

**ReSPA/EC/SER/012-24**  
3 March 2024

## **Invitation to submit an expression of interest to become part of a pool of providers of land travel services for ReSPA during 2024-2025**

The Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA), an international organisation set up as a joint initiative of the European Union and the Western Balkans countries, is collecting expressions of interest from companies which would like to be part of a pool of providers of land travel services.

ReSPA fosters and strengthens regional cooperation in public administration, human resource management and civil service reform among its Member States. It seeks to offer high quality, innovative and creative training events, networking activities, capacity building and consulting services to ensure that the shared values of respect, tolerance, collaboration, and integration are reaffirmed and implemented throughout the public administrations in the Western Balkans region. Its seat is in Podgorica, Montenegro.

Further information about the work of ReSPA can be found on its website:  
<http://www.respaweb.eu>.

### **1. Submission of the expression of interest**

The expression of interest must be submitted in A4 size. Hand-written expressions of interest will not be accepted.

The expression of interest must be submitted via email to the following address:  
[procurement@respaweb.eu](mailto:procurement@respaweb.eu)

Expressions of interest sent by any other means (e.g. by fax) or delivered to other addresses will be rejected.

**Please note that incomplete expressions of interest may be rejected. Applicants are advised to verify that their expression of interest is complete.**

The application must bear the **reference number and the title of the expression of interest**,

The application must contain:

- The form for the submission of an expression of interest (application form). Please see annex 1.

- The declaration referred to in the first paragraph of Section 7 of the application form in accordance with the template in annex 2.
- The declaration on honour on exclusion and selection criteria. Please see annex 3.
- The legal entity form drawn up in accordance with the template in annex 4, accompanied by the required supporting documents.
- The financial identification form drawn up in accordance with the template in annex 5.
- The evidence and documentation demonstrating the fulfilment of the selection criteria as required under Sections 3 (economic and financial capacity) and 4 (technical and professional capacity) of the application form.
- A financial statement with the prices you are currently charging in accordance Section 5 of the application form.

## **2. Deadline for the submission of expressions of interest**

The applicants' attention is drawn to the fact that there is only one system for sending expressions of interest: email.

The deadline for submitting expressions of interest is 22 April 2024 by 4 pm on the following email: [procurement@respaweb.eu](mailto:procurement@respaweb.eu).

Any expression of interest submitted after the deadline will be rejected.

## **3. Further information about the expressions of interest**

Questions may be sent by e-mail no later than 12 days before the deadline for the submission of expressions of interest to the address below, indicating clearly the reference of the invitation:

E-mail address: [procurement@respaweb.eu](mailto:procurement@respaweb.eu)

ReSPA has no obligation to clarify questions received after this date.

Replies will be given no later than 5 days before the deadline for submission of expressions of interest.

No individual replies will be given to questions. All questions and answers as well as other important notices to applicants during the course of the evaluation procedure will be published on the website where the invitation was published: [www.respaweb.eu](http://www.respaweb.eu), as the need arises. It is therefore advisable to consult the abovementioned website regularly to be informed of the questions and answers published.

Please note that ReSPA may decide to cancel the invitation procedure at any stage.

#### **4. Confidentiality and protection of personal data**

Processing of personal data related to this procedure by ReSPA takes place in accordance with the national legislation of Montenegro and with the provisions of the respective financing agreement.

The procedure and the contract relate to an external action funded by the EU, represented by the European Commission. If processing your reply to this invitation involves the transfer of personal data (such as names, contact details and CVs) to the European Commission, they will be processed solely for the purposes of monitoring the procurement procedure and the implementation of the contract by the Commission, for the latter to comply with its obligations under the applicable legislative framework and under the financing agreement concluded between the EU and the Partner Country without prejudice to possible transmission to the bodies in charge of monitoring or inspection tasks in application of EU law. For the part of the data transferred by ReSPA to the European Commission, the controller for the processing of personal data carried out within the Commission is the head of contracts and finance unit R4 of DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations.

