

CONCEPT NOTE

Steering Committee Meeting & 1st Advisory Board Meeting

11-12 November 2008, Athens, Greece

1. Introduction

The Regional Centre for Public Administration Reform (RCPAR) is the result of a partnership established between the United Nations Development Programme's Bratislava Regional Centre (UNDP/BRC), and the Hellenic Ministry of Interior. In this context, the two parties entered into a 5-year partnership agreement based on their mutual interest in, and shared commitment to advancing public sector reforms in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) through technical cooperation. The agreement – ratified by the Hellenic Parliament in late February 2008 – highlights the areas in which the Project will concentrate its activities, as well as the envisaged modalities for implementation and fulfillment of overall goals¹. In brief, the Project aims at promoting regional cooperation on public administration reform, emphasizing replicable good practices, mutual learning and home-grown solutions to common challenges in reforming the post-communist public sector.

2. Background

In 2006, the Hellenic Government and UNDP/BRC started a partnership to advance public sector reform in the region of Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS. This joint venture is based on substantive convergence in terms of programmatic objectives and complementarities in terms of operational infrastructure and capacities, i.e., BRC's project development and implementation capacity, as well as UNDP's infrastructure of Country Offices (COs) throughout the region and outreach to local partners. From the UNDP perspective, the partnership has been an attractive and timely opportunity, as it has allowed it to build a more coherent and unified framework for regional programming on Public Administration Reform (PAR), reduce duplication in donor-funded activities, consolidate resources, and bring together regional networks, experts databases and knowledge repositories.

¹ For more details on the rationale and the intended purpose of the RCPAR project, please see http://www.rcpar.org/public/rw/resource/RCPARdocuments/1_20080111_rcpar_prodoc_5-year_final.pdf

The Project has adopted a phased approach. The first phase was inaugurated in July 2006, and subsequently extended to the end of December 2007. It concentrated on strengthening regional cooperation and information sharing on PAR, and it administered a regional PAR Survey (“First Survey of Potential Assistance Needs in the Participating Countries”) in order to lay the foundations for the second phase, to start in 2008. The second phase focuses on the implementation of a demand-driven five-year programme on PAR, based on the findings of the Survey and other inputs from the Focal Points and the UNDP Community of Practice. In June 2007, the Project received a pledge for financial support from the Hellenic Government, which, following the necessary Parliamentary ratification on 27 February 2008, has been realized, covering the period 2008 to 2013.

In November 2006, the Project convened the Inaugural Meeting of Regional Networks of Public Administration Reform Practitioners and Experts, where the new partnership was officially introduced to relevant stakeholders. This included the existing networks of Focal Points and UNDP’s regional Community of Practice (CoP) on PAR, which were brought together for the first time and invited to engage in joint co-operation in the framework of the new Project. Specifically, the Meeting had the following objectives: [a] Introduce the new initiative; [b] Engage in dialogue on recent PAR developments and identify common challenges and concerns; [c] Initiate the process of joining the two regional PAR networks; [d] Prepare the ground for the regional PAR survey; and [e] Agree on a roadmap for consultations to develop a demand-driven regional five-year PAR programme. The Meeting succeeded in initiating a dialogue on issues that were subsequently addressed in the 2007 PAR Survey. Initial proposals for activities of the network were also discussed and network members made some progress in identifying shared challenges / areas of intervention and proposing co-operative initiatives.

The regional PAR survey was completed at the end of March 2007. The analysis of its findings and the Survey Report², presenting recommendations for the multi-year demand-driven programme on four thematic clusters, were completed in June 2007, and circulated to the networks as a basis for discussion in developing the five-year project.

