

Open Call for Consulting Services

Title:	Technical assistance in supporting the programming and reporting processes of the SEE 2030 Strategy
RCC Department:	Programme Department
Eligible:	Individual consultants within consortia / consulting companies
Reporting to:	RCC Secretariat
Duration:	15 February 2022 – 15 December 2022
Deadline for Application:	31 January 2022
Reference number:	003-022

TERMS OF REFERENCE:

I. BACKGROUND

Purpose

The purpose of the consultancy is to provide technical advice, editorial support and written input for the implementation of programming and reporting cycles of the South East Europe 2030 Strategy (hereinafter: the SEE 2030 Strategy).

Background Information

At the 2019 South East European Cooperation Process (SEEC) Summit, the RCC was tasked “to prepare a vision of a post-SEE 2020 Strategy in line with the UN Sustainable Goals Agenda 2030” at the level of all thirteen SEEC Participants.

With this political mandate expressed at the highest level of political representatives, RCC prepared the SEE 2030 Strategy based on the needs assessment, lessons learned, and an extensive consultation process with all relevant stakeholders, which was endorsed at the 2021 SEEC Summit in Antalya.

The objective of SEE 2030 Strategy is to reach regionally sustainable economic growth shared by all. The Strategy aims to reduce poverty and inequality, empower women, improve social inclusion, decelerate depopulation of the region through enhancing the quality of life for its citizens and speed up the green and digital transition, without widening socio-economic inequalities and disrupting competitiveness and private sector development, through a genuinely regionally owned political process. It will provide benefits across the South East European (SEE) region and accelerate

convergence with the European Union (EU) of those economies which seek integration into the EU, thereby strengthening the foundations of that process.

The implementation of the SEE 2030 Strategy foresees three interlinked cycles.

Programming cycle: Programming process represents the link between the SEE 2030 Strategy, as the basis for intervention, and the actual implementation.

It is foreseen that one programming cycle lasts two years and new cycle starts after each biennial update. Each biennial programming cycle will result in regional projects to convert the priorities and objectives of the SEE 2030 Strategy into tangible regional, plurilateral or bilateral actions.

The overall programming process will be carried out in partnership between the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Secretariat and the SEECP Participants represented by National SEE 2030 Coordinators and, where appropriate, line ministries and agencies of SEECP Participants, and other regional organisations in SEE. SEE 2030 programming will put in place a consultative process in which all relevant perspectives should be heard and reflected in the resulting regional actions. An elaborate coordination system is to be established to enable the flow of information between the RCC, National Coordinators, private sector, civil society, academia, international and regional organisations, donor community and other stakeholders who play a critical role in ensuring sound programming and success in implementation.

The SEE 2030 Strategy Monitoring Committee's approval is required to determine the selection criteria to identify the counterparts in multi-stakeholder dialogue mechanisms which are foreseen by the SEE 2030 Strategy. National Coordinators and their offices are involved throughout the process to ensure complementarity between national and regional strategies and provide a feedback loop with the on-going SEECP participant-level implementation of SDGs and the Agenda 2030 with bilateral donors and social partners/stakeholders.

The overall facilitation of the programming process will be the responsibility of the RCC, while the SEE 2030 Strategy Monitoring Committee shall oversee and guide the process. The RCC Secretariat has the direct duty to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are included into the process and kept regularly informed about the progress and that all steps are taken prior to the final approval of regional actions. The RCC Secretariat will help coordinate the process of raising funds for the prioritised regional actions, as multiple sources of funding are envisioned, including national budgets, statutory budget of the RCC, multilateral and bilateral donors, private sector, and international organisations and financial institutions.

Monitoring cycle: The monitoring cycle of the SEE 2030 Strategy includes quantitative and qualitative analysis of the SEE 2030 implementation based on its indicators per dimension with the aim to measure the progress in reaching the corresponding targets within each priority under three dimensions. The list of indicators would be subject to a review by the SEECP Participants' statistical offices to confirm the availability of relevant data and feasibility of data collection before initiating the first monitoring cycle.

The results of both monitoring exercises in annual cycle will be reported through the SEE 2030 Strategy Annual Implementation Report (AIR).

- Data Collection for Drafting Annual Implementation Report (AIR) of the Strategy: As indicated in the SEE 2030 Strategy, under the "monitoring and evaluation" section, the RCC Secretariat, mandated to facilitate the implementation of SEE2030 Strategy, shall draft the SEE2030 Strategy AIR through collecting data from the SEECP Participants/Statistics Offices (SOs) on the progress of implementation of the Strategy, based on its targets and indicators. UNECE, the UN institution mandated to collect SDGs data in Europe, and other international organisations' reports, databases, tools or instruments such as the EC/EUROSTAT, OECD, or World Bank, depending on data relevance and availability, would be referred to wherever appropriate.

