



TRIPLE P TOURISM PROJECT

Open Call for Consultancy Services

Adventure Tourism Development and Promotion

TERMS OF REFERENCE:	Support to RCC Secretariat and the Triple P Tourism Project Team in further advancement of adventure tourism routes in Western Balkans Six through development of a Strategic and Business Model for Via Dinarica regional adventure travel route
Title:	Strategic and Business Model development for <u>Via Dinarica</u> regional adventure travel route
RCC Department:	Programme Department Project: Triple P Tourism in SEE: Promotion, Policy and Pilots
Eligible:	Individual consultants/ consortia of individual consultants/ /consulting companies/consortia of consulting companies
Reporting to:	RCC Secretariat
Duration:	15 November 2019 – 14 February 2020 Expected level of effort (LoE) is indicated in the text below, along with respective deliverables
Deadline for Application:	11 November 2019
Reference number:	033-019

I. BACKGROUND

Purpose

The purpose of this assignment is to provide assistance to the RCC Triple P Tourism in SEE project team and the tourism industry of Western Balkans Six in establishing and further strengthening the regional adventure tourism route of the Via Dinarica Mega Trail in terms of its management structures, identity and marketing potential.

The expected output of this assignment is to have full rounded strategic planning and management structures for Via Dinarica Mega Trail defined and foundations put in place.

The development of the strategic planning and management structures will include analysis of different models and best practices, based on which a recommendation will be put forward for the founding structures to be established, including tasks and obligations of such structures and the related financial resources and funding mechanisms. This will also include further development and management of the Via Dinarica label.

Background information

Tourism is one of the priority sectors of the SEE 2020 Strategy, with its significant potential for regional cooperation as direct and indirect contributor to the employment, export and GDP growth. However, due to many challenges, such as sector fragmentation, underdeveloped infrastructure, burdensome administrative procedures, lack of diversified market offer, etc., the SEE economies have agreed to prioritise tourism and address those challenges through joint, regional action.

RCC's Triple P Tourism Project, a three-year initiative funded by the EU, focuses on the 6 IPA II beneficiaries in the Western Balkans. The project aims to improve the quality of the tourism offer by: creating joint offer/product(s) to foster regional integration in the tourism sector and its joint global promotion; diversifying tourism offer of the region; alleviating policy barriers to development of tourism industry and easing of administrative procedures; improving the level of services related to tourism; and supporting small-scale infrastructure projects to support the development of regional tourism offer/product.

The Project team implements the action under the supervision of the RCC Secretariat's Programme Department (Competitiveness). The coordination that guides the activities, verifies and endorses the results is achieved through the RCC Tourism Expert Group (TEG), comprised of relevant national stakeholders from the six governments, the private sector and the civil society active in tourism development and promotion. The national TEG Coordinators are also responsible for coordination of relevant stakeholders from tourism or other relevant fields within their own economies.

Product Development

During 2018 RCC Triple P Tourism project completed stage one of the product development that included identification and selection of the themes for the regional routes, development of key framework approach for each route/product and initial concept development for the two new themes. Through the consultative process executed with Tourism Expert Group (TEG) the following regional offer has been selected for project support:

- **(Adventure) Via Dinarica and spin off programmes;** Via Dinarica, as the regional mega trail, already enjoys recognition in international adventure travel market, and serves as a growth generator in remote areas of the region. Trans Dinarica, a mountain bike option complementary to the Via Dinarica hiking programmes, has been recognised as the next product that is in expansion. Further, similar sub-programmes are expected to be identified and development launched during the implementation period.

II. DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Objectives and scope of the assignment

The Via Dinarica Mega Trail is a long distance hiking trail that stretches nearly 2,000 kilometres and extends the entire length of the Dinaric Alps, connecting the Western Balkans' economies: Slovenia,

Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo* and Albania, with an initiative to also include the Shar Mountain at the border between Kosovo* and Republic of North Macedonia.

The Via Dinarica corridor has three trails: the White, Green and Blue, each offering hikes of varying difficulty for nature lovers and adventurous minds. In the last two years a sister trail has emerged exploring the Dinaric Alps by bike – the Trans Dinarica.

