



## Open Call for Consultancy

Services Reference Number: 057-024

### **LOT 1: Public and Business Opinion Surveys in the Western Balkans - Balkan Barometer 2025, data collection and data processing**

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Implementation of Public and Business Opinion Surveys in the Western Balkans – Balkan Barometer 2025, data collection and data processing</b>
<b>RCC Department:</b>	Programme Department
<b>Number of posts:</b>	Team Leader + 2 Key Experts (minimum), full team to be proposed by the bidder
<b>Starting Date:</b>	November 2024
<b>Reporting to:</b>	RCC Secretariat
<b>Location:</b>	Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
<b>Duration:</b>	November 2024 – 28 April 2025
<b>Price ceiling:</b>	Up to EUR 90,000 (without VAT) – Bids indicating a price above this threshold shall not be considered

## **I BACKGROUND**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the consultancy is to collect data to help determine the public attitudes and business sentiment in the Western Balkan Six (WB6) with regards to the socio-economic situation, particularly in the context of South East Europe (SEE) 2030 Strategy and Common Regional Market (CRM) 2021-2024 agenda, and the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans Action Plan 2021-2030 (GAWB) through the implementation of a field survey in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia and Serbia. Furthermore, the survey objective is to also take into account recently endorsed second iteration of Common Regional Market Action Plan 2025-2028 (CRM2 AP).

For this purpose, a consultancy or a consulting consortium (hereinafter: the Consultant) will be engaged to support the development and execution of data collection phase and data processing of the survey on behalf of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC).

### **Background Information**

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\* This 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.

During the past seven years, RCC has led the WB6 in implementing the *South East Europe 2020 – Jobs and Prosperity in a European Perspective* strategy. The Strategy was adopted at a conference of Ministers of Economy from South East Europe held in Sarajevo on 21 November 2013. The goal of the SEE 2020 Strategy was to improve living conditions in the region and enhance competitiveness and development, closely following the vision of the EU strategy *Europe 2020*.

Given that the year 2020 was the last year in the implementation of SEE 2020 Strategy, RCC Secretariat was tasked by South East European Cooperation Process (SEEC) Participants in the SEEC Declaration of 9 July 2019 to prepare a vision of SEE 2030 Strategy in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In light of this, RCC Secretariat drafted SEE2030 Strategy, proposing several objectives to reach regionally sustainable economic growth, such as reducing poverty and inequality, empowering women and social inclusion, slowing down depopulation of the region through enhancing life quality, smooth transiting to a carbon-neutral economy without disrupting competitiveness and private sector development. Consultations with South East Europe participants, including Western Balkan Six and civil society organisations were conducted in the course of 2021 with a view of solidifying and strengthening the structure of SEE2030 Strategy so as to reflect the immediate and most acute needs of the South East Europe, including the Western Balkan Six (as the main beneficiaries of this Strategy).

Following the Berlin Process Sofia Summit in 2021, Western Balkan Six Leaders committed to an ambitious four-year Action Plan for the implementation of Common Regional Market (CRM1) 2021-2024 agenda with an aim of deepening the regional economic integration and bringing the region closer to the EU Single Market. By drawing on the EU recovery efforts and building on EU four freedoms approach, CRM 1 targeted key areas: i) *Regional trade area: Free movement of goods, services, capital and people*; ii) *Regional investment area*; iii) *Regional digital area*; and iv) *Regional industrial and innovation area*.

RCC had just finalised the successor of CRM 2021-2024, notably, the Common Regional Market Action Plan for 2025-2028 in a highly participatory approach together with WB6, and with its regional partners CEFTA, Western Balkans 6 Chamber Investment Forum (WB6 CIF), Transport Community Permanent Secretariat (TCT), and with the support of EC. The Plan was also widely consulted with the civil society, and was endorsed at the Berlin Process Summit in October 2024. It focuses on the six building blocks, or priority areas:

- 1) Free movement of goods – making trade in goods more efficient and less costly through harmonising and simplifying procedures, thereby fostering greater market integration and competitiveness.
- 2) Free movement of services – allowing people and businesses in the service sectors to operate and grow across multiple regional markets by improving market access, removing discrimination and addressing regulatory challenges. In doing so, it promotes competitiveness and modernisation of the service economy;
- 3) Horizontal trade measures – underpin trade in goods and services – such as reduction of waiting times, digitalisation and paperless trade, intellectual property rights, trade dispute settlement, consumer protection, statistics, environment and export promotion;
- 4) Human capital development – aimed at enhancing workforce mobility for economic opportunities, workforce adaptability and innovation, while targeting social dimension;

- 5) Business enabling environment and competitiveness – aiming to create a conducive and competitive economic environment with a focus on sustainable, digital and consumer finance, attracting quality investments, and supporting the inclusive greening of industries, including enhancing entrepreneurship;
- 6) Digital transformation – bringing the region closer to the EU Digital Single Market in the areas of digital connectivity, digital economy and cybersecurity.

The Berlin Process Summit in July 2021 reconfirmed the importance of inclusive regional cooperation as a fundamental factor for the Western Balkan Six towards their EU membership, commending the positive coordination amongst the projects launched within the framework of the Berlin Process and EU policies, with a specific focus on the Economic and Investment Plan, Green Agenda for the Western Balkans and Common Regional Market<sup>1</sup>. Balkan Barometer 2025 edition will, therefore, feature elements from these important regional initiatives in order to provide the most comprehensive and reliable source of regional data across numerous important policy areas in the context of EU accession and regional economic integration.