Details concerning the processing of your personal data by the Commission are available on the privacy statement at:

[https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/ExactExternalWiki/Annexes#Annexes-AnnexesA\(Ch.2\):General](https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/ExactExternalWiki/Annexes#Annexes-AnnexesA(Ch.2):General)

In cases where you are processing personal data in the context of participation to a tender (e.g. CVs of both key and technical experts) and/or implementation of a contract (e.g. replacement of experts) you shall accordingly inform the data subjects of the possible transmission of their data to EU institutions and bodies and communicate the above-mentioned privacy statement to them.

#### **5. Eligibility of applicants**

##### **a. The nationality rule**

Participation is open on equal terms to all legal persons (participating either individually or in grouping -consortium- of applicants) effectively established in a Member State of the European Union or a country, territory or region mentioned as eligible by the relevant regulation/basic act governing the eligibility rules for the grant as per Annex A2a to the practical guide (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, Iceland, Linchtenstein, Norway, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, The Republic of Moldova, Morocco, occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), Syria, Tunisia, Ukraine). Applicants must state their nationality in their expression of interest and provide the usual proof of nationality under their national legislation.

This rule does not apply to the personnel proposed under service tenders financed by the grant.

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\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

b. Participation and subcontracting

- Participation in this procedure is open only to legal persons.
- Legal persons are not entitled to participate in this procedure or be awarded a contract if they are in any of the situations mentioned in Sections 2.4. (EU restrictive measures), 2.6.10.1.1 (exclusion criteria) or 2.6.10.1.2. (rejection from a procedure) of the **practical guide**. Should they be in one of these situations, their expression of interest will be considered either unsuitable or irregular.
- At a later phase, tenders shall be submitted by the same economic operator or consortium that submitted the application form on the basis of which it was short-listed in a pool of potential service providers. No change whatsoever in the identity or composition of the applicant is permitted unless a written request has been submitted to ReSPA and the latter has given its prior approval in writing.
- Short-listed economic operators or consortia are not allowed to form alliances with any other firms or to subcontract to each other for the purposes of the services of this procedure.
- For the purpose of implementing the contract, subcontracting is the only permitted form of collaboration with firms that have not been short-listed. The applicant and, where applicable, entities on whose capacities the applicant has relied with regard to criteria relating to the economic and financial capacity, shall be jointly liable for the performance of the contract.
- All subcontractors as well as all entities, upon whose capacity the applicant relies for the selection criteria, must be eligible for the contract. If the identity of the intended subcontractor is already known at the time of submitting the application, the applicant must furnish a statement guaranteeing the eligibility of the subcontractor. If any subcontractor/capacity-providing entity identified in this way does not meet the eligibility criteria, the application shall be rejected.
- Subcontractors cannot be in any of the exclusion situations listed in Section 2.6.10.1 of the practical guide. The successful applicant shall submit a declaration from the intended subcontractor that it is not in one of the exclusion situations. In the event of doubt, ReSPA shall request documentary evidence that the subcontractor is not in a situation of exclusion.
- ReSPA will not request consortia to have a given legal form to be allowed to submit an expression of interest but reserves the right to require a consortium to adopt a given legal form before the provision of services. This can take the form of an entity with or without legal personality but offering sufficient protection to the ReSPA's contractual interests (depending on the country concerned, this may be for instance, incorporation or partnership or a temporary association). Consortia must identify one of their members as leader (coordinator) who will interface with the ReSPA.

## 6. Nature of the services

### 6.1. Purpose and scope

Applicants will provide travel agency services to ReSPA regarding land travel from/to the Western Balkans region (i.e. ReSPA Members and Kosovo), according to ReSPA needs such as meetings, conferences, seminars, working group meetings and other events organized in the region.

ReSPA is looking for experienced companies that could make travel arrangements for public administration officials from ReSPA member countries, including higher officials, ReSPA international and technical staff members, experts, senior officials from the EU, civil society representatives and other distinguished guests. Whenever an event is to take place for which land travel services will be necessary, land transportation will be provided from different departure locations to a common arrival point. The service provider shall organise its services as to cover all travellers to the location of the event and back to their places of residence.

ReSPA uses the term “Activity and/or Activity Number” (hereinafter “Activity”) to describe an authorized trip of a determined traveller(s). Each activity has a specific activity reference number provided by the ReSPA.