The genesis of the Via Dinarica dates to 2009-2010 with the pilot portion of the trail connecting Sutjeska National Park in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Durmitor National Park in Montenegro. In 2013, the route was charted from Slovenia to the border of Kosovo*, Albania, and Montenegro. One wing of trail goes beyond the Dinaric Alps and on to the Sharr Mountain at the border between Albania and Republic of North Macedonia. During the period from 2014 to 2018 a major investment was made with the support of USAID and UNDP during which the Via Dinarica White Trail was fully developed through Bosnia and Herzegovina, while during the same time a cross-border initiative supported by EU developed sections of the trail connecting Montenegro and Kosovo* and Kosovo* and Albania. Further trail development support is projected for the upcoming period, again focusing on specific segments of the trail.

From the market perspective Via Dinarica has already gained recognition as well. In 2014, American adventure magazine *Outside* named the Via Dinarica the world's best new hiking trail. In 2015, *Paste* magazine did the same. *Wanderlust* travel magazine and *The Guardian* shortlisted the trail as a must-do adventure stop for 2016. *National Geographic Traveller* magazine named the trekking route one of its "Best of the World" destinations for 2017. The Via Dinarica has also been covered by *Vogue* magazine, *Wizz* Airlines in-flight magazine, and *Lonely Planet* and more than 100 articles have been published in the travel media.

The current status of Via Dinarica development indicates high levels of organisation and development in Slovenia and Croatia – at the northern end of the trail. Following the above mentioned USAID and UNDP funded project, the core organisational structure has been established in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well.

Since early 2014 there has been strong private sector recognition for close regional coordination of the Via Dinarica product that led to establishment of the Via Dinarica Alliance – the business partnership that jointly presented Via Dinarica in the international market and closely coordinated delivery of the Via Dinarica products on the ground. In 2017 this need was also recognised by the development agents dealing with Via Dinarica, resulting in the Via Dinarica Regional Cooperation platform that at this moment in time brings together the country lead organisations from Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Via Dinarica Alliance.

From the development perspective it is important to highlight that Via Dinarica Mega Trail is a flagship programme of the Via Dinarica adventure travel and cultural corridor, and that Via Dinarica as such is still not fully developed in its full length. To facilitate this unique situation of developing the internal management structures while responding to significant market demand, the key and immediate development needs of the regional adventure route are: strategic development and planning, building management model and structures, marketing strategy development with long-term market goals and immediate (2year) marketing plan for immediate market oriented actions.

Strategic planning and business development for Via Dinarica Mega Trail (November 2019–February 2020)

* 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

With the basic initiative for regional cooperation and coordination in place and recognising the power of the market requirements, it is of utmost importance to establish a reliable and stable coordination platform that will secure stable product delivery along the trail, coordinate market presence and manage development needs and utilise opportunities for knowledge transfer and share of resources. The regional platform needs to secure that Via Dinarica Mega Trail remains on the path of developing and delivering responsible and sustainable tourism product.

The consultant will be expected to facilitate strategic planning process towards establishment of regional management structure with identified resource needs.

Identification of similar initiatives worldwide	What other similar initiatives exist; how are they registered, organised; how are they funded – information collected.
Comparative analysis of operational and funding models	Looking at other routes and what seem to be the key factors of success, and what are the possible traps? What parts must be coordinated at regional level?
Recommendation and inputs for establishment of management structure for Via Dinarica Mega Trail (VDMT) that would include core organizational needs and functions	<p>Overview of the existing cooperation and coordination, the existing connections among businesses involved in Via Dinarica offer from all WB economies. Insight in other relevant business cooperation initiatives and models that exist even if they are not directly involved in Via Dinarica operations. Who could be the key stakeholders in WB6 to support the proposed VDMT model (businesses, development agents, management agents)?</p> <p>What organisational model would work for VDMT and why, what are the key functions that VDMT must have in order to grow as a sustainable organisation.</p> <p>Key adventure operators, including their key personnel, involved in Via Dinarica, details about the products/services that these businesses provide (typology, etc.) and main qualities which make them successful businesses.</p> <p>What markets are currently served by Via Dinarica businesses? The growth trends for entire industry, and how the demand and emerging trends would affect the product/service and the business operators as a whole.</p>
Analysis of needed resources and future steps to maintain the proposed organisational structure and its role in the industry	Identified resources needed to attain the competitive edge and ensure skills and qualities needed to maintain the structure, and possible funding models.
Inputs on Adventure Tourism Products that relate to market segmentation sections	<p>Brief description of specific advantages or improvements that make Via Dinarica adventure product/service unique;</p> <p>How the product fulfils the customer need in a unique way, who are the existing and ideal customers, and why the product will be valuable to them.</p> <p>Comparison with other products in the area and safety issues.</p> <p>Segmentation of existing and potential activities in two main categories: “soft” and “hard” adventure travel.</p>
Consultations with WB6 on the proposed	How to explain the benefits and secure buy-in in order to commit

model, including TEG buy-in and support	needed resources?
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Duties

