

Procurement Notice and Terms of Reference

Assignment name: Expert to support ReSPA Secretariat in developing ReSPA Strategy for the period 2025-2030

Reference Number: # 25/2023

Section 1. Introductory Information

1.1 Background information on the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA)

The Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) is an inter-governmental organization 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 regional governments in developing 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 function in Member countries. ReSPA also works in partnership with the European Union, Directorate General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), other regional players such as OECD/SIGMA and Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), as well as agencies and civil society organizations. Since its inception, ReSPA, as an international organization and a key regional endeavor in Public Administration Reform, has contributed to capacity-building and networking through in-country support mechanisms, peering, and the production of regional research material.

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 representatives of institutions in charge of PAR, government policy planning, and the European Integration coordination process and four regional thematic groups: Policy planning, better regulation and coordination of Centre of Government; European integration and accession negotiations (with specific reference to PAR and governance aspects); Human Resources Management and Development; and Service Delivery (digitalization and quality management).

1.2 ReSPA now seeks to engage an Expert to support ReSPA Secretariat in developing its Strategy for the period 2025-2030

1.3 Expected deliverables of the assignment are: as per Terms of Reference.

1.4 Tentative timeframe: the assignment is expected to be performed during **April-October 2024**.

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

1.5 NOTE: Please, clearly indicate in the Methodology that you shall submit, the entity with whom the contract would be concluded (in case your application will result successful), i.e. whether the contract would be concluded with:

- the expert as a physical person;
- a company on behalf of the expert (the name of the company should be also provided).

This cannot be changed in the procedure to follow.

In addition, you are kindly requested to fill and submit the following documents:

- **Legal Entity File (for individual expert) – attached to this document**
- **Legal Entity File (for private company) - attached to this document**

Please, also submit any supporting document required in these templates.

Section 2. Language of the supporting documentation

2.1 Language of application: The supporting documentation shall be prepared in English.

2.2 The CVs should provide information on the qualifications and competencies of the applicant, her/his general track record and previous specific experience in similar assignments, as required by the Terms of Reference. The applicants should particularly state in their CVs:

- Length of general and specific professional experience, in line with ToR;
 - Professional experience in the role of lecturer / presenter.
- 2.3 The required qualifications, experience and skills: as per Terms of Reference.

Section 3. Submission of the supporting documentation

3.1 Interested candidates are invited to submit a proposal consisting of the following documentation:

- Written methodology: explaining their experience related to the analysis subject and how they intend to respond to the assignment;
- Personal CV including past experience in similar activities and particularly issues referred to under point 2.2 of this Procurement Notice;
- At least three contacts for references (name and position of referee, email address and phone number) which may be contacted by ReSPA. (NOTE: There is no need to submit reference letters; ReSPA will directly contact the referees, if needed).
- Financial offer (which shall specify a total sum amount in euros as well as max. number of working days proposed) in a separate e-mail.

3.2 The required documentation should be submitted in electronic format by e-mail to the following address: procurement@respaweb.eu by **08 April 2024** before midnight. Late submissions will not be considered for evaluation. **The application should contain in the e-mail title the following reference: Application for activity number 25/2023.**

Public servants from ReSPA Members and Kosovo are not eligible to apply.

Selection 4. Evaluation of offers

4.1 The offer will be evaluated against the required criteria as defined in the Terms of Reference.

4.2 The applicant securing the highest final ranking will be invited to negotiate the contract and the financial offer proposed by ReSPA. If negotiations are successful, the selected applicant will be awarded the contract. Should the negotiations fail; the next ranked applicant will be invited to negotiations.

Section 5. Final Considerations

5.1 The payment will be done in one installment following the submission and approval of the deliverables.

5.2 The following document is attached to this Procurement Notice: Terms of Reference (see below).

5.3 ReSPA reserves the right to cancel this procurement procedure at any moment without any compensation to the applicants. The cost of preparing a proposal and of negotiating a contract, including any related travel, cannot be reimbursed by ReSPA under any circumstances nor can ReSPA be held liable for it, regardless of the outcome of the procurement procedure.

