

Terms of Reference

Request for Services

Expert in digitalisation for collecting the data in public administration of North Macedonia for Western Balkans Regional Study on Digitalisation

1. 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*¹ 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 organizations. 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 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.

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

2. Description of the assignment

ReSPA conducted a comprehensive Service Delivery Study² on the delivery of public services in the Western Balkans in 2018 (study finalised in 2019).

The 2018 study followed the SIGMA principles developed for Service Delivery:

(1) Citizen oriented service delivery policy, (2) Fairness and efficiency of administrative procedures, (3) Existence of enablers for public service delivery, (4) Access to public services), and covered three thematic areas:

- (1) Implementation of General Administrative Laws
- (2) Digitalisation and E Government
- (3) Quality Management

The prime objective on the "macro" (country) level of the Study on Service Delivery was to provide an operational overview of and practitioners' insights on public service delivery in the Western Balkan region. Secondly, the Study on Service Delivery provided in-depth understanding of the operational level of service delivery (actual implementation of developed services) on the organisational or "micro" level. It attempted to understand the Western Balkan countries' practices in service design and change procedures, measurement of user satisfaction and citizens/users-oriented approach, quality measurement procedures, digital enablers' management, accessibility and other operationally interesting topics.

The extensive scope of the study prevented deep dive at the level of details. Moreover, with the rapid changes in the area of service delivery, as one of the most dynamic public administration reform area, the results of the study necessitated an update from a current perspective.

Therefore, ReSPA has decided to continue studying different components of service delivery separately. In the area of quality management ReSPA is conducting the Periodical Regional Quality Management Analysis -to be updated biannually as one of the functions of its Regional QM Centre, while in 2021, SIGMA already conducted a detailed Western Balkans study on the implementation of laws of general administrative procedures³.

The area necessitating further assessment is the **digitalisation of public services**.

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 delivery 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 within

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<https://www.respaweb.eu/download/doc/Comparative+Study+on+Service+Delivery.pdf/2342ffd1fe9e64da16d225f545eef521.pdf>

³ <http://www.sigmaxweb.org/publications/implementation-laws-administrative-procedure-western-balkans-sigma-june-2021.htm>

different studies, researches and measurements. Some Western Balkans administrations have already been included in some of the comparative studies conducted by the EC such as *eGovernment Benchmarks*, *European Interoperability Framework (EIF) Monitoring Mechanism etc.* *SIGMA monitoring assessments* can be added 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, while Bosnia and Herzegovina is being currently assessed in 2022.

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 in the realm of Western Balkans digital public administrations providing regional comparative overview in the field of digitalisation segment within service delivery in the Western Balkans.

The study will show how the governments in Western Balkans approach the digital transformation focusing on the e service delivery models and respective policies, including the actionable recommendations on the level of the particular public administration and those with regional perspective, by looking into areas:

- ✓ *level of use digital technology/infrastructure to optimise digital service delivery including institutional framework and national digital government portals (analysis to be done at more general level);*
- ✓ *potential for digitising services and processes, preparing plans and realisation of plans in governments for making appropriate services available digitally (digitalisation), for connecting of registers and ensuring the interoperability with main four aspects: legal, semantic, organizational, technical,*
- ✓ *the proactive use of digital technologies, data and big data by governments to enable more responsive, inclusive, accountable governments - "open by default" approach. Examples include open datasets, open-source solutions and multiple reuse cases, within legislative limits,*
- ✓ *how and to what extent systems in countries have facilitated increased co-operation and data sharing between institutions, leading to cost-reductions and increased efficiency (once only principle),*
- ✓ *how governments are redesigning services to focus on the needs of their citizens in ways that take advantage of data, the Internet and digital technologies (digital by default and/or digital by design) including deployment of new technologies (AI and blockchain),*
- ✓ *whether and to what extent government transactions and services are fully available and updated online, regarding trust services and key e enablers such as: e-ID, e-signature, e-payment, single sign-on, e-seal etc.*

Regarding the areas of Digital skills and Cyber Security, the Study will build on the latest respective assessments done for the Western Balkans. The Digital skills is the subject of fully fledged Western Balkans assessment undertaken 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 Public Administration Reform Action Plan related initiatives 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 Expert in digitalisation to provide the information pertaining to the data collections sheets developed by Senior EU Expert

and approved by Key Senior Expert. Data collection sheets will foresee the methodological tools that will be used for collection of information. The collected information will relate to the state of art in the digitalisation segment within service delivery in North Macedonia.

3. Tasks and responsibilities

The Expert in digitalisation shall perform the following tasks and responsibilities **for up to 7 (seven) days**:

- Closely collaborate with the Key Senior Expert for WB Study on the Digitalisation and Senior EU Expert throughout the assignment. Participate in an online training delivered by senior experts who will present the data collections sheets and chosen methodological tools for collection of information and provide any clarifications. (0,5 day)
- Meet with the government officials on the level of the relevant national institutions and collect the information envisaged by the data collection sheets. The data will contain the state of art in the country, best practices and recommendations for improvement and it will serve as an input for the Western Balkans Regional Study on Digitalisation. (5 days)
- Include a digest of user-friendly and good digital usability examples from the public administration of North Macedonia (0,5 days)
- Revise the draft version as well as the final version of the report in the section that relates to North Macedonia (1 day)

Throughout the duration of the assignment, the expert will collaborate closely with ReSPA Programme Manager in charge of the project. The expert will take into consideration the instructions received beforehand.

4.Necessary Qualifications, Experience and Skills

The Expert shall possess the following profile:

Qualifications and skills:

- At least B.Sc. (M.Sc. would be considered as an advantage) in Computer Science, Information and Communication Technologies, Public Administration, Law, Economy or related field.

General professional experience:

- At least 5 (five) years of relevant professional experience in the field of Digital transformation of Public Administration
- Experience of working in the Western Balkans, preferably North Macedonia, on similar actions (desirable).

Specific professional experience:

- Experience in drafting analytical papers or other country inputs for public administration in the area of Digital transformation of Public Administration/E government/IT related to the administration of North Macedonia.
- Familiarity with the context of North Macedonia, especially related to the area of digitalisation.

Skills:

- Excellent written and oral communication skills in English;
- Knowledge of the Macedonian language will be considered as an advantage;
- 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 the work from home and participation in the workshop. The work will be performed during **August- December 2022**.

6. Remunerations

The assignment foresees up to **7 (seven) working days**. The final outputs will be subject to approval from ReSPA before the payment is executed.

The daily fee shall be determined based on the assessed and evaluated expert's capacities, in line with ReSPA expert selection procedure adopted by the ReSPA Governing Board. The payment will be made in one instalment, following the submission of the final report.

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

7. Reporting and Final Documentation

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

Outputs

- Filled out data collection sheets for the relevant country.

Documents required for payment

- Invoice (original and signed);
- Timesheet (original and signed);
- Final report in English on the performed tasks. The report shall be submitted not later than 7 (seven) working days after the completion of the task. The report shall include relevant remarks, inputs and feedback related to the task performed and will be subject of approval by ReSPA.