2nd MEETING OF THE PAR NETWORK

26 – 27 Januaryy 2015, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Discussion paper and provisional programme

Background

ReSPA organises the process of its strategic transformation from being primarily a training and capacity building institution to an institution which creates a platform and facilitates dialogue among public administration officials and policy makers on issues and challenges confronting Western Balkan countries on their path towards the membership in the European Union (EU). This strategic shift requires ReSPA to focus its activities on running and maintaining networks dedicated to a specific topic related to the comprehensive process of reforming public administration. The network events create opportunities for participants to compare experiences, share lessons learned and discuss how they can be transposed to other countries, establish lasting working bond among individuals and institutions, and generate ideas which promote greater leadership and innovative solutions.

The Public Administration Reform (PAR) Network, established in June 2014 by ReSPA, creates a particular forum for exchange of knowledge and experience among the ReSPA members in the area of PAR. The PAR Network assembles the senior managers for PAR in Western Balkans governments and two additional middle management representatives involved in the various specific segments of the process of development and implementation of PAR strategies. At the second Meeting of PAR Network (see attached Agenda) we expect participation of middle managers in charge of development of IPA II Sector Planning Documents for Sector Democracy and Governance, and responsible for coordination of national activities for implementation of SEE 2020 Strategy and its Dimension 'N' Effective Public Services within the 5th Pillar 'Governance for Growth'

Rationale

Following the first meeting of PAR Network this meeting has been planned for December 2014, but due to objective reasons it has been postponed for the last week of January 2015.

The synergy between the European integration process and reforms in area of public administration provokes specific needs for deeper ReSPA engagement in improvement of regional cooperation of responsible institutions and officials from its Member states. Within broad framework of European Integration and Public Administration Reform processes a number of specific ongoing activities deserve important additional attention. The interconnections of PAR and EU integration processes require the enlightening the following activities: The first activity is related to methodologies for development of PAR Strategies; Another one is connected with implementation of Dimension "Effective Public Services" of SEE 2020 Strategy and development and implementation of specific National and Regional Action Plans for the implementation of priorities defined within this Dimension; Closely connected with these activities is an issue related to the new sector wide approach in programming of IPA II support in Democracy and Governance

sector. All these issues open a new space for further regional initiatives and potential ReSPA engagement and supporting activities through the PAR Network, which is the final topic on the agenda of 2nd meeting of PAR Network.

The specific topics for thematic discussion will be in detail explained bellow.

Objectives

The main objective of the 2nd meeting of PAR Network is to exchange experience and practices aimed to facilitate the PAR strategies development and implementation process and its connection with important strategic documents related to PAR developed within the framework of IPA II and SEE 2020 Strategy.

The expected outcomes are the sharing of information, best practices, common challenges, and lessons learned, thus facilitating PAR efforts on practical level. In addition, it is expected that the meeting will identify how ReSPA can best support the activities of the Network which are related to utilization of results of Regional comparative study on Methodology of PAR Strategies; as well as how regional cooperation led by ReSPA can complement national efforts for achievements in Dimension "Effective Public Services" in SEE 2020 Strategy.

The meeting also aims at fine-tuning the definition of the role of PAR network within the structure of regional Public Administration Network. During the discussion, the members of the network will engage in defining the role of the PAR network in relation to specialized working groups in different areas (HRM, E-government, GAPA etc.). A discussion will also take place as to the identification of the most relevant and challenging topics of PAR reforms in 2015, which will also serve as an important input for the ReSPA programme of Work 2015. This discussion will, along with other activities (interviews with focus groups in member states etc.) contribute to defining the key issues and topics for discussions, studies and training events in 2015. In the discussion, ReSPA will provide inicial ideas on the list of key (most relevant and challenging) topics and we expect the members of the network to assess the proposal and to discuss other topics they would like to focus on in 2015. The key topics which will guide the final preparation of the ReSPA Programme of Work reflect the situation and the dynamics of public administration reforms in the region, the challenges and dilemmas encountered by the policy makers.

DRAFT PROGRAMME

Day 1 – 26 January 2015 (Monday), Hotel "EUROPE", Sarajevo

9.00–9.30	Registration of participants

9.30–9.45   *Introduction*

Welcome address by ReSPA representative and the representative of the Government of the host country

Presentation of the programme and its rationale

9.45–10.45   **SESSION I** – Launching of the Regional Comparative study on ***Methodologies Used for PAR Strategies Development** (*Moderator: prof. Gordana Djurovic, PhD.)