In October 2007, as part of its planned activities, the Project supported a Western Balkans Workshop on Civil Service Reform³ and the related meeting of the Western Balkans Community of Practitioners on Human Resource Management in Civil Service (WB HRM CoP) as a prototype of participatory, thematic and/or sub-regional initiatives

² The Regional PAR Survey Report - a key input to developing the current project - is available at: http://www.rcpar.org/public/rw/resource/RCPARdocuments/3_20070730_cpar_survey_report.pdf

³ The report from the 2nd Western Balkans Workshop on Civil Service Reform: *Towards a Professional and Apolitical Civil Service* is available at <http://europeandcis.undp.org/governance/show/6D10DDA1-F203-1EE9-BAC0C7BBA53EDCB3>. The event was organized on 11-12 October 2007 in Budva, Montenegro, by UNDP Country Offices in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro with support from UNDP BRC and the Project, and gathered civil service reform practitioners from all the countries in the sub-region.

that will be facilitated by the RCPAR. Similar support was offered in November 2008, and it is expected that the WB HRM CoP will become actively engaged in regional initiatives under the RCPAR framework in the coming period.

The joint networks of Focal Points and Communities of Practice have been reinforced through the establishment of a public website⁴, an online regional resource centre on PAR⁵ and a regional PAR expert roster⁶. The online resource centre enables the networks to share information and knowledge, generate multi-country PAR initiatives in an interactive way, and solicit the Project's support for their implementation. The regional PAR expert roster maintains a database of expertise in areas of interest to the Project to be used when required.

A controlled and targeted widening of network membership is also underway, as it is considered a priority for the Project's successful implementation. The target is to attract institutions and individuals within each national government that are the most relevant. The so-called National Coordinator will be selected amongst those institutions with a mandate for PAR coordination, and additional thematic Focal Points will reflect the aforementioned four thematic areas⁷.

The guidelines for multi-country activity proposals have been finalised, and are currently being disseminated through the Project's public website⁸ and online regional resource centre. The guidelines aim at facilitating the development of demand-driven activities - falling within the four thematic areas⁹ of the Project - through the active involvement of the members of the CoP and the Network of Focal Points. The ultimate goal is to advance public administration reform in the region through the enhancement of regional cooperation, innovation and sharing of best practices. These guidelines are designed to deal with one of the two activity tracks, complementary to each other¹⁰.

The first type of activities aims at enhancing regional cooperation on PAR while responding to specific requests from participating countries. These multi-country activities are expected to be aligned to the Project's strategic priorities and support their achievement. The second type of activities is geared towards achieving the Project's strategic objectives at the macro level, and they involve a longer planning and implementation cycle. An example is the Western Balkans Workshop on Civil Service Reform and WB HRM CoP, the meetings supported in 2007 and 2008, and the research and survey on attracting and retaining the best people in the civil service, with specific

⁴ <http://www.rcpar.org>

⁵ <http://www.rcpar.org/mermig/home.do>

⁶ <http://tcdc.undp.org/cventry/default.aspx?key=1M7F96Y028088P4288H7>

⁷ For a detailed focal points distribution by thematic area, please see Survey Report, p. 6, available at: http://www.rcpar.org/public/rw/resource/RCPARdocuments/3_20070730_cpar_survey_report.pdf

⁸ <http://www.rcpar.org/public/rw/pages/activities.en.do>

⁹ Policy-making & Coordination; Public Finance; Organization & Staffing; and Service Delivery.

¹⁰ For a detailed presentation of these two types of Project activities, please see Project Document, pp. 4-5

reference to the level of HRM development in the Western Balkans Civil Service Structures.

3. Objectives of the meeting(s)

I. Steering Committee meeting

As specified in the Project Document, the RCPAR project is directed by a Steering Committee (SC), regularly chaired by the Regional Democratic Governance Team Leader (UNDP/BRC) and comprising of one or more appointed representatives of the Hellenic Government and eventually a representative of beneficiary countries/institutions¹¹. However, this particular SC meeting will not convene in its regular composition, but at high level of representation of the partners as it is considered of special importance given that it is the first one taking place following the ratification of the agreement.

The main objectives of this SC meeting are: [a] to mutually reaffirm the expectations stemming from this partnership and the Project; and [b] to highlight the principles the partnership may be based upon, such as mutual trust, transparency and accountability in the implementation of the Project's activities and fulfillment of its objectives.

