

**REGIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION
INITIATIVE**

29th STEERING GROUP MEETING



Summary, Conclusions and Decisions

Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

March 12, 2019

29th Regional Anti-corruption Initiative (RAI) Steering Group (SG) Meeting took place in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina on March 12th, 2019. The meeting was hosted by the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina and it was organized by the RAI Secretariat.

Participants

29th RAI Steering Group Meeting was chaired by the Head of RAI Secretariat, Mr. Vladan Joksimovic. It was attended by 8 member countries' representatives and 1 observer country:

Albania – Ms. Elda Zenelaj, Delegated Representative; Director, Directorate of Policy and Strategies in the field of justice, Ministry of Justice;

Bosnia and Herzegovina – Mr. Adnan Dlakic – Senior Representative, Expert Adviser, Department for Combating Organized Crime and Corruption, Ministry of Security;

Bulgaria – Ms. Dora Zgurovska – Deputy Senior Representative, Head of Internal Security and Police Cooperation at the EU and International Co-operation Directorate, Ministry of Interior;

Croatia – Ms. Tamara Mišerda – Senior Representative, Head of the Anti-Corruption Sector, Ministry of Justice;

Moldova – Mr. Valeriu Cupcea – Deputy Senior Representative, Head of the Anti-corruption Policies and Programmes Division, National Anti-corruption Centre;

North Macedonia – Ms. Elena Dimovska – Deputy Senior Representative, Advisor, Unit for Coordination of Anti-corruption Activities, Ministry of Justice;

Romania – Ms. Ruxandra A. Banica – Delegated Representative, legal personnel with the status of judges and prosecutors, Department for Crime Prevention, Ministry of Justice;

Serbia – Ms. Katarina Nikolic, Senior Representative, Advisor on International Co-operation Matters, Ministry of Justice.

Observers were represented by:

Georgia – Ms. Lana Morgoshia, Senior Specialist, Strategic Development Unit, Ministry of Justice.

RAI Secretariat was represented by:

Mr. Vladan Joksimovic – Head of Secretariat;

Ms. Aida Zukic – Finance and Administrative Officer;

Ms. Jasna Panjeta – Programme and Outreach Officer.

Summary of Discussions

Head of RAI Secretariat Mr. Vladan Joksimovic opened the meeting and welcomed all the members of the Steering Group, especially the newly delegated representatives of Albania and Croatia. Mr. Joksimovic offered chairing of the meeting to the representative with the longest experience as a member in the RAI Steering Group. Nevertheless, the Steering Group decided that Mr. Joksimovic should chair the meeting.

Mr. Adnan Dlakic, Senior Representative of BiH to RAI welcomed and greeted all the members and participants on behalf of the Ministry of Security, expressing satisfaction to host the meeting.

Following the introductory remarks, Head of the Secretariat presented the draft Agenda. Mr. Joksimovic stressed that the representatives of Bulgaria, Moldova and Romania who were not present at the opening session, due to travel delay caused by adverse weather conditions in Sarajevo, agreed with the draft Agenda that was communicated to them via phone and emails.

Following the discussion, Agenda was adopted by the members of the Steering Group.

1. Selection procedure for Anti-corruption Expert

Mr. Joksimovic presented the process of interviewing the candidates for the vacant position of the Anti-corruption Expert. He also presented the list of potential questions for the members of the Steering Group to be considered, prepared by the Secretariat in advance. The list of 6 potential questions was distributed to the members.

Interview questions were approved by the Steering Group, following reformulation of these questions into final four questions to be posed to the candidates during an interview.

Head of Secretariat addressed interview questions with candidates, while the Steering Group members evaluated all interviewed candidates using the standard evaluation form. All interviews followed the same procedure, including core questions and timing, to ensure all candidates have an equal opportunity to present themselves.

In accordance with the Office Policies Manual, Section 3.3.8 Hiring, the employment contract shall be offered to applicant who received the highest score out of technical evaluation (50% of total score) and interview (50% of total score).

The Representative of Macedonia suggested to reopen the position and repeat the selection process. The Representative of Moldova concurred with this proposal. Nevertheless, based on the total scores, the Steering Group agreed to offer the contract to Ms. Aneta Arnaudovska. As both first and the second ranked candidate performed very well at the interview, and as there was a small difference in cumulative scores between them, it was agreed that in case Ms. Arnaudovska does not accept the employment contract, or in case she does not perform adequately during the probation period, the employment would be offered to the second-ranked candidate.

