

Open Call for Consulting Services

Subject:	Technical assistance to prepare feasibility study for digital identity in Albania
Title:	Technical assistance to prepare feasibility study for digital identity in Albania
RCC Department:	Programme Department
Reporting to:	RCC Secretariat
Duration:	May 2024 – 14 February 2025
Eligible:	Individual consultants/ consulting companies/consortia of individual consultants
Reference Number:	026-024
Deadline for application:	22 April 2024

TERMS OF REFERENCE:**I. PURPOSE**

The overall objective of the consultancy is to support preparation of a feasibility study for notified electronic identification scheme in Albania that would be eligible to become a notified eID scheme under eIDAS. The overall purpose of TA is to identify possible solution for introducing an electronic identification scheme that would fulfil the requirements of notified eID scheme, in line with articles 7, 8 and 9 of eIDAS.

Cutting-edge technologies should be used under this national scheme for issuing the means for electronic identification on assurance level high, taking into account best practices in the EU.

II. BACKGROUND

With respect to the general provisions of eIDAS, the Albanian legal framework is to a great extent compliant with eIDAS, although further actions are necessary to allow Albanian citizens and companies to use freely e-signatures/e-seals and to access public services across the EU. The

Albania has enhanced laws and regulations aimed to promote the use of digital signature, electronic documents and online authentication mechanisms with e-Albania government portal; however, there may be areas where further clarification or refinement is needed to ensure compliance with evolving EU and eIDAS standards and best practices.

The existing national ID card does not have any eID scheme or electronic signature related capabilities; however, the Ministry of Interior is examining options for issuing a new type of national ID card with digital identity and digital signature capabilities. A mobile-based economy level issued eID scheme with high assurance can be considered as a potential solution.

In this regard and referring to the digital agenda, 2030 will be totally digitalised in terms of citizens, entrepreneurs and new generation. Digital infrastructure development will aim at facilitating and ensuring electronic identification and trusted services in digital transactions.

In addition, Albania is in the process of planning an economy level digital identity solution, which can be accepted cross-border/boundary among the WB economies and could potentially be notified in the EU under eIDAS.

According to the RCC study Regional Interoperability and Trust Services in Western Balkans, government issued and recognised eID schemes are in place but are not practically used in service offering processes, and easy-to-use user environments for QES creation and validation are not available. The practical usage of ID card in electronic transactions is rather low or non-existing. To access public services via Government Portal first the registration is required using SMS-based 2F authentication. After registration, services are accessed using the username (national ID/NIPT) and password. For electronic signing another SMS-based code is used. This means ID card based eID scheme is not practically used in electronic service offering processes.

Furthermore, the study states that lack of ID card readers and corresponding end-user software can be considered as ID card usage limiting factors.

III. DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Objectives and scope of the assignment

The overall objective of the consultancy is to support the Government of Albania in the process of planning a national level eID solution, which could be notified in the EU under eIDAS. To do this, due consideration should be given to the current state of play in the economy, as well as EU best practices, exploring successful implementation in three EU Member States.

For the purpose of this consultancy, a consultant, consulting company or consortium of individual consultants will be engaged.

This assignment targets Albania.

The scope of services under this assignment includes:

- Developing proposals for potential national level notified eID scheme under eIDAS, introducing EU best practices and approaches, and
- Providing expert advice on needed resources to implement the proposed solutions.

Specific tasks

1. Analyse the state of play in the economy;
2. Identify three EU Member States that use national level eID with assurance level high, using contemporary technologies and are notified in the EU;
3. Propose at least three national level eID solutions with assurance level high applicable in Albania that would fulfil the requirements for notified eID scheme under eIDAS, based on best practices in the EU, and which would, among other things, provide access to public services throughout the Western Balkans region and the EU, as well as allow the use of e-signatures/e-seals;
4. Identify potential competent government body/ies to be responsible for issuing the eID means;
5. Identify resources in terms of prerequisites and dependencies, human capacities, provisional budget and provisional timeframe for implementation of each of the proposed solutions.

Deliverables

1. Work plan;
2. Feasibility study report, including the state of play, proposed solutions, competent bodies, resources, and comparative study for EU Member States.

