



Regional Cooperation Council



This project is funded by the EU

## Employment and Social Affairs Platform 2 – ESAP 2

### Open Call for Consultancy Services

<b>Terms of Reference:</b>	Expert on Tackling Undeclared Work in the Western Balkans
<b>Contracting Authority:</b>	Regional Cooperation Council Secretariat
<b>Reporting to:</b>	RCC Secretariat
<b>Duration:</b>	10 February 2021 – 31 December 2021
<b>Number of Posts:</b>	1 international expert
<b>Application Deadline:</b>	2 February 2021
<b>Reference Number:</b>	<b>001-021</b>

### Objective

This service contract will support the objectives and activities of the Employment and Social Affairs Platform 2 (ESAP 2) to enhance cooperation in tackling undeclared work in the Western Balkans by providing guidance and expert support to the Regional Network for Tackling Undeclared Work through thematic learning, information exchange, capacity building and analytical work. Beneficiaries of this action will be national enforcement authorities, including ministries of labour, labour inspectorates, tax and social security authorities as well as social partners (employers' and employees' organisations).

### Background and context

The Western Balkan Six (WB6) have recognized and prioritized tackling informal economy and informal employment in the national Economic Reform Programmes (ERP) as key priorities for restructuring their economic performance, while some of the economies have in place national strategies, action plans and programmes to tackle informality.

However, as the European Commission assessment of the most recent ERPs points out, informal economy and undeclared work remain major challenges and these need to be addressed in a more comprehensive manner. Additionally, in its 2019 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy, the European Commission highlights that economic development in the Western Balkan region is hampered by an entrenched grey economy, that the share of informal economy and informal employment is very high and proposes enhanced efforts to address these challenges.

The EU has itself invested a lot of efforts in tackling undeclared work. The European Platform Tackling Undeclared Work has enhanced cooperation between Member States' authorities and other actors involved with the aim to tackle undeclared work more effectively and efficiently while fully respecting national competences and procedures.

Drawing on the EU experience and in the light of the importance of aligning the WB6 to the EU policy cooperation and practice, the Employment and Social Affairs Platform 2 currently supports the Western Balkan economies through a regional platform for the transformation of undeclared work into declared work, pursuing a holistic integrated strategic approach, akin to that of the EU. The platform has adopted a regional work-plan of activities, currently under implementation, that include regular high level coordination and technical level meetings, seminars, workshops, study visits, analyses on priority topics as well as the implementation of mutual assistance projects that will enable the exchange of experience, and provide advice and implementation support.

## **Description of Responsibilities**

### **Objectives and Scope of the Assignment**

The objective of this assignment is to provide guidance and expert support to ESAP 2 in the implementation of its activities on undeclared work.

### **Tasks and Responsibilities**

The tasks under this service contract require high-quality input by the expert in several domains and include provision of guidance to ESAP 2 and members of the Network in identifying priority topics and areas of work for the Network, support in mutual learning, facilitation of information exchange, implementation of learning results and analytical work and contribution to strengthening capacities of national institutions for tackling undeclared work in the Western Balkans.

The ESAP 2 team will closely monitor the situation in all Western Balkan economies with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic and in close coordination with the selected expert will allow for flexibility, in order to be able to adjust activities to the situation on the ground, while aiming to deliver on the objectives of this consultancy.

## **Task 1: Guidance and technical support for the meetings of the Western Balkan Network Tackling Undeclared Work**

### ***1.1. Provide guidance and thematic input for two plenary meetings***

The consultant will be in charge of providing expert support to ESAP 2 in preparing input to and facilitating two plenary meetings of the Network.

Under this sub-task, the consultant will:

- a) Contribute to the preparation and design of the Network plenary meetings;
- b) Prepare thematic input, such as materials and short summaries of the activities implemented under ESAP 2, deliver PPT presentations and facilitate discussions at the meetings;
- c) Provide expert contribution towards strengthening capacities of Western Balkan officials in tackling undeclared work;
- d) Write a short summary of the key meeting results, recommendations and propose possible follow up actions.

### ***1.2. Provide guidance and expert support to two working group meetings***

The consultant will be in charge of providing support to ESAP 2 in preparing input to and facilitating two working group meetings of the Network, which will focus on operational issues related to the implementation of the Network activities.

Under this sub-task, the consultant will:

- a) Contribute to the preparation and design of the working group meetings;
- b) Prepare thematic input, deliver PPT presentations and facilitate sessions of the meetings;
- c) Provide expert contribution towards strengthening capacities of Western Balkan officials in tackling undeclared work;
- d) Write a short summary of the key meeting results, recommendations and propose possible follow up actions.

## **Task 2: Expert contribution to information exchange, mutual learning and capacity building**

### ***2.1. Provide expert support for two thematic review workshops***

The thematic review workshops will be conceived as policy learning experiences through sharing of knowledge, which will give space for interactive discussions between participants to enable peer learning.