Likewise, this year's Balkan Barometer will include elements of the second iteration of the Common Regional Market (CRM2) agenda in order to depict the region's sentiments, attitudes and aspirations on the main policy areas that will define the region's economic performance in the next four years.

RCC is looking to mobilise a Consultant to design and implement the data collection and data processing components of these surveys during 2024 as a prerequisite for the production of the Balkan Barometer 2025.

The analytical work, including conclusions, recommendations, drafting of the final Balkan Barometer reports (on the Public Opinion survey and the Business Opinion survey), and the design and publication of the reports are subject of separate contracts.

## II DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

### Objectives and Scope of the Assignment

The main objective of the assignment is to design, with RCC's input, and execute the data collection and data processing components of the public and business opinion surveys, supporting the production of the Balkan Barometer 2025 report. Balkan Barometer 2025 will consist of two separate analytical reports: **Public Opinion Survey** - a survey of citizen opinions of Western Balkan Six, and **Business Opinion Survey** - a survey of business sentiment in each of the WB6. Each of the two surveys would be conducted in all WB6: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia and Serbia. The results for the WB6 will be presented in the two core reports, as was done in the previous years.

The Balkan Barometer surveys are conducted annually with a majority of core questions that remain unchanged, and a number of topical questions that vary from year to year. Launched as an attempt to measure impact of regional actions implemented under the SEE 2020 Strategy, the Balkan Barometer is now firmly established as a reliable source of regional data widely employed and referenced by media, business, civil society and decision-makers alike. While addressing the most important socio-

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<sup>11</sup> Berlin Summit Conclusions, July 2021

economic policy areas, it continues to be up-to-date with the latest regional developments and EU-related aspirations of the Western Balkan Six.

In terms of expected outputs and deliverables, the Contractor and its team of experts are expected to carry out the following activities:

## **Component 1:            *Public Opinion Survey***

### **General**

The Public Opinion Survey is planned to be carried out through face-to-face interviews with residents in each of the Western Balkan Six (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia and Serbia).

The sample size in each WB6 should include at least 1,000 respondents, bringing the total to at least **6,000** respondents throughout the region. Samples should be probability-based and nationally representative of the resident population aged 18 and above. The coverage area should include the entire territory including rural areas and the sampling frame should represent the entire population of the 18+ age group. Data weighting should be used to ensure a nationally-representative sample for each WB6. In addition to taking into account disproportional sampling across regions, data should be weighted by gender, age, education, economic activity and socio-economic status.

Draft questionnaire for Public Opinion Survey will be subject to potential update due to most recent global and regional developments. In general, the questionnaire should include approximately 50-60 questions, where RCC reserves the right to amend the number of questions as it sees fit in the regional context. The questionnaire is developed in English and should be translated into local languages using the system of back translation to minimise potential misunderstandings. Kick-off meeting will be held between the RCC, data collection team and the team engaged for data analysis to finalise the list of questions for both surveys. The meetings will be held upon signature of the contracts.

The surveys will be conducted face-to-face in respondents' homes. Interviewers should have adequate experience in survey research studies and should be provided with training prior to the start of data collection. A training manual should be produced to assist the work in the field and ensure consistency. Quality control back-checks should be carried out and documented covering at least 10% of respondents.

All deliverables will be produced in English, thus an excellent command of the language is critical.

### **Specific Tasks**

Under this Component, it is envisioned that the Consultant shall carry out the following tasks:

Conduct preparatory work

- Familiarise itself with the RCC, South East Europe (SEE) 2030 Strategy, CRM 2021-2024 and CRM 2025-2028 Action Plans and the Green Agenda for Western Balkans (GAWB);
- Participate in a kick-off meeting and on-going consultations with the RCC Secretariat;
- Agree with the RCC Secretariat on any outstanding issues and/or possible modifications to the scope of work;
- Finalise the methodology.

Survey Design and Sample Preparation

- Obtain input from the RCC Secretariat and prepare final questionnaire in English for approval;
- Prepare translation of the approved questionnaire into local languages (Albanian/Bosnian/Macedonian/Montenegrin/Serbian) using the system of back translation;
- Develop the sample for each WB6 as described above.

#### Survey deployment and field work

- Develop a training manual for interviewers;
- Mobilise and train the interviewers;
- Deploy interviewers and conduct field work;
- Ensure quality control using back-checks (either in person or by phone). At least 10% of the respondents should be checked in this way, and send brief report to RCC on this.

#### Data input and processing

- Carry out data entry for each question, both for national-level data and regional aggregates;
- Produce the data tables for each question, including the regional aggregates;
- Calculate the Balkan Public Sentiment Index and the sub-indices relating to the present situation and the expectations (see [the Balkan Barometer 2024: Public Opinion Survey](#)) using the same methodology as in 2024 for comparison purposes.