Methodology

The consultant is expected to come up with the best approaches for undertaking this task. However, the following guiding principles should be taken into consideration:

- Desk review of all existing reports/documents addressing the area under this ToR;
- Communication/consultations with the representatives of the Ministry of Interior of Albania and Idetitek from Albania, and, if needed, with other competent government bodies (contact details to be provided);
- Any other method applicable.

Lines of communication

- The consultant will report to the RCC Secretariat and representatives of the Ministry of Interior of Albania and Identitek from Albania. Upon completion of the activities as defined in the timeframe and in accordance with the Terms of Reference, a detailed report will be prepared and sent to the RCC Secretariat for review and approval.
- Representatives of the Ministry of Interior and Identitek will be the main contact points for the preparation of the entire feasibility study.
- A preparatory meeting will be organised to elaborate further on expectations and deliverables prior to the start of work.

Timeframe

The total duration of the engagement will be from May 2024 to 14 February 2025.

Deliverables	Due date
Work Plan	13 May 2024
First draft feasibility study reflecting all tasks of these Terms of Reference	6 September 2024
Second draft feasibility study reflecting all tasks of these Terms of Reference	15 November 2024
Final draft of the feasibility study report. The study should reflect all comments of the RCC and representatives of the Ministry of Interior of Albania and Identitek from Albania.	30 January 2025

III COMPETENCIES

Qualifications:

Education:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Advanced degree in law, economics, telecommunications, computer science, public policy or other areas directly related to the subject of work
Experience:	Experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimum of 5 years of relevant experience in EU member states in

	<p>implementing ICT solutions that support trust services and electronic identification based on eIDAS;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in working on eID implementation is considered an advantage; • Understanding of relevant policies, regulations, and legal frameworks related to eIDAS and EU standards; • Proven analytical skills and ability to conceptualise and write concisely and clearly; • Demonstrable experience in writing and reporting on complex solutions development and implementation (samples of work to be provided); • Proven communication and presentation skills and ability to work in an environment requiring liaison and collaboration with multiple actors including government representatives, businesses, civil society institutions, donors and other stakeholders.
Language requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fluency in written and spoken English
Other:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N.A.

Core Values

- Demonstrates integrity and fairness by modelling RCC values and ethical standards;
- He/she is independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities defined by the Terms of Reference;
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability.

Core Competencies

- Demonstrates professional competence to meet responsibilities and post requirements and is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines and achieving results;
- Result-oriented; plans and produces quality results to meet the set goals, generates innovative and practical solutions to challenging situations;
- Communication: Excellent communication skills, including the ability to convey complex concepts and recommendations clearly;

- Team work: Ability to interact, establish and maintain effective working relations in a culturally diverse team;
- Ability to establish and maintain productive partnerships with regional and national partners and stakeholders.

IV QUALITY CONTROL

The expert should ensure an internal quality control during the implementing and reporting phase of the assignment. The quality control should ensure that the draft reports and deliverables comply with the above requirements and meet adequate quality standards before sending them to stakeholders for comments. The quality control should ensure consistency and coherence between findings, conclusions and recommendations. It should also ensure that findings reported are duly substantiated and that conclusions are supported by relevant judgment criteria.

The views expressed in the report will be those of the contractor and will not necessarily reflect those of the Regional Cooperation Council. Therefore, a standard disclaimer reflecting this will be included in the reports. In this regard, the expert may or may not accept comments and/or proposals for changes received during the above consultation process. However, when comments/proposals for changes are not agreed by the expert, he/she should clearly explain the reasons for his/her final decision in a comments table.

V APPLICATION RULES

The application needs to contain the following:

- Technical Offer;
- Financial Offer.

Technical Offer

For Companies and Consortia:

For companies and consortia of individual consultants:

- Company profile including a brief description (up to 2 pages) of the company. In case of a bidding consortium, the team leader should submit the profile of the consortium;
- Copy of Company's Registration Certificate (in case of consulting companies);

- In case of bidding consortia of individual consultants participating in this Call, they must indicate the members and show how the work is divided between them. Specifically, all members must name the team leader and authorise this member to represent the consortium and receive payments on behalf of the other members. A corresponding written authorisation, power of attorney must be attached to the bid;
- Financial records - company's balance sheet and profit-and-loss statement for the past 2 years (only in case of a bidding of consulting companies);
- CV of an expert(s), outlining relevant knowledge and experience as described in the Terms of References, along with contact details of referees;
- Concept note outlining the proposal of the methodology, timeline and the research and analytical tools to be used in carrying out the assignment;
- List of references for relevant activities implemented over the past years demonstrating relevant experience in the subject matter;
- Signed Statements of Availability (Annex I).

