

## **Open Call for Consultancy Services**

**Title: Women in STEM Role Models Regional Online Communications Campaign**

**Contracting Authority: Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Secretariat**

**Reporting to: RCC Secretariat**

**Duration: February 2022 – June 2022**

**Application Deadline: 31 January 2022**

**Reference Number: 002-022**

**Eligible: Consulting companies/individual experts within bidding consortia**

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE:**

#### **I. BACKGROUND**

##### **Purpose**

The purpose of the assignment is to support the implementation of the Common Regional Market (hereinafter: CRM). The Leaders of the Western Balkans endorsed the Declaration on CRM and the respective CRM Action Plan 2021-2024 at the Sofia Summit of the Berlin Process in November 2020. The CRM aims to enable an unobstructed flow of goods, services, capital and people making the region more attractive for investment and trade, while accelerating convergence with the European Union (EU), to bring about prosperity to the citizens of Western Balkans.

The CRM's Regional Innovation Area (RIA) component aims to build a dynamic regional innovation ecosystem by supporting the region's businesses in priority industry sectors to innovate, grow and contribute to European and global value chains. Having in mind that the WB innovation ecosystem is in an embryonic stage, the RIA's foreseen actions in the immediate future will focus on creating a favourable environment for its growth through connecting and empowering various stakeholders including businesses, governments, academia and civil society. Alongside technology and capital, the third major factor contributing to a culture of innovation and commercialisation of knowledge is the quality of human capital. Societies either create their high-quality human capital through formal and non-formal education or find ways to attract talents from abroad. This is particularly important with marginalised and vulnerable groups, including women. In 2021 the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) jointly launched the regional Network of Women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) to encourage higher participation of girls and young women in STEM education and careers. The RCC's first practical action after the Network's launch is the Women in STEM Role Models Regional Online Communications Campaign.

The specific purpose of the assignment is to: (1) identify up to five women in STEM role models in each Western Balkan economy, (2) create an attractive Online Communications Campaign featuring selected role models to be promoted via key social media in local languages with English subtitles; (3) develop appropriate promotional messages, focusing on the content, appeal, structure and format of the message; and (4) run campaign by using appropriate marketing tools to capture the attention of target audience.

### **Background information**

The [Common Regional Market \(CRM\) Action Plan](#) 2021-2024 endorsed by the Western Balkans Leaders, under the Regional Innovation Area component foresees continuous support to the development of human capital, with a special emphasis on encouraging additional participation of women in STEM fields. The Network of Women in STEM is a part of the CRM, and the broader regional initiative on [Women's Economic Empowerment: Areas for joint actions in the Western Balkans \(WEE\)](#), also jointly implemented by the RCC and UNDP. The WEE initiative is based on five pillars (drivers of change), one of which is 'closing gender gaps in digitalisation and STEM'.

In 2020 the RCC commissioned the background study [Mapping of Gender-Related Policies, Programmes and Mechanisms on Gender Disparity in STEM in Western Balkans](#) to identify the key obstacles/opportunities and stakeholders in this field. The study identified opportunities for women and societies at large including a growing demand for STEM experts and associate professionals in the future, noting that empowering and promoting women in STEM could significantly contribute to economic development of the region and greater equality between men and women. The study also uncovered several obstacles such as the following: STEM fields tend to perpetuate inflexible, exclusionary, male-dominated cultures that are not supportive of, or attractive to, women; girls and women are the greatest untapped population to become the next generations of STEM professionals; employment rates of well-educated women are higher than the ones of men; on average there are more young women STEM students & graduates in the WB than in many EU countries, the participation of girls and women in STEM is limited, particularly in computer sciences and engineering.

During preparatory meetings and consultations after the official launch of the Network of Women in STEM (April 2021) regional champions have agreed on several important conclusions. First, successful women *and* men in STEM fields should be encouraged to support empowering young women to enter STEM education and careers. Second, the Network's focus in the future should be on developing actions that will translate to practical results. With this in mind, several practical actions were suggested by most of the participants/Network members: (1) promoting successful women as role models that young women can relate to, and identify with, to encourage their increased participation in STEM fields; (2) creating mentoring (& coaching) programmes to assist young girls to enter STEM fields more smoothly; (3) organising regional events to exchange ideas and experiences including scaling local STEM-related events to the regional level, and (4) showcasing good practices to embolden practitioners to introduce similar tools in their business and educational environments.

Having this in mind, the RCC seeks to reduce STEM gender gaps in education and businesses by promoting women role models that young women can identify with.

## **II DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Objectives and scope of the assignment**

This consultancy aims to create the Women in STEM Role Models Regional Online Communications Campaign to raise awareness among high-school girls and young women in the Western Balkans about the importance of STEM fields for their future jobs prospects and encourage them to pursue both higher education in STEM fields and consider STEM professions as their primary choices. Therefore, the selected consultant should carefully create the key messages, the most suitable communication online channels that ensure high engagement of target audience and motivate girls/young women to enter the STEM fields.

