

United Nations Development Programme Regional Centre for Public Administration Reform

Guidelines for Multi-Country Proposals

1. Funding for multi-country initiatives

The UNDP Regional Centre for Public Administration Reform (RCPAR) is an initiative launched by the United Nations Development Programme - Bratislava Regional Centre (UNDP-BRC) with financial support from the Hellenic Government. Relying on its staff in Athens and Bratislava and on cooperation with the UNDP country offices, the RCPAR aims to act as the hub of a regional network of Public Administration Reform (PAR), consisting of specialists from Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEECIS)¹.

Building on an existing network of Focal Points, recruited from government, academia and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the region, as well as the UNDP Regional Community of Practice on Public Administration Reform and Anti-Corruption (PAR-AC CoP), the RCPAR aims to develop four Communities of Practice in specific thematic areas - Policy-making & Coordination; Public Finance; Organization & Staffing; and Service Delivery - to enhance cooperation, foster innovation and dissemination of best practices, and facilitate the development of demand-driven activities through the active involvement of the CoPs in regional programming. For more information on the Project and its thematic areas, see **RCPAR Project Document 2008 – 2012**², January 2008 and **Study and Recommendation for the UNDP – CPAR Programme**³, July 2007.

1.1 Funding availability

The total budget available for the five-year project period is approximately \$7.1 million US, of which a yearly amount of approximately \$0.7 mill US (\$0.58 mill US in the first year) is earmarked for funding of multi-country initiatives⁴. The amount is divided equally between the four thematic areas of support. The estimated average funding per initiative is \$100,000 US. In the event that an initiative is co-financed by other partners (participating countries and/or external donors), or is evaluated to present significant partnership opportunities, the upper ceiling may be increased by up to 50%.

¹ This denomination covers the entire region according to UNDP terminology, which includes Central, Eastern, South-Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

² http://www.rcpar.org/mediaupload/RCPAR_documents/1_20080111_rcpar_prodoc_5-year_final.pdf

³ http://www.rcpar.org/mediaupload/RCPAR_documents/3_20070730_cpar_survey_report.pdf

⁴ See ProDoc 2008 – 2012, Budget, Output 1, Activity Set 1.1 – 1.4, for detailed information

1.2 Geographical scope

Proposals can be generated by RCPAR network members in all the countries in the CEECIS region. However, the Project does not assume an obligation to develop specific activities with all countries, or to serve all countries equally. Each proposal must have a regional dimension, understood as participation of at least three countries, which may or may not be from the same sub-region.

1.3 Number of initiatives per country per year

In principle, there is no limit to the number of projects network members in a country can be engaged in per year, in particular if the overall country engagement is spread across the four thematic areas. However, should it be found that the same country is particularly active in generating successful proposals in all the thematic areas of support, it may be encouraged to prioritise or sequence the different initiatives so as to avoid overstretching capacities and maximize impact.

1.4 Targets and priorities

Programming strategies with macro-level objectives and results frameworks will be jointly developed with the network members under each of the four thematic pillars in the first year of operation, and reviewed annually. Proposals generated by the network members will be assessed among others in terms of convergence with the thematic strategies when they become available. In the meantime, proposals will be selected based on the applicable criteria listed below.

1.5 Criteria for proposals selection

The following criteria will be taken into account:

- the number of countries involved, i.e. minimum three (more is an advantage)
- the diversity of participating countries, in terms of historical/political/socio-economic background, current PAR situation and geographical location (depending on the nature of the proposed initiatives, higher diversity may be an advantage or not)
- the need to support all the four main thematic areas
- linkages with other similar/convergent proposals and anticipated synergies within the programme
- the programmatic quality of the proposal:
 - alignment to RCPAR's programme strategy;
 - linkage with national PAR priorities of participating countries;
 - clear planned results and monitoring framework;
 - potential for impact and follow-up
- the need to avoid duplication with activities implemented by other organizations
- willingness of the initiators to co-sponsor the initiative, which may also be seen as an indicator of the level of interest and ownership
- partnership opportunities (actual and/or potential)
- the past performance of network members supporting the proposal; earlier participation per se in other activities will neither be an advantage nor a handicap
- support from UNDP country offices in participating countries (as determined by RCPAR)

- as an added value, promotion of substantive consultation and information sharing to consolidate regional PAR networks and knowledge resources and facilitate exchange with other international organizations, networks and initiatives operating in the same field.

1.6 Eligible initiatives

To be eligible for funding, initiatives must have been generated by one or more RCPAR network members, and network members from minimum three countries must endorse the submission of the proposal. The proposals must fall within one of the four RCPAR thematic areas: [a] policy-making and coordination; [b] public finance management; [c] organisation and staffing; and [d] service delivery. For more information on thematic areas and activity types, see the Report of the Regional PAR Survey, July 2007 and the RCPAR Project Document⁵.

1.7 Eligible costs

To be considered eligible under an approved initiative, costs must be necessary for carrying out the initiative; be provided for in the approved proposal and detailed budget plan; and comply with the principles of sound financial management, in particular value for money and cost-effectiveness. Costs must have been incurred during the initiative's implementation period, and must be recorded, verifiable and backed by original financial documents. Indirect costs such as telephone and internet charges, office rent and stationary shall normally not be covered, as the participating network members are expected to be able to make such contributions in kind to the initiative. Finally, items financed by another source, as well as debts or losses, including currency exchange losses, are considered ineligible costs.

