

Terms of Reference

Request for Services

Senior specialist in Human Resources Management and Professional Development for supporting ReSPA programmatic actions in the Western Balkans

1. Background

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* 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 membership in the European Union.

ReSPA establishes close cooperation with Ministers, senior public servants and heads of units in Member countries. 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. 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 for the support of the ReSPA activities (research, training and networking programmes) in line with the EU accession process. Currently, ReSPA is implementing its 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 1 January 2023.

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 senior civil servants representing the ministries responsible for the Public Administration, ministries of Finance, and institutions in charge of the European Integration process coordination of the ReSPA Members and four regional thematic groups: (1) Policy planning, better regulation and coordination of Centre of Government, (2) European integration and accession negotiations; (3) Human Resources Management and Professional Development; (4) Service Delivery (digitalization and quality management).

* 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.

2. Description of the Assignment

For the period 2023-2026, ReSPA will develop, design and deliver capacity-building programmes, deliver surveys and other activities in the thematic area “Human Resources Management and Professional Development”. ReSPA members invested in their efforts to increase the professionalization of the civil service but there is still much work to be done. Human resources management and professional development thematic area has also been affected in the last couple of years by the COVID-19 pandemic, digitalisation processes, use of artificial intelligence, innovation and modernisation in many HR areas, etc. ReSPA’s focus will remain on merit-based recruitment and performance appraisal but there are other areas that also need to be addressed from the innovation and digitalisation point of view, from the point of view of the ageing workforce, workforce planning and forecasting, agile management etc.

Talent management or talent planning (attracting, recruiting and retaining the best people for the job) shifts the focus of the HR team from reactive to proactive - letting them concentrate more on strategic than administrative tasks. HR should be a true enabler of personal, strategic and organisational growth, and not simply have an administrative role as is the case currently. **Support to reflecting the issues of career** development such as promotions, transfers, but also **retention, and mobility** will be continued. Public institutions should strengthen their capacities to manage the unforeseen, namely, to become resilient to different types of shocks.

Workforce planning, forecasting of the needed skills, and how they accommodate the workforce in flexible conditions, especially during the COVID pandemic, and how to develop job descriptions will also be on the ReSPA agenda. In addition, forecasts of inflows and outflows lead to the exploration of steps and opportunities for the advancement of individuals. ReSPA will continue to support and promote the new trends in HR that will contribute to building resilient organisations, changing **organisational culture and the role of HR units** as agents of change in the civil service.

Strengthening leadership skills in the public service of the WB remains an issue that needs to be addressed in the future. In public administration, good **leadership** is crucial to building and maintaining a strong and resilient organisation that can properly perform its important duties for society. To this end, support will be provided in the development of agile leaders, learning about innovation **leadership** and innovation culture, learning about the ageing workforce and generational solidarity, inclusion and diversity, teleworking and the deployment of digital skills. The focus will also be placed on fostering **integrity** in public administration in cooperation with the regional organisations dealing with this topic. The exchange of experience not only among the WB administrations but also with the institutions/schools in the EU member states, as well as learning about the ongoing as well as new trends in the area of HR, is important.

The ambition of ReSPA in this thematic area is to strengthen the capacities of the senior civil servants of ReSPA members and equip them with skills for dealing with the HRMPD,

but also for creating a driving force which will lead to future changes in this area in the Western Balkans.

By means of these Terms of Reference (ToR), ReSPA is seeking one Specialist, an expert in Human Resource Management and Professional Development (HRPM), who would support ReSPA in boosting its work in knowledge management within the HRMPD area.

3. Tasks and responsibilities

The expert will be a part of the team of specialists engaged for different thematic areas. The expert shall work closely with the Programme Manager in charge of HRMPD and will provide support throughout 2024/2025 in designing thematic topics and activities, conducting brief analytical snapshots on selected topics in this thematic area, assisting in analysing and screening the needs pertaining to specific topics in the thematic area, providing comments at analytical papers/documents to be developed over the course of 2024/25, etc.

The expert might occasionally assist at the meetings of the regional thematic working group by streamlining the technical discussion into the conclusions of the meeting, preparing technical part of the panels, discussions and other events that require specific expertise. For each specific task within the assignment, the expert will provide information on the good regional and EU practices, existing networks, and work of other international organisations or CSOs in the region that might be of relevance to the envisaged programme activity.

The expert will be engaged for up to 15 days and will perform the following indicative tasks:

- Assist in analysing and screening the needs in the specific topics within the HRMPD thematic area;
- Provide support in the upgrading of programme activities within HRMPD thematic area and support in co-designing capacity-building actions of ReSPA in the area (**among others, use the inputs from the conference held in Slovenia in October 2024**);
- As requested, conduct brief analytical snapshots on the selected topic within the HRMPD thematic area;
- Provide comments on the analytical papers/documents that will be developed within the HRMPD thematic area in 2024/25;
- Occasionally assist at the meetings of the HRMPD regional thematic group by streamlining the technical discussion into the conclusions of the meeting;
- Prepare technical part of the panels, discussions and other events that require specific HRMPD expertise;
- Occasionally meet other specialists online and boost the synergy among thematic areas.

The abovementioned tasks and responsibilities represent the milestones of the assignment, but the expert and ReSPA Programme Manager in charge can propose changes/adaptations upon mutual agreement.

4. Timing and Location

The assignment foresees working from home/office – most of the support will be provided online (through electronic communication, e-mails, and e-meetings) and participation in at least one face-to-face meeting. The work will be performed from **September 2024** to **December 2025**.

5. Remunerations

The assignment foresees up to **15 (fifteen) expert days** in the amount of up to 7.500EUR.

The payment will be made in two instalments (two phases), the first following the submission of the report for implementation of the 7 days of the assignment and the second one following the submission of the report on the implementation of the remaining 8 days. Both reports are subject to the approval of the relevant ReSPA PM.

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.

6. Necessary Qualifications, Experience and Skills

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 HRMPD, capacity development, conducting analysis, surveys, etc. More specifically, the expert shall possess the following profile:

Qualifications and skills:

- At least Master degree in Public Policy and Management, Public Administration, or other related fields;
- PhD shall be considered an asset;

General professional experience:

- At least 10 years of professional experience working in or with the public sector and related assignments/positions;

Specific professional experience:

- Specific experience in work related to HRMPD (merit-based recruitment, performance appraisal, leadership, career development, knowledge management, talent management)
- Proven experience related to the development/design/delivery of capacity-building programmes in the area of HRMPD;
- Prior experience in conducting analysis and needs assessment;
- Previous experience and work in the Western Balkans will be considered an advantage.

Skills:

- Strong 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.

7. Reporting and Final Documentation

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

Outputs (indicatively)

- Analytical snapshots in the relevant area, analytical papers with comments, conclusions from the meetings, inputs for the panel discussions, curricula/programme development, PPTs prepared, etc.

Documents required for payment

- Invoice (original and signed);
- Timesheet (original and signed);
- Final report in English on the performed tasks.