The selected consultant(s) will deliver the following services and outputs:

### **Create a final strategy and a work plan**

A final strategy and a work plan should be an updated and finalised version of draft documents outlining the key elements of the online communications campaign previously submitted as part of a concept note. Both documents should reflect the RCC's core needs defined in this call.

#### **1. Identify and shortlist up to five women in STEM role models in each Western Balkan economy**

Run a meeting with RCC staff and gain full understanding of the RCC's needs and requirements. Following the agreed points and in close cooperation with the RCC, the selected consultant will prepare a broader list of women champions in STEM from the region to be contacted for the campaign. Following the champions' response, the consultant will shortlist the available candidates and provide key information on their expected engagement.

#### **3. Create an attractive Online Communications Campaign**

The selected consultant will create an attractive online communications campaign featuring selected role models to be promoted via key social media in local languages spoken in the Western Balkans, with English subtitles.

More specifically, the consultant will:

- Create visually and aesthetically appealing communications materials including, but not limited to, visuals and three engaging messages in English language that the target audience can identify with and encourage user-engaging experience,
- Ensure the same visuals and core messages are used across all communications materials produced and disseminated online,
- Customise the core messages for targeted audiences in local languages used in all six Western Balkan economies,
- Design and implement a mix of digital interactive content products such as video clips/animations (max length 60 seconds), gifs, quizzes, illustrations, etc. suitable for social media dissemination. Note that all interactive content must feature women in STEM role models.

### **3. Run an online communications campaign**

The consultant will run an online communications campaign by using appropriate marketing tools to capture the attention of the target audience. The focus will be on social media promotion. Therefore, the consultant will:

- Propose a set of social media platforms to be used to effectively communicate the campaign's main messages,
- Run paid ads on social media such as Instagram, TikTok and YouTube or any combination of social media with potential of reaching and engaging the target audience (note that all products will be placed on the RCC's social media channels),
- Provide regular bi-weekly progress reports summarising activities conducted to ensure the smooth implementation of the assignment in line with the RCC's expectations,
- Deliver the final report summarising all activities performed during the consultancy.

### **Deliverables**

- Meeting with the RCC convened to agree and approve the work plan and timeline in line with the set needs and requirements,
- Up to five women in STEM identified and shortlisted as potential role models in each Western Balkan economy in close cooperation with the RCC,

- Visually and aesthetically appealing communications materials created, including three core messages,
- Core messages customised for targeted audiences in the main languages used in all six Western Balkan economies,
- Digital interactive content products designed and created,
- The campaign developed and implemented including running paid ads on social media,
- Regular bi-weekly progress reports and the final report submitted.

In all its stages, the deliverables will be developed in close consultation with the RCC's Senior Expert on Human Capital Development and Senior Policy Analyst who will be supported by the UNDP staff.

### **Timeframe**

The total duration of the engagement related to designing and running an online communications campaign is estimated to seven months. Note that the campaign duration (paid social media ads to promote the created content) may extend until the end of 2022.

<b>DELIVERABLE</b>	<b>DEADLINE/TIMEFRAME</b>
Meeting with the RCC convened to agree and approve the work plan and timeline in line with the set needs and requirements	1 <sup>st</sup> week
Up to five women in STEM identified and shortlisted as potential role models in each Western Balkan economy in close cooperation with the RCC	3 <sup>rd</sup> week
Visually and aesthetically appealing communications materials created, including three core messages	4 <sup>th</sup> week
Core messages customised for targeted audiences in the main languages used in all six Western Balkan economies	5 <sup>th</sup> week

Digital interactive content products designed and created	5 <sup>th</sup> week
The campaign developed and implemented including running paid ads on social media	12 <sup>th</sup> week until the end of the campaign/September 2022
Regular bi-weekly progress reports submitted	Throughout the contract duration
The final report submitted	October 2022

**III. COMPETENCIES**

**Qualifications**

Company requirements:

- The company must have previously demonstrated experience in similar assignments, i.e. experience in creating and running online communications campaigns;
- The proposal shall include the company’s short background and experience, including personalised CVs for the key staff;
- The company must provide a reference list of previous similar works/projects with contact details and permission for reference check indicating the e-mail addresses of contact persons (indicate links to previous assignments),
- Companies with associates capable of communicating messages in the main languages spoken in the Western Balkans are strongly encouraged to apply.

Qualifications of personnel:

- The proposed personnel must have a University degree in information technology or marketing and/or corresponding IT/marketing knowledge and skills certificates;
- Minimum 5 years of professional experience in the field of the assignment;
- Previous experience in the marketing and digital marketing industry;
- Fluent in written and spoken English.

