

Procurement Notice

Assignment name:

Independent expert for providing help desk assistance on EU-funded grant management

Reference Numbers: TA

Section 1. Introductory Information

1.1 Background information on the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA)

The Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) is the 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, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, while Kosovo*¹ 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 them for membership in the European Union (EU). The European Commission (EC) provides directly managed funds for support of ReSPA activities (research, training and networking programmes) in line with the EU accession process.

The new EC grant supports the main objective of ReSPA work in 2016-2017: Improving regional cooperation in the field of PAR and EU integration and strengthening administrative capacities in the beneficiaries. This objective will be achieved through the following three pillars of ReSPA Programme of Work for 2016- 2017:

- (1) European Integration Pillar: Increased capacity of public administration in the ReSPA Members necessary for successful conducting of the European Integration process;
- (2) Public Administration Reform Pillar: Facilitated and enhanced cooperation and exchange of experience in Public Administration Reform and European Integration activities in ReSPA Members;
- (3) Governance for Growth Pillar: Ensured effective coordination of the implementation of the Governance for Growth pillar of the SEE 2020 Strategy.

ReSPA is implementing its activities through the Secretariat which is consisting of 15 staff members from the Western Balkan region. The Secretariat is located in Danilovgrad, Montenegro.

¹ 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

1.2 ReSPA now seeks to engage one expert who would support the activities which would strengthen the capacities of ReSPA staff in the EC Grant management in accordance with PRAG rules.

1.3 Expected deliverables of the assignment are: as per Terms of Reference.

1.4 Tentative timeframe: the assignment is expected to be performed during period June – December 2017.

1.5 NOTE: Any individual employed by a company or institution who would like to submit an offer in response to this Procurement Notice must do so in their individual capacity, even if they expect their employers to sign a contract with ReSPA. In such case the applicant shall notify ReSPA in the application which institution is his/her employer.

Section 2. Preparation of CVs and supporting documentation

2.1 Language of application:

The CVs and supporting documentation shall be prepared in English.

2.2 The CVs should provide information on the qualifications and competencies of the applicant, her/his general track record and previous specific experience in similar assignments, as required by the Terms of Reference. The applicants should particularly state in their CVs:

- Length of professional experience in providing expert's assistance in the area of management of the EC grant, considering sound financial management and the best practices in result-oriented monitoring.

2.3 The required qualifications, experience and skills: as per Terms of Reference

Section 3. Submission of CVs and supporting documentation

3.1 The interested candidates are invited to submit a proposal consisting of the following documentation:

- Proposal: explaining their experience related to the analysis subject and how they intend to respond to the assignment;
- Personal CV including past experience in similar activities and particularly issues referred to under point 2.2 of this Procurement Notice;
- At least three contacts for references (name and position of referee, email address and phone number) which may be contacted by ReSPA. (NOTE: There is no need to submit reference letters; ReSPA will directly contact the referees).

3.2 The required documentation should be submitted in electronic format by e-mail to the following address: procurement@respaweb.eu by **12 June 2017** before Midnight. Late submissions will not be considered for evaluation. **The application should contain in the e-mail title the following reference number TA.**

Public servants from ReSPA Members and Kosovo* are not eligible to apply.

Section 4. Evaluation of offers

4.1 The offer will be evaluated against the required qualifications, experience, skills and competencies as defined in the Terms of Reference.

4.2 The applicant securing the highest final ranking will be invited to submit a financial proposal (the financial proposal shall specify a total sum amount in EURO for expert's daily fee) and negotiate the contract. If negotiations are successful, the selected candidate will be awarded the contract. Should the negotiations fail; the next ranked candidate will be invited to negotiations.

Section 5. Final Considerations

5.1 The payment will be done in three installments, following the submission and approval of the deliverables.

5.2 The following document is attached to this Procurement Notice: Terms of Reference

5.3 ReSPA reserves the right to cancel this procurement procedure at any moment without any compensation to the applicants. The cost of preparing a proposal and of negotiating a contract, including any related travel, cannot be reimbursed by ReSPA under any circumstances nor can ReSPA be held liable for it, regardless the outcome of the procurement procedure.

5.4 Should you need any further clarifications with respect to this procurement notice, please contact: Mr. Dragan Djuric, Programme Manager via e-mail: d.djuric@respaweb.eu, by **08 June 2017 (midnight)**, the latest. ReSPA will post the response, including an explanation of the query without identifying the source of inquiry, at its website (www.respaweb.eu) till **09 June 2017**. Any request for clarification must be sent by standard electronic communication to the above e-mail address.

