Open Call for Consulting Services

Title:	**Assessing the state of development of e-services, in particular eHealth, eGovernment and eProcurement in Western Balkans (WB)**
RCC Department:	Programme Department
Reporting to:	RCC Secretariat
Duration:	26 October – 30 December 2020
Eligible:	Respective consulting companies or individual consultants within bidding consortia
Reference Number:	077-020
Deadline for application:	19 October 2020

TERMS OF REFERENCE

I.   PURPOSE

The overall objective of the consultancy is to assess the state of development and review the progress in each of the respective areas of e-services (i.e. eGovernment, eHealth and eProcurement) pertaining to the Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans. The consultancy aims at mapping key developments in all three areas mentioned above, providing progress and key priorities of each WB economy in the respective areas. The consultancy will also lay grounds for concrete actions needed at regional level in the mentioned three areas.

II.   BACKGROUND

At the Trieste Summit of the Berlin Process (12th July 2017), Western Balkan leaders endorsed the Multi-annual Action Plan for a Regional Economic Area (MAP REA), prepared and coordinated by RCC. The MAP REA puts forward a structured agenda for regional economic integration promoting further trade integration, introducing a dynamic regional investment space, facilitating regional mobility, and creating a digital integration agenda. It stems from the commitments undertaken within the framework of the Central European Free Trade Agreement and South East Europe (SEE) 2020 Strategy and is based on EU rules and principles as reflected in the Stabilisation and Association Agreements.

The MAP REA agenda was introduced with an objective to spur economic growth and foster regional cooperation among Western Balkan economies. Activities that are foreseen within MAP REA have the potential to improve the attractiveness of the region, create value chains across borders, boost intraregional trade and produce employment opportunities to tackle brain drain. Throughout the last three years of its implementation, MAP REA has faced both

achievements and impediments, with the majority of measures already rolled out, while others are to be implemented in the course of a year. Although with a mixed track record, MAP REA has brought notable results which should constitute a basis for further development of a reinvigorated regional development agenda.

Digital Integration is one of the components of MAP REA and measures therein aim to integrate the region into the pan-European digital market on the basis of a future-proof digitisation strategy, an updated regulatory environment, improved broadband infrastructure and access as well as digital literacy. Embracing digital transformation, ensuring greater availability of digital infrastructure, and enabling better regulatory framework and level playing field can help our region grow, increase the convergence rates with the EU, improve the business environment and encourage cross-border services, thus offering better life for the citizens.

In addition, Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans launched on 25-26 June 2018 aims to support the digital transformation, improve service delivery for the citizens and businesses and help Western Balkans in the preparations to integrate better into the EU Digital Single Market. E-services, in particular eGovernment, eHealth and eProcurement are an integral part of the Digital Agenda. The assessment of state of implementation of Digital Agenda has been prepared by RCC and it is currently being reviewed by the economies.

eGovernment can help meet the challenge of developing a public administration, which provides public services for citizens and seamless cross-border public services for businesses. Efforts in this area focus on deployment of eGovernment services, infrastructure, standards and interoperability. All WB economies in the region have already established portals for eGovernment services, and put a lot of effort in developing and improving eGovernment services and other e-services in general. The eGovernment benchmark prepared by European Commission has included four Western Balkan economies in the assessment (Montenegro and Serbia from 2018; North Macedonia and Albania from 2019) and this will help to portray the development in our region in comparison to the EU peers. In addition, ISA² programme was also instrumental in providing support to improving public services through IT solutions. Montenegro and North Macedonia already participate in the programme while Albania is in process of joining it. The new Digital programme will continue to be of great support for the Western Balkans; hence, the remaining WB economies should explore the potentials and participate.

eHealth refers to tools and services that use information and communication technologies that can improve prevention, diagnosis, treatment, monitoring and management of health and lifestyle. It can also improve access to quality care and efficiency in the health sector. South-eastern Europe Health Network (SEEHN) operates at regional level and is a political and institutional forum set up by the governments of SEE to promote reconciliation and health in the region. As of 1 January 2010, SEEHN took over the ownership of regional cooperation for health and development under the auspices of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and the SEE Regional Cooperation Process. Outbreak of Covid-19 showed the importance digital solutions have to facilitate the provision of services to citizen.

eProcurement - The public procurement process can be greatly improved by using digital technology and services. This goes beyond simply moving to electronic tools and involves

making the processes simpler for businesses to participate in and for the public sector to manage. It also allows for the integration of data-based approaches at various stages of the procurement process. With digital tools, public spending becomes more transparent, evidence-oriented, optimised, streamlined and integrated with market conditions. All Western Balkan economies are working to improve their eProcurement procedures.

