

## Terms of Reference

### Expert in Interoperability for Interoperability Academy 2024 Montenegro

#### 1. Background

The Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) is an inter-governmental organization for enhancing regional cooperation, promoting shared learning and supporting the development of public administration in the Western Balkans. ReSPA Members are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, while Kosovo\* is a beneficiary. ReSPA's purpose is to help governments in the region develop better public administration, public services and overall governance systems for their citizens and businesses and prepare for membership in the European Union.

ReSPA establishes close cooperation with Ministers, senior public servants and heads of units in Member countries. ReSPA also works in partnership with the European Union, specifically the Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), other regional actors such as OECD/SIGMA and Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), as well as agencies and civil society organizations. Since its inception, ReSPA, as an international organization and a key regional endeavour in Public Administration Reform, has contributed to capacity-building and networking activities through on-demand support mechanisms, peering and the production of regional research materials.

The European Commission (EC) provides directly managed funds for the support of the ReSPA activities (research, training and networking programmes) in line with the EU accession process. Currently, ReSPA is implementing its fifth EC Grant Contract "Support to the Regional School of Public Administration for implementing PAR Agenda and facilitating EU accession process in the WBs" which is active as of 1 January 2023.

ReSPA works primarily through regional networks which operate at three levels: Ministerial, Senior Officials, and networks/working groups of experts and senior practitioners. There is one network – Programme Committee composed of the senior civil servants representing the ministries responsible for the Public Administration, ministries of Finance, and institutions in charge of the European Integration process coordination of the ReSPA Members and four regional thematic groups: (1) Policy planning, better regulation and coordination of Centre of Government, (2) European integration and accession negotiations; (3) Human Resources Management and Professional Development; (4) Service Delivery (digitalization and quality management).

#### 2. Purpose

In order to implement its Programme of Work for the 2023-2025 period, and as the continuation of conducted regional interoperability training in 2023, ReSPA is organising the Interoperability Academy 2024 Montenegro with the title *"Embrace collaboration, innovation and excellence for a transformative journey in fostering higher interoperability across public administration"*.

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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.

The Interoperability Academy 2024 Montenegro is the capacity building activity aimed at increasing and levelling up the knowledge and skills of senior public officials from key public administration institutions in Montenegro on the main components of interoperability and data exchange so that they are better informed and equipped to work in an aligned manner to meet interoperability requirements based on the provisions of existing laws, contemporary EU policies and good practices in EU and Montenegro. The second aim of the Academy is to serve as the platform for an intensive exchange of views on laws and practices that can be streamlined into the priority actions and steps for improving the performance of the national interoperability framework in Montenegro and its maturity. Providing information and insights about the most contemporary EU policies and practices related to interoperability is also part of the Interoperability Academy 2024 Montenegro programme.

### 3. Description of the assignment

The Interoperability Academy 2024 Montenegro, a two-and-half-day event, is an opportunity for public officials at the operational level and policymakers from the Ministry of Public Administration, Ministry of Interior Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health; Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare; Data protection Agency; Tax Administration; Health Fond; Real Estate Administration, lecturers, and technologists to connect meaningfully between peers as well as with lecturers, and technologists to break through some of the biggest challenges related to interoperability nowadays in Montenegro. Through the planned work and communication that will be encouraged and fostered, our cutting-edge program is designed to empower public officials of various provenience at operational and decision-making levels (lawyers, IT workers, economists) with the information and additional knowledge needed to navigate the complexities of interoperability as well as to discuss and come up with possible venues to follow for improving the interoperability and data exchange in Montenegro.

Based on specific inputs about the application of the national interoperability framework in Montenegro and identified areas for improvement from the UNDP ICT Workshop, at this Academy, we would like to host information sharing and discussion between public officials working on different aspects of interoperability, on how to improve the deployment of the existing law provisions, policies and significant developments already made in practice for better interoperability and sharing of data for the benefits of citizens and other users.

To this end, the Academy's Program will encompass the topics relevant to the successful functioning of interoperability that will be presented, jointly reviewed and discussed. The participants, lecturers and facilitators will look more closely into the following main topics:

Interoperability framework - what is the importance, what problems interoperability can solve, how the good model functions, how it works in Montenegro;

- EU Interoperability Framework (EIF) and key policies
- National Interoperability Framework in Montenegro - the alignment of Montenegro's policies and legal framework with interoperability goals, identifying areas for improvement;
- How interoperability works or fails - technology and aligned practices, cooperation between the normative side and IT workers, breaking down silos and promoting interoperability between entities that may have different systems and technologies.

Case Studies from EU and Montenegro - good practice :

- Successful interoperability initiatives or projects in the EU and in Montenegro, providing practical insights and lessons learned

Data Governance and Privacy Compliance:

- Effective data governance and ensuring privacy compliance in Montenegro's legislation and interconnected systems.
- Strike a balance between ensuring data security and privacy while also fostering an environment that encourages the exchange of information across platforms.

e-Government Services and Interoperability:

- Low level of interoperability of databases managed by various public sector entities as main barriers to the development and use of public e-services
- Development of citizen-centric e-government services through interoperability and strategies to enhance citizen engagement.

