



Open Call for Consulting Services

Terms of Reference:	Youth Employment Analysis in the Western Balkans
Title:	Expert on Youth Employment
Contracting Authority:	Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Secretariat
Reporting to:	RCC Secretariat
Duration:	September 2020 – November 2020 (Max. 25 consultancy days per economy)
Eligible:	Respective consulting companies and other legal entities/individual consultants or individual consultants within bidding consortia
Number of consultants:	6 consultancy assignments in total (one per each economy)
Application Deadline:	30 August 2020
Reference Number:	072-020

I BACKGROUND

Purpose

The purpose of this assignment is to develop knowledge and build capacity among key labour market institutions in the Western Balkans about the process of establishing a systematic and comprehensive approach to addressing the needs of youth in the labour market.

Background Information

The *Employment and Social Affairs Platform 2* (ESAP 2) was launched in 2019 and lasts for 3 years. The project is funded by the European Commission and jointly implemented by RCC and ILO in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia and Serbia. The project aims to strengthen regional cooperation and institutional capacities of national administrations, employers' and workers' organisations, enabling them to develop and effectively implement labour market and social policy reforms in their EU enlargement process.

In the Western Balkans, youth employment is an important policy priority for all governments. Along the general economic development, all economies have experienced a positive trend in youth employment creation. Overall youth employment rate has increased from a meagre 15.6% in 2012 to

¹This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

21.6% by end of 2019. While this progress translates in almost 80,000 new jobs for youth in the region, it compares quite unfavourably to the average EU 28 youth employment rate of 35.7%.

Correspondingly, youth unemployment remains an important challenge. By the end of 2019, average youth unemployment in the region stood at 32%. While this figure represents a steep decline compared to a high youth unemployment rate of 48.5% in 2012, it still remains a striking feature of Western Balkan labour markets. As a reference, the average EU 28 youth unemployment rate stood at a much lower 14.9% in 2019.

Launched by the European Commission in 2013, the Youth Guarantee (YG) is a political commitment undertaken by all EU Member States to give all young people under the age of 25 a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of either leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. More than 5 million young people have registered in YG schemes each year since 2014 and more than 3.5 million young people have accepted an offer of employment, continued education, a traineeship or an apprenticeship.

Most Public Employment Services in the Western Balkans deliver measures specifically designed to target unemployed youth. In most cases, the cornerstone measure is one of a variety of programmes intended to provide young graduates with a first work experience. They comprise on-the-job training programmes, professional practice for new graduates, employment promotion for disadvantaged youth, youth entrepreneurship support, internships and traineeships. However, only few of the programmes target unskilled youth directly.

The Republic of North Macedonia is the first case in the Western Balkans, which has aimed to introduce a systematic approach in tackling the issue of youth unemployment, drawing on the experience of the EU Youth Guarantee.

Based on the ESAP 2 objectives to support regional cooperation among Western Balkan labour market institutions and promote closer alignment with EU good practices on employment and social affairs, this initiative aims to support knowledge sharing on current experiences with the implementation of the youth guarantee and, upon the political commitment and interest of Western Balkan economies, support them in developing a feasibility and readiness analysis as well as a roadmap for setting up and implementing an initiative similar to the youth guarantee scheme. In this regard, the experience of the EU and the Republic of North Macedonia will be valuable for the other Western Balkan economies.

II DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Objectives and Scope of the Assignment

The overall objective of the consultancy will be to produce national analytical reports for Western Balkan economies, which will analyse the current situation with youth unemployment, assess current policies and measures and capacities of main institutional stakeholders and propose national roadmaps for strengthening youth employment programmes. The assignment will specifically:

- Analyse and summarise existing youth employment measures and identify specific challenges in the national context and best practices;
- Map the youth NEET (not in employment, education or training) situation in each of the WB6 using the official statistical data or existing research;
- Propose modifying the design and delivery of policies, specific for each economy, to integrate non-registered NEETs, including tailored outreach mechanisms to identify and assist the most vulnerable NEET groups in order to provide them with a good continued education, apprenticeship, training or employment opportunity within an agreed period of time;
- Analyse the capacities of main stakeholders in each economy (employment agencies, Ministries of Labour and Education and institutions related to them) and identify areas for enhancing their performance;

- Propose roadmaps for each economy for adapting the existing institutional frameworks and projecting as accurately as possible the administrative and operational costs with a focus on the outreach activities and the work of the Public Employment Service.

Methodology

In order to carry out the above tasks, the tender is open to consultants with relevant expertise and experience.

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

- Desk review of primary and secondary data.
- Interviews with relevant government ministries and other stakeholders.
- Any other methods applicable.

Any meetings with relevant stakeholders in the region required by the consultant within the duration of the assignment are the consultant's obligation. ESAP 2 project and RCC staff may facilitate and/or attend such meetings, if deemed necessary by both parties.

