Procurement Notice

Assignment name: **Senior E-Government EU Expert for providing technical inputs within the development of Western Balkans Regional Study on Digitalisation**

Reference Number: #22020

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* 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 the membership of the European Union.

ReSPA establishes close co-operation with ministers, senior public servants and heads of function in Member countries. ReSPA also works in partnership with the European Union, specifically Directorate General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), other regional players 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 endeavor in Public Administration Reform, has contributed to capacity-building and networking activities through in-country support mechanisms, peering and the production of regional research material.

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. So far, three EC Grant Contracts (GCs) have been implemented by ReSPA during the period 2010-2018. The current EC grant supports the implementation of the activities required for contribution to the achievement of the three strategic objectives during the period 2019-2021.

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 representatives of institutions in charge of PAR, Public Financial Management (PFM) and government policy planning and the European Integration (EI) co-ordination process and five Working groups: (1) Centre-of-Government Institutions; 2) Better Regulation; 3) Human Resource Management and Development; 4) E-Governance; and 5) Quality Management.

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.

1.2 ReSPA now seeks to engage one expert to provide support in the area of e-Government.

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 March - June 2022.

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 general and specific professional experience, in line with ToR;
- Professional experience in the role of lecturer / presenter.

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 **9 March 2022** before Midnight. Late submissions will not be considered for evaluation.

The application should contain in the e-mail title the following reference: **Activity No 22020 Senior E-Government EU Expert for providing technical inputs within the development of Western Balkans Regional Study on Digitalisation**

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 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 one installment, 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 o.damjanovic@respaweb.eu, by **07 March 2022** (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) by **08 March 2022.** Any request for clarification must be sent by standard electronic communication to the above e-mail address.
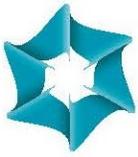
Terms of Reference

Request for Services

Senior E-Government EU Expert for providing technical inputs within the development of Western Balkans Regional Study on Digitalisation

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* 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 the membership of the European Union.

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1. Description of the assignment

ReSPA conducted a comprehensive study on the delivery of public services in the Western Balkans in 2018 (study finalised in 2019) This study covered wide range of areas including policy, legal and institutional framework; laws of administrative procedures; quality management; accessibility; and digitalisation. As the service delivery area is one of the most dynamic public administration reform areas in the Western Balkans, the results of this study become quickly outdated and need a revision.

The 2018 study covered a large number of areas and even though the report was extensive, it did not allow to cover any of these topics in sufficient level of detail. Therefore, ReSPA has decided to continue studying different components of service delivery separately. Work has already started on the **quality management** ReSPA is conducting the Periodical Regional Quality Management Analysis which will be updated biannually as one of the functions of its Regional QM Centre. In 2021, SIGMA conducted a detailed Western Balkans study on the implementation of **laws of general administrative procedures**, and it would not be justified to run another study in this area.

The policy, legal and institutional framework does not change that rapidly and it was already studied in course of the SIGMA 2021 assessment and further analysis by ReSPA would add a little value.

The only area that deserves a further study is the **digitalisation of public services**. **Therefore, the Western Balkans Regional Study on Digitalisation will be developed according to this ToR.**

SIGMA recently published (November 2021) the updated monitoring assessment reports of the Western Balkans and the assessment methodology covers also key aspects of digital government. However, the Principles of Public Administration do not include a separate principle on the digital government and it includes only key components of digitalisation at a rather general level under the Service Delivery area. This has also been acknowledged by the DG NEAR and SIGMA and is being addressed in course of the revision of the Principles and the methodological framework. Still, this revision process would take some time and the new methodological framework will be applied in the next round of assessments in couple of years' time.

Moreover, the digitalisation has become one of the priority areas for many governments in the Western Balkans due to the pandemic crisis. The variety of digitized services have been developed in order to suit the rapidly changing needs of citizens caused by the pandemic crises. Within the action plans of the strategic documents developed for the reform of public administrations as well as in other strategic documents which targeted the desired changes and improvements of information societies in Western Balkans it has become obvious that digitalisation of entire public administration is a prerequisite not only for better deliver of public services but also it is a needed element for developments and reforms of all layers of public administrations.

The evolution of names from E-Government, via Digital Government to Digital Public Administration represents the change in the function of the digitalisation. The analysis of the state of play of digital public administrations in Western Balkans have been done withing different studies, research and measurements. The Western Balkans administrations have already been included in some of the comparative studies conducted by the EC:

- *eGovernment Benchmark* covers Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.
- *European Interoperability Framework (EIF) Monitoring Mechanism* covers Montenegro and North Macedonia.
- Monitoring the Digital Economy and Electronic Communications Services in the Western Balkans and Turkey Market Report (aligned with the DESI methodology) covers all Western Balkans administrations.
- Also *SIGMA monitoring assessments* can be listed here as they provide some insights to the level of digitalisation of public services and were conducted for Albania, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia in 2021. Bosnia and Herzegovina is going to be assessed in 2022.