II. Advisory Board meeting

The Advisory Board (AB) has been created to provide strategic recommendations and substantive support and guidance on the programmatic framework, general direction and programme impact, in order to ensure the optimal implementation of RCPAR's mandate. The members are typically internationally recognized PAR scholars and practitioners. Their selection has been based on recommendations from RCPAR, BRC, network members and UNDP COs, and is subject to approval by the Steering Committee. The AB will eventually consist of up to fifteen members¹², nominated for a period of five years. The AB will normally convene twice per year. The current number of approved AB Members is twelve.

¹¹ This representative will be designated on a rotational basis. The specific set-up for selection/nomination will be decided in consultation with the UNDP/BRC, the Hellenic Government and the Network.

¹² Members will be internationally recognized scholars and practitioners with an interest in supporting the Project and its mandate. Due consideration will be given to regional balance and equitable gender representation. For more information about the Advisory Board – including its Terms of Reference - see <http://www.rcpar.org/public/rw/pages/advisors.en.do>

4. Format of the meeting(s)

I. Steering Committee meeting

The meeting will take place on Tuesday 11 November, between 9.30 and 10.30 am, in a high-level format.

The expected participation on behalf of the Government of the Hellenic Republic is as follows:

- [a] Professor Prokopios Pavlopoulos, Minister of Interior
- [b] Vassilios Andronopoulos, Secretary-General, Public Administration and Electronic Governance, Ministry of Interior
- [c] Ourania Psomiadou, Director-General, Administrative Simplification and Modernisation, Ministry of Interior
- [d] Representative of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (tbc)

The expected participation on behalf of UNDP/BRC is as follows:

- [a] Jens Wandel, Deputy Regional Director for Europe and CIS, BRC Director
- [b] Regional Democratic Governance Practice Leader (tbc)
- [c] UNDP Partnership Bureau representative (tbc)
- [d] Dan Dionisie, PAR-AC Policy Specialist
- [e] Panos Liverakos, RCPAR Team Leader

Suggested agenda:

- [a] Brief presentation of progress from November 2006¹³ to date (Dan Dionisie and Panos Liverakos)
- [b] Expectations from the partnership and the Project, specific deliverables - ministerial meeting, project office, electronic library, etc (Minister Pavlopoulos)
- [c] Presentation of the Project from UNDP's perspective (strategy to deliver, expansion of network and its involvement in the design and implementation of demand-driven multi-country activities, application of the CoP modality, etc), project governance issues (role of BRC vis-à-vis the RCPAR Project Office in Athens, immediate next steps, etc) (Jens Wandel)
- [d] Designation of regular SC members
- [e] Introduction of the Advisory Board members to the members of the Steering Committee.

¹³ Date of the previous SC high-level meeting.

II. Advisory Board meeting

This meeting will take place over roughly a day and a half. The first session will begin at about 11.00 on Tuesday 11 November and it will last until about 17.30, with a break for lunch. The second session will begin at 09.30 on Wednesday 12 November and it will last until 12.30 noon.

Suggested Agenda:

Opening:

- [a] Presentation of the Advisory Board members

Working sessions – presentations and AB discussions and recommendations:

- [a] Historical background of the RCPAR
 - Beginning of the partnership
 - Inaugural Meeting in Alexandroupolis
 - PAR Survey
- [b] 5-year project
- [c] Structure of the project
 - Current and future – organogram, personnel and project office
 - Project approach and philosophy (demand-driven within a strategic framework, CoP modality and participatory programming using regional expertise ...)
- [d] Web portal / web application
- [e] Network of Focal Points – current state / future plans
- [f] Activities
 - Selection criteria
 - Implementation modality
 - Monitoring
- [g] Role and procedures of the AB in the RCPAR framework
- [h] Strategic orientation of the Centre
- [i] Partnerships.

- [j] Advisory Board rules of operation and procedure