Terms of Reference

Request for Services

Independent expert for providing help desk assistance on EU-funded grant management

Background

The Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) is the 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, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, while Kosovo*² 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 them for membership in the European Union (EU). Since its inception, ReSPA has contributed to the development of human resources and administrative capacities through training programmes and innovative cooperation mechanisms such as the exchange of good practices, peer reviews and development of know-how.

European Commission (EC) provides directly managed funds for support of ReSPA activities (research, training and networking programmes) in line with the EU accession process. So far, two EC Grant Contracts (GCs) have been implemented by ReSPA, during the period 2010-2015. The new EC grant will support the main objective of ReSPA work in 2016-2017: Improving regional cooperation in the field of PAR and EU integration and strengthening administrative capacities in the beneficiaries.

This objective will be achieved through the following three pillars of ReSPA Programme of Work for 2016-2017:

- (1) European Integration Pillar: Increased capacity of public administration in the ReSPA Members necessary for successful conducting of the European Integration process;
- (2) Public Administration Reform Pillar: Facilitated and enhanced cooperation and exchange of experience in Public Administration Reform and European Integration activities in ReSPA Members;

² * 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

(3) Governance for Growth Pillar: Ensured effective coordination of the implementation of the Governance for Growth pillar of the SEE 2020 Strategy.

Following the analysis of the internal needs, ReSPA is in search of an expert who would support the activities which would strengthen the capacities of ReSPA staff in the EC Grant management in accordance with PRAG rules.

Description of the assignment

Although established in 2011, ReSPA has constantly been undergoing various challenges imposed by a limited number and constant turnover of staff. This is of particular importance for the implementation of the 2016-2017 Programme of Work supported by the ongoing EC grant in the amount of €3.5 million. The implementation of EC grant still remains a challenge for all staff in ReSPA.

In view of this, the ReSPA staff has benefited from training on EC PRAG rules, but there are still remaining issues which need to be addressed in order to ensure efficient and effective management of the EC grant.

Therefore, the establishment of an external help desk for providing continuing support to ReSPA staff in efficient and effective managing of the EC grant and result oriented monitoring becomes instrumental.

The assignment shall contribute to the increased capacity and skills of ReSPA staff in management of the EC grant which will contribute to better spending the EC funds, and the result oriented monitoring which will improve presentation of the achieved results and, finally, the impact.

Tasks and responsibilities

The expert shall provide hands-on support to the ReSPA staff in management of the EC grant, taking into account sound financial management and the best practices in result-oriented monitoring. He or she will help ReSPA staff to ensure that the planned outputs are justifiable and qualitative, and that the impact has been properly proved and assessed.

As home-base work, the expert shall provide the following services:

- Recommend appropriate and corrective measures in order to comply with the terms and conditions of the signed grant contract (up to 2 days);
- Assist ReSPA staff in preparation of tender dossiers for the procurement of services, including contracts with third parties - updating the tender procedures for land travel, as well as tender procedures for catering; proposing the model for engagement of travel agents (up to 12 days);

- Support ReSPA staff in handling EC contract amendments and formulation of contract addendum related to grant budget (up to 5 days)
- Assist ReSPA staff in preparation of reports, both narrative and financial, reading the first draft of reports and providing instructions on their improvement (quarterly, interim and final reports) (up to 6 days).

Total number of days: 25 days

Necessary Qualifications

The Expert shall possess the following qualifications:

- University degree (VII);
- At least 5 years of experience in programming and implementation of EU pre-accession funds in fields of Public Administration Reform in the Western Balkan countries;
- Relevant experience in working within an IPA contracting authority or in an EU Delegation in one of the in EU accession countries will be an advantage;
- Proven experience in providing training and coaching to government officials and public servants;
- Proven experience in programme management gained in the international organisation will be considered as an advantage;
- Excellent written and oral communication skills in English and at least in one language of the Western Balkan region;
- Advanced computer literacy;
- Ability to work with people of different nationalities, religions and cultural backgrounds;
- Excellent organisational skills, proven communication and presentation skills and ability to work in an environment requiring liaison and collaboration with multiple actors including government representatives, international organizations, and other stakeholders.

Timing and Location

The assignment will take place from the beginning of June 2017 until end of December 2017.

Remunerations

Payment will be conducted in three instalments:

1. First installment in the amount of 40% after finalization of model for engagement of travel agents and updating the tender procedures for land travel and catering services.
2. Second installment in the amount of 30% of the whole amount after development of addendum on EC grant Budget.
3. Third - final installment in the amount of 30% at the end of engagement.

Reporting and Final Documentation

For payment of each installment the expert will be requested to deliver the reports which should be submitted in English with time sheets (signed originals) and invoices (signed originals).

The final report should be delivered on completion of the engagement.