

Procurement Notice and Terms of Reference

*Assignment name: **Expert assistance in the process of creating the CAF e-Platform***

Reference Number: # 69/2026

Section 1. Introductory Information

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

The Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) is an intergovernmental organisation 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* ¹ is a beneficiary. ReSPA's purpose is to help regional governments 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 function in Member countries. ReSPA also works in partnership with the European Union, Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), other regional players such as OECD/SIGMA and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), as well as agencies and civil society organisations. Since its inception, ReSPA, as an international organisation and a key regional endeavour in Public Administration Reform, has contributed to capacity-building and networking through in-country support mechanisms, peering, and the production of regional research material.

1.2 ReSPA now seeks to engage short-term expert assistance in the process of creating the CAF e-Platform

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 the period **October – December 2026.**

1.5 NOTE: Please, clearly indicate in the Methodology that you shall submit, the entity with whom the contract would be concluded (in case your application is successful), i.e. whether the contract would be concluded with:

- **the expert as a physical person;**
- **a company on behalf of the expert (the name of the company should also be provided).**

This cannot be changed in the procedure to follow.

In addition, you are kindly requested to fill out and submit the following documents:

Legal Entity File (for individual expert) – attached to this document

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

Legal Entity File (for private company) - attached to this document

Please also submit any supporting documents required in these templates.

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 general and specific professional experience, in line with ToR;

Professional experience with ICT tools, and/or other relevant IT infrastructures and ICT systems, experience in delivering training, workshops, and/or experience in preparation of guidelines, methodologies, knowledge and understanding of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) model and its implementation process is considered an asset.

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:

Written methodology: 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.)

Financial offer (which shall specify a total sum amount in euros as well as max. number of working days proposed) in a separate e-mail.

3.2 The required documentation should be submitted in electronic format by e-mail to the following address: procurement@respaweb.eu by **24 September 2026**, before Midnight. Late submissions will not be considered for evaluation. **The application should contain in the e-mail title the following reference: activity No. 69/2026 Expert assistance in the process of creating the CAF e-Platform**

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

Selection 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 negotiate the contract and the fee proposed by ReSPA. If negotiations are successful, the selected candidate will be

awarded the contract. Should the negotiations fail, the next-ranked candidate will be invited to the negotiations.

Section 5. Final Considerations

5.1 The payment will be made in one instalment, 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 Slaven Bukarica, Quality Management Officer via e-mail: s.bukarica@respaweb.eu, by **21 September 2026** (midnight), the latest. ReSPA will post the response, including an explanation of the query without identifying the source of inquiry, on its website (www.respaweb.eu) by **23 September 2026**. Any request for clarification must be sent by standard electronic communication to the above e-mail address.

Terms of Reference

Request for Services

Expert assistance in the process of creating the CAF e-PLATFORM

1. Background

The Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) is an intergovernmental organization that enhances regional cooperation, promotes shared learning, and supports the development of public administration in the Western Balkans. ReSPA Members are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia, while Kosovo² is a beneficiary. ReSPA aims to help regional governments develop better public administration, public services, and overall governance systems for their citizens and businesses and prepare them for membership in the European Union.

ReSPA establishes close cooperation with ministers, senior public servants, and unit heads in member countries. ReSPA also works in partnership with the European Union, precisely the Directorate General for Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood (DG ENEST), other regional actors such as OECD/SIGMA and the 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 to support the ReSPA activities (research, training and networking programmes) in line with the EU accession process. Currently, ReSPA is implementing its sixth 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 2026.

ReSPA works primarily through regional networks which operate at three levels: Ministerial, Senior Officials, and networks/working groups of experts and senior practitioners. There are five regional thematic groups: (1) Policy management, better regulation and simplification, (2) European integration and accession negotiations; (3) Human Resources Management and Professional Development; (4) Service Delivery (digitalization and quality management); (5) Public Finance Management.

2. Problem statement and description of the assignment

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a comprehensive quality management model specifically designed for public sector organisations. Its implementation requires a structured and

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participatory process covering preparation, self-assessment, prioritisation of improvement actions, development and implementation of improvement plans, monitoring of results, and preparation for the CAF External Feedback Procedure (CER).

As the Regional Quality Management Centre (RQMC), ReSPA supports public administrations in the Western Balkans in introducing and implementing CAF and works closely with National CAF Correspondents, CAF project managers, institutional teams and external feedback actors. The growing number of CAF implementations and stakeholders involved has created a need for a more integrated, efficient and sustainable digital approach to managing the entire CAF lifecycle.