In this phase, availability and reliability of data per indicators foreseen by the SEE 2030, as the backbone of quantitative analysis, are of crucial importance.

- Qualitative Data for Drafting Annual Implementation Report (AIR) of the Strategy: As indicated in the SEE 2030 Strategy, under the “monitoring and evaluation” section, the preparation of the SEE 2030 Strategy Implementation Report starts with receiving qualitative data from each SEECP Participant about the progress in implementation of the SEE 2030 Strategy based on its targets and indicators.
- Complementary Qualitative Data and Information: In parallel to the quantitative monitoring, as foreseen by the SEE2030 Strategy, open and transparent dialogue mechanisms with various stakeholders shall be established in order to ensure an inclusive and transparent implementation and monitoring process, but also to increase awareness of the SEE13 region’s sustainable development agenda. Therefore, four dialogue mechanisms in addition to the existing governance mechanisms with the government institutions shall be established in line with the vision of SEE2030: a) SEE parliaments; b) civil society, think-tanks and academia dialogue; c) private sector participation; and d) region-to-region dialogue.

Reporting cycle:

The preparation of the SEE 2030 Strategy Annual Implementation Report (AIR) starts with receiving qualitative data from each SEECP Participant about the progress in implementation of SEE 2030 Strategy based on its targets and indicators. The draft AIR will also include qualitative inputs from each SEECP Participant and comments and remarks to be received from the above-mentioned dialogue mechanisms.

The Draft Report shall be presented to the SEE 2030 Strategy Monitoring Committee, which shall be composed of high level officials of the SEECP Participants, as indicated in the SEE2030.

Based on the quantitative data to be received from SEECP Participants, RCC Secretariat will prepare the first draft of SEE 2030 Strategy AIR. The draft AIR will be presented for adoption to the SEE 2030 Strategy Monitoring Committee which comprises of mandated senior officials of SEECP Participants. After the adoption of AIR, the report will be submitted to the RCC Board Annual Meeting by the RCC Secretary General and its highlights will be presented to the SEECP Summit. During each implementation year, RCC Secretariat will regularly present the progress of SEE 2030 Strategy to the relevant meetings of SEECP and RCC Board.

II. DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Objective and scope of the assignment

The scope of work under this assignment includes the assistance to the SEE 2030 Team of RCC Secretariat in conducting the programming, and reporting process of the SEE 2030 Strategy, as well as supporting the smooth functioning of dialogue mechanisms. The assistance will include providing technical advice to assess project proposals received during the implementation of the programming processes, adjust the proposals to match the strategic priorities of SEE2030, merge them to constitute smart clusters of actions, and align with the priorities of donors. For reporting, the technical assistance will include support in updating the current state of play of the SEE region with regard to the socio-economic areas highlighted in the Strategy, consolidating the inputs and reports received from quantitative and qualitative monitoring cycles, and editorial support in the preparation of AIR. In addition, the consultant is expected to provide its support to facilitate dialogue mechanisms foreseen in the qualitative monitoring.

Specific Tasks

The consultant will be expected to perform the following tasks:

Programming:

- Familiarise oneself with the RCC work on SEE 2030 Strategy and especially the programming, monitoring and reporting cycles of the SEE 2030 Strategy;
- Assist in evaluating each project proposal received from SEE stakeholders in the framework of programming cycle;
- Provide its opinion of admissibility of project proposal based on selection and eligibility criteria decided by the SEE 2030 Monitoring Committee;
- Propose the best ways to adjust proposals to meet the selection and eligibility criteria and assist in drafting written communications with the stakeholders submitting the given project proposals;
- Merging individual project proposals in a smart way to constitute much longer term and sustainable actions with respect to the strategic objectives of SEE 2030;
- Adjusting project proposals in a way to match with the programming priorities of donors which agree to finance the selected project proposals;
- Assist in preparation of project proposals for the approval by the SEE 2030 Monitoring Committee.

Reporting:

- Contributing to updating the assessment of socioeconomic conditions of the SEE region, particularly in the policy areas for which the Strategy provided its initial assessment;
- Assist in analysing quantitative monitoring data and providing its expert opinion as written contributions to the quantitative monitoring part of the Annual Implementation Report;
- Providing editorial support in consolidating qualitative monitoring inputs to be received from all the stakeholders involved in the monitoring exercise;
- Assisting in editing the draft versions of AIR and preparing a final draft for the approval of the relevant governance structures of SEE2030 Strategy.