Travel arrangements will be made based on the most convenient trip (shortest possible schedule in terms of time and distance from departure to destination and return) at the best possible price and according to the provisions described below.

The service provider will advise the traveller on the most suitable travel option for the Activity and inform him or her about other suitable alternatives. Once the names of travellers of ReSPA’s event/activity are sent by ReSPA and received by the service provider, the communication shall remain between the traveller and the service provider.

Following a ReSPA’s request for land travel services, along with the anticipated number of travellers, the short-listed applicants shall communicate their prices for the services and all route options by e-mail within one (1) working day from the receipt of the request. On some occasions, ReSPA may ask the short-listed applicants to provide an urgent response. In this case, service providers should be able to respond within an hour. After agreeing in writing upon whom and for how much the services will be provided, ReSPA will share the contact details of the travellers to the selected short-listed candidate for the job.

### Departures and destinations

The table below shows an indicative list of destinations where ReSPA is likely to implement activities:

Departure	Destinations
Belgrade	Sarajevo, Skopje, Pristina, Banja Luka, Ljubljana, Zagreb
Sarajevo	Tirana, Ohrid, Pristina, Banja Luka, Budva, Mostar, Belgrade, Skopje, Podgorica, Bar

Departure	Destinations
Skopje	Belgrade, Sarajevo, Tirana, Ohrid, Pristina, Budva, Podgorica, Banja Luka
Tirana	Sarajevo, Skopje, Ohrid, Pristina, Budva, Podgorica, Bar, Banja Luka, Mostar
Pristina	Sarajevo, Skopje, Ohrid, Tirana, Budva, Podgorica
Podgorica	Sarajevo, Skopje, Ohrid, Tirana, Pristina, Budva, Bar, Banja Luka, Mostar, Skadar

### Cancellations

The general cancellation policy must be clearly outlined at the submission form. In the case of cancellation on short notice, the best alternative option to facilitate the mission in question should be provided. In addition, the service provider will endeavour to minimise the costs incurred by ReSPA. The latter will not pay additional charges attributed to a fault of the service provider. The service provider has a duty to keep ReSPA always informed on the status and changes of a mission including information on such aspects as schedules, prices, extra charges applicable etc. Other services may additionally be provided upon request by ReSPA.

### Activities

In general, the model activity of ReSPA is one/two/ three-day event with one/two/three overnights per traveller. The usual number of participants is 18 or 24 when the events take place in ReSPA premises or in the ReSPA region, and 24 or more when in EU Member State. However, ReSPA conferences organized at ReSPA premises or in the region may encompass 70-120 participants, i.e. 10-20 participants from each ReSPA Member.

## 6.2. Reporting, assessment and coordination

The service provider shall provide ReSPA upon the latter's request a quantitative report on the services rendered during a certain period, along with a detailed list of travellers transported. ReSPA will carry out a performance assessment of the services providers, especially during the first year of collaboration.

The short-listed service providers may be requested to attend a small number of coordination meetings at ReSPA's premises (1 to 2 meetings before the services will be provided and 1 to 2 follow-up meetings per year thereafter). The costs of participating at these meetings will not be reimbursed by ReSPA. The latter will attempt to hold all these meetings virtually.

## 6.3. Working hours

All short-listed service providers shall be able to render services during normal working hours (Monday to Friday 8.00 – 18.00, CET +1), except during public holidays which shall be communicated by ReSPA.

During working hours, staffers of the service providers must be available by telephone, by e-mail or via voice call over an internet solution of zero cost per call. Short-listed service providers will appoint a dedicated team (minimum 1 employee) to serve ReSPA

and have a direct telephone line and e-mail address to communicate with ReSPA and its staff.

Contractors shall guarantee enough resources to support via telephone and e-mail the volume of activities during normal working hours (Monday to Friday 8.00 – 18.00, CET +1) for each ReSPA working day. Therefore, replacement of staff for any reason (sickness, holiday, training, etc.) must be envisaged by all short-listed service providers.

Flexibility during weekends and holidays is required. Short-listed service providers shall make available and warrant a hotline service for urgent queries arising outside normal working hours and stretching at least two (2) hours before office hours and three (3) hours after (a telephone number must also be provided).