5.4 Should you need any further clarifications with respect to this procurement notice, please contact: Mr. Gentian Xhaxhiu, Programme Coordinator via e-mail: g.xhaxhiu@respaweb.eu, by **04 April 2024** (midnight), the latest. ReSPA will post the response, including an explanation of the query without identifying the source of inquiry, at its website (www.respaweb.eu) by **05 April 2024**. Any request for clarification must be sent by standard electronic communication to the above e-mail address.

Terms of Reference

Request for Services

Expert to support ReSPA Secretariat in developing ReSPA Strategy for the period 2025-2030

1. Background

[The Regional School of Public Administration](#) (ReSPA) is a regional organization established in 2010 as a joint initiative financed by European Commission and Western Balkans (WB) administrations. It is managed and governed by five ReSPA Members: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, while Kosovo* is beneficiary. ReSPA's purpose is to assist governments in the region to develop better public administration, public services and overall governance systems for their citizens and businesses and prepare for the European Union membership.

Since its inception, ReSPA, as an international organization and a key regional endeavour in Public Administration Reform, has contributed to capacity-building and networking through regional training, workshops, conferences, seasonal schools, and on-demand support mechanisms, peering and the development of regional research materials. ReSPA establishes close cooperation with Ministers, senior public servants and heads of units in its Members. 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 organizations.

The European Commission (EC) provides directly managed funds to support ReSPA activities in line with the EU accession process. Currently, ReSPA is implementing the 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 January 2023.

ReSPA works primarily through regional networks which operate at three levels: Ministerial, Senior Officials, and thematic groups of experts and senior practitioners. More specifically, the Programme Committee is composed of the senior civil servants representing ministries responsible for the Public Administration reform, and institutions in charge of the European Integration process, and four regional thematic groups: (1) Policy planning, better regulation and

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coordination of Centre of Government, (2) European integration and accession negotiations; (3) Human Resources Management and Professional Development; (4) Service Delivery (digitalization and quality management).

ReSPA is currently operating under its [Strategy 2019-2024](#), which defines the following overarching strategic goal: *to support public administrations' in responding effectively to the needs of the citizens and businesses they serve*. This goal, arising as a result of a partner-centric strategic review, was pursued through strengthening regional cooperation in areas of public administration reform and EU integration, supporting the implementation of PAR strategies, facilitating professionalization and depoliticization of the civil service, enabling digital transformation; and supporting deliver improvements in the quality of public services. Therefore, and in addition to acknowledging the impact of public administration performance on society at large, ReSPA's strategic focus also recognized the indispensable role public administrations play in advancing WBs long-term EU objectives.

Since the programming period of the current Strategy is towards the end, through these Terms of Reference, the ReSPA Secretariat aims to identify an external expert who shall support the Secretariat in developing the new Strategy for the period 2025-2030.

2. The strategic context and the description of the assignment

In envisioning the **Western Balkans public sector of 2030**, ReSPA aims to embrace a forward-looking strategic orientation that aligns with the region's dynamic and evolving landscape. ReSPA's commitment is to foster a professional, accountable, resilient, transparent, and innovative public sector that serves as a catalyst for sustainable development and responsive governance. ReSPA recognizes the pivotal role strong public administration plays in advancing the region's EU accession process. ReSPA's commitment extends beyond regional collaboration to contributing to preparing and positioning the Western Balkan administrations as integral members of the European Union – WB within the shared European Administrative Space. The Region is still just moderately advanced in the area of public administration with the tempo of reforms that need to be accelerated.

ReSPA envisions a region where **collaborative governance** transcends borders, promoting shared values and collective solutions. By 2030, ReSPA anticipates the establishment of a resilient network of regional cooperation, enabling governments to address common public administration, governance and integration challenges collaboratively. Through shared platforms, joint initiatives, and information, knowledge and practices exchange, the Western Balkans public sector can contribute to regional stability and prosperity. ReSPA remains dedicated to maintaining regular political dialogue, in particular through the organization of Policy Dialogues on public administration, public transformation, and the civil service at the political level, and to carry on to support the voicing and later follow-up of the joint political affirmations (declarations, commitments, statements) aimed at advancing public administration reform in line with EU standards.

