



**ReSPA**

Regional School  
of Public Administration

Network Meeting of the  
**COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE ON  
HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

24-25 April 2014  
Becici, Montenegro

**DISCUSSION PAPER AND DRAFT AGENDA**

## Background

Strategic human resources development is essential for the governance and management of all organizations of public administration. Human resource capacity building and development is critically needed both horizontally and vertically. The first focuses on domestic capacity building strategies, while the latter stresses capacity development in international relations, in particular, the effective functioning in the EU integration process.

ReSPA intends to promote additional instruments to achieve its mission of supporting “the creation of accountable, effective and professional public administration systems”, as well as to facilitate EU accession preparedness of its member countries. HRM/HRD aspect in latter mentioned process is of ultimate importance. In that context ReSPA has taken over the lead from UNDP RC PAR in bringing the HR practitioners together, and is responsible for the overall management of this network and performance of similar activities. Consequently ReSPA has established a Human Resources Management Community of Practitioners network (HRM CoP).

The main objective of this initiative is to provide ReSPA with an effective instrument for professional networking, knowledge management and development of demand-driven cooperative activities among the civil servants and others concerned with human resources management in the context of civil service reform in the Western Balkans. This forum also serves as a discussion forum between professionals to discuss issues that require immediate action/revision. Furthermore, it is an instrument that provides civil servants and other HRM professionals in the Western Balkans the opportunity to discuss challenges, learn from mistakes and spread good practices in their efforts to reform the public administration.

The first meeting of this initiative was held on 4th and 5th December 2012, at ReSPA, Danilovgrad Montenegro, in December 2012.

The Second ReSPA Networking Event on Human Resource Management for the Western Balkans, Community of Practitioners was held in May 2013 in Tirana, Albania. As a conclusion from all previous mainstream activities including networking events ReSPA has formulated the overall objective in 2014 to strengthen regional co-operation and exchange of good practices among beneficiary countries in the field of Human Resources Management and Development. The specific objective is to improve the system of human resources management in the public administration of the Western Balkan countries by means of strengthening the capacity of the Community of Practitioners in the field of HRM in order to ensure the continuity of the reform process. At the same time, ReSPA aims to support the establishment of merit based civil service systems and to focus on activities to support the closure of existing critical gaps in the civil service through identification, development and implementation of the HR policies and practices. In particular, recruitment and retention, Personal development Plans (PDP) and Integrated Leadership and Change Management curricula development. Training needs will be given more importance in the professional development of administrative and management capacity, as it is considered a real added value in support of change management.

ReSPA will provide various types of assistance and activities to the CoP members (Conferences, Regional meetings, Workshops, Brainstorm sessions, Publications, etc).

## Target Audience

The target audience of the CoP on the HRM is foreseen as follows:

1. Head of National training institution / Head of Department for capacity building in the relevant Ministry in charge of Public Administration; and
2. Senior official responsible for HR Policy in the relevant Ministry in charge of Public Administration.

Since this network is a strong asset for the region, it is expected to develop and diversify its activities further in the future.

## Objectives

The overall aim of the CoP on HRM at the upcoming event is to provide a background for discussion among the members of the HRM CoP network regarding the challenges of HRM in the Western Balkans, and the development of an agenda for the CoP: Thematic options, types of activities, an HR Roadmap and an implementation timeframe.

The event will be composed of 3 specific objectives, and they are as follows:

- Review the challenges of HRM in the Region and discuss the CoP's main perspective in regard of of the EU 2013 Progress Reports and SIGMA Report Nr 48 as well as subsequent research on human resources management and development in the region.
- Propose and discuss a strategy for the CoP, and, in particular, discuss thematic options and types of activities
- Discuss the HR Roadmap, including specific activities and the timeframe for their implementation

2 members from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo\*, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia as Member States of ReSPA are represented in this network as permanent members.

## Content

Strategic human resources development is essential to the governance and management systems of all organizations of public administration and it is critically needed both horizontally and vertically. The first focuses on domestic capacity building strategies, while the latter stresses capacity development in international relations, in particular, in effective functioning in the EU integration process.

