

# Terms of Reference

## Request for Services

*Evaluation of the Public Administration Reform (PAR) Strategy 2018 – 2021 and its Action plan of the Republic of North Macedonia*

### 1. Background

The Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) is the inter-governmental organisation for enhancing regional co-operation, 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\*<sup>1</sup> 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 Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), other regional players such as OECD/SIGMA and 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 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 2010-2015. The current EC grant CN 2019/ 405 139 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) coordination 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 supports its members through its support mechanisms, and one of them is the in-country support mechanism. This mechanism addresses the specific needs of ReSPA Members, supporting public administration reforms in the areas covered by the ReSPA Programme of Work.

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<sup>1</sup> \* 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

This Terms of Reference (ToR) refers to the request submitted to ReSPA by the Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA) of the Republic of North Macedonia to evaluate the Public Administration Reform (PAR) Strategy and its Action Plan for the period 2018-2021.

## 2. Description of the assignment

The existing PAR strategy 2018 – 2022 for North Macedonia was adopted on 20 February 2018, after series of consultative meetings with external stakeholders such as representatives from the civil society, international community, trade unions and other partners. The Strategy contains the following priorities:

1. Policy-making and Coordination;
2. Public Service and Human Resource Management;
3. Responsibility, Accountability and Transparency; and
4. Public Services and ICT Support to Administration.

Continuous monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the PAR umbrella strategy has been ensured, through regular reports prepared in cooperation with relevant institutions and stakeholders. Civil society has actively participated in the monitoring of the government's reform efforts, and where possible, has contributed to the institutions' reports on the implementation of strategies. MISA, in close cooperation with SIGMA, prepared Guidelines were prepared for monitoring of the PAR Strategy implementation. To date, 4 semiannual and 3 annual reports were prepared and submitted to the PAR Secretariat. All relevant reports and documents related to the Strategy are published on MISA website<sup>2</sup>. The EC monitors the progress of PAR in North Macedonia and regularly evaluates and reports on what has been achieved and what remains to be done in the area. The 2020 Report notes that the monitoring reports on implementation of the Public Administration Reform Strategy and the Public Financial Management Reform Programme were produced and accompanied with adequate visibility actions<sup>3</sup>. The latest EC Report<sup>4</sup> states that the implementation, monitoring and reporting of the 2018-2022 public administration reform strategy and the 2018-2021 public financial management reform programme continued. SIGMA measurement report 2021 provides in-depth assessment per each area and comparison of the current status with the one in 2017.

The Strategy envisages an independent evaluation of its implementation – one mid-term evaluation (after 2 years of implementation) and one overall evaluation on the implementation. However, based on the need to timely prepare and adopt a new PAR Strategy 2023 – 2027 and to ensure continuation of the process and prevent occurrence of a potential gap, the overall evaluation of the implementation of the Strategy should start before its expiration, taking into consideration that the activities which will not be implemented are already identified. Based on the findings from the evaluation and SIGMA recommendations from the Monitoring Report 2021, MISA should commence the process for preparation of the new PAR Strategy and an Action plan for implementation. In case some activities remain unimplemented before

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<sup>2</sup> Please see <https://mioa.gov.mk/?q=mk/node/2103>

<sup>3</sup> EC Progress Report 2020

<sup>4</sup> EC Progress Report 2021

the adoption of the new PAR Strategy, the Strategy and AP will be adjusted to reflect the actual situation.

To date, no independent evaluations have been made. An independent evaluation has been recognized as a key priority of MISA activities, as the preparation of the next Strategy is planned for 2022.

The aim of the evaluation is to provide a combined mid-term and ex-post review of level of implementation of PAR Strategy 2018 – 2022. The proposed evaluation will serve as a basis for the forthcoming revision of the current Strategy, and, at the same time, it will make decision-makers aware of the actual progress in achieving the set PAR objectives, including an assessment supported by data relating to the set indicators.

The evaluation will be focused on the assessment of the level of implementation in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, and how these could be improved. The ultimate objective is hence to contribute to the improvement of the PAR strategic and operational framework in North Macedonia with well-targeted findings and recommendations. In view of this it is important to apply a well-designed and robust evaluation methodology. The general evaluation framework should revolve on standard DAC OECD evaluation criteria, correlated by the set of indicators defined in the AP. Focus should be on achieved results and the extent of achievement. The evaluation will be conducted by an independent external expert, who should, in close cooperation with MISA staff, assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the implemented actions, as well as their prospective impact and sustainability.