The importance of aligned approaches and actions by leaders, top managers and operational level for improving and supporting the implementation of interoperability and data exchange (horizontally and vertically):

- Clear governance mechanisms are essential to define roles, responsibilities, and rules governing interoperability initiatives, fostering collaboration and accountability.
- The decisions and guidance of policymakers and top management can significantly assist in achieving interoperability. By establishing clear and aligned policies, promoting standardization, allocating resources, fostering collaboration, and creating a conducive regulatory environment, the seamless exchange of information and improved connectivity between different systems can be assured and/or improved.
- Fostering collaboration and engagement of different stakeholders with diverse perspectives and expertise can enrich the dialogue of stakeholders and lead to impactful outcomes and continuous improvement.

The Interoperability Academy will be held in Montenegrin language.

## 4. Tasks and responsibilities

With this document, ReSPA is seeking an expert to provide the lecturing sessions, facilitation and co-facilitation at the Interoperability Academy 2024 Montenegro, which will be held between the **27<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of March**.

Specifically, the Expert will provide his expertise and knowledge in performing the following tasks:

1. Prepare and conduct two presentations that will capture the following topics (27<sup>th</sup> of March):

- Importance of Interoperability in Public Administration
- International policy framework for achieving seamless data exchange between systems and its evolution (EIF)
- Good practices example (s) from EU

2. Facilitate group discussion (on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March) and mock-up (28<sup>th</sup> of March) related to the following sessions :

- Conditions (laws, policies) and technical solutions for Public Administration Interoperability- what are the challenges and opportunities on the technical level?
- Simulate development of electronic service eProperty - Technical Framework

3.Co-facilitate group discussions (28<sup>th</sup> March and 29<sup>th</sup> March) and formulate the conclusions from both days as inputs to the Dialogue of decision-makers

- Group Exercise: Developing Policy Recommendations for Public Administration

- Conclusions of Day 1 and Day 2- Identified "quick wins" and measures for improvement -inputs for dialogue of decision-makers
- Dialogue of decision-makers – Montenegro interoperability challenges and ways forward

The expert will liaise directly with the responsible ReSPA Programme Manager and take into consideration instructions received beforehand. All the materials should be submitted to the responsible ReSPA Programme Manager for approval beforehand and, if necessary, all adjustments will be done in accordance with suggestions by ReSPA Programme Manager.

## 5. Necessary Qualifications

The expert must have diverse but compatible experience working for or with the public sector, preferably in positions/assignments and tasks related to digital transformation. More specifically, the expert shall possess the following profile:

### Qualifications and skills:

- At least a Master's Degree in Electronic Engineering, Computer Science or other related fields,
- PhD will be considered an asset.

### General professional experience:

- At least 10 years of experience working in or with the public sector and related assignments/positions, as a public servant, consultant, expert, advisor, etc.

### Specific professional experience:

- At least 5 years of experience in dealing with the digitalisation of e-services including interoperability and data exchange,
- Experience in delivering training, and workshops, as well as previous engagements in preparation of guidelines, methodologies, policy papers, analysis, etc.;

### Skills:

- Written and oral communication skills in English and Montenegrin/Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian,
- Ability to prepare and deliver well-structured presentations/trainings;
- Ability to write clear and coherent methodological and guidance documents
- Ability to analyse complex information and convey clear messages;
- Ability to work with people of different nationalities, religions and cultural backgrounds.

## 6. Time frame, Level of Effort, and Location

The main assignment is to be completed **on the 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of March in Bar, Montenegro**. The Expert is expected to participate in person at the Interoperability Academy.

- The Level of Effort is estimated at 6,5 (six and a half ) expert days, distributed as follows:

- 4 (four) days for preparation of the presentation and exercises for the Montenegro IA 2024;
- 2,5 (two and a half ) days for participation at the Montenegro IA 2024;

## 7. Remunerations

The maximum amount of funds allocated for this assignment is up to 4,500 EUR for a total of up to 6,5 expert days. However, the daily fee per working day will be defined following the ReSPA expert selection procedure based on assessed and evaluated expert capacities. The payment will be made in one instalment upon finalization of the assignment.

Note: No other costs will be covered apart from the expert cost per day. The expert cost per day comprises of expert's fee per day only. The expert cost per day comprises of expert's fee per day and a lump sum for covering related costs which include, travel, accommodation, local transport, meals and other incidentals.

ReSPA reserves the right to change the timing and volume of the assignment and will timely inform the assigned expert if such changes occur.

## 8. Reporting and Final Documentation

The Expert will be requested to deliver the following outputs of the assignment (presentations held during the Academy sessions and exercises)

- PPT presentations
- Final report in English, not later than seven days after the completion of the Assignment. The report will be subject to the approval of the ReSPA as a contracting authority;
- Timesheet (signed via DocuSign);
- Invoice (signed via DocuSign).