Covid-19 pandemic showed necessity to digitalise the services and facilitate access to e-services, in particular health services. To this end many challenges remain with public institutions overseeing all three areas.

II   DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Objectives and scope of the assignment

Through this technical assistance Regional Cooperation Council seeks to map the developments in each Western Balkan economy with regard to the respective e-services covered by the Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans (i.e. eGovernment, eHealth, and eProcurement).

The assessment will lay grounds for potential future regional actions in the area of e-services. To this end, respective a consulting company or individual consultants within bidding consortia will be engaged. This assignment targets all Western Balkan economies.

The scope of services under this assignment includes the following:

1. Review key developments in all three areas of e-services included in the Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans (i.e. eGovernment, eHealth, eProcurement);

2. Present the progress and key priorities of each WB economy in the respective areas in a friendly manner;

3. Provide expert advice on any potential regional actions in the respective areas, including cross-border facilitation of e-services through digital platforms.

Specific Tasks

The specific tasks specified herewith are:

1. Complete desk-based research related to each area covered by these Terms of Reference (ToR), including EU annual reports for each economy, WHO reports for Western Balkan economies, ReSPA report(s) on e-services, World Bank reports, and other available reports to support the analysis of the state of development in each Western Balkan economy;

2. Take stock of recent developments, including but not limited to legislative framework changes, new policy and institutional reforms, etc., in each Western Balkan economy;

to this end, liaise with responsible institutions for each respective area in each economy to get the latest developments;

3. Carry out a critical review of the state of play in each respective area based on the information collected through desk-review and from direct inputs provided by public institutions in each Western Balkan economy; the review should be supported with any available statistical data per area in each economy;

4. Review and present any recent change/update in adjusting policy formulation, legislative framework, policy/legislative enforcement and monitoring due to Covid-19 as well as digitalisation reforms undertaken in each Western Balkan economy;

5. Elaborate on any measure taken to respond to Covid-19 and create the inventory of all digital solutions introduced in each respective area per economy; prepare short summaries with key measures implemented in response to Covid-19; this assessment should also anticipate any specific need per each area in the post-Covid-19 context, wherever possible;

6. Provide expert advice on any potential new reform/action needed, at national and regional level, to address challenges induced by Covid-19 and given the fast spread of new technologies, take into account reforms aimed at digitalisation of services and facilitation of cross-border movement of services.

Deliverables

1. Methodology, including structure of each individual report, and work plan;

2. Assessment reports (one per area) providing the state of development and key priority reform measures undertaken as well as any potential practical intervention introduced in Western Balkans, covering all aspects defined in these Terms of Reference.

Methodology

i.   Desk review of primary and secondary information (EU reports for each economy, eGovernment Benchmark report, ReSPA reports, WHO reports, etc.)

ii.   Communication/interviews/consultations/focus groups with the representatives of national administrations in the respective areas;

iii.   Any other method applicable.

Lines of Communication

The experts will report to the RCC Secretariat during the whole duration of the contract. Comments and recommendations provided by the RCC should be duly incorporated in the final version of the deliverables.

Timeframe

The engagement is expected to start on 15 October and end on 30 December 2020. To carry out the tasks defined in the ToR, a consulting company or individual consultants within bidding consortia (3 experts, one per each area) will be engaged, one expert per each area to allow parallel working and assessment.

Each individual expert will be in charge of all tasks/deliverables defined in the ToR and will prepare the report providing the state of development and key priority reform measures required as well as any practical intervention in each respective area (i.e. eGovernment, eHealth, eProcurement).

One of the experts should act as a Key expert and, in addition to the above, will be responsible to prepare the structure to be used for each of the reports and ensure the consistency in the assessment provided for each economy. Experts are required to work in parallel and seek synergies, as needed, among them in regard to the areas assessed.

