volumes of data, helping policymakers make data-driven decisions. These technologies can support evidence-based policy formulation, resource allocation, and predictive modeling to address societal challenges more effectively.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** The use of blockchain technology can enhance transparency and trust in government operations. It can enable secure and immutable record-keeping, reducing the risk of corruption and ensuring the integrity of public transactions.
- **Citizen Engagement and Participation:** Emerging technologies can facilitate citizen engagement in public decision-making processes. Digital platforms and social media enable governments to gather public opinions, conduct surveys, and involve citizens in policy discussions, leading to more inclusive governance.
- **Streamlined Government Interactions:** Through digital transformation, citizens can interact with government agencies seamlessly. Online applications, e-government services, and digital signatures reduce paperwork and simplify administrative processes.

The integration of emerging technologies in public administration is crucial for modernizing governance, enhancing citizen engagement, and addressing complex societal challenges more effectively. It opens up new opportunities for efficient, transparent, and citizen-centric governance, ultimately leading to improved public services and better quality of life for citizens. However, it's important to strike a balance between technological advancement and ensuring data privacy, security, and ethical considerations in the implementation of these technologies

By means of these Terms of Reference (ToR), ReSPA is seeking an expert in Digital Transformation, who would analyse the use of emerging technologies in the public administrations of the Western Balkans (WB), with a specific focus on Artificial Intelligence (AI), for more efficient

delivery of public services and produce an overview of emerging technologies use cases in public services delivery in the WB region.

The purpose of this overview is to provide most recent state of art of using emerging technologies in the public administrations of the Western Balkans which will constitute input for the Western Balkans Digital Summit 2023 and other ReSPA programme activities (Digital Transformation Seasonal School and other capacity building events). The overview should contain information on the current status regarding the existence of strategies or policies as well as of developed practices or the practices that are being under development, to inform recommendations for policymakers.

3. Tasks and responsibilities

The expert will provide support in conducting an in-depth research on emerging technologies current use and their potential applications in Western Balkans, focusing on areas of artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, Internet of Things (IoT), data analytics, virtual/augmented reality, etc. The expert shall analyse use of emerging technologies in the administrations of the WB and produce an overview of emerging technologies use cases in public services delivery in the WB region. Based on the use cases mapped, the overview should showcase successful implementation strategies and identify critical challenges – data to inform recommendations for policymakers.

The expert will be engaged **for up to 13 days** and will perform the following tasks:

1. Preparatory activities - up to two days (2) days
 - Research and data collection related to emerging technologies initiatives, projects and application in the region of Western Balkan. The Expert will be able to use, among other resources, preliminary findings from ReSPA Regional Study on Digitalisation where they concern the AI and Blok chain application in public administrations of the WB at the end of 2022.
2. Development of snapshot overview “Use of emerging technologies in the administrations of the Western Balkans for more efficient delivery of public services” – up to nine (9) working days
 - Assessment of current emerging technology landscape:
 - o Conduct a thorough analysis of the current state of art regarding emerging technology policies, development, and implementation in the region.
 - o Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges in the level of public administration digital ecosystem;
 - Identify emerging technologies implementations in the region, looking closely to AI:
 - o Categorize (planed, under developing, developed...) and identify the different use cases of AI in the region. Common applications might include generative AI use, natural language processing (NLP), image and speech recognition, predictive analytics, robotics, and autonomous systems.
 - o Analyse use of other emerging technologies in the administrations of the WB for more efficient delivery of public services;
 - o Identify potential domains and sectors where AI and other emerging technologies can be applied to address more efficient public administration.
3. Validation, revision, presentation and reporting of the snapshot overview – up to one (2) working day:
 - o Based on ReSPA comments on the the draft, produce final overview,

- Presenting the final overview at the regional event (optional),
- Prepare a final document with regional snapshot overview “**Use of emerging technologies in the administrations of the Western Balkans for more efficient delivery of public services**”.

The expert shall work closely with the Programme Manager in charge of Service Delivery and Public Policies Innovations and Digitalization officer in ReSPA.

The final report shall be straightforward and concise, not exceeding 20 pages and will be accompanied with a PowerPoint presentation of up to 15 slides.

The report will have a following substantive sections covered, at minimum within following structure:

- **Executive summary** highlighting the key points, findings, and recommendations,
- **Brief introduction** outlining the objectives and scope of the snapshot,
- **Emerging technologies for public service delivery**, briefly presenting their potential impact and benefits in the Western Balkans, also stating their potential for increased cross-border cooperation and data exchange between WB,
- **Successful implementation strategies** outlining existing strategies, policies and practices under development, that enable and accelerate successful adoption and implementation of emerging technologies in the public sector,
- **Use cases in public services delivery of the WB** presenting real-world examples and case studies of emerging technologies use or planned use, emphasising use cases of AI, showcasing how those have improved or intend to improve service delivery and efficiency,
- **Critical challenges** identifying main obstacles for wider adoption of emerging technologies in the Western Balkans, based on the feedback from different stakeholders during the mapping exercise,
- **Conclusion** summarizing the key findings and recommendations.

4. Necessary Qualifications, Experience and Skills

Educational background:

Qualifications and skills:

- At least Master’s degree in Public Policy and Management, Public Administration, Computer Sciences or other related fields.

General professional experience:

- At least 10 years of professional experience in the field of digitalisation and emerging technologies.

Specific professional experience:

- At least 5 years of specific experience in working positions and/or assignments related to digitalisation and using data for a knowledge-based economy;
- Prior experience in conducting analysis, and needs assessment.

Previous experience and work in the Western Balkans will be considered an advantage.

Skills:

- Excellent presentation and moderation skills;
- Excellent written and oral communication skills in English;
- Ability to write clear and coherent guidance documents;
- Ability to work with people of different nationalities, religions and cultural backgrounds.

5. Timing and Location

The assignment foresees work from home and on the site solely on the occasion of the presentation of the overview at the regional event. The work will be performed during **August – October 2023**.

6. Remunerations

The assignment foresees up to **13 (thirteen) expert days** in the total amount of up to 5.000 EUR.

The final outputs will be subject to approval from ReSPA before the payment is executed.

Activity	Max. No. of working days
Preparatory activities	2
Development of the Snapshot overview	9
Validation, revision, presentation and reporting	2
Total	13

The payment will be made in one instalment following the submission of the report on the implementation. The report is subject to the approval of the relevant ReSPA Programme Manager.

Note: No other costs will be covered apart from the expert cost per day. The expert cost per day comprises of expert's fee per day and (if needed) a lump sum for covering related costs, including travel, accommodation, local transport, meals and other incidentals.

ReSPA reserves the right to change the timing and volume of the assignment and will timely inform assigned expert if such changes occur.

7. Reporting and Final Documentation

The Expert will be requested to deliver the following documents in English language before the payment is conducted:

Outputs

- Snapshot overview “Use of emerging/ technologies in the administrations of the WB, emphasizing AI for more efficient delivery of public services”, including the accompanying PowerPoint presentation

Documents required for payment

- Invoice (original and signed);
- Timesheet (original and signed);
- Final report in English on the performed tasks.