

Terms of Reference

Request for Services

*Expert to assist ReSPA in developing a concept for the Western Balkans
Knowledge Management Platform*

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* 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.

Since its inception, ReSPA, as an international organization and a key regional endeavour in Public Administration Reform, has contributed to capacity-building and networking through regional training, workshops, conferences, seasonal schools, and on-demand support mechanisms, peering and the development of regional research materials. ReSPA establishes close cooperation with Ministers, senior public servants and heads of units in its 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.

The European Commission (EC) provides directly managed funds to support ReSPA activities in line with the EU accession process. Currently, ReSPA is implementing the 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 January 2023.

ReSPA works primarily through regional networks which operate at three levels: Ministerial, Senior Officials, and thematic groups of experts and senior practitioners. More specifically, the Programme Committee is composed of the senior civil servants representing ministries responsible for the Public Administration reform, and institutions in charge of the European Integration process, and four regional thematic groups: (1) Policy planning, better regulation and coordination of Centre of Government, (2) European integration and accession negotiations; (3)

*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.

Human Resources Management and Professional Development; (4) Service Delivery (digitalization and quality management).

These Terms of Reference aim to identify an experienced expert who shall assist ReSPA in developing a concept for the Western Balkans Knowledge Management Platform.

2. Problem statement and description of the assignment

Nowadays knowledge management has emerged as one of the most critical areas in management practices and is established as a basic resource for international organizations and public sector institutions. Any organization that wishes to acquire sustainable competitive advantages must make the most of all its knowledge and put it to use. The need for the introduction of knowledge management in public administration is the result of the importance of leveraging and capitalizing on collective knowledge, continuous learning culture and mindset, creating interlinkages and addressing silos, as well as a result of the constantly growing demands of citizens on the quantity and quality of information. Knowledge management (KM) plays an important role in public administration through improving public officials' decision-making effectiveness and crisis management and response.

The main benefits of the introduction of Knowledge Management in public administration are, indicatively, the following:

- enhance the quality of decision-making process within public policies;
- enhance efficiencies, improve accountability by making informed decisions,
- enhance collaboration and strategic partnerships between stakeholders;
- improve the relevance of public services in accordance with technological changes;
- help the public to participate effectively in public decision-making;
- build competitive societal intellectual capital capabilities;
- develop a knowledge-competitive workforce and improve operational excellence

Since knowledge management remains important for the development of the public sector, it is essential that public servants are continuously trained, their skills are further strengthened and developed, and they acquire up-to-date knowledge for improving their own performance and their performance relationship with citizens. The introduction of knowledge management in public administration means implementing the entire complex changes and introducing new knowledge, but first, it is necessary to understand this process. Correctly implementing and using the principles of knowledge management in state and local government means accurately identifying the organization's processes, being willing to educate employees in the long term, identifying and implementing a series of changes in the organization of work, and so on.

To streamline knowledge management, various organizations or networks of organizations or institutions establish specific knowledge management platforms. In simple words, these platforms are special databases that structure, edit, share and promote information. They can be seen as the tool and technique to manage digitized knowledge content to be more usable and accessible. The strength of knowledge platforms is that they pack relevant knowledge and make it available for specific user groups, thus opening up new possibilities:

- Relevant knowledge is recognized, bundled and structured;
- Knowledge is made available to an open circle of interested parties and users with different levels of knowledge;
- Stakeholders from a specific subject area are networked;

In this regard, ReSPA aims to establish a PAR Knowledge platform that supports the respective administrations in learning how modern administrations work, screens trends in public administration nowadays, pools knowledge, identifies and promotes good practices. The platform shall map relevant projects and initiatives in the domain of good governance and PAR (repository), thus enabling members to share best practices, learn from each other's experience, and liaise with EU PAs and their knowledge base. The platform is expected to be developed in an agile way with the open participation of several stakeholders who will benefit from it (mostly public servants from the WBs), while feeding ReSPA programme on capacity building. Mapping experiences and lessons learned is an integral part of knowledge management and is especially crucial in digital transformation where managing knowledge assists in identifying what to digitize and how to digitalize optimally. It is important to know what the administrations in the region are doing and how; therefore, the Platform shall seek to further boost the exchange of experiences, identification and proliferation of inspiring examples, etc. Mapping of experiences and sharing lessons learned will also be expanded to other areas synergetic to PAR.