#### Production and delivery of data tables

- Produce the data tables inclusive of all data collected in each of the WB6, including regional aggregates and/or averages and calculated indices. Data shall be prepared in a format allowing statistical analysis, properly tabulated and ready to be imported in any of the major statistical tools (such as SPSS, Stata, SAS, etc.). The format must allow for production of data analysis, additional analysis as well as graphical data presentation and should be accompanied by all appropriate documentation. Submit the data tables to the RCC Secretariat by 10 March 2025;
- Produce a separate table with data to be imported into the Balkan Barometer online database and submit this data table to the RCC in excel format, according to the instructions provided by the RCC Secretariat, no later than 10 March 2025;
- Prepare a methodological report and send it to RCC by 10 March 2025.

### **Component 2:            *Business Opinion Survey***

#### **General**

The Business Opinion Survey is planned to be carried out through face-to-face interviews with businesses in each of the Western Balkan Six (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia and Serbia).

The sample size in each WB6 should include 200 companies-respondents, bringing the total to 1,200 respondents throughout the region. Samples should be probability-based and nationally-representative of the overall population of businesses. The coverage area should include the entire economy and the sampling frame should represent the entire population of the business sector. Data weighting should be used to ensure a nationally-representative sample for each WB6. In addition to taking into account disproportional sampling across regions, data should be weighted by sector, size in terms of revenue and number of employees, export profile, ownership structure and legal status.

Draft questionnaire for Business Opinion Survey will be subjected to amendments due to developments in the post-pandemic environment. In general, the questionnaire should include approximately 40-50 questions. The questionnaire is developed in English and should be translated into local languages using the system of back translation to minimise potential misunderstandings.

The surveys will be conducted face-to-face at company sites. The person responding on behalf of the company should be a member of the management team of the firm. Interviewers should have adequate experience in survey research studies and should be provided with training prior to the start of data collection. A training manual should be produced to assist the work in the field and ensure consistency. Quality control back-checks should be carried out and documented covering at least 10% of respondents.

The final report will be produced in English, thus an excellent command of the language is critical.

### **Specific Tasks**

Under this Component, it is envisioned that the Consultant shall carry out the following tasks:

#### Conduct preparatory work

- Familiarise itself with the RCC, South East Europe (SEE) 2030 Strategy, CRM 2021-2024 and CRM 2025-2028 Action Plans, GAWB;
- Participate in a kick-off meeting and on-going consultations with the RCC Secretariat;
- Agree with the RCC Secretariat on any outstanding issues and/or possible modifications to the scope of work;
- Finalise the methodology.

#### Survey Design and Sample Preparation

- Obtain input from the RCC Secretariat and prepare final questionnaire in English for approval;
- Prepare translation of the approved questionnaire into local languages (Albanian/Bosnian/Macedonian/Montenegrin/Serbian) using the system of back translation;
- Develop the sample for each WB6 as described above.

#### Survey deployment and field work

- Develop a training manual for interviewers;
- Mobilise and train the interviewers;
- Deploy interviewers and conduct field work;
- Ensure quality control using back-checks.

#### Data input and processing

- Carry out data entry and data processing for each question, both at national-level data and regional aggregates;
- Calculate the Balkan Business Sentiment Index and the sub-indices relating to the present situation and the expectations using the same methodology as in 2024 for comparison purposes.

#### Production and delivery of data tables

- Produce the data tables inclusive of all data collected in each of the WB6, including regional aggregates and/or averages and calculated indices. Data shall be prepared in a format allowing statistical analysis, properly tabulated and ready to be imported in any of the major statistical tools (such as SPSS, Stata, SAS, etc.). The format must allow for production of data analysis, additional analysis as well as graphical data presentation and should be accompanied by all appropriate documentation. Submit the data tables to the RCC Secretariat by 10 March 2025;
- Produce a separate table with data to be imported into the Balkan Barometer online database and submit this data table to the RCC in excel format, according to the instructions provided by the RCC Secretariat, no later than 10 March 2025;
- Prepare a methodological report by 10 March 2025.

The Consultant will appoint a Team Leader to manage both the Component 1 and 2 and liaise directly with the RCC Secretariat.

The implementation of the work outlined in these Terms of Reference shall commence on November 2024 and will end on 28 April 2025<sup>2</sup>. All draft deliverables outlined above should be submitted to the RCC in the appropriate format by 10 March 2025. The final deliverables, prepared according to RCC's inputs, will be delivered within 15 calendar days following RCC's comments.

### III PROFILE AND COMPETENCIES

For the purpose of this contract, the Consultant is expected to put together the necessary team of experts to conduct the work. The Consultant will decide on the adequate team's composition and structure, bearing in mind that the minimum team composition will need to include the Team Leader and two Key Experts – one per each Component of work. The rest of the team should be described in the Technical Offer as well. The Technical Offer should also indicate the level of effort planned per each member of the team.

