

**Open Call for Consultancy Services
Senior Expert on economic and business integration in SEE
Reference Number 011-017**

TERMS OF REFERENCE:	Support to RCC Secretariat in regional economic and business integration
Title:	Senior Expert on economic and business integration in SEE
RCC Department:	Programme Department
Number of Consultants:	1 (one)
Starting Date:	25 April 2017
Reporting to:	Head of Programme Department
Duration:	25 April – 31 December 2017

I BACKGROUND

Purpose

The purpose of the assignment is to support the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) in developing a regional agenda for enhanced economic and business integration, as well as in producing final edited drafts of: SEE2020 Annual Report on Implementation for 2017 and Balkan Barometer 2017.

The main objective of the assignment is to:

- Analyze and interpret data and findings based on SEE2020 monitoring inputs (national data, Regional Dimension Coordinators' activity reports, Balkan Barometer findings,

insights from Economic and Reform Programs), revise targets and indicators from SEE to WB6 context and edit the monitoring outputs and reports so as to elaborate edited final drafts of the ARI 2017 and Balkan Barometer 2017;

- In line with the Joint Statement of the WB6 Prime Ministers' Meeting (16.3.2017 Sarajevo), assist in conceptualizing and developing a comprehensive regional economic integration agenda, including an itemized multi-annual Action Plan to be presented at the Trieste Summit from the Berlin Process.
- Provide support, if necessary until 31 December 2017, in the implementation of the multi-annual Action Plan

Background information

II DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Objectives and scope of the assignment

1.

Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Secretariat, working upon the request of the Southeast Europe Cooperation Process (SEEC) participants and the European Commission (EC), coordinated the development of a regional growth strategy titled "SEE 2020 – Jobs and Prosperity in European Perspective". The main goal of the Strategy is to help boost competitiveness, job creation as well as to underscore the European perspective of the region's future. The success of the SEE 2020 depends on achieving high and sustained economic growth. In this respect, by 2020 the region plans on achieving 11 ambitious headline targets in the five main growth pillars of the Strategy – integrated, smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, underpinned by good governance.

The tracking of the implementation of the Strategy and achievement of the above stated goals is done through the SEE 2020 monitoring process. The monitoring process is overseen by the SEE 2020 Monitoring Committee and is carried out in three main phases during each year of implementation – preparatory phase, data collection and information gathering, and analysis and report-writing.

- During the **preparatory phase**, the SEE 2020 Monitoring Committee defines the scope of monitoring, identifies the roles and responsibilities of the participating institutions and provides the final list of quantitative, qualitative and perception-based indicators to be used in the data collection process. The indicators are selected based on their relevance,

availability of data and methodological consistency to ensure comparability of data during the analysis.

- **Data and information collection process** is initiated by the RCC based on the decision of the SEE 2020 Monitoring Committee. The request for data-collection is distributed to the participating institutions with an overview of the process, the grids with agreed indicators, and the timeline for data-collection.
 - Quantitative indicators are collected based on the sources of data - the national administrations collect those indicators available from the national statistical and administrative sources, RCC collects the data available from international sources (World Bank, IMF, OECD and others), and selected Regional Dimension Coordinators provide data sets already available through their own separate monitoring activities.
 - The data on perception-based indicators collected by the RCC through the Balkan Barometer – an annual survey of public opinion and business sentiments – is further included in the data collection process.
 - Finally, the data on indicators is complemented with the activity reports. Regional Dimension Coordinators (RDCs) provide activity reports on the regional actions implemented during the previous year and RCC collects information from the Economic Reform Programmes prepared by the governments to ensure that both national and regional actions are accurately presented in the SEE 2020 Annual Report on Implementation (ARI).
- In the **analysis and report-writing phase**, using the inputs gathered during the data and information collection phase, RCC develops the first draft of the SEE 2020 Annual Report on Implementation and seeks feedback on the report from the Monitoring Committee and the RDCs. Following the endorsement of the ARI, the report is forwarded to the SEE 2020 Governing Board for adoption, thus completing the annual monitoring cycle.

The RCC is hence looking for consultancy services in editing and finalizing the draft of the Annual Report on Implementation and Balkan Barometer.

2.

Based on the Joint Statement from WB6 Prime Ministers meeting held in Sarajevo (16.03.2017), RCC, together with governments' representatives and EC, should start working on a proposal for a joint approach to furthering economic cooperation in the Western Balkans through different initiatives in order to present them at the Trieste Summit (July 2017), which could include for example free circulation of goods, services and capital, free flow of skilled workforce, a common digital approach and a dynamic investment space.

In this respect, RCC is looking for consultancy services in developing a draft Action Plan on regional economic integration, structured along four main results areas: 1. A common market for goods, services and capital; 2. Free flow of skilled workforce integrated into professional and academic EU networks 3. A common digital market and 4. A dynamic investment space.