The ability of service providers to provide in addition to the above mentioned an emergency hotline service on a 24/07 basis for urgent queries arising outside the normal working hours will be considered an asset for the qualification to the shortlist.

#### **6.4. Communication with travellers**

The service provider will immediately inform travellers and ReSPA of changes in the scheduled transfers and any significant circumstances that could cause any changes in the scheduled transfers, e.g.: planned strikes, or any new carriers operating which might be of interest of the travellers and ReSPA, as well as any discount/offers proposed by carriers.

#### **6.5. Confidentiality**

The service provider must ensure that personal data to which they may get access during the implementation of the services are protected.

ReSPA remains the owner of the data collected, including all personal data related to business travel. Data is treated by the service provider as confidential and personal data is treated in line with the requirements of Directive 95/46/EC as transposed to the respective Member State of ReSPA.

#### **6.6. Staff**

Staffers working for the service provider must prove to have a high level of professionalism and “client orientation.” The staffer designated as a contact person with ReSPA shall have a good working knowledge of English, while some knowledge of other EU languages would be appreciated. A good knowledge of the geographical areas in which ReSPA is mainly operating (Members of ReSPA countries) is also considered an advantage.

The service provider shall ensure that any member of its staff dealing with ReSPA travels has the necessary and sufficient knowledge and training to render the services at the required level.



### **6.7. The request for services**

ReSPA will send a request for services by e-mail at least 5 working days prior to the departure. In exceptional circumstances, the delay may be shorter. The service provider will respond to it with a quotation confirming the travel details in accordance with the request for services not later than one day after its receipt.

The request for services will contain:

- the names and travel arrangement plans of the travellers
- an indication of the type of vehicle required (e.g.: upper medium of segment D or a van of category N1)
- The location of the event venue and traveling dates
- and any other location that may be relevant for the services requested.

ReSPA reserves the right, in cases when participants demand a change of travel model or when the event is canceled/postponed, to withdraw the whole assignment and to carry out the activity with another service provider (e.g., a flight arrangement or use of a private car, upon request from travellers).

Following the receipt of the service provider's quotation, ReSPA will issue a purchase order for the services within 24h by email. The service provider shall confirm the receipt of the purchase order by email and their availability to provide the services.

The service provider, in line with the purchase order, shall communicate with the travellers. After obtaining confirmation from the travellers, the service provider shall inform ReSPA that they managed to get in touch with the travellers and have started organising the land transfer services, in line with the approved purchase order.

In case of delay, and if travellers are not reachable, the service provider shall report about the situation to the ReSPA contact person for the event by e-mail. This contact person will describe what further steps should be taken.

In every communication, the activity reference number must be readable in the email subject.

Once the services have been rendered, the service provider shall send an overview of those services without omitting any substantial detail.

The subsequent invoice for the service provided must be consistent with the purchase order, which will be attached to it.

### **6.8. Quality of the services**

The service provider is obliged to render efficient, reliable, and timely transport services, as follows:

1. The service provider should have available at least 3 (three) upper medium vehicles of the segment D (e.g.: BMW 3 Series, Volkswagen Passat, Mercedes Benz C Class, Audi A4, Mazda 6, Škoda Superb, Volvo S60, Opel Insignia, Citroen



- C5X, Peugeot 508, Toyota Camry) and at least 1 van of the category N1<sup>1</sup>, bearing the following minimal amenities:
- i. Two zones for air conditioning
  - ii. Six airbags
  - iii. The length of the vehicles should be minimum 4.75 metres
2. The vehicles should not be older than 6 years, class sedan or limo, and regularly maintained.
  3. The van must have at least 8 seats, including the driver's, and not be older than 7 years, regularly maintained.
  4. All vehicles must have appropriate season tyres, mounted according to the period of the year.
  5. All vehicles will be timely registered and fully insured for the provision of transportation services. The insurance policy must encompass all passengers riding along with the driver with premiums for passengers' injuries and death.
  6. Smoking should not be allowed.
  7. Drivers are qualified professionals with all the licences to perform their duties, must have a basic knowledge of English language, wear appropriate garments and be careful and courteous with the travellers.
  8. Drivers should always take the most time-efficient route, bearing in mind likely traffic problems, and know alternative routes that will be taken prior explanation to the travellers.
  9. When a traveller does not show up at the pick-up point in an airport, the service provider will inform the ReSPA contact person without delay.
  10. Drivers will provide info on traffic regulations to the travellers (e.g.: no smoking, fasten the seat belt, rest breaks, no disturbance to the driver, etc.). The signature of the latter on the passengers' list will mean the acknowledgement that they will abide by the foregoing regulations.