Under this sub-task, the consultant will provide expert support to the organization of 1 thematic review workshop. The topic of the workshop will be identified jointly with beneficiary institutions. Following the thematic workshop, a follow-up visit will be organised depending on the findings of the thematic review to explore any additional good practices, on the interest of participants for follow up discussions, or to assist an institution which introduces a measure with insight from peers more advanced in the area. Following this, a practitioner's toolkit for the thematic review topic/event will be produced.

Under this sub-task, the consultant will:

- a) Draft a discussion paper based on inputs received from beneficiary organizations;
- b) Contribute to the development of the agenda for the thematic review workshop;
- c) Draft an analytical paper summarising all the findings, plus up to four evidence-based good practice fiches (2-4 pages) to be submitted within one month from the meeting, on the basis of existing reports and evaluations and additional information provided by participants;
- d) Prepare and facilitate the programme of the follow-up visit;
- e) Draft up to two evidence-based good practice fiches based on the findings of the follow up visit;
- f) Based on accumulated evidence and best practice results, produce a practitioner's toolkit that could include checklists, step-by-step guides, or other relevant tools;
- g) Contribute towards strengthening capacities of Western Balkan officials in tackling undeclared work.

## *2.2. Provide expert support to the organization of one seminar*

Seminars organized under the Western Balkan Network Tackling Undeclared Work will provide participants with an opportunity to reflect on practices, tools and approaches that deal with undeclared work. Seminars will have a strong training and capacity building component.

Under this sub-task, the consultant will:

- a) Prepare a background discussion paper identifying the main questions, summarising existing evidence including comparative evidence on the topic of the seminar;
- b) Draft an analytical paper summarising all the findings, including good practice fiches;
- c) Based on accumulated evidence from previous events and papers and best practice results, produce for the topics of the seminar a product which can be in the form of a practitioner's toolkit, handbook or implementation guidelines, depending on the topic of the seminar and the interest of participants;
- d) Contribute towards strengthening capacities of Western Balkan officials in tackling undeclared works.

### ***2.3. Provide expert support to the implementation of 3 mutual assistance projects***

With the aim to improve institutional capacities and capabilities to tackle undeclared work, mutual assistance programmes are practical, hands-on and tailored learning activities designed to support and transfer practices, help solve issues, provide advice and implementation support.

Under this sub-task, the consultant will:

- a) Conceptualize and provide expert support to two mutual assistance projects between two or several beneficiaries with the objective of implementation support, capacity building, change management to introduce a new practice, methodological development, organisational analysis, strategic planning and target setting, participation in the design, evaluation or review of measures or an action plan to improve performance etc.;
- b) Produce a synthesis report providing operational guidance to beneficiaries concerned, as well as broader recommendations and reflection on the organisation of mutual assistance projects;
- c) Contribute towards strengthening capacities of Western Balkan officials in tackling undeclared work.

### ***2.4. Compilation of good practice fiche and promotion among stakeholders***

A good practice fiche summarizes a policy or measure that constitutes a well-documented good policy practice. The fiche will include a brief summary of the context in which the policy/measure is implemented, the objectives, resources, outcomes, and lessons learned. A final important dimension is an assessment of its potential for transferability.

Under this sub-task, the consultant will:

- a) develop a common template for the presentation of the good practices identified or generated under the activities of the network;
- b) provide editorial services for the good practice fiche;
- c) use the regular meetings of the Network to share and promote good practices.

### ***2.5. Conduct 2 small scale analyses and studies***

The analyses and studies will collect and analyse information and evidence on relevant topics proposed by the network, in order to better inform the activities of the network and national actions. (e.g., under-declared employment/envelope wages; entrepreneurship in the informal economy; bogus self-employment; preventative policy approaches).

## *2.6. Organize 2 study visits/staff exchanges*

The study visits/staff exchanges will be organized upon the demand of national stakeholders based on topics identified by the network and relevant to the beneficiary institutions. They aim to facilitate learning and information exchange, establish mutual trust and kick-start future joint activities.

## **Lines of Communication**

The consultant will submit all reports and timesheets to the ESAP 2 Project Team Leader and RCC for review and approval of deliverables. The expert will work closely with the ESAP 2 Project Team from whom they will seek guidelines to efficiently conduct the work.

## **Timeframe**

The service contract will be concluded for the period from 10 February 2021 to 31 December 2021.

## **Profile and Competencies of the Tenderer**

The consultant should have thorough understanding of the labour markets in the EU and the WB6 economies, excellent understanding of informal employment, excellent knowledge of recent developments in the field of the fight against undeclared work in the EU economies and the WB6 economies and a record of projects and published articles on labour policies and informal economy. In addition, the consultant should be well versed and experienced in data collection, mutual learning, statistical analyses and drafting high quality reports.

