



ReSPA

Regional School
of Public Administration

BUILDING TOGETHER
GOVERNANCE FOR THE FUTURE

METHODOLOGY

In-country support mechanism for ReSPA Members

Application procedure:
Rules and steps



Revised in September 2021



ReSPA activities are funded
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IN-COUNTRY SUPPORT MECHANISM FOR RESPA MEMBERS

METHODOLOGY

Background

ReSPA is an international inter-governmental organization and a key regional endeavor in PAR, in Western Balkan. Through the implementation of its activities, ReSPA has become recognized as the leading regional organization for public administration development. The strategic goal of ReSPA defined in the ReSPA Strategy 2019-2024¹ is to contribute to the effective response of the public administrations of ReSPA members to the needs of citizens and businesses. It will be achieved through strengthened regional cooperation in the area of PAR and EUI. In meeting this strategic goal in the Western Balkans, ReSPA will work on the further improvement of the implementation of PAR and PFM strategies, the professionalization and depoliticization of the senior civil service, and the improvement of the quality of public services. ReSPA will achieve its strategic objectives through the organization of high-level political dialogues, conferences, networking events, working visits, mobility schemes, delivery of capacity-building activities (workshops, seminars, training, seasonal schools), production of analytical papers, studies and research, followed by policy recommendations based on the best regional, European and international practice, and other innovative methodologies. Through this kind of activity, ReSPA will transfer new knowledge and skills, as well as facilitate the exchange of experiences and best-practice examples both within the region and between the Western Balkan administrations and the EU Member States. ReSPA provides a unique framework for networking and peer -to-peer learning. Therefore the mutual exchange of experiences and practices in the area of PAR and PFM will be an important segment of all further actions.

The “in country support mechanism” – a brief introduction

The model for direct in-country support has been introduced as of July 2014, recognized as “new mechanism”. During the implementation of the EC grant which covers programming period 2016-2018 ReSPA has continuously implemented this instrument, named since July 2017 as: “In-country support mechanism”. In the meantime, the methodology for the application process, as well as guidelines and application forms, have been continually improved and ReSPA Members significantly enhanced the strategic importance of proposals for this instrument.

Who is the instrument for?

ReSPA mechanism of in-country support targets ReSPA members (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia). Besides regionally organized activities which cover the common interests of its Members, ReSPA will, **through in-country support mechanism**, target the specific demand driven topics and needs defined by its Members. On their

¹ Adopted in November 2018. See: <https://www.respaweb.eu/11/library/#strategic-documents-18>

path towards reforming public administration, particular countries face different significant challenges, and ReSPA will support activities devoted to their overcoming.

What is the instrument aimed at?

The instrument aims to **address the specific needs of each ReSPA Member** by influencing on the work of public administrations respectively compliant with the ReSPA Programme of Work 2020-2021.

Proposals/Applications for the in-country support mechanisms are expected to be raised and inspired by:

- the **operational conclusions from the PAR Special Group meetings**;
- or the **deficiencies/needs identified in the action documents for implementation of PAR strategies**;
- or the **findings of the European Commission on PAR at the Annual Country Reports**;
- or **policy recommendations emerging from the ReSPA regional studies** (which can be downloaded at the ReSPA website) or during the ReSPA working groups meetings.

Guidelines and the Application Process

The In-country support mechanism pertains to the provision of assistance to each ReSPA Member in terms of engagement and delivery of necessary expertise for carrying out the requested activities which address the identified specific needs in the field of PAR.

Each ReSPA Member has an opportunity to swiftly address specific need(s) and make a direct impact by requesting a provision of expertise in an identified field within the scope of the ReSPA Programme of Work.

Few tips:

- The in-country support mechanism is financed by the EC Grant and, therefore, all the activities should be implemented and completed within the EC Grant implementation period and related cost eligibility criteria (December 2022).
- The identified needs have to fall within the domains of the ReSPA Programme of Work (PoW) 2021-2022, (to be downloaded from the ReSPA Website: <https://www.respaweb.eu/8/library#strategic-documents-18>).
- The financial resources - per ReSPA Member - (that can be allocated in 2021 and 2022) are available for around 60 expert days (indicative).