During the discussions following the interviews and evaluation of the interviewed candidates, the Macedonian representative pointed out the need for amending internal rules regarding the recruitment and selection procedure for international staff, considering the lessons learned.

2. Presentation of the Financial Report for 2018

Head of Secretariat provided the general framework of the Report. Ms. Aida Zukic, Finance and Administrative Officer, presented the Financial Report for 2018 highlighting the key elements. She also presented the Audit Report for 2018 Financial Statements for RAI core funding.

She noted that the Audit Report will be shared with the Steering Group and will be available on RAI website. It was pointed out that the audit process has been successful and all expenditures were in line with RAI internal rules, and the international accounting best practices and ISO standards for accounting.

Narrative Financial Report is currently under development and will be shared with the SG members.

Ms. Zukic informed that the Annual Financial Audit for the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) Regional Programme will take place in April 2019.

Secretariat highlighted the fact that the cumulative RAI Budget is growing as well as number of projects/donors. This is seen as a very positive trend and indicates RAI's commitment to be more project orientated organisation.

Representative of Macedonia suggested that it would be good to present the budget execution per country and per topics also, and measure the impact of the given expenditures. This has been raised at the previous SG Meetings as well.

Secretariat took note of the suggestion, stressing that the Secretariat continually implements *equal treatment for all countries* policy. Although the Secretariat would benefit from budget analysis in terms of geographical distribution as well as other parameters such as value for money, gender gaps, substance, etc., current human resources do not allow for such an extensive analysis. With the growth of staff the Secretariat will be able to dedicate resources to a more in-depth analysis.

3. 2019 RAI Core Budget reallocation

The Secretariat presented the proposed reallocation and elaborated on its importance. Reallocations related to funding of core staff salaries are particularly important, given the fact that the current Finance and Administrative Officer will be on maternity leave as of late June, and that a maternity cover shall be employed.

In order to mitigate the financial burden on the Secretariat by avoiding that the high compensation amount is paid-out in a short period of time (6 months), the Secretariat proposed to amend the section 4.8 Maternity Leave and Paternity Leave of the Office Policies Manual by spreading the gross amount dedicated to maternity/paternity leave to a one-year period.

Other proposed budget changes referred to items related to compensation package of the new Anti-corruption Expert, and increase of the budget for financing programmatic activities. More funding will be dedicated to Summer School taking place in Bosnia and Herzegovina and for additional quarter of the Internship Program.

Source of reallocation are funds generated from other donor's projects and funds saved from operational expenses.

2019 RAI Core Budget reallocation request as well as the proposed amendments to the Office Policies Manual were adopted by the members of the Steering Group.

4. Amendments to RAI internal documents: ToR of the Chairperson

Head of Secretariat presented the proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Chairperson, submitted by the Macedonian Representative. He also stressed that additional sentence has been added since the distribution of the material for the SG Meeting to introduce the document titled "Acceptance of Mandate". This was justified by the fact that the Chairperson does not sign a Contract or an Agreement with the Organisation upon takeover of Mandate. It was noted that it is prudent to have a record of acceptance of rules and procedures as well as values of RAI. It is also important to have a record of commencement of the Mandate.

Members of the Steering Group assessed the proposed amendment as positive.

Representative of Romania proposed to introduce the additional amendments and to have 2 + 2 years Mandate. SG would discuss the Mandate every two years. Representative of Macedonia commented it as a good suggestion but it is not possible since the Memorandum of Understanding stipulates that the mandate will be renewed annually.

Representative of Serbia suggested to think in the direction that RAI countries shall chair the organization, on a rotation principle.

Secretariat found this proposal as positive and was of the opinion that this would further integrate member counters into the RAI actions. Secretariat suggested that 20 years of RAI would be an occasion to introduce such a change and encouraged countries to continue the dialogue about this topic in the context of the new Memorandum of Understanding.

Following the comments made by representatives of Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia and Serbia, amendments were adjusted during the meeting and adopted by the Steering Group Representatives.

The adopted amendments will enter into force and will apply with the next mandate of the Chairperson.

5. Prolongation of the Chairperson Mandate

Having in mind the fact that the mandate of the current Chairperson expires on 31st of August 2019 and that this is the last planned meeting prior to that, mandate and performance of the Chairperson in his first year was brought to discussion.