## **6.9. Invoicing**

The service provider shall issue monthly invoices for the services rendered during a calendar month. The invoice will be considered valid only if the monthly report provides the following required information:

- Description of the service rendered: analytical information is required, e.g.: name of the traveller, travel itinerary, dates and times of travel, cost.
- The activity reference number, for each transaction listed (Note: this number is necessary for the identification of the relevant authorized purchase order and the validation of the invoiced cost).

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<sup>1</sup> All vehicle categories are taken from the following classification by the European Commission:  
<https://alternative-fuels-observatory.ec.europa.eu/general-information/vehicle-types>

- A copy of the list of passengers duly signed by the latter.

ReSPA shall approve or reject the monthly report and proceed to the payment of the invoice within (30) thirty days from receipt of the report and the invoice.

ReSPA is exempted from all taxes and duties, including Value Added Tax (VAT). The service provider should demand direct payment from the traveller for all additional costs relating to any detours or parts of the journey made for private reasons. ReSPA takes no responsibility and will accept no request for payment of the cost of such travelling arrangements for private reasons. Private arrangements are not subject to the conditions of the invitation.

The flexibility of the service provider to invoice the services only after the provision of the services will be required during the evaluation of the expressions of interest.

## **7. Content of the expressions of interest**

The interested candidates shall enclose with their application form all documents and pieces of information that will enable the assessment of their expression of interest in terms of quality and of compliance with the provisions of this invitation.

The application form shall include as a minimum the following information and must be filled out, dated, stamped and signed by an authorised person for its acceptance:

- A brief description of the service provider as a company and the types of services that the company regularly offers;
- A short, simple description of how they have provided land travel services for other customers;
- A description of the team proposed to manage and oversee the requested services, including the roles of the contact person and the quality manager, and any other staffers.
- The name and contact details of the person responsible for this expression of interest.
- A list of the current prices (without VAT) charged by the applicant for transportation between at least two of departure cities and all the destinations marked for that city as per the table found in Section 6.1 above. The service provider should provide individual round trip price for each destination pair and one-way trips for other destinations, in compliance with the financial statement of Section 5 of the application form.

Please take special care when entering data in all the application sections. Failure to provide a fully completed form may result in your expression of interest being declared invalid and not being further evaluated.

## **8. Type of contract**

The successful applicants will be offered a framework service contract which will be implemented through purchase order forms which alone shall bind the ReSPA. The purchase order forms will detail the services to be provided and the resources to be allocated depending on the ReSPA's needs. ReSPA may, at its own discretion, extend the contract in duration and/or scope subject to the availability of funding. Any extension of the contract would be

subject to satisfactory performance by the applicant, who will become a contractor. The duration of the first framework contract shall be until the end of 2025.

A framework contract is a legal agreement between two parties - in this case ReSPA and the contractor. It acts as the basis for possible future purchase of services by ReSPA. The framework contract contains, inter alia, a description of the scope of services that can be requested by ReSPA.

The framework contract will be signed for an initial one-year period and will be automatically renewed for the period until the end of 2025, unless one of the parties receives formal notification to the contrary at least three months before the end of the ongoing duration. Renewal does not change or postpone any existing obligations.

The contract will be concluded in English and all follow-up communication related to the contract and its implementation will also be done in English.

The framework contract has no fixed value. It does however have an estimated maximum total value. Signature of the framework contract imposes no obligation on ReSPA to order services. Only the implementation of the framework contract through purchase orders or specific contracts is binding for the ReSPA.

