

VACANCY NOTICE

Local Short-Term Expert for conducting a cost estimation of the Developmental Sectorial Strategy for the Judiciary (2024-2028)

Component:	Component 1: Improve the capacities of justice institutions to deliver justice in transparent and accountable manner
Activity:	Activity 1.5.1 Supporting the Ministry of Justice in an effective implementation of the Justice Reform Strategy
Place of work:	Skopje, North Macedonia
Contractor:	Centre for International Legal Cooperation
Working days:	20 working days
Expected start:	February 2024

BACKGROUND

The Local Short-Term Expert will work as part of the implementation team for the European Union grant-funded project “EU Support for Rule of Law” in the Republic of North Macedonia.

The EU Support for Rule of Law project (the Project) is designed to support vital institutions operating in the fields of justice, law enforcement, anti-corruption efforts, and the promotion and protection of fundamental human rights. The Project is funded by the European Union and executed through collaborative efforts with four implementing partners (Ludwig Boltzmann Gesellschaft - Institute of Fundamental and Human Rights, Republic of Slovenia – Ministry of Interior, Republic of Croatia – Ministry of Justice, Public Administration and Digital Transformation, and the Centre for International Legal Cooperation).

The project is structured around four specific objectives, each implemented by one of the four project components. This assignment falls under Component 1 of the project, whose objective is to improve the capacities of justice institutions to deliver justice in transparent and accountable manner. Particular attention is being given to the functioning of the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors as the managerial bodies; the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors as the sole point of entry into the professions; the Ministry of Justice regarding the implementation and monitoring of the Judicial Reform Strategy; the ICT Council for the Judiciary for support on the Information Communication Technology of Justice Sector Strategy and the Bar Association as branch organization for lawyers.

These justice institutions will be supported to properly and efficiently fulfil their mandates in line with European standards, such as the recommendations of the Venice Commission,

GRECO and Senior Experts' Group on systematic Rule of Law issues, and in line with Judicial Reform Strategy 2024-2028. Being aware of the dynamics of the accession negotiation process, the project functions as a resource and knowledge facility to help guide the Macedonian justice institutions through this process.

In December 2023, the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia adopted the Developmental Strategy for the Judiciary 2024 – 2028 with an Action Plan (hereinafter referred to as the Judicial Strategy 2024 – 2028). The Judicial Strategy 2024 – 2028 is a strategic document that outlines key reforms necessary to further develop the justice sector and implement the European Commission's recommendations for enhancing the rule of law, the judicial system, basic values, and fundamental rights. It continues the reform process, which started with the Justice Sector Reform Strategy 2017-2022 and enabled a certain degree of approximation to European standards in the field of justice.

The vision of the Judicial Strategy 2024-2028 is to establish an independent, accountable, transparent and accessible judiciary, resistant to internal and external influence, which protects human rights and efficiently ensures the rule of law. This Strategy identifies five specific priority areas: 1. Judiciary and public prosecution in line with EU standards, 2. Institutions of the justice system, 3. Independent professions and public services, 4. Reform of the Constitutional Court, 5. Reforms in Special Legal Areas (Criminal and Civil). Under each priority area, specific objectives are determined, including detailed measures and activities that should be implemented to achieve the desired goals.

According to relevant Governmental regulations, each strategic document should be accompanied by an Indicative Financial Plan. An Indicative Financial Plan is annexed to the Judicial Strategy 2024 – 2028. However, as with other sectorial strategies, this was not done based on sound financial planning. The amounts planned are not based upon adequate projections and calculations, and for some of the activities, no financial means are planned at all. This can have a negative effect on the implementation of the Judicial Strategy 2024 – 2028. The lack of good planning of the fiscal implementation led to insufficient budgeting, which in turn resulted in the failure to implement of some of the key measures planned in the previous Judicial Strategy 2017 – 2022.

A strategy is valuable only as far as it is implementable, and experience has shown that one of the biggest obstacles to reform is the lack of funding for delivering the envisaged actions.

According to SIGMA, once the objectives have been set and the necessary actions to achieve these objectives have been produced, it is crucial that the resources required for their implementation are estimated and their costs calculated. When a strategy is developed, it must always include the proper calculation of the costs and resources needed for its implementation.

In addition, steps must be taken to ensure that the identified resources are budgeted, which means that they are allocated in the annual and medium-term budget(s), and to ensure that development partners have committed to providing any necessary supplementary resources. It is particularly important to identify the costs that constitute a financial burden in addition to the institution's existing base budget.

Implementation of the Judicial Strategy 2024 – 2028 involves not just one but several institutions or “budget organizations”. It is, therefore, critically important to know the budgetary implications of the planned actions for all implementing organizations’ budgets when the strategy and its action plan are being developed.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The objective of the assignment is to review the Indicative Financial Plan for implementation of the Judicial Strategy 2024 – 2028 and to prepare an updated version of the plan with a summarized overview of the necessary costs for the implementation of the action plan in the priority areas with the designation of the potential source of funding. The assignment will be carried out in close cooperation and engagement of other experts from the Project and following consultations with relevant institutions.

Specifically, the expert will carry out the following tasks:

- Reviewing the Indicative Financial Plan and the Action Plan of the Judicial Strategy 2024 – 2028;
- Identifying the types of costs that will be incurred due to implementing the Strategy and break down the actions into activities and their required inputs;
- Gathering relevant data from judicial institutions and the Ministry of Finance;
- Holding meetings with relevant stakeholders – Ministry of Finance, Judicial Budget Council, amongst others;
- Calculating the inputs into financial costs. The expert may use different methodologies based upon his/her expert opinion and judgement (average unit cost, historical costs of similar services, average reference prices);
- Preparing an updated Indicative Financial Plan as required in the prescribed form;
- Preparing a mission report.

Planned results:

- Assessment of the Indicative Financial Plan and the Action Plan of the Judicial Strategy 2024 – 2028;
- Preparation of an updated Indicative Financial Plan;
- Mission report

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- Proven minimum of **15 years** of work experience in the area of public finance and budgeting;
- Master's degree in finance, economy or public administration;
- Excellent knowledge and oral and written communication skills in English;
- Excellent analytical skills;
- Flexibility, strong adaptation skills and capability of teamwork in a potentially stressful environment under tight deadlines;
- Good command of Microsoft Office™ tools;
- Good planning and work organisation skills;
- Good communication and reporting skills.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

- Proven minimum 10 years of experience in financial planning and monitoring of the implementation of national strategies;
- Advanced knowledge of methodologies for cost estimation;
- Experience in conducting fiscal impact assessments proven through specific references;
- Previous experience in projects related to finances in the areas of judiciary would be an asset;

CONTRACT AND REMUNERATION

The remuneration will be done in accordance with the grant contract.

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications must be sent in English (CV in Europass format and a motivation letter) via e-mail to elena.brmbeska@rolaw.mk indicating "Local STE Developmental Sectorial Strategy for the Judiciary (2024-2028)" in the subject line. References must be available on request.

Application submission deadline: 14th February 2025

Applications received after the deadline or incomplete applications will not be taken into consideration. Only short-listed candidates will be invited for an interview.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The expert must not have had any contractual relationship with the public administration of the Republic of North Macedonia for at least 6 months prior to his/her hiring.