In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding, article 1 paragraph 3, every year a Chairperson for RAI will be appointed from the region by the RAI Steering Group. In accordance with the ToR for the Chairperson, the mandate is for one year, with possible prolongation for additional year if there are no objections by the members of the Steering Group.

Objection was expressed towards prolongation of the mandate for additional year. The SG instructed the Secretariat to act in accordance with ToR for Chairperson.

6. Amendments to RAI Internal Documents

Given the time constraints, there was no opportunity to elaborate in depth proposed amendments to internal documents. Nevertheless, it was noted that this is very important for the organization and that it shall be on the agenda for the next SG meeting.

Also, in order to make operational and financial rules more efficient, it has been agreed that amendments to Procurement Manual and Finance Management Manual shall be sent to SG members for approval, following the meeting.

7. Any other Business

Secretariat informed the members of the Steering Group that this year Secretariat will undergo an external evaluation for the Regional Programme funded by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). External Evaluator may reach out to some of the members of the Steering Group for an interview.

Secretariat also noted that it will reach out to the members of the Steering Group in the coming months within the ongoing consultation process for the development of the new Regional Programme that will be submitted to ADA and development of the project proposal for the DG NEAR Grant.

Conclusions and Decisions

- Based on the results of the Evaluation Process for recruitment of Anti-corruption Expert, Steering Group agreed that the Secretariat would offer the contract to Ms. Aneta Arnaudovska for the position. In case Ms. Arnaudovska does not accept the employment contract, or in case she does not perform adequately during the probation period, the employment would be offered to the second-ranked candidate;
- Steering Group took note of the Financial Report and Audit for 2018;
- Steering Group approved proposed reallocations of 2019 RAI core budget and adopted amendments to 4.8 Maternity Leave and Paternity Leave of the Office Policies Manual;
- Amendments to the ToR of the Chairperson were adopted by the Steering Group Representatives. The adopted amendments shall enter into force and will apply with the next mandate of the Chairperson;
- Steering Group made the decision that the Mandate of the current Chairperson will not be prolonged for additional year. SG instructs the Secretariat to act in accordance with ToR.

Amendments to RAI's internal documents

Strategic Document

Annex 2 - Terms of References - Chairperson

- 1. Mandate and Selection Procedure is renamed to “Mandate and Election Procedure”, and its paragraph three is amended as follows:**

Chairperson is to be elected at the Steering Group meeting. The Steering Group shall consider all applications that were determined as responsive/ compliant/ acceptable by the Secretariat. Interviews shall be conducted at the Steering Group meeting with all candidates whose applications were determined as responsive/ compliant/ acceptable. Interviews shall be an opportunity for candidates to express their motivation for applying and verbalize overall understanding of RAI. Steering Group members may pose questions to all candidates, but there shall be no predefined questions.

- 2. Paragraph three is added as follows:**

Upon election, the Chairperson shall sign Acceptance of Mandate. The form shall be countersigned by the head of Secretariat on behalf of RAI.

- 3. Paragraph six added as follows:**

The Chairperson shall be discharged from his/her function if he/she is not performing in accordance with the Terms of References for the Chairperson. A proposal for discharging the Chairperson may be submitted to the Steering Group by the Head of Secretariat or a member state Representative. The Steering Group decides upon the proposal not later than 30 days from the date of receipt of the proposal. The Head of Secretariat shall convene and chair the meeting. Invitation for the meeting shall also be sent to the Chairperson against whom the proposal was submitted. The decision discharging the Chairperson or the conclusion for rejecting the proposal shall be adopted by a majority of votes of the Steering Group and signed by the Head of the Secretariat on behalf of the Steering Group.

- 4. Paragraph seven, first sentence amended as follows:**

The procedure to elect a new Chairperson shall start no later than 10 days after the notification by the Chairperson/adoption of decision for discharging the Chairperson from his/her functions.

Office Policies Manual

1. In 4.8 Maternity Leave and Paternity Leave:

In the first paragraph, word “women” is replaced by “staff”.

Sentence “This period may be extended by one month in case of a multiple birth.” is moved to the first paragraph.

In the third paragraph, is amended as follows:

“Staff members are entitled to paid maternity/paternity leave at a rate of 42% of monthly gross salary.”

Fourth paragraph is deleted.

Throughout the section, “or” is replaced by “/”, and contract by “Contract”.