- Presentation of the main findings and recommendations (*Egle Rimkute*, Lead expert, International author of the Regional Comparative Study)
- Presentation of national inputs (up to 10 minutes):
  o Current state of play related to PAR strategies,
  o Main challenges and specific needs in the context of draft Government work plan 2015 and PAR;
  o EC Progress report 2014 and PAR – main remarks;
  o PAR and public finance management in crisis time;
  o Impact of the Study on development of methodologies for national PAR strategies;
  o Expectation of PAR network and PAR regional support;

10.45–11.15   Coffee break

11.15- 12.15   *Continuation of the Session I*

- Presentation of national inputs (up to 10 minutes):

12.15-13.45   Lunch break

13.45-15.00   *Continuation of the Session I*

  – Overall discussion

- How to ensure practical utilization of the Comparative study
- How ReSPA could contribute to improvement of methodology and content of PAR strategies in Western Balkan

15.00   End of Day 1

Day 2 – 27 January 2014 (Tuesday), Hotel "EUROPE", Sarajevo

9.00 - 9.15   Introduction to the Day

9.15 – 10.30   **SESSION II –** *Alignment of the five pillars of SEE2020 with NERP priorities under Part II: from NAPs 2014-2015 to country specific NERPs 2015-2017 (*Moderator: prof. Gordana Djurovic, PhD.)

- General introduction and updates on SEE 2020 and RCC role in it (Sanjin Alifagic, Head, SEE 2020 Coordination Unit of RCC)
- Presentation of the Regional Action Plan for the fifth pillar and the role of ReSPA: towards a more comprehensive NEPRs (prof. Gordana Djurovic)
- Country presentations – transition from the SEE 2020 National Action Plans with focus on the fifth pillar "Governance for Growth", i.e. Dimension "Effective Pubic Governance" to NERPs (up to 10 minutes per national presentation):
  - Current status related to NAP for SEE 2020 and IPA II programming;
  - Current status related to development of a National Economic Reform Programmes 2015-2017
  - Indicative strategy paper – Sector Planning Document "Democracy and Governance"

10.30 – 11.00 Coffee break

11.00 - 12.00 *Continuation of the session II*

- How to reach synergy? Moderated discussion on possibilities for coordination and complementarities between NAPs, new NERPs and RAP

12.00 – 12.45 **Session III** – ***How can ReSPA best support the successful operations of the PAR Network (***Moderator: prof. Gordana Djurovic, PhD.)

12.00- 12.45

- Presentation of the mission and goals of the PAR Network within the REPAN structure and correlation with new Principles of PA (Gregor Virant)

- National inputs (5 minutes per input)
  - Defining crucial substantive issues for the work of PAR network and specialized RePAN working groups in 2015
  - Inputs for fine-tuning of ReSPA Programme of Work for 2015
  - Link with draft Government plan of work 2015 and ReSPA PoW for 2015 in order to create synergy and

complementarity of regional actions towards the needs of ReSPA members

- Discussion

12.45 – 13.00 **Wrap-up and next steps**:

Possible themes for discussion at the next meeting

13.00 – 14.00 Lunch

End of Day 2

14.00 Departure of participants

RATIONALE OF THE PROPOSED THEMES

THEME 1:

The objective of the launching event is to present the purpose and results of the comparative regional study on Methodologies used for development to Public Administration Reform Strategies. The purpose of the Study was to analyze and review the methodologies applied in the Western Balkans for the preparation of public administration reform strategy and to reveal the recommendations for the improvement of such practices. Overall conclusions of the Study focused on the following:

- Governments are committed to reforming public administrations including the EU integration as key driving force for PARs;
- As a rule, PAR strategies are prepared with significant support from TA projects using external expertise (opportunity to apply best practices but ownership of the PAR agenda remain limited); and
- The administrative capacities of PAR-lead institutions to coordinate the preparation and monitoring process is rather limited and needs to be strengthened.

One of the main recommendations of the Study is related to necessity to strengthen capacity of leading institutions for PAR to enable them to coordinate preparation, implementation and monitoring of the strategies. This recommendation calls for a discussion on broader initiative to develop an overall regional training programme in ReSPA committed to enhancement of strategic competencies of the targeted civil servants. Another important topic for discussion is the need for engagement of wider public in PAR preparation and monitoring of implementation, recognized by the Study.