The KM Platform will aim:

- to connect, promote and strengthen capacity development initiatives relevant to PAR;
- to systematically store comprehensive knowledge gained on PAR and enable a new space and hub to connect and share knowledge;
- to promote good practices, tools, solutions, and resources in area of PAR;
- to present research outputs;
- to ultimately strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of PAR initiatives, promote innovation and dialogue, and enhance cooperation between ReSPA Members authorities involved in PAR agenda.

Through the platform, ReSPA will also continue to strengthen networking with the EU institutions and similar platforms based in the Union.

To that aim, ReSPA needs to develop a consolidated concept of the upcoming KM Platform, its content categories, pillars, toolbox, and potential composition, based on already successful examples of similar KM platforms active in various EU-based institutions or networks.

3. Tasks and responsibilities

The Expert shall, indicatively, perform the following tasks:

- Get familiar with ReSPA specificities, mandate, portfolio of activities, state of art of public administration reform in the Western Balkans and the ReSPA Moodle platform (1 day);
- Explore good examples of already existing Knowledge Management Platforms / Hubs (up to three) which can serve as potential sources of inspiration for the ReSPA KM Platform and prepare a brief report on them where the main advantages and disadvantages of these examples are highlighted (4 days);
- Present and discuss with ReSPA staff the outcomes of the abovementioned Report and gather insights from ReSPA staff through a joint discussion/interview necessary for developing the concept of the ReSPA KM Platform. During the meeting with ReSPA staff, the expert shall present the platforms he/she explored and provide explanations on strong and weak points of those platforms. The format of the final concept and Roadmap (see bullet below) shall be also discussed (1 day);
- Develop the ReSPA KM Platform concept and present it to ReSPA staff. The concept shall contain a proposed structure and organization – i.e. propose categories/pillars, mission/vision/goals/, proposed pulling of content concerning capacity building and training opportunities, proposal for collaborating organizations, for practitioners/expert exchange forums to foster platform-based exchanges. A short, easy-to-read roadmap with proposed incremental milestones/timeline for the establishment and launch of the platform shall also be developed. In developing the concept, the expert shall also assess to which extent the learning platforms (such as Moodle or ILIAS) might be integrated in the future platform (5 days);
- Review the concept, based on the comments/input received by ReSPA staff (1 day);

The abovementioned tasks and responsibilities represent the milestones of the assignment, but the expert may propose slight changes/adaptations and re-arrangements of working days upon agreement with the ReSPA Programme Manager in charge.

4. Necessary qualifications of the required expert

The expert needs to have **diverse but compatible experience in working for or with the public sector**, preferably, on positions/assignments and tasks related to capacity development, knowledge management, organizational aspects, management, development communication, etc. More specifically, the expert shall possess the following profile:

Qualifications and skills:

- At least BA degree in Public Administration, Management, Computer Science, Information Technology, Development Communication, Economics, or related field;
- PhD will be considered an asset.

General professional experience:

- At least 7 years of experience working in or with the public sector and related assignments/positions.

Specific professional experience:

- At least 3 (three) years of relevant professional experience in knowledge management projects/assignments with public or private organizations, capacity development, organizational aspects, management, development communication or similar;
- Experience in conceptualizing or developing knowledge management platforms or hubs will be considered a substantial advantage;

Skills:

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

5. Timing and Location

The assignment foresees work from the home, office and online meetings. The assignment is expected to be performed tentatively from **March–May 2023**.

6. Remunerations

The assignment foresees engagement of up to **12 (twelve) expert days in the amount of up to 6.600 EUR**.

The payment will be done in one instalment upon completion of the assignment. The final outputs will be subject to approval from ReSPA before the execution of the payment.

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. ReSPA and the expert shall agree before the signature of the Service Contract on the rate of the daily fee.

7. Reporting and Final Documentation

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

Outputs

- One report on good examples of already existing Knowledge Management Platforms / Hubs (up to three) which can serve as potential sources of inspiration for the ReSPA KM Platform, highlighting the main advantages and disadvantages of these examples;

- One final Concept (including the roadmap) for the upcoming ReSPA KM Platform and concrete recommendations for ReSPA related to the establishment of the Platform.

Documents required for payment

- Invoice (signed original);
- Timesheets (signed original);
- Final brief report on the conducted assignment, milestones and challenges.