Currently, the different stages of CAF implementation require extensive coordination, exchange of documents, collection and consolidation of individual inputs, scoring, preparation of reports, prioritisation of improvement actions and continuous monitoring. These processes can be administratively demanding and may rely on fragmented tools and manual interventions. A centralised digital environment is therefore needed to standardise and simplify CAF implementation, facilitate collaboration among stakeholders, improve the quality and consistency of information, and provide timely insight into implementation progress.

To address these needs, ReSPA intends to develop a **CAF e-Platform** as a comprehensive digital solution supporting organisations throughout the complete CAF implementation lifecycle, from initial preparation and self-assessment to improvement planning, implementation monitoring and CER readiness assessment. The platform will provide a common environment for ReSPA RQMC, National CAF Correspondents, CAF project teams and external feedback actors to coordinate, manage and monitor CAF-related processes.

The assignment will therefore encompass the **design, development, testing, deployment and operationalisation of the CAF e-Platform**, based on the functional, technical and user requirements defined by ReSPA. The platform should digitalise and integrate the key CAF processes, including CAF project management, communication planning, questionnaire management, individual and consolidated self-assessment, prioritisation of improvement actions, preparation of improvement plans, learning resources, event management and user administration.

Particular attention shall be given to the introduction of **AI-supported functionalities** where they can improve efficiency and quality. These should include, inter alia, support for adapting questionnaires, summarising and improving textual inputs, supporting scoring, consolidating self-assessment inputs, generating self-assessment reports, clustering improvement actions and supporting preparation of improvement plans. AI-generated outputs shall remain subject to human review and approval and shall not be automatically accepted by the system.

The platform should also provide role-based dashboards and reporting functionalities enabling relevant stakeholders to monitor CAF implementation at institutional, national and regional levels.

The solution shall be designed as a **secure, multilingual, scalable and maintainable web-based platform**, capable of accommodating future growth in the number of users, institutions and CAF projects. It shall ensure secure authentication and role-based access, data protection,

reliable performance, availability and backup mechanisms, compatibility with modern browsers and responsive access from desktop, tablet and mobile devices. Its modular architecture should allow future modifications to the CAF model and further functional enhancements without requiring major redevelopment.

Through this assignment, ReSPA aims to establish a sustainable regional digital infrastructure for CAF implementation that will reduce administrative workload, strengthen collaboration and institutional ownership, improve consistency and quality of CAF processes, and enable more effective monitoring and evidence-based management of quality improvement initiatives across public administrations in the Western Balkans.

The CAF e-Platform shall be developed following an iterative, **user-centred and Agile approach**, allowing for feedback from **CAF practitioners** during the development process and incorporation of agreed improvements into subsequent development stages. The platform shall be fully aligned with the latest applicable **CAF External Feedback Procedure (CAF Excellence Recognition - CER)** and its requirements, ensuring that the CER-related functionalities and workflows reflect the current European CAF framework. The link of the CER <https://www.eipa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/CAF-Excellence-Recognition-CER-November-2025.pdf>.

3. Tasks and responsibilities

Based on the main elements described in the previous section, the Expert shall, indicatively, perform the following tasks:

1. **Analyse and validate the functional and technical requirements** for the CAF e-Platform in close cooperation with ReSPA, ensuring their alignment with the CAF implementation lifecycle, the needs of different user groups, and the requirements of the Regional Quality Management Centre (RQMC)..... **(1.5 days)**
2. **Design the overall system architecture, database structure, user interface and user experience (UI/UX)**, ensuring that the platform is modular, scalable, secure, maintainable, responsive and suitable for future functional upgrades..... **(2 days)**
3. **Design and develop the authentication, user and role management system**, including appropriate role-based access rights for ReSPA RQMC, National CAF Correspondents, CAF Project Managers and Deputy Project Managers, CAF Project Users and External Feedback Actors..... **(2 days)**
4. **Develop role-based dashboards** providing relevant institutional, national and regional-level information and visualisations, including CAF projects status, milestones, risks, resources, implementation rates, overdue activities and other relevant indicators. **(2 days)**
5. **Develop a learning module**, where education materials and various e-learning courses on CAF will be made available from..... **(1 day)**