### *Criteria related to the expert delivering the service:*

<b>Education:</b>	Advanced degree in economics, statistics, social sciences or related field
<b>Experience:</b>	<p>Qualifications and Skills Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ 10-15 years of relevant experience in the fields of labour markets, labour policies and informal economy in the EU and the WB6 economies;</li><li>▪ Extensive experience in analysing respective quantitative and qualitative data;</li><li>▪ Excellent knowledge of labour policies and informal employment</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>issues in the EU and the WB6 economies;</li> <li>▪ A record of projects and publications in the fields of labour economics and informal economy;</li> <li>▪ Excellent communication and report writing skills;</li> <li>▪ Analytical skills and ability to conceptualise and write concisely and clearly;</li> <li>▪ Able to interact with professionals of and representatives from the national administrations in the SEE region.</li> </ul>
<b>Language requirements:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fluency in English, as the official language of the RCC.</li> <li>▪ Knowledge of other languages of the region desirable.</li> </ul>

### **Core Values**

- Demonstrates integrity and fairness by modelling RCC values and ethical standards;
- 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.

### **Quality Control**

The consultant should ensure an internal quality control during the implementing and reporting phase of the assignment. The quality control should ensure that the draft reports 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 expert and will not necessarily reflect those of the Regional Cooperation Council. Therefore, a standard disclaimer reflecting this will

be included in the report. 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.

## Quality Control by the Regional Cooperation Council

The consultant's outputs shall undergo external reviews by all relevant stakeholders, including the representatives of the ESAP Project Team, and the Regional Cooperation Council.

## Application Rules

- Qualified candidates are invited to send an application via e-mail to [ProcurementforRCC@rcc.int](mailto:ProcurementforRCC@rcc.int) no later than 2 February 2020 by 17.00 Central European Time;
- The assignment will be awarded to the highest qualified applicant based on the skills, expertise, and the quality of the concept note and the cost-effectiveness of the financial offer;
- The best value for money is established by weighing technical quality against price on a 80/20 basis;
- Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted for the competency based interview.

The application needs to contain the following:

- Letter of interest;
- CV(s) including relevant knowledge and experience, as well as reference list including contact details (e-mail addresses) 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;
- Application Submission Form, Annex 1;
- Financial offer and budget breakdown, Annex 2.

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

- The proposed budget should include daily fee rate for consulting services broken down by tasks as below; the fee rates should be broadly consistent with the EU framework rates for these types of professional services for international consultants.

Task	Maximum number of person days
1.1	

1.2	
2.1	
2.2	
2.3	
2.4	
2.5	
2.6	
Total	

## Evaluation and Selection

The application is evaluated on the basis of the profile and competencies of the candidate and the responsiveness to the Terms of Reference (ToR).

1. Profile and Competencies
2. Brief Concept Note
3. Financial evaluation based on Annex II

The best value for money is established by weighing technical quality against price on a 80/20 basis.

### Technical Evaluation

<b>EVALUATION GRID</b>	<b>Maximum score</b>
Education	<b>30</b>
Qualifications and Skills Required	<b>30</b>
Brief Concept Note	<b>30</b>
Language Skills	<b>10</b>

<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	<b>100</b>
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In addition to the results of the application, a competency-based interview will be held with the selected candidates.

#### **Financial Evaluation**

<b>Financial Proposal/ cheapest price has maximum score</b>	<b>100</b>
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**ANNEX I:****APPLICATION SUBMISSION FORM****REF: 001-021****Title:** Expert on Tackling Undeclared Work in the Western Balkans**One signed copy** of this Call for Consultancy Submission Form must be supplied.1      **SUBMITTED by:**

Name	
Surname	
Address	
Telephone	
Fax	
e-mail	

3      **DECLARATION**

[Name ] \_\_\_\_\_ hereby declares that we have examined and accepted without reserve or restriction the entire contents of the Call for Consultancy....

And we are not in one of the following situations:

- (a) Bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- (b) Have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of res judicata;
- (c) Have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the Contracting Authority can justify;
- (d) Have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the Contracting Authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;
- (e) Have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity.
- (f) Are civil servants or other agents of the public administration of the RCC Participants, regardless of the administrative situation, excluding us from being recruited as experts in contracts financed by the RCC Secretariat.

We offer to provide the services requested in the call for experts on the basis of supplied documentation subject of this call, which comprise our technical offer and our financial offer.

Name and Surname of the Consultant	
Signature	
Date	

## **ANNEX II: BUDGET BREAKDOWN**

**REF: 001-021**

<b>Cost categories Tasks</b>	<b>Daily fee rate</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
1....		
2.....		
.....		
<b>2 TOTAL COSTS</b>		

Proposed daily fee rate for consulting services should be broadly consistent with the EU framework rates for these types of professional services.