

Terms of Reference

Request for Services

Institute, School, College, Higher Education institution or Company specialising in communication and training, to support ReSPA in designing and delivering the Education Programme “Communicate Smarter: Mastering Strategy and AI for Public Sector Communicators”

1. Background

The Regional School of Public Administration ([ReSPA](#)) is a regionally owned organisation and a joint endeavour of the European Commission and the Western Balkan administrations. Governed and managed by its five Members - Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia - with Kosovo* participating as a beneficiary, ReSPA serves as a central platform for advancing public administration reform in the region. As of January 2026, ReSPA has further expanded its reach by engaging civil servants from Armenia, Moldova, and Ukraine through its programme and activities. Aligned with the region's evolving reform priorities, ReSPA champions a professional, accountable, resilient, transparent, citizen-oriented, and innovative public sector - one that enables responsive governance, sustainable development, and tangible improvements in citizens' lives. In doing so, the ReSPA team connects public administrations from the Western Balkans and Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine with one another, with EU Member States, EU institutions, and renowned international partners. ReSPA's ultimate goal is to support governments in modernising public administration systems, strengthening leadership and human capital, embracing digital transformation, and advancing towards full integration into the European Administrative Space.

ReSPA's work is structured around five core thematic areas, reflecting both regional reform priorities and EU accession requirements: Policy Management; Better Regulation and Simplification; European Integration and Accession Negotiations; Human Resources Management and Professional Development; Digital Transition (Digitalisation and Quality Management); and Public Financial Management.

These Terms of Reference aim to identify a renowned Institute, School, College or Higher Education institution to support ReSPA in designing and delivering a two-day Education Programme “Communicate Smarter: Mastering Strategy and AI for Public Sector Communicators” in the period mid-September to mid-October 2026 in Bar, Montenegro.

2. Problem statement and description of the assignment

Effective communication is a cornerstone of modern public administration. As governments across the Western Balkans, Ukraine, Moldova and Armenia advance reforms, strengthen European integration processes, and respond to increasingly complex societal expectations, communication teams play a critical role in ensuring that policies, services, and reforms are clearly understood by citizens and stakeholders.

Public institutions are operating in an environment characterised by rapidly changing information flows, increased demand for transparency, growing expectations for citizen engagement, and the need to communicate complex policy processes in an accessible and meaningful way. In this context,

*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.

communication professionals need both strategic capabilities and innovative tools to design impactful communication approaches, engage diverse audiences, and enhance public trust.

This two-day practical programme is designed to strengthen the capacities of communication teams from public administrations across the Western Balkans and Eastern Neighbourhood countries by combining two complementary areas: strategic communication planning and the practical application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in communication work.

The overall objective of the programme is to enhance the capacity of public administration communication professionals to plan, implement, and improve strategic communication activities while effectively leveraging emerging digital tools.

Specifically, the programme aims to enable participants to:

- Strengthen their understanding of strategic communication principles and their role in supporting institutional objectives and citizen-centred governance;
- Develop more structured, evidence-based communication plans tailored to specific audiences and communication goals;
- Improve their ability to define messages, select appropriate communication channels, and organise communication activities effectively;
- Explore practical applications of AI tools to increase efficiency, creativity, and quality in everyday communication tasks;
- Develop responsible approaches to integrating AI into communication workflows, while considering ethical, security, and professional standards.

The main indicative parameters of the programme:

- The programme is expected to be held between mid-September and mid-October;
- The programme shall be entirely delivered in the English language;
- The total number of attendees shall be up to 25, from the Western Balkans, Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine;
- The programme shall last for 2 full working days and shall be delivered in Bar, Montenegro;
- The sessions of the full days shall indicatively start at 09:00 and end at 16:30. The sessions shall be interactive and participatory, where critical thinking and debating shall be encouraged;

The programme responds to the evolving needs of government communicators by providing participants with practical methodologies, tools, and approaches that can be directly applied within their institutional environments.