Lines of Communication

The consultant will submit all deliverables to the ESAP 2 Project Team Leader and RCC for review and approval. The consultant will work closely with the ESAP 2 project team from whom s/he will seek guidance to efficiently conduct the work. The final outputs will be shared with the national stakeholders and will be presented and discussed in a regional meeting of the ESAP 2 working groups. Upon invitation, the consultant will be required to participate and present the report in a regional meeting. These costs will be treated separately and should not be included in the budget proposal under Annex II.

Timeframe

The engagement is expected to start in September 2020 and end in November 2020.

Deliverables	Due date (from mobilisation)
• Detailed Methodology and Work Plan	2 weeks
• First draft of the Report	8 weeks
• Final version of the Report to be submitted to RCC	12 weeks

III PROFILE AND COMPETENCIES OF THE CONSULTANT

The successful applicant for this assignment needs to have at least 10 years of relevant experience and a proven track record in employment and labour market studies and research, with a focus on youth employment.

Qualifications:

Education:	▪ Post-graduate degree in Social Sciences, Business, Economics, Statistics or
-------------------	---

	related field
Experience:	<p>Qualifications and Skills Required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Technical expertise in analysing issues of employment, labour market demand and supply, and social development in the Western Balkans, with a particular focus on youth and the ability to draw strong and valid conclusions ▪ Previous experience of working with or on labour market institutions in the region ▪ In-depth knowledge of the youth guarantee design and implementation ▪ Excellent communication and report writing skills ▪ Analytical skills and ability to conceptualise and write concisely and clearly ▪ Able to interact with professionals of and representatives from the national administrations in the SEE region
Language requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fluency in English, as the official language of the RCC

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.

IV 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 contractor 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 outputs shall undergo external reviews by relevant stakeholders, including the representatives of the ESAP 2 project team, and the Regional Cooperation Council.

Application Rules:

The application needs to contain the following:

- Technical Offer;
- Financial Offer.

Technical offer:

For individual consultants:

- Letter of Interest, highlighting relevant similar work experience on youth employment in participating economy the candidate is applying for;
- CV outlining relevant knowledge and experience as described under the Profile and Competencies;
- Work plan outlining the proposed action, sources of information to be used, timeline and tools to be employed by the consultant;
- Reference list including contact details (e-mail addresses) of referees;
- Submission Form (Annex I);

For legal entities and consortia of individual consultants:

- Legal entities' profile, including a brief description (up to 2 pages) of the entity. In case of a bidding consortium, the team leader should submit the profile of the consortium;
- Copy of Legal Entity's Registration Certificate (in case of consulting companies/legal entities). In case of a bidding consortium, a corresponding written authorisation, power of attorney is treated accordingly;
- Financial records - balance sheet and profit-and-loss statement for the past 2 years (only in case of bidding of consulting companies);
- CV of the expert, highlighting youth employment expertise in participating economy the candidate is applying for, outlining relevant knowledge and experience as described in the Terms of References, along with contact details (e-mail addresses) of referees;
- Work plan outlining the proposed action, sources of information to be used, timeline and tools to be employed by the consultant;
- List of references for relevant activities implemented over the past 5 years demonstrating relevant experience in the subject matter;

- Submission Form (Annex I);
- Signed Statements of Availability (Annex III).

Financial Offer, Annex II Budget

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

- All figures should be expressed in EUR;
- The proposed budget should include daily fee rate for consulting services; the fee rates should be broadly consistent with the framework rates applicable in the region for these types of professional services.

Application need to be submitted by 30 August 2020 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.

EVALUATION AND SELECTION

The assignment will be awarded to the highest qualified applicant based on the skills, expertise, and the quality of the concept note(s) and the cost-effectiveness of the financial offer.

Applications will be evaluated on the basis of the profile and competencies of the candidate and the responsiveness to the Terms of Reference for Consultancy Services.

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

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 nature comparable to that of the Call; 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 ToR, education and experience demonstrate professional capacity and experience required.	35
A.3 Quality of the Work Plan: Work plan describing the main issues, information, data sources, and tools to be employed by the expert as well as approach to the work to be undertaken.	30
B. Financial Proposal/lowest price has maximum score	100

--	--

Score for offer X =

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

B: [Price of offer X] * 20

In addition to the results of the technical and financial evaluation, a 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: SUBMISSION FORM

REF: 072-020

One signed copy of this Call for Consultancy 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 Call for Consultancy Ref: 072-020.

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	
Signature	
Date	

ANNEX II: BUDGET

BREAKDOWN REF: 0 7 2 - 0 2 0

No Cost categories	Daily fee rate	Total Cost
2 TOTAL COSTS		
3 VAT (if applicable):		
GRAND TOTAL (2+3):		

The fee rates should be broadly consistent with the framework rates applicable in the region for these types of professional services.

ANNEX III: STATEMENT OF AVAILABILITY

REF: 072-020

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