2. Roles in design, selection and implementation of multi-country initiatives

2.1 Role of RCPAR National Coordinators and Focal Points

One or more RCPAR National Coordinator and thematic Focal Points (hereinafter referred to as network members) from the same country or from different countries, should assume the role of *initiator(s)* of a proposal. The initiator network member is expected to:

- Identify the need for a regional cooperation initiative in line with national PAR priorities and within RCPAR's thematic areas
- Liaise with relevant RCPAR network members in the country and develop a draft concept for the proposed initiative. At this stage, the initiator network member(s) is/are encouraged to also seek the endorsement of the National Coordinator in their respective country, and the support and advice from PAR officers in the respective UNDP country offices
- With the draft concept, and using RCPAR's networking facilities (e.g. Network Facilitator, interactive online workspace), liaise with network members in other countries and develop a joint proposal from minimum three countries
- In case the proposal is selected for RCPAR funding, develop the Activity Plan and subsequently serve as main substantive counterpart for RCPAR during the

⁵ Hyperlinks to both documents are provided on page 1.

implementation of the initiative (UNDP country offices are expected to serve as implementation partners from an operational viewpoint)

- Within one month of the completion of the activity, provide a final report to RCPAR.

2.2 Role of RCPAR Advisory Board

The Advisory Board consisting of prominent practitioners and scholars from the region, provides strategic recommendations and substantive support and guidance on the programmatic framework, general direction and programme impact. In particular, the Advisory Board shall:

- Discuss and suggest improvements to the guidelines for multi-country proposals
- Assess performance of earlier initiatives under RCPAR's thematic areas as appropriate
- As required, assess feasibility and merits of proposed initiatives from a strategic perspective and advise the RCPAR management accordingly.

2.3 Role of Network Facilitators

- Encourage submission of proposals from network members
- Facilitate networking and participatory programming, with a view to generate quality proposals with full ownership by network members, appropriate involvement of relevant focal points in each country (and of National Coordinators where applicable), and to ensure regional relevance and adequate diversity of participating partners
- Assess the programmatic merits of the proposals, also considering the jointly developed thematic papers, programming strategy and macro-level objectives under the respective thematic pillar as and when they become available
- Assess the feasibility of proposals from a regional/local perspective
- During the implementation period, liaise as appropriate with network members and UNDP country offices to monitor the achievement of key outputs and ensure proper reporting on activities supported.

2.4 Role of UNDP Country Offices

- Assist and provide support to network members in their country upon request. UNDP country offices are not expected to draft proposals, but may provide advice to improve proposals, as and when required
- Express their opinion on proposals prior to submission for funding, upon request from RCPAR
- Implement or support the implementation of specific activities, as applicable.

3. Funding Process

The RCPAR Team Leader, based on the advice of the Advisory Board and the assessment of the Network Facilitator(s), and in consultation with relevant UNDP country offices and the relevant counterparts in the UNDP Bratislava Regional Office, will determine the allocations to selected initiatives.

Funds will only be released if:

- a) The proposal is selected for funding

- b) The Activity Plan has been received by the RCPAR Team Leader
- c) Minutes reflect that the relevant members have participated (in situ or remotely) in developing the proposal and in the appraisal process.

Funds must be spent within the estimated activity period. As a normal procedure, funds will be made available through the relevant UNDP country offices for a determined period, in accordance to the time schedule of the approved proposal. Funds engaged but not spent by the estimate end date of the implementation period will normally be reallocated by RCPAR to other activities. Under special circumstances, an extension of the implementation period may be granted, subject to prior, written request from the initiator network member, explaining the reasons for the delay, and providing a revised time frame.

4. Reporting

Within one month of the completion of an event, the responsible multi-country activity partner should provide an event report, which should take into account the results of the participants' evaluation of the event. The draft report should first be submitted to the multi-country activity initiator for review and feed-back before it is submitted to the RCPAR. The final draft event report should eventually also be shared with the participants in the events for comments.

Mid-way in the implementation of the multi-country activity, the initiator network member should prepare a mid-term report to RCPAR.

Within one month of the completion of an initiative, the initiator network member should provide a final report to RCPAR. In case implementation is operated through UNDP country offices, the financial report will be generated from Atlas, UNDP's financial management system, and the initiator network member should provide a narrative report.

5. Contact information

The activity proposal form can be accessed directly here:

<http://www.rcpar.org/mediaupload/activities/mca/7rcparactivityproposaltemplate.doc>

As soon as it has been completed, it should be submitted via email to RCPAR@undp.org.

Questions or comments regarding the RCPAR funding mechanism for multi-country proposals can also be directed to RCPAR@undp.org.

8 Simple Steps for Getting Financial Support

- 1) **Read** the documentation and post a notice to the Network Facilitator and/or in the workspace, indicating your interest in preparing a proposal for a specific initiative. Solicit responses from fellow network members and the Network Facilitator
- 2) During the design phase, it is advisable to **liaise with the UNDP County Office** in your country and solicit their support
- 3) In co-operation with minimum two other network members (representing different countries), **define** what the priority initiative is and **draft** one joint proposal using the Proposal template⁶
- 4) **Submit** the proposal to RCPAR@undp.org.

If your Proposal has been selected...

- 5) **Fill in** the template for approved Activity Plans⁷ and forward it to the Network Facilitator
- 6) Once the detailed plan has been approved, **liaise** with the UNDP Country Offices to verify that they have been authorized by the RCPAR to spend
- 7) **Start implementation** in accordance with the approved plan.
- 8) Within one month after completion of the activity(ies), provide a **final report** to RCPAR.

⁶<http://www.rcpar.org/mediaupload/activities/mca/7rcparactivityproposaltemplate.doc>

⁷<http://www.rcpar.org/mediaupload/activities/mca/8rcparactivityplantemplatefinal.doc>