The Team Leader and the Key Experts should meet the following requirements:

#### Qualifications

<b>Education:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University or advanced degree in social sciences - political science, economics, law or related fields.</li> </ul>
<b>Experience and skills:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrable experience and good track record of participating and managing comparable public opinion research surveys;</li> <li>• Minimum of 7 years of relevant experience (10 years for the Team Leader), with familiarity of working for international and donor-funded clients;</li> <li>• Proven analytical skills and ability to conceptualise and write concisely and clearly;</li> <li>• In-depth knowledge of the WB6 covered by the assignment and familiarity with development issues;</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> RCC reserves the right to contact the Consultant after 28 April 2025 in case any of the submitted deliverables needs to be revisited and/or clarified.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong writing skills (in English);</li> <li>• Excellent organisational skills;</li> <li>• Ability to be flexible and respond to changes as part of the review and feedback process; and</li> <li>• Proven communication and presentation skills and ability to work in an environment requiring liaison and collaboration with multiple actors.</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 RCC languages is a plus.</li> </ul>
<b>Other:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familiar with MS Office applications.</li> </ul>

**Core Competencies**

- Demonstrates professional competence to meet responsibilities and post requirements and is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines and achieving results;
- Results Orientation: Plans and produces quality results to meet established goals, generates innovative and practical solutions to challenging situations;
- Communication: Excellent communication skills, including the ability to convey complex concepts and recommendations in a clear and persuasive style tailored to match different audiences;
- Team work: Ability to interact, establish and maintain effective working relations with a culturally diverse team; and
- Client orientation: Ability to establish and maintain productive partnerships with regional and national partners and stakeholders and pro-activeness in identifying the needs of beneficiaries and partners, as well as matching them to appropriate solutions.

**Core Values**

- Demonstrates integrity and fairness by modelling RCC values and ethical standards;
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability.

**IV QUALITY CONTROL**

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 RCC and 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.

**Quality Control by the Regional Cooperation Council**

Each Consultant’s outputs shall undergo external review. The first draft shall be reviewed in parallel by all relevant stakeholders and the Regional Cooperation Council.

The final (second) draft of each output shall be reviewed by the Regional Cooperation Council taking account of the comments made by the different stakeholders and how the experts have handled these comments. The approved final report will be subject to a quality assessment by Programme Department of the Regional Cooperation Council, upon whose endorsement each report would be distributed and made public.

The RCC reserves the right to conduct close monitoring of the data collection process, including on-the-spot verification without any prior notification to the Consultant.

**More information on the RCC work and previous Balkan Barometer instalments are available at:**

[Regional Cooperation Council | Welcome \(rcc.int\)](http://rcc.int)

[Balkan Barometer | Welcome \(rcc.int\)](http://rcc.int)

## **LOT 2: Public and Business Opinion Surveys in the Western Balkans - Balkan Barometer 2025, data analysis, conclusions and recommendations**

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Implementation of Public and Business Opinion Surveys in the Western Balkans – Balkan Barometer 2025, data analysis, findings, conclusions and recommendations</b>
<b>RCC Department:</b>	Programme Department
<b>Number of posts:</b>	Team Leader + 2 Key Experts (minimum), full team to be proposed by the bidder
<b>Starting Date:</b>	November 2024
<b>Reporting to:</b>	RCC Secretariat
<b>Location:</b>	Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
<b>Duration:</b>	November 2024 – 30 June 2025
<b>Price ceiling:</b>	Up to EUR 40,000 (without VAT) – Bids indicating a price above this threshold shall not be considered

### **I BACKGROUND**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the consultancy is to perform the analysis of the data collected through Balkan Barometer surveys of public and business opinion (implemented through a separate contract), and prepare analytical reports drawing findings, trends, conclusions and recommendations. The Balkan Barometer surveys are implemented to help determine the public attitudes and business sentiments in the Western Balkans with regards to the socio-economic situation and in the context of SEE2030

Strategy and Common Regional Market (CRM) 2021-2024, CRM2 2025-2028 agenda and GAWB through the field surveys in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia and Serbia. In addition to analysis and report writing, this consultancy would also extend early support to finalising the draft set of questions which will be used in both surveys.

For this purpose, a consultancy or a consulting consortium (hereinafter: the Consultant) will be engaged to complement the data collection by assisting in the development of final questionnaires and engaging in the analytical work and the drafting of the final reports. The actual field work on implementing the surveys on behalf of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) is part of a separate contract and is not included in the scope of the assignment described herein.

## **Background Information**

Over the past seven years, the RCC led WB6 in implementing the SEE 2020 strategy to improve living conditions and competitiveness, aligned with the EU's Europe 2020 strategy.

As the SEE 2020 ended in 2020, the RCC was tasked by the SEECP to develop the SEE 2030 Strategy, aligned with the UN SDGs. SEE 2030 aims to reduce poverty, promote inclusion, improve quality of life, and transition to a carbon-neutral economy while maintaining competitiveness.

Following the Berlin Process Sofia Summit in 2021, Western Balkan Six Leaders committed to an ambitious four-year Action Plan for the implementation of Common Regional Market (CRM) 2021-2024 agenda with an aim of deepening the regional economic integration and bringing the region closer to the EU Single Market. By drawing on the EU recovery efforts and building on EU four freedoms approach, CRM targeted key areas: i) *Regional trade area: Free movement of goods, services, capital and people*; ii) *Regional investment area*; iii) *Regional digital area*; and iv) *Regional industrial and innovation area*. The CRM agenda remained the main socio-economic transformative tool for the region for the past four years. The implementation results across above-mentioned areas also had direct impact on the strategic framework of SEE2030 Strategy.