Execution of the framework contract will be performed through purchase order forms (draft template provided as the Annex 6), which will contain details of deliverables and timelines for services. The procedure for concluding purchase orders is described in Section 6.7 above.

## **9. Selection and award criteria**

The award procedure of a framework contract will consist of three successive stages; only applicants meeting the requirements of one stage will be examined in the next stage. The procedure foresees:

Step 1: Eligibility check of the applicant, including the exclusion criteria (provision of the legal entity form, annex 4, duly filled out and signed, accompanied by a copy of inscription in a trade register and/or a copy of inscription in a VAT register, and signature of the declaration on honour, annex 3).

Step 2: Assessment of the economic, financial, technical, and professional capacity of the applicant (meeting the selection criteria).

Step 3: Compliance with the qualifications, quality standards and financial value.

Supporting documents must be supplied in the form of originals, photocopies or scanned versions (i.e. showing legible stamps, signatures and dates) of the said originals.

Where such documents are not in one of the official languages of the European Union or in the languages of the Western Balkans countries, a translation into English of the relevant parts of these documents proving the applicant's eligibility must be attached for the purpose of analysing the application.

Where these documents are in an official language of the European Union other than English, it is strongly recommended, in order to facilitate the evaluation, to provide a translation of the relevant parts of the documents, proving the applicant's eligibility, into English.

### **9.1. Selection criteria**

Applicants should show their degree of economic and financial capacity, and technical and professional capacity to render the requested services by providing information on the criteria described below. If several service providers are involved in the expression of interest, the economic and financial capacity, and the technical and professional capacity will be assessed in relation to the combined capacities of the service providers, as a whole, to the extent that service providers put their resources at the disposal of the applicant for performance of the framework contract.

ReSPA reserves the right to reject an applicant where it is established that he has conflicting professional interests which may negatively affect the performance of the contract.

#### **Economic and financial capacity**

Applicants must provide sufficient information to prove their financial standing and that they have the necessary resources and financial means to carry out the work which is the subject of the contract.

Requirement:

- The applicant (including the applicant consortium) had an average turnover or equivalent during the previous 3 (three) calendar years of no less than € 50,000.

Evidence to be provided by the applicant:

At least one of the documents listed below must be presented as evidence of compliance with the requirements for the economic and financial capacity:

- Copy of the profit and loss account and balance sheet for the last three years for which accounts have been closed.

If, for some exceptional reason, which ReSPA considers justified, an applicant is unable to provide at least one of the references requested above, he may prove his economic and financial capacity by any other means which ReSPA considers appropriate.

#### **Technical and professional capacity**

Requirement:

- Applicants must have at least 3 (three) years of relevant experience during the last 3 years (2021, 2022 and 2023) in provision of comparable services to the ones described in this invitation to similar clients.

Evidence to be provided by the applicant:

- At least 2 references issued in the past 3 years (2021-2023/2024) of delivered land transfer services for travellers sponsored by international organizations,

Delegations of the European Union, OSCE, UN, embassies, ministries and/or other public institutions and private companies, along with the name and contact of a reference person.

ReSPA may decide to contact any of the customers for confirmation of the reference. Applicants' permission to do so will be assumed unless they express any objections.

## 9.2. Award criterion

Having duly filled out the application form and met all the eligibility and selection criteria, applicants will be awarded a framework contract if the prices (excluding VAT) presented in the financial statement (Section 5 of the application form) are deemed as reasonable with standard market prices recently paid by ReSPA.

## 10. Provisional commencement date

May 2024.

## 11. Timetable

	DATE	TIME
Information meeting (if any)	Not applicable	
Deadline for requesting clarification from ReSPA	11 April 2024	10:00 am
Last date for ReSPA to issue clarifications	18 April 2024	10:00 am
Deadline for submitting the expression of interest	22 April 2024	16:00 pm
Completion date for evaluating the applications	April 2024	-
Notification of award	April 2024	-
Contract signature	April/May 2024	-
Start date	April/May 2024	-

## **12. List of annexes**

1. Application form
2. Declaration for the submission of an expression of interest
3. Declaration on honour
4. Legal entity form
5. Financial identification form
6. Draft template for a purchase order
7. Draft framework service contract