Criteria and Conditions for Implementation of the assistance provided through this mechanism

The Applicant

- Each interested institution from any of the ReSPA Members should fill the Application Form (attached) where shall provide a detailed plan of the proposed activity(-ies)..
- The activities proposed by the applicants shall contain the following budget lines:
 - Expertise costs (number of expert days) fee for experts' and/or trainers' who will deliver the assistance);
 - Travel costs (for participants to attend workshop/s and/or training/s organized in the frame of the action);

- Per diems, (covering costs for accommodation and meals) for participants who attend workshops and/or trainings organized in the frame of the action;
- Other costs (to be specified by the applicants. Such as: rent of a conference room, production of visibility materials related to the action, etc.)
- ReSPA shall review the proposed budgets and reserves the right to change them (decrease, increase or delete budget lines), informing the applicant on any potential changes. In doing do, ReSPA takes into account the type of action, its impact and replicability.
- Each applicant commits to use the assistance in the most rational and reasonable manner.
- In case of requiring the engagement of more than one expert, the applicant should provide a table with tasks for each expert and their tasks should not overlap.
- The activities requested in the application form should be organized solely in ReSPA Members ensuring the availability of institutional capacities for providing the necessary facilities and/or required logistics for the organization of the envisaged activity(s) and/or expertise.
- For delivery of the requested assistance, each Applicant should recommend and/or propose **up to three (3) experts** per required expert engagement. ReSPA Secretariat will organize the process of selection of the expert in accordance with the enacted procurement procedures and make the final selection, approval and appointment of a relevant expert. If deemed necessary, the ReSPA Secretariat has the right to request submission of the additional information and/or clarification from each ReSPA Member, and to reject any of the submitted requests if the request for In-country support mechanism is not compliant with the ReSPA Programme of Work 2021-2022 and provisions stipulated in the Annex I of the Grant Contract. In case of a negative decision, the ReSPA Secretariat will provide written notice to the applicant.
- The application/request is submitted to ReSPA with prior endorsement by a relevant national Governing Board member to the ReSPA Governing Board.

ReSPA

- The entire process is managed and coordinated by ReSPA.
- Prior to the final approval of applications, ReSPA shall forward all applications to the European Commission.
- The received applications for the assistance will be examined and evaluated by the ReSPA Secretariat, in cooperation with European Commission. ReSPA reviews the proposed budgets and may change them (decrease, increase or delete budget lines), informing the applicant on any potential changes. In doing do, ReSPA takes into account the type of action, its impact and replicability.
- All proposed activities submitted by the applicants will be assessed according to the information provided in the application form.
- If deemed necessary, the ReSPA Secretariat has the right to request submission of the additional information and/or clarification from each ReSPA Member, and to reject any of the submitted requests if the request for In-country support mechanism is not compliant with the ReSPA Programme of Work 2021-2022 and provisions stipulated in the Annex I of the Grant Contract. In case of a negative decision, the ReSPA Secretariat will provide written notice to the applicant.
- In case of approval of the application, ReSPA Secretariat will organize the process of selection of the expert in accordance with the enacted procurement procedures and make the final selection, approval and appointment of a relevant expert.
- All payments to third parties (such as to the expert/s, participants, service providers, etc.), shall be effectuated by ReSPA, in accordance with the approved budget of the action.)

European Commission / EUD in respective countries

- After receiving the applications from ReSPA, the EC reserves the right to:
 - make comments and suggestions that shall be taken into account,
 - make the final approval or
 - reject any of the submitted requests.
- In order to speed up the application process, ReSPA advises all applicants of the In-Country support mechanism **to consult their draft applications with the respective EU Delegations**, before submitting them to the ReSPA Secretariat.