Dialogue Mechanisms:

- Liaising with SEE 2030 Team of RCC to run all the relevant dialogue mechanisms as foreseen by the SEE 2030;
- Provide support in the preparation of contents for the meetings with the civil society and private sector stakeholders in dialogue mechanisms (in case of necessity the consultant's support to other dialogue mechanisms would be required);
- Ensure its online presence in the dialogue mechanisms meetings upon the instructions of RCC;
- Assist in secretarial support to running the dialogue mechanisms for which RCC requires the involvement of the consultant;
- Facilitate the communication with the current SEECPCiO with regard to the implementation of dialogue mechanisms in the context of SEE 2030;
- Provide any other relevant technical or administrative support in facilitating all the dialogue mechanisms, particularly the ones with civil society and private sector.

In all its stages the deliverables will be developed in close consultation with the RCC Secretariat.

The abovementioned tasks will be performed by the consultant through online work and his/her physical presence will not be required.

Deliverables

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

- Inputs/draft written assessments and other types of written contributions under the programming cycle which may also include preparation of visuals or other types of displays;
- Written contributions to the drafting of AIR which may also include preparation of visuals or other types of displays;
- Written contributions to the dialogue mechanisms which may also include preparation of visuals or other types of displays;
- The final report summarising all the activities and deliverables provided by the consultant.

Deliverables	Expected level of efforts (in working days)	Due date
Written inputs for the programming cycle	13	Continuous – final outputs to be reported in the final report
Written contributions to the AIR	15	01 July
Written contributions to dialogue mechanism	45	Continuous – final outputs to be reported in the final report
Final Report	2 days	12 December

Methodology

The expert is expected to propose the best methodological approach for undertaking this task.

Lines of Communication

The expert will report to the RCC Secretariat. Deliverables will be sent to the RCC Secretariat within the set deadlines. RCC Secretariat will conduct a quality assessment and approval of each deliverable.

Timeframe

The assignment is expected to start on 15 February 2022 and end on 15 December 2022.

III. COMPETENCES

The consultant is expected to offer two key experts and the one who will perform the tasks related to programming and reporting is to be considered a Team Leader.

Qualifications of the Key Expert 1 (Team Leader):

Education:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PhD or Master’s Degree in social sciences, economics, business, or other areas directly related to the subject of the work.
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Experience:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minimum of 7 years of relevant experience in policy advice, research, analysis and developing strategic frameworks in the area of socio-economic development, and in particular in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); ▪ Experience in drafting regional strategies for socio-economic development or SDGs in a setting where more than two economies are involved; ▪ Experience in developing, evaluating, or managing multilateral projects, preferably implemented with donor financed assistance; ▪ Familiarity with SDGs is considered an asset; ▪ Proven professional record in working with international and/or regional organisations; ▪ Proven analytical skills and ability to conceptualise and write concisely and clearly, preferably evidenced by a list of published reports/articles in English; ▪ Proven communication and presentation skills and ability to work in an environment requiring liaison and collaboration with multiple actors including government representatives, international organisations’ representatives, businesses, civil society institutions, donors and other stakeholders
Language requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fluency in written and spoken English, as the official language of the RCC.

Qualifications of the Key Expert 2 (Dialogue Mechanisms):

Education:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PhD or Master’s Degree in social sciences, economics, business, or other areas directly related to the subject of the work.
Experience:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minimum of 3 years of relevant experience in policy advice, research, analysis and developing strategic frameworks in the area of socio-economic development, and in particular in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); ▪ Proven familiarity with SDGs is considered an asset; ▪ Proven familiarity with RCC Secretariat and its areas of work is considered an asset; ▪ Proven analytical skills and ability to conceptualise and write concisely and clearly, preferably evidenced by a list of published reports/articles in English; ▪ Proven communication and presentation skills and ability to work in an environment requiring liaison and collaboration with multiple actors including government representatives, international organisations’ representatives, civil society institutions, donors and other stakeholders
Language requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fluency in written and spoken English, as the official language of the RCC.