The Evaluation Report should incorporate the analysis of the progress made towards the vision and set objectives in the Strategy.

The overall objective (OO) of the Evaluation is to assess the level of implementation of the PAR Strategy 2018 – 2022 and its Action Plan. The evaluation shall contribute to the improvement of the PAR strategic and operational framework in North Macedonia with well-targeted findings and recommendations.

In particular, the evaluation will:

- 1 - Collect and provide available evidence that will enable an assessment on how well the PAR Strategy 2018 – 2022 has worked so far, taking into account the intervention logic, and whether the activities and outputs triggered by the Strategy are on course to achieve the objectives.
- 2 - Assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact (DAC Criteria) of the PAR Strategy 2018 – 2022 and its Action Plan, and generate specific and actionable recommendations based on the evaluation findings
- 3 - Assess the relevance and the adequateness of the defined indicators and provide recommendations on better definition of indicators.

The following outputs are expected:

- Methodology for evaluation (to be agreed with the Beneficiary) – short document precisely identifying the steps and aspects of the evaluation process

This will include: the key objectives and targets of the strategy against which the assessment must be carried out, the evaluation matrix, the methods for information collection and processing and the work-plan. The evaluation matrix will include a set of evaluation questions

including the evaluation criteria mentioned above, the judgement criteria and the main indicators for each EQ. The methodological approach and evaluation matrix should be prepared and approved in the first month of the commencement date of the mission, in order to define and clarify the methodology based on a more in-depth discussion of the requirements, such as availability of information, updated timetable of implementation.

- Draft outline (Headings) of the Reports on the implementation of the Strategy

A draft outline of the Reports, containing Headings and description of the information that will be contained in each chapter/subchapter should be proposed. This document should also be approved by the Beneficiary

- Draft Evaluation Report

The evaluation report will specifically answer each of the evaluation questions agreed in the inception phase and meet all the specific objectives and requested services. Despite that the content of the report is a subject of approval by the Beneficiary (please see the previous output), the report should include at least: an executive summary, main section, conclusions and recommendations and annexes

- Final Evaluation Report

This will include: (i) a synthesis of the findings of the evaluation questions; (ii) an overall conclusion and detailed conclusions; (iii) a set of recommendations based on the lessons learned.

- Action plan for preparation of the new strategy (steps, deadlines, institutional structure, comprehensive analysis of the problems and prioritization of the ones that should be solved, etc)
- Recommendations for capacity building of the strategic and technical operational framework for PAR

The main analytical tools will consist of relevant documentation assessment (desk research), and stakeholder consultations (field phase). The stakeholder consultations should be done in an evaluation workshop, organized in close cooperation with MISA Team. Additionally, online survey, individual interviews, and consultations with the focus groups may be used. The focus should also be put on the comprehensive study of indicators included in the Strategy.

A working group will be formed in MISA, to support the work of the evaluation team. The entire work shall be aligned with the Methodological approach, proposed by the expert at the very beginning of the evaluation.

Workshop No. 1 will serve as a starting point for field phase. The discussion will be facilitated the expert and the participants will be selected by MISA.

The methodology should also include the second workshop

Workshop No 2 will serve for validating the findings and recommendations by key players. Special focus should be put on the lessons learned, that should be incorporated in the preparation of the next Strategy.

Both workshops should be 2-days events with up to 30 participants and will be held in North Macedonia.

With this document ReSPA is seeking for **an expert on evaluation** to conduct evaluation of the PAR Strategy 2018 – 2021 and its Action plan of the Republic of North Macedonia. The expert is invited to propose his/her own approach to achieve the defined results.

### **3. Tasks and responsibilities**

The Evaluation **expert** shall be engaged for up to **30 (thirty) days** to perform the tasks listed below:

#### 1. Inception phase (2 days)

- Drafting the methodology for conducting the evaluation and obtaining confirmation/approval for the methodology from MISA team
- Developing the evaluation matrix and identification and formulation of evaluation questions (EQ) in relations to the DAC Criteria with regard to the Strategy priorities.
- Participating in the meeting with the MISA team and discussing evaluation matrix, EQs, judgement criteria and obtaining confirmation.
- Providing a proposal of a draft outline of the Reports, containing Headings and description of the information that will be contained in each chapter/subchapter. The outline should contain an Action plan for preparation of the new strategy (steps, deadlines, institutional structure, comprehensive analysis of the problems and prioritization of the ones that should be solved, etc), as well as recommendations for capacity building of the strategic and technical operational framework for PAR

#### 2. Desk research (5 days)

With support of MISA team making a list of all relevant documents that will be a primary and secondary source of information for the Strategy priority areas.