The year **2030 will hopefully be a defining moment** in the Western Balkans' journey toward EU accession. A professional, accountable, resilient, and effective public administration is paramount in navigating the complexities of this transformative process. ReSPA provides support in transforming civil services by enhancing the administrative capacities of its members and facilitating the process of meeting the rigorous standards and requirements set forth by the European Union, which leads toward a meaningful accession negotiation trajectory and *acquis* transposition and implementation. By promoting the issues of recruiting people based on merit and equal opportunities, boosting value-driven leadership and management, enhancing accountability, respect, and transparency, and providing support in the delivery of targeted capacity-building initiatives, knowledge exchange, and peer learning, ReSPA will contribute to foster professionalism, and accountability and fortify the foundations of public administration, aligning them with EU principles and values.

The year 2030 will witness a **digitally transformed public sector** across the Western Balkans, leveraging cutting-edge technologies to enhance efficiency, accessibility, and citizen engagement. ReSPA will strive to support its members in strengthening digital governance, and institutional cooperation, which lead to seamless delivery of e-services containing safe data, adopting and adapting emerging technologies to be used in an ethical way, ensuring thus that the digital transformation benefits all, leaving no one behind. The vision is of a technologically advanced, innovative, and future-proof public sector that empowers citizens, streamlines processes, and enhances service delivery. Supporting the development of crisis preparedness capabilities and cyber-security capacities will also be in focus.

ReSPA will continue to advocate **talent development** throughout the Western Balkans' civil services, supporting in this way a seamless and outstanding provision of public services and implementation of priority policies. The primary objective by 2030 is to endorse the evolution of progressive work methodologies that will prioritize the health and well-being of civil servants and proper work-life balance, encompassing flexibility, telecommuting, and the cultivation of digital competencies to foster the emergence of contemporary administrative practices. An additional focus is placed on advancing skill sets and diversifying career trajectories and mobility, thereby fortifying and expanding the reservoir of potential within the civil service.

In navigating the complexities of an ever-evolving landscape, **enhancing foresight capacities** within public administration is critical. In an era marked by rapid technological advancements, geopolitical shifts, and unforeseen global challenges, cultivating the ability to anticipate and proactively respond to emerging trends is crucial. Through strengthening public servants' foresight capacities, ReSPA will support empowering of public administrators to formulate strategic policies, anticipate potential risks, and seize opportunities for innovation. By embracing foresight, public administrations of the Region may foster resilience, agility, and informed decision-making, ensuring they remain adept at addressing dynamic societal needs and contributing to sustained governance excellence.

Dedicated to establishing **resilient public services** aligned with user expectations, ReSPA commits to fostering a culture of adaptability and innovation within the public sector across the Western Balkans. Through targeted capacity-building programs, knowledge-sharing initiatives, and strategic partnerships, ReSPA will aim to equip public servants with the skills and tools

necessary to anticipate and respond effectively to emerging challenges and changing societal needs. A particular emphasis will be placed on fortifying public administrations, rendering them adept at confronting the challenges of the 21st century, and drawing invaluable insights from the multifaceted crises experienced.

ReSPA's strategy for 2025-2030 shall place a strong emphasis on **inclusivity and accountability**. By 2030, we anticipate institutions that prioritize diversity, equality, and citizen participation. The public sector will be characterized by robust accountability mechanisms, transparency, and ethical standards. ReSPA will actively contribute to building the capacities of public institutions to ensure they effectively serve the diverse needs of the citizens.

The **ReSPA Strategy 2025-2030** should encapsulate a comprehensive roadmap that aligns with ReSPA's overarching goals and values while addressing the dynamic challenges and opportunities within the realm of public administration. It should outline clear objectives, approaches, and instruments aimed at enhancing the effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance of ReSPA's programs and initiatives across the WBs. This strategic document should prioritize capacity-building efforts, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange among WB administrations, promoting innovation and digital transformation in public administration practices, and ensuring inclusivity and sustainability in all endeavors. It should reflect a forward-thinking approach that anticipates emerging trends and adapts to evolving needs, ultimately empowering ReSPA to play a pivotal role in advancing public administration excellence and governance outcomes throughout the region.