**IV QUALITY CONTROL**

## **Quality control by the Regional Cooperation Council**

The consultants' outputs shall be reviewed by the RCC. The approved output will be subject to a quality assessment by the Senior Expert on Human Capital Development and Senior Policy Analyst in the RCC's Programme Department.

## **V. APPLICATION RULES**

The application needs to contain the following:

- Technical Offer;
- Financial Offer.

### **Technical Offer**

#### ***For companies and consortia of individual consultants:***

- Company profile including a brief description (up to 2 pages) of the company. In case of a bidding consortium, the team leader should submit the profile of the consortium stating the key expert and experts;
- Copy of Company's Registration Certificate (in case of consulting companies). In case of a bidding consortium a corresponding written authorisation, power of attorney is treated accordingly;
- Financial records - company's balance sheet and profit-and-loss statement for the past 2 years (only in case of bidding of consulting companies);
- CVs of key staff (stating the key expert and experts), outlining relevant knowledge and experience as described in Section III Competencies of the Terms of References, along with contact details of referees;
- Reference list with client contacts for reference check indicating the e-mail addresses or fax numbers of contact persons;
- Clear presentation of approach/work plan/product describing either all the steps for the development of content management site or the elements and functions of the product which will lead to the completion of the assignment;

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

**Financial Offer** (Free format)

The financial offer should reflect the following:

- All figures should be expressed in EUR;
- VAT amount, if applicable, should be presented.

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

- Use a free format for the budget providing the global price for the work to be provided.
- The fee rates should be broadly consistent with those applicable in the region for these types of professional services.

Note: *The price ceiling for this assignment is EUR 40,000*

**Submission of applications:**

**Applications need to be submitted by 31 January 2022, by 17:00 Central European Time to the following address [ProcurementforRcc@rcc.int](mailto:ProcurementforRcc@rcc.int)**

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

**VI. EVALUATION RULES:**

- The consultancy will be awarded to the highest qualified bidder based on the relevance of skills and expertise to this assignment;
- The applications are evaluated following these criteria:

<b>EVALUATION GRID</b>	<b>Maximum score</b>
<b>A. Technical Offer (A.1+A.2+A.3)</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>A.1. Work experience, references list:</b> Relevant work experience; evidence of other contracts of the size comparable to that of the Call; experience with clients comparable to the Contracting Authority.	35
<b>A.2. Quality and professional capacity of the consultant(s):</b> CV(s) satisfy the criteria outlined in the Terms of Reference, education and experience demonstrate professional capacity and experience required.	35
<b>A.3 Quality of the work programme:</b> An outline of the work programme describing the main issues, information, data sources, research and analytical tools to be employed by the author, as well as the timeline.	30
<b>B. Financial Offer/ lowest price has a maximum score</b>	<b>100</b>

The score for offer X =

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

**B: [Lowest price/price of offer X] \* 20**

**In addition to the results of the technical and financial evaluation, a competency-based interview will be held with the selected bidder.**

#### **Information on a 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.

A 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 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 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](mailto:ProcurementforRcc@rcc.int) or the address of the RCC Secretariat:

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**ANNEX I:**

**APPLICATION SUBMISSION FORM**

**Open Call for Consultancy Services:**

**Women in STEM Role Models Regional Online Communications Campaign**

**REF: 002-022**

**One signed copy** of this Call for Consultancy Submission Form must be supplied.

1 SUBMITTED by:

Name	
Address	
Telephone	
Fax	
e-mail	

2. STATEMENT

[Name of the Authorised person representing the Entity] \_\_\_\_\_ hereby declares that we have examined and accepted without reserve or restriction the entire contents of the Open Call for Experts, Grounds for Exclusions and Conflict of Interest as such:

**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 Officer 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 Officer 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 Officer as a condition of participation in the contract procedure or fail to supply this information.

### **Conflict of Interest**

- a) The Contractor 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.
- b) 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 their staffs, including its management, are not placed in a situation which could give rise to conflict of interests. The Consultant shall replace, immediately and without compensation from the Contracting Authority, any member of its staff exposed to such a situation.
- c) The Contractor shall refrain from any contact which would compromise its independence or that of its personnel. If the Contractor 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.
- d) The Contractor 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 Contractor and any other contractor or supplier with whom the Contractor 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.

- e) 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.
- f) The Contractor 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.

We offer to provide the services requested in the Terms of Reference on the basis of supplied documentation subject to this Open Call for Consultancy Services, which comprise our technical offer, and our financial offer.

This Open Call for Consultancy Services is subject to acceptance within the validity period stipulated in the Terms of Reference.

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

**ANNEX III: STATEMENT OF AVAILABILITY**

REF: 002-022

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