New principles of PAR presented by SIGMA in November 2014 additionally enhance the importance of adequate methodology for PAR strategy development and implementation. The need for adequate assessment of the level of realization and achievements of these principles in practice of Western Balkan public administrations is recognised as another useful topic for discussion.

Overall discussion on these issues will provide a chance that PAR Network define models how to ensure practical utilization of the Comparative study and more precisely how ReSPA could further contribute to improvement of methodology and content of PAR strategies in Western Balkans.

THEME 2:

On the basis of adopted conclusions of the 5th Ministerial level Governing Board meeting, held in Skopje on 31 October 2014, on providing information on National Action Plans (NAP) as well as the inputs for the Regional Action Plan (RAP) we plan to open

discussion on core issues regarding the National Action Plans and the Regional Action Plan for Dimension 'Effective Public Governance' of the SEE 2020 Strategy.

The Governance for Growth pillar is a cross-cutting component of the SEE 2020 Strategy and a prerequisite for the achievement of the Strategy's overarching objectives. In SEE the NAPs were developed during the first half of 2014 with objective to present national priorities for the period of January 2014 - December 2015, which will contribute to achieving the SEE 2020 targets. The purpose of these plans is also to indicate the timing and institutional responsibility, expected outcomes as well as a source of finance and links to relevant regional programmes. Very important novelty in the process is the obligation of Western Balkan governments to develop National Economic Reform Programmes (NERPs) which should be produced by end of January 2015 and will replace the role of NAPs. NERPs are the enhanced versions of the existing Pre-Accession Economic Programmes for candidate countries and Economic and Fiscal Programmes for potential candidate countries. NERPs will have two parts: Part I will set out a medium-term macro-economic and fiscal policy framework, and Part II will cover sectoral structural reform measures planned for improvement of competitiveness and growth.

Although NERPs are related to improvement of the overall Economic Governance these documents have no direct links with Public Administration Reform in SEE countries and will not include the topics covered by the Dimension "Effective Public Services" of the Pillar "Governance for Growth" within SEE 2020 Strategy. Therefore, the participants (coordinators, or persons involved, for Dimension "Effective Public Services" in national governments) will be asked to prepare beforehand short presentations respectively on the state of play of NAP, which will serve as basis for discussion which will particularly evolve around the following issues:

- Main focus of developed NAPs related to Pillar "Governance for Growth" and Dimension "Effective Public Services";

- Importance of the replacement of NAPs by NERPs;

- Necessity to ensure complementarities and synergy between the new NERPs and Regional Action Plan for Dimension "Effective Public Services".

The RAP for Dimension "Effective Public Services" envisages four broad actions which further are elaborated in more specific activities lead by ReSPA and/or NALAS as regional coordinators :

- Upgrading policy and regulatory capacity;
- Improving the quality of public services;
- Subsidiarity and co-ordination between levels; and
- Professionalism of public servants.

ReSPA envisages the need to improve and update drafted RAP in accordance with novelties introduced by the European Commission and its Work plan for 2015. Therefore

the 2nd meeting of PAR Network will be an excellent chance for deeper discussion on directions for further achievement of complementarities and synergy of new revised RAP with NERPs and ReSPA Work Plan for 2015 in accordance with new principles of Public Administration.

THEME 3:

ReSPA recognizes strategic tasks which confront all ReSPA national counterparts in area of PAR and establishment of PAR Network is an answer on emerging needs and new and innovative kind of support for overarching these common challenges. The PAR Network is established as the flexible platform for exchange of information and experiences with PAR strategies implementation - the content of the reform, state of play, defined goals and priorities, examples of successful implementation, lessons learned etc. Through the discussion on various experiences on PAR strategies development and implementation the specific windows of opportunities for mutual benefits and further regional cooperation could be opened.

Therefore, the overall objective of PAR Network is to provide support in strengthening democratic public governance systems and administrative capacities of public institutions in ReSPA member states in line with principles of European Administrative Space. Par Network is established to coordinate various kind of activities in which are included: delivering comparative studies; developing and piloting specific training modules; organizing seminars and/or workshops; conducting mobility scheme programmes.

The discussion on this topic will provide chance for establishment of better link between the governments' annual programmes for work and ReSPA Programme of work for 2015 in order to create synergy and complementarity of regional actions towards the needs of ReSPA members. Additionally the mission and goals of the PAR Network within the structure of Regional Public Administration Network (RePAN) and correlation with new Principles of PA will be elaborated.