Entering its final year of implementation, and appreciating the tangible results produced by the CRM 2021-2024, the Leaders of Western Balkan Six have expressed their commitment to endorse the new Action Plan for Common Regional Market 2025-2028 at the Berlin Process Leaders' Summit 2024. This new phase of CRM acts as a stepping-stone towards the EU's Single Market in many sectors, and operationalizes the second pillar of the Growth Plan for Western Balkans: Regional economic integration through the Common Regional Market unlocking the economic potential of the region, creating opportunities for our private sector and SMEs as well as for workers.

Therefore, this year's Balkan Barometer will include elements of the Common Regional Market 2025-2028 agenda in order to depict the region's sentiments, attitudes and aspirations on main policy areas that will define the region's economic developments in the next four years. In this respect, both Public and Business Opinion surveys will encompass elements within the aforementioned plan too.

Balkan Barometer 2025 edition will, therefore, feature elements from these important regional initiatives in order to provide the most comprehensive and reliable source of regional data across numerous important policy areas in the context of EU accession and regional economic integration, and can serve as a baseline reference point for the new CRM2.

RCC is looking to mobilise a Consultant to do the analytical work after the data are collected and processed, and to draft Key Findings and the Final Report of both surveys, and produce the Balkan Barometer 2025.

## **II DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

The main objective of the assignment is to perform the analytical work, draw conclusions and recommendations, and produce the Balkan Barometer 2025 report. Balkan Barometer 2025 will consist of two separate analytical reports: **Public Opinion Survey** - a survey of citizen opinions of Western Balkan Six, and **Business Opinion Survey** - a survey of business sentiment in each of the Western Balkan Six. In both of the reports, sentiments of businesses and citizens on the latest COVID-19 pandemic will be reflected and reported. Each of the two surveys will be conducted in all WB6: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia and Serbia. The results for the WB6 will be presented in the two core reports, as was done in the previous years.

The Balkan Barometer surveys are conducted annually with a majority of core questions that remain unchanged, and a number of topical questions that vary from year to year. Launched as an attempt to measure impact of regional actions implemented under the SEE 2020 Strategy, CRM 2021-2024 and its successor CRM2 2025-2028 Action Plan, the Balkan Barometer is now firmly established as a reliable source of regional data widely employed and referenced by media, business, civil society and decision-makers alike. While addressing the most important socio-economic policy areas, it continues to be up-to-date with the latest regional developments and EU-related aspirations of the Western Balkan Six.

In terms of expected outputs and deliverables, the Consultant and its team of experts are expected to carry out the following activities:

### **Component 1: Analysis of data generated from the Public Opinion Survey**

#### **General**

The Public Opinion Survey will be carried out through face-to-face interviews with residents in each of the Western Balkan Six (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia and Serbia).

The sample size in each WB6 will include at least 1,000 respondents, bringing the total to at least 6,000 respondents throughout the region. Samples will be probability-based and nationally-representative of the resident population aged 18 and above. The coverage area will include the entire territory including rural areas and the sampling frame should represent the entire population of the 18+ age group. Data weighting will be used to ensure a nationally-representative sample for each WB6. In addition to taking into account disproportional sampling across regions, data will be weighted by gender, age, education, economic activity and socio-economic status.

Draft questionnaire for Public Opinion Survey is provided in Annex VI. In general, the questionnaire should include approximately 50-60 questions, where RCC reserves the right to amend the number of questions as it sees fit in the regional context in 2024. Kick-off meeting will be held between the RCC, data collection team and the team engaged for data analysis to finalise the list of questions. The meeting will be held upon signature of the contracts.

Data analysis should be entrusted to experienced experts and the final analytical report will be produced in English, thus an excellent command of the language is critical.

## Specific Tasks

Under this Component, it is envisioned that the Consultant shall carry out the following tasks:

### Conduct preparatory work

- Familiarise itself with the RCC: South East Europe (SEE) 2030 Strategy, CRM 2021-2024 and CRM 2025-2028 Action Plans, GAWB, SWP 2023-2025;
- Participate in a kick-off meeting and on-going consultations with the RCC Secretariat. This meeting will be held in the first week upon signature of the contract;
- Agree with the RCC Secretariat on any outstanding issues and/or possible modifications to the scope of work;
- Finalise the methodology.

### Support the Survey Design and Sample Preparation

- Support the RCC Secretariat and the design phase of the survey, with focus on refinement of the questionnaire.

### Report writing

- Prior to the comprehensive analytical reports, prepare Key Findings Report modelled after the Key Findings Report of previous years, reference year to be used can be 2024, and can be found at: [Balkan Barometer | Welcome \(rcc.int\)](https://www.rcc.int/);
- On the basis of the collected and processed data provided by the RCC, develop a comprehensive analytical report – Public Opinion Survey – that will include, but not be limited to: an introduction and main findings, detailed overview of responses to each question with the already prepared graphic representation and commentary, conclusions and recommendations, including the already prepared methodological notes and technical specifications. The structure of the Balkan Barometer 2024: Public Opinion Survey published in 2024 should be used as a template;  
NB: Proofreading and editing of the report should be done by a native English speaker;
- The Consultant should also propose the text for infographics, highlighting the most outstanding findings on the regional and level of each Western Balkan Six.