For individual experts:

- Letter of Interest;
- CV outlining relevant knowledge and experience as described in the Terms of References, along with contact details of referees;
- Concept note outlining the proposal of the methodology, timeline and the research and analytical tools to be used in carrying out the assignment;
- List of references for relevant activities implemented over the past years demonstrating relevant experience in the subject matter;

Financial Offer (Free format)

The financial offer should reflect the following:

- All figures should be expressed in EUR;
- VAT amount, if applicable, should be presented.

When preparing the financial offer, the applicant should take into account the following:

The proposed budget should include fee rate for consulting services broken down by tasks; the fee rates should be broadly consistent with the regional rates for these types of professional services.

Submission of applications:

Applications need to be submitted by 22 April 2024, Central European Time.

VI. EVALUATION RULES:

- The consultancy will be awarded to the highest qualified bidder based on the relevance of skills and expertise to this assignment;
- The applications are evaluated following these criteria:

EVALUATION GRID	Maximum score
A. Technical Offer (A.1+A.2+A.3)	100
A1: Relevant work experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of 5 years of relevant experience in EU member states in implementing ICT solutions that support trust services and electronic identification based on eIDAS; Experience in working on eID implementation is considered an advantage; • Understanding of relevant policies, regulations, and legal frameworks related to eIDAS and EU standards; 	35
A.2. Education and professional capacity of the consultant(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced degree in law, economics, telecommunications, computer science, public policy or other areas directly related to the subject of work; • Proven analytical skills and ability to conceptualise and write concisely and clearly; Demonstrable experience in writing and reporting on complex solutions development and implementation (samples of work to be provided); • Proven communication and presentation skills and ability to work in an environment requiring liaison and collaboration with multiple actors including government representatives, businesses, civil society institutions, donors and other stakeholders. 	30
A.3 Quality of the concept note: An outline of work programme describing the main	35

issues, information, data sources, research and analytical tools to be employed by the author, as well as the timeline.	
B. Financial Offer/ lowest price has maximum score	100

Score for offer X =

A: [Total quality score (out of 100) of offer X / 100] * 80

B: [Lowest price / price of offer X] * 20

In addition to the results of the technical and financial evaluation, a competency-based interview may be held with the selected bidder.

Information on selection of the most favourable bidder

The RCC Secretariat shall inform candidates and bidders of decisions reached concerning the award of the contract as soon as possible, including the grounds for any decision not to award a contract for which there has been competitive tendering or to recommence the procedure.

Standard letter of thanks for participation to unsuccessful bidders shall be sent within 15 days after the contract is signed with the awarded bidder.

The candidates and bidders wishing to receive a feedback may send a request within 15 days after receipt of the standard letter of thanks.

The request may be sent to the e-mail address ProcurementforRcc@rcc.int or to the address of the RCC Secretariat:

Regional Cooperation Council Secretariat
 Attention to: Administration Department
 Building of the Friendship between Greece and Bosnia and Herzegovina
 Trg Bosne i Hercegovine 1/V
 71000 Sarajevo
 Bosnia and Herzegovina

Appeals procedure

Bidders believing that they have been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may petition the RCC Secretariat directly. The RCC Secretariat must reply within 15 days of receipt of the complaint.

The appeal request may be sent to the e-mail address ProcurementforRcc@rcc.int or to the address of the RCC Secretariat:

Regional Cooperation Council Secretariat

Attention to: Administration Department

Building of the Friendship between Greece and Bosnia and Herzegovina

Trg Bosne i Hercegovine 1/V

71000 Sarajevo

Bosnia and Herzegovina

ANNEX I: STATEMENT OF AVAILABILITY

REF: 026-024

Technical assistance to prepare feasibility study for digital identity in Albania

By representing the Entity_____ we agree to participate in the above-mentioned tender procedure. We further declare that we are able and willing to work for the period(s) foreseen for the position for which our CVs have been included in the event that this tender is successful, namely:

Full name	Available from (Date)	Available until (Date)	Acceptance by signature