3. Tasks and Responsibilities

Institute, School, College, Higher Education institution or Company specialising in communication and training (the applicant) shall, indicatively, perform the following tasks:

- Develop the program and methodology with the identification of learning objectives, and how it targets the audience;
- Develop a detailed agenda of the program with brief descriptions under each session of 1-3 sentences for reference;
- Ensure the participation of renowned lecturers (in-house and external) to deliver the sessions of the programme in-person, with adequate profiles and expertise and familiar with the Western Balkans region and Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine;
- Prepare and deliver a pre-training questionnaire

- Prepare and deliver a follow-up session (1.5 hours, online), scheduled 3-4 weeks after the initial training
- Organise logistics for the experts to attend the training and handle all communication with them, both in terms of logistics and from ReSPA regarding desired content;
- Deliver the learning programme in line with the agreed agenda;
- Issue joint attendance certificates with ReSPA to the attendees;
- Appoint a coordinator for liaising directly with ReSPA on the subject.

The abovementioned tasks and responsibilities represent the milestones of the assignment, but the applicant may propose slight changes/adaptations upon agreement with the ReSPA Programme Manager in charge.

4. Necessary qualifications and experience

The Institute, School, College, or Higher Education institution Company specialising in communication and training (the applicant) needs to have a diverse yet compatible track record of delivering post-graduate capacity-building programmes on topics/themes related to Communication Strategies and the use of AI tools in Communication.

More specifically, the applicant shall have the following profile:

General criteria:

- At least 5 (five) years of proven experience in designing and delivering capacity-building, executive education, or professional development programmes;
- Demonstrated institutional experience in strategic communication, public communication, digital communication, or closely related fields;
- Proven experience in designing learner-centred and practice-oriented programmes for adult professionals, using participatory methods, case studies, simulations, group work, and hands-on exercises;
- Adequate organisational and project-management capacity to design, coordinate, deliver, and report on the assignment within the agreed timeframe;
- Capacity to mobilise a multidisciplinary team combining expertise in communication strategy, public-sector communication, and the practical application of AI tools;
- At least three relevant assignments of comparable scope and complexity completed within the last five years, supported by references or other verifiable evidence;
- Demonstrated quality-assurance procedures for programme design, delivery, participant feedback, and follow-up;
- Ability to deliver the full assignment and all related materials in professional English.

Specific criteria:

- Proven experience in designing or delivering programmes on communication strategy, including audience analysis, objective setting, message development, channel selection, implementation planning, and monitoring and evaluation;
- Demonstrated experience in the practical use of AI tools for communication-related tasks, such as research, content development, editing, visual or multimedia production, workflow optimisation, and performance analysis;

- Demonstrated knowledge of responsible AI use, including data protection, confidentiality, copyright, transparency, bias, fact-checking, human oversight, and the safe use of institutional information;
- Previous experience working with public administrations, international organisations, public-sector training institutions, or other governance-related stakeholders;
- Previous experience and interaction with the Western Balkans and/or Eastern Neighbourhood region, with an understanding of the institutional and communication context of participating administrations;
- A proposed lead lecturer with at least 3 (three) years of relevant professional experience in strategic communication and/or public-sector communication;

The applicant shall submit the following documents:

- Copy of the founding document or any similar document that proves the establishment year of the applicant;
- Organigramme of the applicant;
- A methodology on how the programme will be delivered;
- A draft proposed programme of the Executive education, including topics and potential lecturers to deliver the sessions;
- CVs of the proposed lecturers;
- Financial offer with breakdown of expenses.

5. Timing and Location

The assignment is tentatively scheduled between mid-September and mid-October in Bar, Montenegro.

6. Remunerations

The assignment amounts **to 10.000 EUR for** the preparation and delivery of tasks listed above.

The payment will be made in one instalment upon completion of the assignment. The final outputs will be subject to ReSPA approval before payment is executed.

Note: costs related to logistic aspects, such as training room, learning materials, coffee breaks, lunch breaks, networking activities, etc., are not included in this financial offer. Those costs shall be taken over by ReSPA.

7. Reporting and Final Documentation

Upon completion of the assignment, the selected applicant will be requested to deliver the following documents before the payment is conducted:

Outputs

- The final implemented programme of the Executive education and bios of the lecturers;
- Presentations held during the sessions of the Programme (after the programme is delivered);
- Attendance Certificates for all the participants in the Programme.

Documents required for payment

- Invoice (e-signed);
- Timesheets (e-signed);
- One final report to ReSPA on the implementation/performance of the assignment (please see section 3 above).