The ReSPA Secretariat has developed an initial concept for the future strategic orientation, which will be made available to the selected expert who shall support the development of the whole Strategy. The document is entitled *"From Public Administration Reform to Public Administration Excellence"*.

The draft Strategy 2025-2030 shall be submitted to the Governing Board at the Ministerial level for final endorsement (October 2024).

3. Tasks and responsibilities

The Expert shall be engaged for up to **12 (twelve) working days** to perform the following indicative tasks and responsibilities:

- Get familiar with the ReSPA profile and mandate, portfolio of activities, current Strategy 2019-2024, and the initial concept for the future strategic orientation developed by the ReSPA Secretariat (1 working day);
- Conduct desk research on the main challenges and trends in the public sector in EU member states and Western Balkans (1 working day)
- Organize online meetings with the ReSPA Secretariat, stakeholders, ReSPA area specialists, and other actors (1 working day);
- Based on the input gathered, draft the consolidated draft of the ReSPA Strategy 2025-2030, which will be subject of consultations (5 working days);

- Attend in person the External Knowledge Workshop (in July 2024), which will bring together members of the ReSPA Governing Board, ReSPA team, and the area specialists to discuss the upcoming strategy and gather additional input (1 working day);
- Incorporate the adjustments resulting from the consultations as well as the External Knowledge Workshop and develop the final Draft (3 days);

The abovementioned tasks and responsibilities represent the milestones of the assignment, but the expert may propose changes/adaptations (as well as re-arrangements of the working days), upon agreement with the ReSPA Programme Manager in charge.

4. Necessary Qualifications

The Experts shall possess the following profile:

Qualifications:

- University degree in Public Administration, Political Sciences, Social Sciences, Economics, Law, or similar fields, appropriate for the execution of the assignment.

General professional experience:

- At least 10 (ten) years of relevant professional experience in working with or in the public sector, academia, civil society, and/or consultancy;

Specific professional experience:

- At least 5 (five) years of specific professional experience in positions, tasks, assignments and/or projects related to public administration systems and reforms;
- Previous assignments in drafting strategic documents, action plans, roadmaps, multi-annual guidelines, etc., shall be considered an important asset. Please indicate this in the methodology to be submitted.

Skills:

- ✓ Teamwork;
- ✓ Ability to write clear and coherent documents;
- ✓ Excellent presentation skills;
- ✓ Ability to organise and plan effectively;
- ✓ Excellent written and oral communication skills in English;
- ✓ Familiarity with Zoom Platform;

5. Timing and Location

The assignment foresees mainly working from home/office and occasionally Zoom meetings. The assignment will be conducted during **April – October 2024**. The main indicative milestones of the assignments and the respective target timings, are listed below:

- Contracting of the expert – 10 April;
- Initial remote meeting with the ReSPA Secretariat – 12 April;
- Remote meetings with other stakeholders (to be identified with the support of the ReSPA

Secretariat: mid-April – mid-May;

- Finalization of the 1st draft of the strategy – end of June
- Attendance (ideally in-person) of the External Knowledge Workshop in Podgorica, Montenegro – first week of July
- Reviewing and incorporating the comments and suggestions gathered during the consultation phase – July – September
- Finalization of the 2nd draft of the Strategy – end of September.

6. Remunerations

The assignment foresees engagement of up to **12 (twelve)** expert days in the amount of **up to 6.000 EUR**.

The ReSPA expert selection procedure will define the daily fee based on the assessed and evaluated Expert's capacity. The payment will be made in one instalment on completing the assignment and the approval obtained from ReSPA.

Note: No other costs will be covered apart from the expert cost per day. If the expert will attend the External Knowledge Workshop in-person, ReSPA will cover the accommodation in Podgorica.

7. Reporting and Final Documentation

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

Outputs:

- Consolidated draft of the ReSPA Strategy 2025 – 2030
- Concise summary / digest of the Strategy (up to 3-5 pages)
- PPT held during the External Knowledge workshop

Documents required for payment:

- Invoice (e-signed);
- Timesheets (e-signed);
- Brief Report on the completed assignment.