

Procurement Notice and Terms of Reference

Lead expert to support the development of a regional comparative analyses on Integrity in the Public Sector in the Western Balkans

Reference Number: # 11/2025

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 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, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia, while Kosovo*¹ is a beneficiary. ReSPA's purpose is to help regional governments in developing 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 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 through in-country support mechanisms, peering, and the production of regional research material.

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, government policy planning, and the European Integration coordination process and four regional thematic groups: Policy planning, better regulation and coordination of Centre of Government; European integration and accession negotiations (with specific reference to PAR and governance aspects); Human Resources Management and Development; and Service Delivery (digitalization and quality management).

1.2 ReSPA now seeks to engage Lead expert to support the development of a regional comparative analysis on Integrity in the Public Sector in the Western Balkans

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 **February- June 2025**

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

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 will result 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 be also 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**
- **Legal Entity File (for private company) - attached to this document**

Please also submit any supporting documents required in these templates.

Section 2. Language of the supporting documentation

2.1 Language of application: The 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 the supporting documentation

3.1 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 ReSPA may contact. (NOTE: There is no need to submit reference letters; ReSPA will directly contact the referees if needed).
- 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 electronically by e-mail to the following address: procurement@respaweb.eu by **19 February 2025** before midnight. Late submissions will not be considered for evaluation. **The application should contain the following reference in the e-mail: Application for activity number 11/2025.**

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 criteria 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 financial offer proposed by ReSPA. If negotiations are successful, the selected applicant will be awarded the contract. Should the negotiations fail; the next ranked applicant 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 (see below).

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 of the outcome of the procurement procedure.

5.4 Should you need any further clarifications with respect to this procurement notice, please contact Ms. Jelena Mrdak, Programme Manager, via e-mail: j.mrdak@respaweb.eu by **10 February 2025 (midnight)** at 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 **12 February 2025**. Any request for clarification must be sent by standard electronic communication to the above e-mail address.

Terms of Reference

Lead expert to support the development of a regional comparative analysis on Integrity in the Public Sector in the Western Balkans

Introduction

The Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) is an 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, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia, while Kosovo^{*2} is a beneficiary. ReSPA's purpose is to help regional governments in developing 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 Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), other line DGs, regional actors and initiatives such as OECD/SIGMA Programme 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 through on-demand support mechanisms, peering, and the production of regional research material. The European Commission (EC) provides directly managed funds to support the ReSPA activities (research, training, and networking programs) in line with the EU accession process.

Following consultations with its members, ReSPA has identified integrity in the public sector as a critical issue and aims to develop a regional analytical document to support policy reforms in this area. The analysis will provide an in-depth analysis of legal frameworks, implementation practices, and training initiatives related to integrity management in the Western Balkans, enriched with relevant EU good practices.

Purpose

The purpose of this assignment is to develop a comprehensive regional comparative analysis on integrity in the public sector, which, among others, will:

- Provide an overview of the legal framework governing integrity in each Western Balkan administration. Refer to relevant provisions of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) related to integrity and include findings from relevant analysis from other international organizations.

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- Analyse the implementation of the legal framework, highlighting good practices and challenges.
- Assess the training programs related to integrity available for civil servants, with a particular focus on training for senior public officials.
- Include examples of good practices from EU Member States.
- Develop concrete conclusions and recommendations, either administration-specific and/or at the Western Balkans regional level, to enhance integrity frameworks, strengthen enforcement mechanisms, and improve institutional coordination in the fight against corruption.

Problem Statement

Integrity in the public sector is a cornerstone of good governance and a fundamental prerequisite for building trust between citizens and institutions. Despite significant progress in regulatory frameworks across the Western Balkans, practical implementation of integrity measures remains uneven. Many public administrations face challenges in translating legal provisions into effective integrity management mechanisms.

Public sector integrity frameworks in the Western Balkans differ in terms of institutional mandates, enforcement capacities, and alignment with international standards. While integrity managers and integrity plans have been introduced in some administrations, their role, authority, and operational impact vary widely. Ensuring a consistent and effective approach to integrity management requires a deeper understanding of how different frameworks function in practice and identifying opportunities for alignment with EU standards.

Another challenge concerns the implementation of integrity plans at various administrative levels. Some administrations struggle with insufficient resources, lack of political will, and limited awareness among public officials regarding integrity principles. Moreover, coordination between anti-corruption bodies, public institutions, and civil society actors remains fragmented, reducing the overall impact of integrity-related policies.