- Acquaintance with the relevant documents, reports and other related materials and collection of data.
- Identification of quantifiable information from existing documents as well as other secondary information sources, needed to answer the EQs elaborated in the evaluation matrix.
- Preparation of preliminary answers to EQs and issues to be further investigated that will be submitted to the participants of 1<sup>st</sup> workshop

#### 3. Workshop 1 (3 days)

- Preparation of the workshop
- Participating in a two-day workshop and presentation of the approach as well as preliminary answers to EQs and issues to be further investigated
- Facilitating group discussion on the achievements per evaluation questions related to Strategic areas

#### 4. Field research (6 days)

- Conducting at least 6 interviews with most relevant key informants (per sector) to complement document review and initial focus group discussion during the Workshop 1.
- Designing and conducting an online survey with the focus on the Strategy priority areas.

#### 5. Data analysis and report preparation (9 days)

- Examine the data and information collected under the desk and field research stage. Analyse both quantitative and qualitative data. As for quantitative data, the expert will mainly use the Monitoring reports and all other relevant documents identified during the desk phase. As for qualitative data, information extracted in workshop, surveys, and interviews will be examined.
- Prepare the input for the report in regard to Strategy priority areas and merge the main findings on the implementation of the PAR Strategy in relation to the DAC Criteria, achievements of the indicators.
- Providing recommendations for the next Strategy preparation with a focus on improvement of the strategic framework, improvement in relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability

#### 6. Workshop 2 and finalisation of the report (5 days)

- Preparation of the workshop
- Participating in the two-day workshop and presentation of findings, recommendations. Facilitating the discussion about the findings and obtaining feedback.
- Facilitating the development of the action plan for preparation of the new strategy (steps, deadlines, institutional structure, comprehensive analysis of the problems and prioritization of the ones that should be solved, etc)
- Facilitating the development of recommendations for capacity building of the strategic and technical operational framework for PAR
- Finalising the report related to the Strategy priority areas through incorporation of comments and additional findings.
- Preparing a brief digest report (up to three pages) in English language with visual elements.

The Evaluation expert will liaise directly with the MISA team and will take into consideration the inputs/comments received. MISA shall offer a room, technical equipment and assistance for the expert's work in the field. The expert shall also take into consideration the inputs/comments received during the assignment from the ReSPA Programme Manager in charge of the project.

## **4. Necessary Qualifications**

The Evaluation expert shall possess the following profile:

Qualifications and skills:

- At least B.Sc. in Social Sciences, Business Administration, Public Administration, Law, Economy, or any other field.

General professional experience:

- At least 5 years of relevant professional experience in public administration

Specific professional experience:

- At least three years of experience in monitoring and/or evaluation of projects
- Experience in preparation of analytical documents/monitoring or evaluation reports.

Skills:

- Teamwork;
- Fluency in English, as the official language of ReSPA. Fluency in the official language of the country where the process of consultancy is taking place;
- Ability to write clear and coherent guidance documents;
- Ability to work with people of different nationalities, religions and cultural backgrounds.

## 5. Timing and Location

The assignment foresees work from home and on location. The work will be performed from approximately end of **April to July 2022**. There are two workshops planned to be implemented in Macedonia. The exact place and dates will be agreed with MISA team.

## 6. Remunerations

The assignment foresees up to **30 (thirty)** man-days for the expert.

No	Activity	Maximum No of man-days
1.	<i>Inception phase</i>	2
2.	<i>Desk research</i>	5
3.	<i>Workshop 1</i>	3
4.	<i>Field research</i>	6
5.	<i>Data analysis and report preparation</i>	9
6.	<i>Workshop 2 and finalisation of the report</i>	5
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>30</b>

The payment will be conducted in 2 (two) instalments. The payment of the first instalment will be conducted on implementation of the phases 1, 2, 3 and 4 (16 man-days) while the payment

of the second instalment (14 man-days) will be conducted on completion of the assignment and its acceptance by ReSPA.

Note: No other costs will be covered apart from the expert cost per day.

## **7. Reporting and Final Documentation**

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

### ***Outputs***

- Final evaluation report with recommendations

### ***Documents required for payment***

- Invoice (signed original)
- Timesheets (signed original)
- Report on the conducted assignment in English language with recommendations

*M. Newby*