Submission of the Request for Assistance

- Each ReSPA Member should submit the request for assistance using the Application form attached to this document and in accordance with the criteria outlined above.
- All applications must be submitted by the respective Liaison officer, after the prior endorsement of the relevant Governing Board member at Senior Level (GB SL).
- Applications must be submitted in English.
- An application for the “in country support mechanism” can be submitted anytime during the year by any of the institutions established in ReSPA members.

Other Implementation Conditions

- Follow-up, monitoring and evaluation of the supported activity will be the responsibility of the ReSPA Secretariat.
- The ReSPA Secretariat may participate at the activities during its implementation in order to perform monitoring of activities.
- After finalization of envisaged activities through the In-country support mechanism, the **selected expert will provide to the ReSPA Secretariat a written report** on the implemented activity. The report should be focused on:
 - action undertaken;
 - activities within the action undertaken;
 - main achievement according to tasks from ToR;
 - produced documents, PPTs (if any);
 - replication potential of the action undertaken (national, regional level)
 - the achieved results of the action and
 - sustainability of the conducted activities, including the potential for the replication at the local, national and regional level.
- After the finalization of the activities **the beneficiary institution is obligated to provide to the ReSPA Secretariat a written report** on the satisfaction with the work of engaged expert and overall outcomes of the activity, as well as send to ReSPA any tangible output funded by the action, such as: list of participants, presentations of the expert/s, the paper/s produced, minutes of meetings, curricula of the training, conclusions of the event (conference, workshop), etc..
- Through the already established reporting mechanism, the ReSPA Secretariat will inform the ReSPA Governing Board on quarterly and annual basis about the outcomes of the undertaken activities under the “in country support mechanism”, referring to the achieved results versus the pre-given expectations.

The Application process, in brief steps

Following the detailed explanations above, this section provides a brief descriptions, in clear steps, of the application and implementation process of the in-country support mechanism:

- Step 1 Institutions from ReSPA Members identify a need that can be addressed through the “in country support mechanism”. The followings shall serve as basis and inspiration for drafting the application:
- the **operational conclusions from the PAR Special Group meetings**,
 - or the **deficiencies identified in the action documents for implementation of PAR strategies**,
 - or **the findings of the European Commission on PAR at the Annual Country Reports**.
 - or initiated to **support and address the policy recommendations emerging from the ReSPA regional studies** (which can be downloaded in ReSPA website) or during the ReSPA working groups meetings.
- Step 2 Institutions from ReSPA Members (“the applicant”) draft the application in the respective application form.
- Step 3 The Applicant consults the draft application with the respective EU Delegation. In case of comments, the applicant revises the application. *This is a recommended but not an obligatory step.*
- Step 4 The final draft is sent to the respective GB Member for approval. After GB Member’s approval, the application is sent to the respective Liaison Officer (LO) for further submission to ReSPA.
- Step 5 LO submits the Application to the ReSPA Secretariat (d.djuric@respaweb.eu)
- Step 6 ReSPA Secretariat reviews the Application, makes first comments and recommendations (if any) that shall be addressed by the applicant. After the applicant addresses ReSPA comments and recommendations (within 7 working days), the revised application is sent by ReSPA to EC for comments, suggestions or approval. In case EC provides comments, ReSPA Secretariat sends the comments back to the applicant who shall address them, within 7 working days. When addressing the comments of ReSPA and EC, the applicants do not need a new approval by the GB member.
- Step 7 Approval of the application. Start of procurement process for delivering the assistance required.
- Step 8 Delivery of the assistance required.
- Step 9 Finalization and submission to ReSPA of two written Reports on the delivered assistance:
- One Report is prepared by the Expert engaged during the implemented activity;
 - Another report is prepared by **the beneficiary institution which describes** on the satisfaction with the work of engaged expert and overall outcomes of the activity.

If you have any question during the application process, please write to: respa-info@respaweb.eu.