The services under this assignment include the following key duties:

1. Conduct comprehensive desk research to gather information on existing multinational hiking and adventure trails, their organisational and funding structures;
2. Conduct an in-depth comparative analysis of existing business models of regional tourism promotional initiatives identifying key benefits and shortcomings and requirements for each model;
3. Develop recommendations for organisational and funding model for the VDMT management structure that would include, but not be limited to Via Dinarica adventure tourism products and services offered that relates to market segmentation sections; brand labelling system and brand management proposal;
4. Facilitate participatory consultations with key WB6 stakeholders;
5. Facilitate development of management structures including the brand management capacity.

In all their stages, the deliverables will be developed in close consultation with the RCC Triple P Tourism in SEE project team.

In the first stage when a detailed outline and methodology of work are to be developed in cooperation with the RCC Triple P Tourism Project Secretariat, a preparatory meeting of the consultant(s) will be held in Sarajevo.

Deliverables

The following deliverables will be produced and transferred to the RCC Triple P Tourism project during the course of the assignment, in the following timeline:

Deliverable	Deadline	Expected Level of Effort (LOE)
Attendance at the preparatory meeting in Sarajevo	Mid November 2019 (dates to be confirmed upon contract signing)	Up to 12 days
Business model development with clear indications from the field research on tourism adventure industry	15 December 2019	
Commitment from WB6 economies towards selected business model secured through at least two rounds	31 January 2020	Up to 10 days

of participatory focus groups and verification missions to all WB6 economies		
Final report on the organisational and management structure for the regional VDMT, with funding projections and overview of key capacity needs for the organisation	15 February 2020	Up to 3 days

Methodology

The consultancy is expected to propose the best methodological approach for undertaking this task. However, the following guiding principles should be taken into consideration:

- i. Desk review of primary and secondary information;
- ii. Communication/interviews/consultations/focus groups with the representatives of the Western Balkans Six economies (national coordination mechanisms on government level, but also the private sector, academia, CSOs, etc.) and relevant regional and international organisations;
- iii. Any other methods applicable.

Lines of Communication

The consultant/s will work in close coordination and under guidance of the RCC Triple P Tourism in SEE project Adventure Tourism Expert and the Project Leader, and RCC Secretariat. Each deliverable will be sent within the set deadlines. RCC Triple P Tourism in SEE project will conduct a quality assessment and approval of each deliverable.

Timeframe

The engagement is expected to start on 15 November 2019 and end on 14 February 2020.

III. COMPETENCES

Education and Experience

Educational requirements must be relevant to the specific assignment but as a general rule, advanced university degrees (Master, PhD) will be considered an asset, and in particular in the fields of tourism, economics, business, or other subjects of relevance for the consultancy.

Requirements concerning work experience and skills must be relevant to the specific assignment, but as a general rule, candidates with the following experience (as a minimum) are encouraged to apply:

Education:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced degree in tourism management or a related field, i.e. economics, business, community development or other areas directly related to the subject of work.
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<p>Experience:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 7 years of demonstrable work experience in areas such as development of adventure tourism, natural heritage utilisation through tourism and with knowledge of and experience in SEE region; • In-depth knowledge of adventure tourism development and related policies, related market practices, and successful solutions in ensuring adventure tourism development follows the guidelines and practices of responsible and sustainable tourism development; • Familiarity with adventure product of the Western Balkans 6 economies; • Excellent analytical and organisational skills, good interpersonal and negotiation skills and business intelligence demonstrable through previous work; • Theoretical and practical experience in designing, implementing, and/or monitoring and evaluating interventions with specific focus on the above mentioned areas, including experience in community support building and consensus building; • Excellent and demonstrable drafting and formulation skills, with a track record of producing and publishing reports or papers/studies in specified areas; • 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;
<p>Language requirements:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluency in English, as the official language of the RCC; • Knowledge of other RCC languages is an advantage.
<p>Other:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiar with MS Office applications.