Thus, we will strongly consider the following aspects during networking event following a clear understanding of the needs and goals to be achieved in the EU integration process:

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

## **Ensuring Local Ownership**

HRM sector, by its nature, deals with already existing structures in every country that need to be further developed and aligned with the relevant EU acquis parts. In addition, the HRM sector has to create new mechanisms and tools in order to improve its function and the implementation of the regulatory framework for the management of the civil and public service (public administration). Both EU Progress Reports and Sigma Assessments regard recruitment, in particular, for top and middle-management positions, as an issue of serious concern because a substantial proportion has been conducted through non-transparent procedures. By utilizing local knowledge, initiatives and experience, and combining them with international expertise our objective is to ensure that the results achieved will become an integral part of the development process of the countries.

## **Building on experience and references of relevant EU and SIGMA reports**

- The experience and good practices with regard to already applied mechanisms and tools will be considered a valuable asset.
- ReSPA will make use and reflect on EU Country Progress Reports and Sigma Assessment reports and priorities in order to ensure the requirements are adequately addressed.
- The activities will reflect national needs (identified by the strategies), but will also encourage regional initiatives that will respond to national needs in domain of HRM.

## **Applying various types of activities**

- The activities that are part of this pillar will be tailored to meet the needs of the CoP network.
- Gap analysis, comparative studies, training activities, study visits, seminars/workshops, conferences, development of guidelines, publications.
- Some of the activities will be done jointly by the ReSPA experts and the beneficiary experts, followed by independent work by the beneficiaries and finalisation of the activity by joined presentation of the results.

Particular activities that will be addressed will be focused on: HR strategies and developing HR policies with focus on recruitment and retention, managing capacity building in public administration – development of Personal Development Plans (PDPs). ReSPA will also be focused on the essential need to train and enhance the capacity of HR professionals in view of improvement of the co-ordination mechanism for HRM at the level of the entire administration through the Development of integrated Leadership and Change Management curricula.

On the **first day**, after the introduction including reference back to past events, objectives that were discussed and future plans, challenges of HRM in the Western Balkans will be presented, aiming in identifying:

- areas of HRM that require an upgrade of the formal-legal basis
- areas that are subject to major implementation problems
- areas that are contested among civil servants (as well as among politicians, civil society organisations and other external observers)

This first presentation should lead to a discussion of the CoP's perspective on the main HRM challenges in the region discussing issues that are more/less pressing and issues that might not have been raised by the initial presentation in order to prepare a strategy for the CoP.

The second block would focus on developing an agenda for the CoP: Thematic options, types of activities, aiming at proposing a strategy for the CoP that might include the following types of activities:

- *Presentations by members of the group and external speakers combined with knowledge exchange*
- *Evaluations and evidence-based improvement of HRM practices, for instance, on the basis of comparative studies*
- *Recommendations and policy advice for the members and their institutions*
- *Dissemination and public engagement, including use of social media*

This presentation will be followed by a discussion on the preferences within the group and the availability among group members to contribute to the CoP.

Next block will focus on challenges of HRM: The case of training. The presentation will be delivered by Ms. Dubravka Prelec.

The **second working day** will focus on the presentation and discussion of the HR Roadmap – specific activities and the timeframe for their implementation. It is envisaged that the HR Roadmap focuses on activities in three main areas:

### **1. HR strategies and developing HR policies with focus on recruitment and retention**

HR strategies and developing HR policies in public administration institutions - principles, policies and practices will provide a practical introduction to the process of HR strategy development with a particular focus on the development of recruitment and retention policy workforce plans for PA institutions. Participants will gain the skills, theory and specialist knowledge needed to implement effective HR Strategies and develop Recruitment and Retention Policy for their organisations.

### **2. Managing capacity building aspects in public administration – development of Personal Development Plans (PDP)**

The civil service needs to continue its move from a mindset of seeing training and development as a cost to one of seeing it as an investment. Responsible bodies for training at a national level are expected to deliver much of this change. ReSPA will address and work in close cooperation with the relevant beneficiary staff on building their capacities to meet necessary training standards, focusing on Personal Development Plans of the employees.

### **3. Development of Integrated Leadership and Change Management curricula**

ReSPA will also focus on the essential need to train and enhance the capacities of HR professionals in view of improvement of the co-ordination mechanism for HRM at the level of the entire administration through development and delivery of the Integrated Leadership and Change Management curricula training program. Such a comprehensive training program will result in improved human capacity management in administration as well as improved status of key civil servants.

