

Terms of Reference

Request for Services

*Expert for updating the Merit-based Recruitment Self-assessment
Framework and supporting public administrations in the Western Balkans
in conducting the assessment*

1. Background

The Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) is a regional organization established in 2010 as a joint initiative financed by European Commission and Western Balkans (WB) administrations. It is managed and governed by five ReSPA Members: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, while Kosovo*¹ is beneficiary. ReSPA's purpose is to assist governments in the region to develop better public administration, public services and overall governance systems for their citizens and businesses, and prepare for the European Union membership.

ReSPA establishes close cooperation with Ministers, senior public servants and heads of units in Members. ReSPA also works in partnership with the European Union, specifically 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. 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.

ReSPA operates through one network – Programme Committee composed of the senior civil servants representing the ministries responsible for the Public Administration, 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).

¹ *This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the **Kosovo** Declaration of Independence.

2. Description of the assignment

ReSPA established the Human Resources Management and Development Working Group (HRMDWG). It is composed of senior professionals, decision-makers and expert practitioners who are granted an opportunity to share lessons learned, establish lasting working relations among individuals and institutions, and generate ideas which would promote more effective solutions to strengthen HRMD in WB. In 2015, the Working Group on HRMD commissioned a regional study on the implementation of merit recruitment procedures in the Western Balkans. The regional study stressed the significant progress that has been made in the area of merit recruitment since the early 2000s, and it also provided regional and recommendations specific to each administration.

In 2018 ReSPA conducted an update of the study in which it allowed for an examination of progress between 2015 and 2018, the extent to which recommendations were implemented and the identification of new challenges that had emerged since the publication of the 2015 regional study. In 2020 ReSPA supported the development of the study *Making merit-recruitment work: Lessons from and for the Western Balkans*² which draws the lessons learned from the Western Balkans for the Western Balkans on how to make merit-based recruitment work more effectively. A central output of the 2020 study was the framework for the self-assessment of merit-based recruitment. The self-assessment framework was applied to the ReSPA Members, and Kosovo in 2020 and the respective reports were produced. In 2021 ReSPA supported the updating of the reports³ in its members. The HRMPD WG members agreed to conduct another self-assessment and to produce the update of the reports from 2021.

The objective of this assignment is to assist ReSPA members and Kosovo in monitoring their merit-based recruitment, defining their state-of-the-art in regard to merit-based recruitment, and exchanging experience among HRMPD WG members.

Having in mind the above said, there is a need to engage an expert who would revise and extend the merit-based recruitment self-assessment framework and present the report to the HRMPD WG in the meeting that will be held in November 2023.

Simultaneously with the update of the merit-based recruitment self-assessment framework, ReSPA shall provide support for the self-assessment of performance appraisal in its Members and cooperation with the Expert for this assignment will be required.

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https://respaweb.eu/download/doc/Making+Merit+Recruitment+Work_Lessons+from+and+for+the+WBs.pdf/7b036d5ba854ac346372dbf0771a8c19.pdf

³ <https://www.respaweb.eu/download/doc/Self-assessment+of+merit+recruitment+in+the+WBs-Update+2021.pdf/15751eaeaca0903d7bc853bd0d213f46.pdf>

3. Tasks and responsibilities

The Expert shall perform the following tasks:

- Carefully acquaint him/herself and review the study *Making merit-recruitment work: Lessons from and for the Western Balkans* which served as a base for the self-assessment framework development. Carefully acquaint him/herself and review six self-assessment reports one for each ReSPA member and Kosovo prepared in 2020 and also reports prepared in 2021. Based on the lessons learned and inputs from HRMPD WG members and ReSPA, revise and extend the self-assessment framework on merit-based recruitment. (4 days)
- Conduct the desk research and fill out the updated self-assessment frameworks, one for each ReSPA member and Kosovo, with the information obtained. (4 days)
- Through respective online meetings with the HRMPD WG members from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia provide confirmation of the filled-out questionnaires and obtain additional information not received through the desk research. (4 days)
- Prepare a regional report based on the filled-out self-assessment frameworks with recommendations for each ReSPA member as well as for ReSPA. Incorporate comments received from administrations and ReSPA in finalizing the report. Prepare a digest of the report for ReSPA use. Ensure that all reports are proofread by a native English speaker. (4 days)
- Prepare a PowerPoint presentation and present the report to the HRMPD WG members at the meeting of the HRMPD WG planned in November 2023. Actively participate in the meeting. Prepare the final report of the assignment. (3 days)

The Expert shall cooperate with the Expert for the development of the performance appraisal self-assessment framework and exchange experience and ideas about the framework revision.

The final document will be subject to approval by ReSPA before the payment is executed.

4. Necessary Qualifications

The Expert shall possess the following profile:

Qualifications and skills:

- At least MA degree in Law, Public Administration, Political Sciences, Social Sciences, Economics, MBA or a related field.
- PhD will be considered an asset

General professional experience:

- At least 10 years of experience working in or with public administration reform and related assignments/positions.

Specific professional experience:

- At least 5 (five) years of relevant professional experience in the field of Human Resource Management;
- Experience in drafting analytical papers in the area of HRMD or similar;
- Prior experience in designing similar frameworks will be considered an advantage.

Skills:

- Excellent written and oral communication skills in English;
- Ability to write clear and coherent guidance documents;
- Ability to prepare and deliver well-structures Powerpoint presentations;
- Ability to work with people of different nationalities, religions and cultural backgrounds.

5. Timing and Location

The assignment foresees work from home and participation in the HRMPD WG meeting which will be organised in November 2023. The work will be performed tentatively from **May to November 2023**.

6. Remunerations

The assignment foresees engagement of up to **19 (nineteen) expert days in the amount of 10.450 EUR**.

The ReSPA expert selection procedure will define the daily fee based on the assessed and evaluated expert's capacity. The payment will be made in one instalment on completing the assignment and the approval obtained from ReSPA.

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 and (if needed) a lump sum for covering related costs which include, travel, accommodation, local transport, meals and other incidentals.

7. Reporting and Final Documentation

The Expert will be requested to deliver the following documents before the payment is conducted:

Outputs

- Revised and extended merit-based recruitment self-assessment framework
- Specific administration reports prepared in line with the self-assessment framework

- Regional report

Documents required for payment

- Invoice (signed original);
- Timesheets (signed original);
- Final report on the conducted assignment.