6. **Develop the CAF Model Configuration and Template Management functionalities**, allowing authorised users to configure CAF criteria and subcriteria and manage templates for communication plans, CAF questionnaires, self-assessment reports and improvement plans, including AI-supported translation where applicable. ReSPA should be able to create generic templates, while the national CAF correspondents should be able to create country-specific templates based on the generic ones..... **(3 days)**
7. **Develop the CAF Project Management module**, covering the creation and management of CAF projects, institutional information, objectives, milestones, risks, resources, strategic documents, project assignments (with automatic generation of the project assignment document), and lifecycle management, including automatic activation/deactivation of relevant functionalities according to the implementation phase..... **(2 days)**
8. **Develop functionalities supporting communication planning and event management**, including preparation and monitoring of communication plans and visualisation of the progress, management of trainings, workshops and other events, participant attendance management, interactive calendars and automated notifications..... **(3 days)**
9. **Digitalise the complete CAF self-assessment process**, including questionnaire adjustment, individual electronic self-assessments via a comprehensive e-form in a wizard form, validation rules, scoring, consolidation of individual assessments, preparation and versioning of the self-assessment report, and collaborative document finalisation following the consensus process..... **(4 days)**
10. **Develop the Improvement Plan module**, including individual and group prioritisation and scoring of improvement actions, clustering of actions, identification of quick wins, preparation and collaborative finalisation of improvement plans, and export of relevant documents in Word and PDF formats..... **(4 days)**
11. **Develop and integrate AI-supported functionalities** across relevant platform processes, including questionnaire adaptation, content summarisation and improvement, scoring support, consolidation of self-assessment inputs, self-assessment report generation, clustering of improvement actions and preparation of improvement plans, while ensuring that all AI-generated outputs remain subject to human review and approval..... **(4 days)**
12. **Ensure multilingual functionality**, allowing users to select their preferred language and provide feature to add additional languages and translations on the platform..... **(2 days)**
13. **Implement notification and workflow mechanisms**, including in-app and email notifications related to pending, upcoming and overdue activities and relevant actions throughout the CAF project lifecycle..... **(2 days)**

14. **Ensure compliance with defined non-functional requirements**, particularly regarding security, authentication, role-based access control, data protection, performance, availability, backup and recovery, scalability, maintainability, browser compatibility and responsive design.....(2 days)
15. **Conduct comprehensive functional, technical, security and user acceptance testing**, address identified issues and optimise the platform based on testing results and feedback provided by ReSPA and designated users. As part of the development and validation process, organise and facilitate two online consultative sessions with CAF practitioners to present the progress and key functionalities of the platform, collect structured feedback and ensure that relevant feedback is appropriately assessed and integrated into the platform before its finalisation..... (2 days)
16. **Deploy and configure the CAF e-Platform** in the agreed hosting environment and ensure that the solution is fully operational and ready for production use..... (1 day)
17. **Prepare comprehensive technical, administration and user documentation**, including user manuals and practical guidance for different categories of platform users. Video tutorials on using the system will be designed in cooperation with ReSPA, which should be available via the platform..... (1.5 days)
18. **Provide knowledge transfer and training** to ReSPA staff and designated administrators/users to ensure effective administration, maintenance and sustainable use of the platform..... (1.5 days)
19. **Provide technical support during the initial operational period**, including troubleshooting, correction of identified defects and necessary adjustments following the initial use of the platform..... (3 days)
20. **Regularly coordinate with ReSPA throughout the assignment, present progress and interim results, incorporate feedback and ensure that all agreed deliverables are completed according to the required quality standards and timeframe.** The Expert shall also co-present the final CAF e-Platform jointly with ReSPA at an appropriate ReSPA event, with the 6th Annual RQMC Meeting proposed as the preferred venue, in order to present the final product, its key functionalities and practical added value to CAF practitioners, ReSPA partners and other relevant stakeholders..... (1 day)
21. **Final Reporting**

Prepare a final report summarising activities conducted, methodologies developed, consultations undertaken, training delivered, key findings, recommendations, and proposed next steps for implementation....., (0.5 day)

The abovementioned tasks and responsibilities represent the milestones of the assignment to be delivered within the time framework of **45 (forty-five) working days**.

4. Necessary qualifications of the required expert

The expert needs to have diverse but compatible experience related to the design and implementation of various IT tools relevant for the development and implementation of public policies and/or strategies. More specifically, the expert shall possess the following profile:

Qualifications and skills:

- At least a university degree in Applied Computer Engineering, Electronic Engineering, or Control Systems Engineering
- A Master's Degree 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 with ICT tools and/or other relevant IT infrastructures and ICT systems
- Experience in delivering training, workshops, and/or experience in the preparation of guidelines and methodologies.
- Knowledge and understanding of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) model and its implementation process is considered an asset. Previous professional experience in supporting or implementing CAF is highly desirable.