### Delivery of the reports

- The Consultant will receive the processed data no later than 15 March 2025;
- The first draft of the report should be submitted to the RCC in writing in MS Word format by 15 April 2025;
- The final report will be delivered within 15 calendar days following RCC's comments. The design of the report will not be subject of this contract since it will be done by RCC, according to RCC graphic design standards.

## **Component 2: Analysis of data generated from the Business Opinion Survey**

### General

The Business Opinion Survey will be carried out through face-to-face interviews with businesses in each of the Western Balkan Six (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia and Serbia).

The sample size in each WB6 should include 200 companies-respondents, bringing the total to 1,200 respondents throughout the region. Samples should be probability-based and nationally-representative of the overall population of businesses. The coverage area should include the entire territory and the sampling frame should represent the entire population of the business sector. Data weighting should be used to ensure a nationally-representative sample for each WB6. In addition to taking into account disproportional sampling across regions, data should be weighted by sector, size in terms of revenue and number of employees, export profile, ownership structure and legal status.

Draft questionnaire for the Business Opinion Survey will be subject to potential amendments to the changing environment and in line with the new CRM2 AP. In general, the questionnaire should include approximately 40-50 questions. Kick-off meeting will be held between the RCC, data collection team and the team engaged for data analysis to finalise the list of questions. The meeting will be held upon signature of the contracts.

Data analysis should be entrusted to experienced experts and the final analytical report will be produced in English, thus an excellent command of the language is critical.

### **Specific Tasks**

Under this Component, it is envisioned that the Consultant shall carry out the following tasks:

#### Conduct preparatory work

- Familiarise itself with the RCC, South East Europe (SEE) 2030 Strategy, CRM 2021-2024 and CRM 2025-2028 Action Plans, SWP 2023-2025, and GAWB;
- Participate in a kick-off meeting and on-going consultations with the RCC Secretariat. This meeting will be held in the first week upon signature of the contract;
- Agree with the RCC Secretariat on any outstanding issues and/or possible modifications to the scope of work;
- Finalise the methodology.

#### Support the Survey Design and Sample Preparation

- Support the RCC Secretariat and the design phase of the survey, with focus on refinement of the questionnaire.

#### Report writing

- Prior to the comprehensive analytical reports, prepare Key Findings Report modelled after the Key Findings Report of previous years, reference year to be used can be 2024, and can be found at: [Balkan Barometer | Welcome \(rcc.int\)](#);
- On the basis of the collected and processed data provided by the RCC, develop a comprehensive analytical report – Business Opinion Survey – that will include, but not be limited to: an introduction and main findings, detailed overview of responses to each question with the already prepared graphic representation and commentary, conclusions and recommendations, including the already prepared methodological notes and technical

.specifications. The structure of the Balkan Barometer 2024: Business Opinion Survey published in 2024 should be used as a template;

NB: Proofreading and editing of the report should be done by a native English speaker;

- The consultant should also propose the text for infographics, highlighting the most outstanding findings on the regional and level of each Western Balkan Six.

#### Delivery of the reports

- The Consultant will receive the processed data no later than 15 March 2025;
- The first draft of the report should be submitted to the RCC in writing in MS Word format by 15 April 2025;
- The final report will be delivered within 15 calendar days following RCC’s comments. The design of the report will not be subject of this contract since it will be done by RCC, according to RCC graphic design standards.

The Consultant will appoint a Team Leader to manage both the Component 1 and 2 and liaise directly with the RCC Secretariat.

The implementation of the contract is envisioned to commence on November 2024 and end on 30 June 2025.

### III PROFILE AND COMPETENCIES

For the purpose of this contract, the Consultant is expected to put together the necessary team of experts to conduct the work. The Consultant will decide on the adequate team composition and structure, bearing in mind that the minimum team composition will need to include the Team Leader and two Key Experts – one per each Component of work. The rest of the team should be described in the Technical Offer as well. The Technical Offer should also indicate the level of effort planned per each member of the team.

The Team Leader and the Key Experts should meet the following requirements:

#### Qualifications

<b>Education:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University or advanced degree in political science, economics, law or related fields.</li> </ul>
<b>Experience and skills:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrable policy analysis experience and track record in comparable opinion research surveys;</li> <li>• Minimum of 7 years of relevant experience (10 years for the Team Leader), with familiarity of working for international and donor-funded clients;</li> <li>• Proven analytical skills and ability to conceptualise and write concisely and clearly;</li> <li>• In-depth knowledge of the WB6 covered by the assignment and</li> </ul>

	<p>familiarity with development issues;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong writing skills (in English);</li> <li>• Excellent organisational skills;</li> <li>• Ability to be flexible and respond to changes as part of the review and feedback process; and</li> <li>• Proven communication and presentation skills and ability to work in an environment requiring liaison and collaboration with multiple actors.</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 RCC languages is a plus.</li> </ul>
<b>Other:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familiar with MS Office applications.</li> </ul>

**Core Competencies**

- Demonstrates professional competence to meet responsibilities and post requirements and is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines and achieving results;
- Results Orientation: Plans and produces quality results to meet established goals, generates innovative and practical solutions to challenging situations;
- Communication: Excellent communication skills, including the ability to convey complex concepts and recommendations in a clear and persuasive style tailored to match different audiences;
- Team work: Ability to interact, establish and maintain effective working relations with a culturally diverse team; and
- Client orientation: Ability to establish and maintain productive partnerships with regional and national partners and stakeholders and pro-activeness in identifying the needs of beneficiaries and partners, as well as matching them to appropriate solutions.