In order to identify the necessary input and devise the training program ReSPA will conduct an analyses in the beneficiary countries addressing management positions and their needs. The program will be focused on managing staff, leadership and change management, and should result in increased capacities of HR professionals and at the regional and national level it will help and support countries to take steps to professionalize the management positions in the administration, introducing a senior civil service capacity building scheme. Furthermore, it is expected that the result and impact of such activity will be twofold: first, HR managers will gain necessary knowledge and skills, and, second, the scheme regarding the training program could be utilized and applied at the national level (having in mind that one of the role of HR managers is to consider training and staff personal development).

The event will be finalized with the wrap – up and agreeing on the next main steps and the timing of the next HRM CoP networking event.

## Moderators

**Jan-Hinrik Meyer-Sahling** is an Associate Professor of European Politics at the University of Nottingham and a Fernand Braudel Senior Fellow at the European University Institute in Florence. Meyer-Sahling's research has focused on the EU political system, the Europeanisation of national political systems in the old member states and the reform of public administration in new member states from Central and Eastern Europe, as well as candidate and potential candidate states from the Western Balkans. Meyer-Sahling is the author of the SIGMA Reports Nr 44 and 48 on the Sustainability of Civil Service Reform Five Years after Accession and Civil Service Professionalisation in the Western Balkans respectively.

**Dubravka Prelec** – Dubravka has many years of experience in development, implementation and assessment of HRM and HRD regulatory framework in the public administration. She has developed and delivered capacity building seminars, training courses and workshops to civil servants and public employees in the Balkan Region providing recommendations for continued capacity building. She has a deep experience in the development of national concept for Management Development programme. She also has a good understanding of public administration reform in the context of EU accession process. She completed her MA in Human Resource Strategy and Change at Kingston University/National School of Government, UK, in 2006 and is currently the director of National School for Public Administration in Croatia.

**Margarita Ivanova** – Margarita has over 15 years of training experience, and more than 12 years of project management experience on different international projects. Margarita is CIPD qualified and experienced in HR consultancy, especially on introduction of Performance Management, Recruitment, Training and Job Description. She has 10 years of professional experience in training and staff development projects, mainly in civil service and public employee training, career development and succession planning. With extensive experience as a consultant, deputy team leader and trainer in various projects funded by the EU, OSCE, etc., she is currently involved in designing and delivering training on implementation of the Methodology for Assessment of the Quality of Institutions including the process of presenting an award of excellence in Macedonian administration.

## DRAFT AGENDA

### Day 1- Thursday, 24 April 2014

09.00 - 09.15	<b>Registrations</b>
09.15 - 09.30	<b>Introduction</b> Welcome address by ReSPA Director, Mr. Suad Music Introductory presentation on the HRM CoP network, structure, objectives and plans, by Mr. Jan Meyer-Sahling
09.30 - 11.00	<b>Session 1 - Challenges of HRM in the Western Balkans</b> Presentation by Mr. Jan Meyer-Sahling
11.00 - 11.15	<i>Coffee break</i>
11.15 - 12.45	<b>CoP perspective on main HRM challenges in the Western Balkans</b> Discussion by participants (moderated by Dubravka Prelec and Margarita Ivanova)
12.45 - 14.15	<i>Lunch break</i>
14.15 - 15.45	<b>Session 2 - Developing an agenda for the CoP: Thematic options, types of activities</b> <i>Presentation by Mr. Jan Meyer-Sahling</i> <i>Agenda for HRM CoP</i> <i>Discussion by participants (moderated by Jan Meyer-Sahling)</i>
15.45 - 16.00	<i>Coffee break</i>
16.00 - 17.00	<b>Session 3 - Challenges of HRM: The case of training</b> Presentation by Ms. Dubravka Prelec Discussion by participants (moderated by Dubravka Prelec) <i>End of day 1</i>

### Day 2 – Friday, 25 April 2014

09.00 - 09.15	<b>Introduction to the Day</b>
09.15 - 11.00	<b>Session 4: Presentation on the proposed Roadmap on HRM/HRD</b> Presentation by Ms. Margarita Ivanova Discussion
11.00 - 11.15	<i>Coffee break</i>
11.15 - 12.30	<b>Session 5: Concluding discussion: 'What shall be the agenda for the CoP for 2014/2015 and beyond?'</b> (moderated by Jan Meyer-Sahling)
12.30 - 13.00	<b>Wrap-up and next steps</b> (moderated by Margarita Ivanova, Dubravka Prelec, Jan Meyer-Sahling)
13.00 - 14.00	<i>Lunch</i> <i>End of Day 2</i>