Skills:

- Excellent written and oral communication skills in English;
- Ability to prepare and deliver well-structured presentations.

Note: The expert shall not be civil/public servant in any of the Western Balkans' administrations in the moment he/she applies for this assignment.

Other preferred knowledge and skills:

- Hands-on experience with modern JavaScript/TypeScript frameworks (e.g., React, Angular, Vue.js), responsive web design, state management, and modern CSS frameworks.
- Proven expertise in building robust, scalable server-side applications and RESTful APIs using modern frameworks (e.g., Node.js, Python/Django/FastAPI, Java/Spring Boot, C#/.NET Core etc.)
- Proficiency in relational (e.g., PostgreSQL, MySQL) databases, including schema design, query optimisation, and data migration.
- Strong familiarity with cloud platforms (e.g. AWS, Azure)

- Understanding of algorithms and data structures to design and implement efficient and scalable software solutions.
- Knowledge and experience in Agile/Scrum methodologies;
- Understanding of object-oriented programming principles and design patterns for creating modular and maintainable code.
- Strong proficiency with web development technologies;
- Ability to write unit tests, perform integration testing, and debug software to identify and fix issues;
- Ability to create clear and concise technical documentation for code, APIs, and systems architecture.
- Ability to analyse complex problems and develop efficient and effective solutions.

5. Timing and Location

The assignment involves work from home/office. The assignment is expected to be performed tentatively from **October to December 2026**.

6. Remunerations

The assignment foresees the engagement of up to 45 (forty-five) expert days in the amount of up to 18.000 EUR.

The payment will be made in one instalment upon completion of the assignment. The final outputs will be subject to ReSPA's approval before payment is executed.

Note: No other costs will be covered except the expert's daily rate.

7. Reporting and Final Documentation

The Expert shall ensure regular communication with ReSPA and throughout the assignment and provide updates on the progress of activities as required.

Upon completion of the assignment, the Expert shall submit a **Final Report** summarising the activities carried out, methodology applied, key findings and recommendations resulting from the assessment. The report should present the outcomes of the analysis in a clear and structured manner and include:

The Expert shall provide the following deliverables:

- **Inception Report and Detailed System Design** – refined functional and technical requirements, system architecture, database structure, user roles and permissions, UI/UX approach, implementation methodology, work plan and timeline.
- **CAF e-Platform – Initial/Testing Version** – development and configuration of the initial operational version covering the agreed core modules and functionalities, including user management, dashboards, CAF model configuration, templates, CAF project management, communication planning, events, self-assessment, improvement planning, monitoring and reporting.

- **AI-Supported Functionalities** – development and integration of the agreed AI-supported functionalities, including questionnaire adaptation, content summarisation and improvement, scoring support, consolidation of self-assessment inputs, report generation, clustering of improvement actions and preparation of improvement plans, with appropriate human review and validation mechanisms.
- **Testing and User Acceptance Report** – functional, technical, security and user acceptance testing, including identified issues, user feedback, corrective actions and confirmation of readiness for production deployment.
- **Final CAF e-Platform and Production Deployment** – fully functional, tested and operational CAF e-Platform deployed in the agreed hosting environment, incorporating all agreed modules, workflows, dashboards, notifications, and multilingual functionalities.
- **Technical and User Documentation** – complete technical and system administration documentation, source code, database and configuration documentation, deployment and maintenance instructions, user manuals and guidance for different categories of users.
- **Training and Knowledge Transfer** – training sessions for ReSPA staff, system administrators and other designated users, including practical guidance on platform administration, configuration and use.
- **Final Report and Handover** – final report summarising the work performed, functionalities delivered, testing and deployment, recommendations and maintenance considerations, accompanied by the formal handover of the platform, source code, configurations and all relevant documentation to ReSPA.

All deliverables shall be subject to ReSPA's review and approval. The Expert shall incorporate comments and requested revisions within the agreed timeframe and ensure that ReSPA has the necessary access, documentation and knowledge to administer, maintain and further develop the

The Final Report shall incorporate comments and feedback received from the Ministry of Public Administration and other relevant stakeholders during the consultation process.

Documents required for payment

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