**Core Values**

- Demonstrates integrity and fairness by modelling RCC values and ethical standards;
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability.

**IV QUALITY CONTROL**

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.

**Quality Control by the Regional Cooperation Council**

Each Consultant's outputs shall undergo external review. The first draft shall be reviewed in parallel by all relevant stakeholders and the Regional Cooperation Council.

The final (second) draft of each output shall be reviewed by the Regional Cooperation Council taking account of the comments made by the different stakeholders and how the experts have handled these comments. The approved final report will be subject to a quality assessment by Programme Department of the Regional Cooperation Council, upon whose endorsement each report would be distributed and made public.

The RCC reserves the right to conduct close monitoring of the data analysis process, including ad-hock meetings with the Consultant.

**More information on the RCC work and previous Balkan Barometer instalments are available at:**

[Regional Cooperation Council | Welcome \(rcc.int\)](http://rcc.int)

[Balkan Barometer | Welcome \(rcc.int\)](http://rcc.int)

## **V APPLICATION AND PARTICIPATION**

Participation is open to the respective legal entities either acting independently or within bidding consortia. The applicant should have **substantial international experience** in conducting public opinion research and be able to efficiently cover, either directly or through consortium partners, Western Balkan Six (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia, and Serbia).

### **Bidding consortia of legal entities, associations/joint venture groups**

Bidding consortia participating in this tender must indicate the members and show how the work is divided between them. Specifically, all members must name the *lead member* 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.

With the submission of an offer, the bidder /bidding consortium, accepts the contents and principles of Service Submission Form and Annex I Statement of Availability. If the said contents and principles of the Forms are violated by the bidder or the bidding consortium, the RCC Secretariat reserves the right to exclude the bid.

## **TECHNICAL OFFER**

### **LOT 1**

The Technical Offer must include the following documents:

- Company/institution profile including a brief description (up to 2 pages) about the company (in case of a bidding consortium, only the lead member should submit the profile);
- Copy of Company's/Institution's Registration Certificate (in case of a bidding consortium, only the lead member submits the Registration Certificate);
- Financial records - company's/institution's balance sheet and profit-and-loss statement for the past 2 years (in case of a bidding consortium, only the lead member should submit the financial records);

- CV of key members of the project team, outlining relevant knowledge and experience as described in Terms of Reference, along with contact details of referees;
- A technical proposal (bid) of maximum of 5 pages describing the methodology, main challenges perceived, and tools to be employed by the Consultant(s) to implement the work as described in Terms of Reference. The technical proposal should outline how the bidder intends to ensure the indicated geographic coverage (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia, and Serbia);
- List of references for relevant activities implemented over the past 5 years demonstrating relevant experience in the subject matter and the geographic area;
- Signed Statements of Availability (Annex I).

## **LOT 2**

The Technical Offer must include the following documents:

- Company/institution profile including a brief description (up to 2 pages) about the company (in case of a bidding consortium, only the lead member should submit the profile);
- Copy of Company's/Institution's Registration Certificate (in case of a bidding consortium, only the lead member submits the Registration Certificate);
- Financial records - company's/institution's balance sheet and profit-and-loss statement for the past 2 years (in case of a bidding consortium, only the lead member should submit the financial records);
- CV of key members of the project team, outlining relevant knowledge and experience as described in Terms of Reference, along with contact details of referees;
- A technical proposal (bid) of maximum of 5 pages describing the methodology, main challenges perceived, and tools to be employed by the Consultant(s) to implement the work as described in Terms of Reference. The technical proposal should outline how the bidder intends to ensure the indicated geographic coverage (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia, and Serbia);
- List of references for relevant activities implemented over the past 5 years demonstrating relevant experience in the subject matter and the geographic area;
- Signed Statements of Availability (Annex I).

## **FINANCIAL OFFER**

**LOT 1 Price ceiling:** Up to EUR 90,000 (without VAT) – Bids indicating a price above this threshold shall not be considered

**LOT 2 Price ceiling:** Up to EUR 40,000 (without VAT) – Bids indicating a price above this threshold shall not be considered

The Financial Offer must include the following elements:

- Budget Breakdown

The budget breakdown should reflect the following:

- All figures should be expressed in EUR;

- Lump sum for the assignment should be indicated;
- Breakdown per cost and activity category should be provided, with budget breakdown per each component of the work as requested in the ToR (Component 1 and Component 2);
- For companies from Bosnia and Herzegovina, VAT should be presented.

Note: According to the Indirect Taxation Authority Instruction and its status of an international organisation, the Regional Cooperation Council Secretariat is entitled to VAT refund and is exempted from customs duties in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION BEFORE THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF OFFERS**

Bidders may submit questions in writing to the following contact: [ProcurementforRCC@rcc.int](mailto:ProcurementforRCC@rcc.int) until **21 November by 17:00 Central European Time**.

### **SUBMISSION OF BIDS**

**The open call has two LOTS. Bidders may submit proposals either only for LOT 1 or LOT 2 or for both LOTS.**

Offers need to be submitted by 21 November 2024, **by 17:00** Central European Time. The offers should be submitted through the website link [Apply now](#).