Tasks;

- Edit, review and assist with additional research of the draft ARI with a view of making the report more coherent and enhancing the quality of the document;
- Proofread the ARI and Balkan Barometer and adjust the writing style, as needed, for various targeted audiences i.e. SEE beneficiaries and the wider public;
- Edit and review the Balkan Barometer Public and Business Opinion with a view of making the reports coherent and enhancing the quality of the documents by May 25th;
- Revise targets and indicators from a SEE to a WB6 context;
- Provide recommendations for improving presentation of information, including coordination with RCC PR unit for promotional purposes (e.g. infographics, videos, etc.);
- Engage in communication with RCC experts on the different sections of the document, if and when needed;
- Review the monitoring cycle of 2016 in coordination with the Head of Program Department, SEE2020 Coordinator and RCC experts with an aim to prepare the background report highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the process and targeted improvements for the monitoring committee meeting;
- Execute the assignment in a collaborative manner, working closely with the SEE 2020 Coordinator throughout the duration of the assignment;
- Submit the final edited version of the ARI to the RCC Secretariat no later than May 30th, 2017.
- Develop a proposal on a multi-annual Action Plan on regional economic integration by June 15th;
- In close coordination with Head of Programme Department and SEE2020 Coordinator, engage in consultations with appointed governmental representatives, EC services, RDCs and relevant RCC platforms in defining the actions under the regional economic integration agenda;
- Develop a proposal for coordination, implementation and monitoring structures for the regional economic integration agenda
- Provide support, if necessary until 31 December 2017, on the implementation of the regional economic integration agenda

Deliverables

The following deliverables will be produced and transferred to the RCC during the course of the assignment:

- Monitoring cycle 2017 report;
- Edited Balkan Barometer 2017 and ARI 2017.
- Proposal for regional coordination structures for advancing the regional economic integration agenda;
- Draft Action Plan on regional economic and business integration;

Timeframe

The total duration of the engagement will be up to 110 days, starting on 25 April and ending 31 December 2017.

DELIVERABLE	DEADLINE
Proposal for regional coordination structures (design, implementation, monitoring phase) for advancing the regional economic integration agenda	20 May 2017
Draft Action Plan on regional economic integration	15 June 2017
Edited Annual Report on Implementation 2017	30 May 2017
Monitoring cycle 2017 report	30 May 2017
Edited Balkan Barometer 2017	25 May 2017
Draft preparatory document for Monitoring Cycle 2018	30 October 2017
Final reporting	31 December 2017

III COMPETENCIES

Qualifications

Education:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Degree in social sciences, economics, business, law or other areas directly related to the subject of work
Experience:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minimum of 10 years of relevant experience, with familiarity of working in international and donor-funded projects; ▪ Proven analytical skills and ability to conceptualise and write concisely and clearly; ▪ In-depth knowledge of the economies covered by the assignment; and ▪ Proven communication and presentation skills and ability to work in an environment requiring liaison and collaboration with multiple actors including government representatives, businesses, civil society institutions, donors and other stakeholders.
Language requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fluency in English, as the official language of the RCC; ▪ Knowledge of other RCC languages is an advantage.
Other:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Familiar with MS Office applications.

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

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.

Quality control by the Regional Cooperation Council

The consultant outputs shall undergo two external reviews. The first draft shall be reviewed in parallel by all relevant stakeholders, including the representatives of the dimension coordinators and the Regional Cooperation Council.

The final (second) draft shall be reviewed by the Regional Cooperation Council taking account of the comments made by the different stakeholders and how the expert has handled these comments. The approved final report will be subject to a quality assessment by SEE 2020 Strategy Coordination Unit of the Regional Cooperation Council, upon whose endorsement the reports and deliverables would be distributed and made public.

V APPLICATION RULES

- Qualified candidates are invited to send an application via e-mail to ProcurementforRCC@rcc.int no later than 13 April 2017 17:00 Central European Time.
- **Only** short listed candidates will be contacted.
- Selection process will be based on the competency-based interview.

The application needs to contain the following:

- Letter of interest;
- CV outlining relevant knowledge and experience;
- A short methodology (maximum 2 pages) indicating how the assignment will be carried out, description of activities and the main issues, tools to be employed by the Consultant, and the scope of the assignment proposed by the applicant;
- List of references for relevant activities implemented over the past five years;
- Financial offer;
- Application Submission Form, Annex I;

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

- The proposed budget should include daily fee rate for consulting services; the fee rates should be broadly consistent with the EU framework rates for these types of professional services.
- It is expected that the Consultant would spend most of the assignment (up to 80%) working from own premises.
- Possibility of up to 20 missions to capitols in the Western Balkans.
- Costs of the trips shall be treated separately based on actual costs of each trip i.e. accommodation, meals and transport. These costs are not subject to the price ceiling.



The contract will be awarded to the highest qualified applicant based on the skills and expertise as demonstrated in the resume and interview, the quality of the concept note and the cost effectiveness of the financial offer.