The inclusion of WB administrations in these studies provides very valuable insights on the developments of the different digital government areas and helps to assess the convergence with the EU tools and practices. In addition to that, the Western Balkans administrations are also included in the studies conducted by other international institutions:

- *eGovernment Development Index (EGDI) run by the United Nations*
- *GovTech Maturity Index run be the World Bank.*

The aim of the Western Balkans Regional Study on the Digitalisation is to provide an overview of the changes that took place after 2018 to date and are occurring in the realm of Western Balkans digital public administrations looking primarily to areas of:

   i. *Digital infrastructure (including institutional framework, national digital government portals)*
  ii. *Digitalization and connectivity of registries*
 iii. *Interoperability (legal, semantic, organizational, technical)*
 iv. *Open and accessible data, big data*
  v. *Once-only principle*
 vi. *Digital-by-default / digital-by-design*
 vii. *Trust services, e-ID, e-signature, e-payment, single sign-on, e-seal*
viii. *Emerging technologies (AI, blockchain etc)*
 ix. *Cyber security*

The methodology will further define the sub-components of these different areas that are analysed having in mind the importance looking from the ReSPA's perspective and some of them will be covered at a more general level, such as the digital infrastructure. The area of Digital skills is the subject of fully fledged Western Balkans assessment being done by RCC and the references to this assessment results that relate to public sector will be made.

An additional component of the study will be mapping of **major digitalisation efforts**:
- At the **macro level** – horizontal projects benefiting the digitalisation of services across the public administration.
- **Public Administration Reform related initiatives** structured along the logic of the Principles of Public Administration and mapping the key digitalisation initiatives in these areas.

All the topics should include the aspect of the pandemic **crisis and its impact on the digitalisation process**.

With this document, ReSPA is seeking for Senior E-Government EU Expert to provide technical expertise related to E-Government and digitalisation when working alongside with the Team Leader on formulating analytical framework of the Study, data collections sheets and questions for stakeholders. The technical expertise refers to comprehensive knowledge on the digital transformation processes as well as to specific issues of public (e)service management, data quality management, data protection, co-production of digitised public services, interoperability, once-only principle.

3. Tasks and responsibilities

 The Expert shall perform the following tasks and responsibilities:

<u>Preparatory activities – up to seven working days (7) days</u>

Besides getting familiar with the ReSPA Service Delivery study from 2018 and Concept Note of the Study the work will refer to the provision of technical inputs into the analytical tools:

- Get familiar with ReSPA Service Delivery Study and the Concept Note for the Study, including the referred materials of the studies.

- Design the analytical framework in co-operation with the Team Leader and adjusting it based on the feedback from the main stakeholders (as proposed by ReSPA).

- Identify the blind spots within the proposed analytical framework in co-operation with the Team Leader.

- Prepare the data collection sheets in cooperation with Team Leader for the national experts.

- Provide the list of research technical questions for collecting additional data.

<u>Development of Western Balkans Regional Study on Digitalisation – up to three days   (3) working days</u>

- Checking and analysing the inputs provided from country experts and from technical angle defining the gaps and needs for clarifications and additional information.

To 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.

Special considerations:

- Confidentiality: The Expert undertakes to maintain confidentiality on all information that is not the public domain and shall not be involved in another assignment that represents a conflict of interest to the prevailing assignment. All related materials/questionnaires collected in the market will be used for the purpose of this assignment only. The Expert shall submit to ReSPA complete material. The materials remain the property of the ReSPA.

- The legality of the inputs: All writing and material to be provided by the Expert during this assignment will be original and expert will work to the highest ethical standards and he/she will avoid:

a. Unlawful violation of any personal right of privacy;

b. Unlawful defamation of any person or entity;

c. Breach of any copyrighted material, literary or publicity right of any person or entity;

d. Violation of any law of the jurisdiction(s) in which consultant is located while fulfilling the assignment;

e. Plagiarism or improper attribution of others' work.

3. Necessary Qualifications, Experience and Skills

Educational background:

Qualifications and skills:
- At least Master's degree in Public Policy and Management, Public Administration, IT Management, Business Management or other related fields;

General professional experience:
- More than 15 years of professional experience in the field of public administration;
- 10 and more years of experience in working with eGovernment;
- Experience in international projects related to e-Governance and Digital Society development.

Specific professional experience:
- Specific experience in work related to public services delivery;
- Prior experience in designing different methodological toolkits;

Skills:
- High presentation and moderation skills;

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

4. Timing and Location

The assignment foresees work from home. The assignment will start in March 2022 and will be finished by the end of June 2022.

5. Remunerations

The assignment foresees up to ten (10) **working days** for the senior eGovernment Expert.

Activity	Max. No. of working days
Preparatory activities	7
Development of the WB Study on Digitalisation	3
Total	**10**

The payment will be done in one instalment after development of the first draft of the Study.

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 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 assigned expert if such changes occur.

6. Reporting and Final Documentation

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

Outputs

- Western Balkans Regional Study on Digitalisation-
    - analytical framework developed
    - data collection sheets developed and checked upon the completion from country researchers
    - technical aspect of the questions for the stakeholders provided

- Report on the assignment fulfilled

7. Reporting and Final Documentation

The Expert will be requested to deliver the following documents:

- *The final report* in English, no later than three days after the completion of the Assignment. The report will be subject to the approval of the ReSPA as a contracting authority;

- Timesheet (original and signed);

- Invoice (original and signed).