Deliverables	Due date
Methodology, including structure of each individual report, and work plan	30 October 2020
First draft assessment reports (one per area) providing state of development and key priority reform measures undertaken as well as any potential practical intervention introduced in Western Balkans, covering all aspects defined in these ToR. The draft should be shared with the WB economies to allow comments and suggestions	30 November 2020
Final reports, incorporating all comments and suggestions provided by Western Balkan economies as well as RCC	30 December 2020

To the extent possible, the deliverables should factor the implications and prospective solutions related to the consequences and impact of Covid-19 pandemic in all three areas covered by this technical assistance. Additional discussions and consultations with RCC in this regard may also be held if requested.

III COMPETENCIES

Expert Qualifications:

Criteria related to the experts delivering the service

Education:	▪ Advanced degree in law, social science and economics, health and medical studies, business, telecommunications, or other areas directly related to the subject of work

Experience:	▪ eGovernment expert:
	  ▪ Minimum of 7 years of relevant experience in reviewing/supporting development in the area of eGovernment and interoperability framework;
	▪ eHealth expert:
	  ▪ Minimum of 7 years of relevant experience in reviewing/supporting development of eHealth services as well as at least one direct or indirect involvement in the development of e-services in health sector;
	▪ eProcurement expert:
	  ▪ Minimum of 7 years of relevant experience in reviewing/supporting development of eProcurement services as well as at least one direct or indirect involvement in the development of eProcurement services;
	
	Additional requirements:
	
	▪ Proven analytical skills and ability to conceptualise and write concisely and clearly;
	▪ In-depth knowledge of the economies covered by the assignment;
	▪ Demonstrable experience in writing and reporting on complex multi-sector or multi-country strategy 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:	▪ Fluency in written and spoken English, as the official language of the RCC; ▪ Knowledge of other RCC languages is desirable.
Other:	▪ 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

- Company profile including a brief description (up to 2 pages) of the company. In case of a bidding consortium, the key expert/team leader should submit the profile of the consortium stating the key expert and experts;

- Copy of Company's Registration Certificate (in case of consulting companies). In case of a bidding consortium a corresponding written authorisation, power of attorney is accordingly treated;

- 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(s) of key expert/team leader and consultants/experts outlining relevant knowledge and experience as described in Competencies section of the Terms of References.

- Proposed Work Plan Methodological Note/ for the implementation of the assignment, including timeframe;

- List of references for relevant activities implemented over the past 7 years demonstrating relevant experience in the subject matter;

- Application Submission Form (Annex I);

- Statement of Availability (Annex II).

Financial Offer (Free format)

The financial offer should reflect the following:

- All figures should be expressed in EUR;

- Use a free format for the Budget providing the Global Price for the work to be provided.

Note:

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

- Maximum budget should not exceed EUR 30,000
- The fee rates should be broadly consistent with those applicable in the region.

Submission of applications:

Applications need to be submitted by 19 October by 17:00 Central European Time to the following address ProcurementforRcc@rcc.int

- Please make sure that the application is submitted in two separate folders one containing Technical Offer and the other Financial Offer. The documents should be submitted in a form of copies of the originals.

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**
A.1. Work experience, references list: Relevant work experience; evidence of other contracts of the size comparable with that of the tender; experience with clients comparable to the Contracting Authority.	35
A.2. Quality and professional capacity of the consultant(s): CV(s) satisfy the criteria set forth in the Terms of Reference, education and experiences demonstrate professional capacity and experience required.	35
A.3 Quality of the proposed Work Plan: An outline of work plan/methodological note describing the main issues, information, data sources, research and analytical tools to be employed by the author, as well as the timeline.	30
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, competency-based interview will 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: APPLICATION SUBMISSION FORM

REF: 077-020 **Open Call for Consultancy Services**

Subject: Assessing the state of development of e-services, in particular eHealth, eGovernment and eProcurement in Western Balkans (WB)

One signed copy of this Application Submission Form must be supplied.

1 SUBMITTED by:

	Name(s) and address(es) of the bidder submitting this tender
Full Entity Name	

2 CONTACT PERSON (for this Call)

Name	
Surname	
Address	
Telephone	
Fax	
e-mail	

3 **DECLARATION**

[Company Name or Name of the Entity] _____ hereby declares that we have examined and accepted without reserve or restriction the entire contents of the Open 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 open call for consultancy on the basis of supplied documentation subject of this call, which comprise our technical offer and our financial offer.

Name and Surname	
Signature	
Date	

ANNEX II: STATEMENT OF AVAILABILITY

REF: 077-020

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	Number of man-days associated to each task from the ToR