Core Values

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

Core Competencies

- Possesses strategic vision, understanding of fundamental concepts and principles of a professional discipline or technical specialty;
- Demonstrates professional competence to meet responsibilities and post requirements and is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines and achieving results;
- Strong analytical capabilities and writing skills;
- Result-oriented; plans and produces quality results to meet the set goals, generates innovative and practical solutions to challenging situations;

- Communication: Excellent communication skills, including the ability to convey complex concepts and recommendations clearly;
- Team work: Ability to interact, establish and maintain effective working relations in a culturally diverse team and with a multitude of diverse stakeholders; flexibility to change and openness to receiving/integrating feedback;
- Ability to establish and maintain productive partnerships with regional and national partners and stakeholders.

IV. QUALITY CONTROL

The expert 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.

V. APPLICATION RULES

The application needs to contain the following:

For individual consultants/consortia of individual consultants:

- Letter of Interest specifying the Consultancy Reference number under which the application is made (max one A4 page);
- CV including relevant knowledge and experience;
- An action plan, up to 1 page, indicating the individual tasks to be undertaken against a timeframe;
- In case of bidding consortia of individual consultants participating in this Call, they must indicate the members and show how the work is divided between them. Specifically, all members must name the team leader 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;
- A concept note, up to 2 pages, elaborating the proposed methodology for addressing and undertaking individual consultancy tasks; an additional page can be included, where relevant, indicating key stakeholders to be included in the proposed approach;
- Reference list including contact details (e-mail addresses) of at least 3 referees;
- Application Submission Form (Annex I);
- Financial offer as per Annex II.

For companies and consortia of consulting companies:

- Company profile including a brief description (up to 2 pages) of the company. In case of a consortia of consulting companies, the leading company should submit the profile of the consortium;
- Copy of Company's Registration Certificate. In case of consortia of consulting companies, the leading company should submit the Registration Certificate;
- Bidding consortia participating in this Call 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;
- Financial records - company's balance sheet and profit-and-loss statement for the past 2 years;
- CVs of key experts in the team, outlining relevant knowledge and experience as described in the Terms of References, along with contact details of referees;
- An action plan, up to 1 page, indicating the individual tasks to be undertaken against a timeframe;
- A concept note, up to 2 pages, elaborating the proposed methodology for addressing and undertaking individual consultancy tasks, an additional page can be included, where relevant, indicating key stakeholders to be included in the proposed approach;
- List of references for relevant activities implemented over the past 5 years demonstrating relevant experience in the subject matter;
- Application Submission Form (Annex I);
- Financial offer, as per Annex II;
- Signed Statements of Exclusivity and Availability (Annex III).

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

- The proposed budget should be stated as a lump sum and broken down by key tasks;
- Costs of travel within the WB6, if planned and proposed, should be budgeted and borne by the consultant;
- The fee rates should be broadly consistent with the framework rates applicable in the region for these types of professional services for international and national consultants.

Applications need to be submitted via e-mail to ProcurementforRcc@rcc.int by 11 November, 12.00 CET.

When applying, please identify your submission as response to this call by naming the subject line of your message as:

RCC Triple P Tourism – 033-019

VI. EVALUATION AND SELECTION

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

Applications will be evaluated on the basis of the profile and competencies of the candidate and the responsiveness to the Terms of Reference of consulting services.

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

The applications are evaluated following these criteria:

EVALUATION GRID	Maximum Score
A. Technical Offer (A.1+A.2+A.3)	100
A.1. Work experience, references list: Relevant work experience; evidence of other contracts of the nature comparable to that of the Call; experience with clients comparable to the Contracting Authority.	35
A.2. Quality and professional capacity of the consultants: CVs satisfy the criteria set forth in the ToR, education and experience demonstrates professional capacity and experience required.	35
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 time frame.	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.

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted for the competency-based interview.

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: Strategic development for Via Dinarica regional adventure travel route

REF: 033-019

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

1 SUBMITTED by:

	Name(s) and address(es) of the Entity submitting this Application
Full Name of the Entity	

2 CONTACT PERSON

Name	
Address	
Telephone	
Fax	
e-mail	

3 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	

ANNEX II: BUDGET

REF: 033-019

Use a free format for the Budget providing the lump sum for the services to be provided.

NOTE:

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

- Price ceiling: up to EUR 15,000. Bids indicating a price above this threshold shall not be considered.
- The offer should also include the costs of travel to the Beneficiaries if required by Terms of Reference, providing it as a separate budget line.
- The expert fees should be consistent with those applicable in the region.