Core Values

- Demonstrates integrity and fairness by modelling RCC values and ethical standards;
- Independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities defined by the Terms of Reference;
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability. Core Competencies
- Demonstrates professional competence to meet responsibilities and post requirements and is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines and achieving results;
- Result-oriented; plans and produces quality results to meet the set goals, generates innovative and practical solutions to challenging situations;
- Communication: Excellent communication skills, including the ability to convey complex concepts and recommendations clearly;
- Teamwork: Ability to interact, establish and maintain effective working relations in a culturally diverse team;
- Ability to establish and maintain productive partnerships with regional and national partners and stakeholders.

IV. QUALITY CONTROL

The consultant should ensure internal quality control during the implementing and reporting phase of the assignment. The quality control should ensure that the draft reports comply with the above requirements and meet adequate quality standards before sending them to stakeholders for comments. The quality control should ensure consistency and coherence between findings, conclusions and recommendations. It should also ensure that findings reported are duly substantiated and that conclusions are supported by relevant judgment criteria. The views expressed in the report will be those of the expert and will not necessarily reflect those of the Regional Cooperation Council. Therefore, a standard disclaimer reflecting this will be included in the report. In this regard, the expert may or may not accept comments and/or proposals for changes received during the above consultation process. However, when comments/proposals for changes are not agreed by the expert, he/she should clearly explain the reasons for his/her final decision in a comments table.

Quality control by the Regional Cooperation Council

The consultant's outputs in the form of a report shall be reviewed by the Regional Cooperation Council. The approved final report will be subject to a quality assessment by the SEE2030 Coordinator of the Regional Cooperation Council, upon whose endorsement, the reports and deliverables will be distributed and made public.

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);
- CV(s) of Key Expert(s), outlining relevant knowledge and experience as described in the Section III Competencies of the Terms of Reference,
- An action plan up to 1 page, indicating the individual tasks to be undertaken against a timeframe;
- List of references for relevant activities implemented over the past 5 years demonstrating relevant experience in the subject matter;
- Application Submission Form (Annex I);
- Signed Statements of Availability (Annex III).

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.

NOTE:

When preparing the financial offer, the applicant should take into account that the fee rates should be broadly consistent with the regional framework rates for these types of professional services for consultants.

Applications including technical and financial offer need to be submitted via e-mail to ProcurementforRcc@rcc.int by 31 January 2022.

VI. EVALUATION AND SELECTION

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

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

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

The applications are evaluated following these criteria:

EVALUATION GRID	Maximum Score
A. Technical Offer (A.1+A.2+A.3)	100
A.1. Work experience, references list: Relevant work experience; evidence of other contracts of the nature comparable to that of the Call; experience with clients comparable to the Contracting Authority.	35 (25+10)
Key Expert 1:	(25)
Key Expert 2:	(10)
A.2. Quality and professional capacity of the consultants: CVs satisfy the criteria set forth in the ToRs, education and experience demonstrates professional capacity and experience required.	35 (25+10)
Key Expert 1:	(25)
Key Expert 2:	(10)
A.3 Quality of the concept note and Action Plan: Relevance and applicability within the WB6 regional framework; methodologically sound concept/ plan, achievable within the defined timeframe.	30
B. Financial Proposal/ lowest price has maximum score	100

Score for offer X =

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

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

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

Information on selection of the most favourable bidder

The RCC Secretariat shall inform candidates and bidders of decisions reached concerning the award of the contract as soon as possible, including the grounds for any decision not to award a contract for which there has been competitive tendering or to recommence the procedure.

Standard letter of thanks for participation to unsuccessful bidders shall be sent within 15 days after the contract is signed with the awarded bidder.

The candidates and bidders wishing to receive a feedback may send a request within 15 days after receipt of the standard letter of thanks.

The request may be sent to the e-mail address ProcurementforRcc@rcc.int or to the address of the RCC Secretariat:

Regional Cooperation Council Secretariat
Attention to: Administration Department
Building of the Friendship between Greece and Bosnia and Herzegovina
Trg Bosne i Hercegovine 1/V
71000 Sarajevo
Bosnia and Herzegovina

Appeals procedure

Bidders believing that they have been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may petition the RCC Secretariat directly. The RCC Secretariat must reply within 15 days of receipt of the complaint.

The appeal request may be sent to the e-mail address ProcurementforRcc@rcc.int or to the address of the RCC Secretariat:

Regional Cooperation Council Secretariat
Attention to: Administration Department
Building of the Friendship between Greece and Bosnia and Herzegovina
Trg Bosne i Hercegovine 1/V
71000 Sarajevo
Bosnia and Herzegovina

ANNEX I:

APPLICATION SUBMISSION FORM

Open Call for Consultancy Services:

REF: 003-022

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.

Name	
Signature	
Date	