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 OF TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL OFFERS**

The technical and financial offers are evaluated in accordance with the following criteria:

<b>EVALUATION GRID</b>	<b>Maximum score</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Total</b>
	1	2	(1x2)
<b>A. TECHNICAL OFFER (A.1+A.2+A.3)</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>A.1. Track record, references and general experience of the bidder:</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>0.8</b>	
A.1.1. General work experience; evidence of other contracts of the size comparable to that of tender; portfolio of prior relevant work with five references that RCC may contact	5		
A.1.2. Experience with clients comparable to the Contracting Authority and in performing similar projects, similar fields and topics as well as clients (international organisations, regional initiatives)	10		
A.1.3. Experience of working in the Western Balkan Six	15		
<b>A.2. Quality and professional capacity of the Team:</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>0.8</b>	
A.2.1. Quality of the team inspires confidence	5		
A.2.2. CVs satisfy the criteria set forth in the Terms of Reference	10		

A.2.3. CVs demonstrate professional capacity and experience required (ability to analyse data, deliver professional reports and translate results into an overall strategy)	15		
<b>A.3 Quality of technical proposal:</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>0.8</b>	
A.3.1. Bidder provided a clear outline of the work to be executed with a sound methodology (Sampling and Recruitment Methodology Described, Field Work and Quality Control Procedures Described, Data Processing Commitments)	15		
A.3.2. Bidder provided a list of the main challenges identified; project approach should demonstrate understanding of the project and the tasks to be performed	15		
A.3.3. The process is clear and the proposed use of resources adequate	10		
<b>B. FINANCIAL PROPOSAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>100</b>
Price/cost effectiveness of the proposal	100	0.2	20

Score for offer X = A: [Total quality score (out of 100) of offer X/100]\*80; B: [Cheapest price/price of offer X]\*20

### **SELECTION OF THE MOST FAVOURABLE BIDDER**

Selection of the most favourable bidder will be internal, in accordance with defined evaluation and award criteria and the RCC's procedures.

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

The contract will be awarded to the highest qualified bidder based on the skills and expertise of the proposed project team, the quality of the technical proposal, i.e. concept note, and the cost-effectiveness of the financial offer.

### **INFORMATION OF 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 for 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](mailto: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

## **GROUNDS FOR EXCLUSION**

Candidates or bidders will be excluded from participation in a procurement procedure if it is known that:

- (a) They are 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) They have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of res judicata;
- (c) They have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the Contracting Authority can justify;
- (d) They 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) They 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.

Contracts may not be awarded to candidates or bidders who, during the procurement procedure, are:

- (a) Subject to a conflict of interest;
- (b) Guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the Contracting Authority as a condition of participation in the contract procedure or fail to supply this information.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The entire evaluation procedure is confidential, subject to the Contracting Authority's policy on access to documents. The Evaluation Committee's decisions are collective and its deliberations are held in closed session. The members of the Evaluation Committee are bound to secrecy.

The evaluation reports and written records, in particular, are for official use only.

The selected bidder will be awarded with contract for services covering the entire period.

Contract proposal is not provided at this stage.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The Consultant shall take all necessary measures to prevent or end any situation that could compromise the impartial and objective performance of the contract. Such conflict of interests could arise in particular as a result of economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties, or any other relevant connection or shared interest. Any conflict of interests which could arise during performance of the contract must be notified in writing to the Contracting Authority without delay.

The Contracting Authority reserves the right to verify that such measures are adequate and may require additional measures to be taken if necessary. The consultant shall ensure that its staff, including its management, is not placed in a situation which could give rise to conflict of interests. The bidder shall replace, immediately and without compensation from the Contracting Authority, any member of its staff exposed to such a situation.

The bidder shall refrain from any contact which would compromise its independence or that of its personnel. If the bidder fails to maintain such independence, the Contracting Authority may, without prejudice to compensation for any damage which it may have suffered on this account, terminate the contract forthwith.

The bidder shall after the conclusion or termination of the contract, limit its role in connection with the project to the provision of the services. Except with the written permission of the Contracting Authority, the bidder and any other consultant, contractor or supplier with whom the bidder is associated or affiliated shall be disqualified from the execution of works, supplies or other services for the project in any capacity, including tendering for any part of the project.

Civil servants and other agents of the public administration of the RCC Participants, regardless of their administrative situation, shall not be recruited as experts in contracts financed by the RCC Secretariat.

The bidder and anyone working under its authority or control in the performance of the contract or on any other activity shall be excluded from access to RCC Secretariat financing available under the same project unless they can prove to the Contracting Authority that the involvement in previous stages of the project does not constitute unfair competition.

### **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](mailto: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: 057-024

LOT 1: Public and Business Opinion Surveys in the Western Balkans - Balkan Barometer 2025, data collection and data processing.

LOT 2: Public and Business Opinion Surveys in the Western Balkans - Balkan Barometer 2025, data analysis, conclusions and recommendations

By representing a Legal Entity\_\_\_\_\_ we agree to participate in the above-mentioned service 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:

List of experts:

Expert Name	Available from (Date)	Available until (Date)	Acceptance by signature