Training of civil servants, particularly senior public officials, is a key mechanism for strengthening integrity in the public sector. However, training programs across the region exhibit discrepancies in content, frequency, and accessibility. Some administrations have developed structured integrity training, while others rely on ad hoc workshops or external donor support. Understanding the effectiveness of these programs and identifying best practices from EU Member States is essential for fostering a culture of integrity in public institutions.

Objectives and Scope of the Assignment

The overall objective of this assignment is to contribute to strengthening integrity frameworks and practices in the Western Balkans by conducting a comparative analysis that examines legal frameworks, implementation mechanisms, and capacity-building efforts. The analysis will provide evidence-based recommendations for improving integrity management at the national and regional levels.

The analysis will focus on three main areas: (1) legal and institutional frameworks; (2) implementation challenges and best practices; and (3) integrity training programs for civil servants, with a focus on senior officials. Special attention will be given to incorporating relevant EU and UNCAC standards, ensuring that the findings are aligned with international best practices.

The analysis will serve as a resource for policymakers, practitioners, and training institutions in the region, supporting efforts to build more transparent and accountable public administrations. It will be developed by a team composed of one team leader and six local experts (who are not subject to this Terms of Reference).

Tasks and Responsibilities

The Lead Expert will be responsible for developing a comprehensive regional comparative analysis on integrity in the public sector and will perform the following indicative tasks:

- To develop methodology and appropriately lead and directly coordinate work with six local experts (one per each WBs administration) engaged in developing the data on integrity in the public sector;
- To conduct desk research on integrity in the public sector in EU and OECD countries; Also assess training programs for civil servants, with a special focus on senior public officials.
- To review, improve and enhance the deliverables of the six local experts, who will contribute to the development of the analysis.
- To prepare a regional analysis on the integrity in the public sector in the Western Balkans, including in-depth analysis of legal frameworks, implementation practices, and training initiatives related to integrity management in the Western Balkans, enriched with relevant EU good practices;
- Based on the feedback of relevant stakeholders, produce the final comparative analysis;
- To prepare user-friendly learning products, snapshots, presentations, and knowledge bites;
- To prepare the report on the assignment, indicating key challenges, lessons learned, and relevant recommendations for ReSPA.

The Expert shall liaise directly with the responsible ReSPA Programme Manager and consider instructions received beforehand. All the materials should be submitted to the responsible ReSPA Programme Manager for approval and, if necessary, all adjustments done following suggestions by ReSPA Programme Manager.

Necessary Qualifications

The Expert shall possess the following qualifications:

- At least Master's degree in political science, law, public administration, or a related field.
- At least ten years of general professional experience;

- At least five years of experience in public administration reform, integrity policies, or anti-corruption initiatives.
- Proven expertise in developing policy and analytical documents at the national and/or international level.
- Experience in legal and institutional analysis related to integrity management.
- Strong understanding of EU public administration standards and good practices.
- Excellent research, drafting, and presentation skills in English.
- Previous experience in working on integrity-related issues in the Western Balkans would be an asset.

Time frame, Level of Effort, and Location

The assignment will take place from February to June 2025. The Level of Effort is estimated at twenty (20) working days, as follows (indicatively):

Task	Due date	Expert-days
1. Conducting desk research on relevant documentation	1 March	5
2. Develop the methodology for researching the data on integrity in Western Balkan administrations	5 March	2
3. Develop a draft comparative analysis based on data provided by the local experts	30 April	7
4. Finalizing the analysis based on the feedback provided	31 May	2
5. Producing learning products, snapshots, presentations, and knowledge bites	15 June	2
6. Presenting the analysis findings during the regional conference organized in Podgorica, tentatively in June 2025	25 June	2
Total:		20

The assignment foresees working from home and participating in the two-day regional conference organized in Podgorica, tentatively in June 2025.

Remunerations

The maximum amount of funds allocated for this assignment is **10,000 EUR** for a total of up to **twenty (20) expert days**. However, the daily fee per working day will be defined following ReSPA expert selection procedure based on assessed and evaluated expert capacities. The payment will be made in one instalment upon finalization of the assignment.

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 expenses, including travel, accommodation, local transport, meals, and other incidentals.

Reporting and Final Documentation

For the purpose of reporting, the Expert will be requested to deliver the following documents:

- The outputs of the assignment (methodology for researching the data, draft and final comparative analysis, PPT held during the Conference, snapshots and knowledge bites)
- A brief final report in English no later than seven days after completing 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).