



Open Call for Consulting Services

Subject:	Common Regional Market Action Plan 2021–2024 / CRM Regional Industrial and Innovation Area and the RCC Women Economic Empowerment Agenda
Title:	Development of a digital platform/solution for online mentoring to the Regional Networks of Women in STEM and Women in Entrepreneurship
RCC Department:	Programme Department
Eligibility:	Relevant (consulting) companies
Reporting to:	RCC Secretariat
Duration:	23 October – 30 November 2023
Reference Number:	051-023

I. BACKGROUND

In November 2020, the leaders of Western Balkans (WB) endorsed the Common Regional Market (CRM) Action Plan (AP) 2021–2024¹ at the Berlin Process Summit held in Sofia. The CRM Action Plan consists of targeted measures along the four key areas: Regional Trade Area, Regional Investment Area, Regional Digital Area, and Regional Industrial and Innovation Area.

The overarching goal of the Regional Industrial and Innovation Area is to support industrial development and innovation across key value chains, while ensuring support to women and young people. Hence, two dedicated Western Balkans (regional) networks have been established to support women economic empowerment through Women in STEM and Women in Entrepreneurship.

RCC has conducted consultation meetings with STEM women and women entrepreneurs participating in its networks, as well as initiatives to brainstorm and identify key topics of interest for mentoring that best respond to their needs. In addition, due to the relevance and cross-cutting interests, as well as the highlighted importance of networking, RCC aims to bring together participants from both Networks through joint mentoring sessions.

¹ [Regional Cooperation Council | Common Regional Market \(rcc.int\)](https://www.rcc.int/)

To ensure sustainability of both networks, as well as to enable creation of a long-lasting/tangible and comprehensive approach towards all expectations and needs of the RCC networks, it is proposed to commission development of a digital tool/online platform for direct peer-to-peer support and collaboration. The platform would also serve as a tool to engage the scientific, entrepreneurial and/or STEM diaspora, and to build partnerships between stakeholders: academia (education institutions, universities, research centres), business, policy and decision-makers, civil society, and media to push for the Women Economic Empowerment Agenda, with a focus on STEM and entrepreneurial fields.

II. DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Objective of the assignment

The proposed action/TA derives from the founding documents of both networks. A fundamental part of the *Action Plan of the Regional Network of Women in STEM* and the *Declaration on the Launch of the Regional Network of Women in Entrepreneurship*² is the need for setting up mentorship and knowledge-exchange programmes, promoting successful regional role models, enabling cooperation, identifying ways to harness women's competitive advantages, and providing the Networks' members with opportunities for networking and peer to peer support at a regional level.

Hence, this consultancy aims to design an interactive and user-friendly online platform that will serve as a tool to facilitate the connection between prospective mentors and mentees at the support of both, the Western Balkans Regional Networks of Women in STEM and Women in Entrepreneurship. The online platform aims to empower participants with the necessary tool to access mentoring, coaching and knowledge sharing in order to enhance skills and information and foster women empowerment within the WB region.

The selected expert/consulting firm is expected to deliver the following services and outputs:

Specific Tasks

This assignment should focus on the following specific tasks:

Task 1: Propose the most suitable methodology to create an online platform/digital tool to serve the needs of the Western Balkans Networks of Women in STEM and Women in Entrepreneurship as a more sustainable long-term tool to respond to the mentorship needs of the Networks' participants, after the current assignment ends.

The digital tool should entail, but not limited to:

² [Regional Cooperation Council | Declaration on the launch of the Regional Network of Women in Entrepreneurship \(rcc.int\)](https://www.rcc.int/)

- Dedicated windows for mentors and mentees (opportunity to create a mentor/mentee profile, profiles of available mentors, option to pick a mentor and indicate interest, notification of interest to the mentor and grace period for the mentor to get back to the mentee, engage in TNA, etc.);
- Thematic categories;
- Mentoring guidelines;
- Direct application by interested parties (followed by login and privacy protection features);
- Window for information sharing (e.g. on other mentorship opportunities from international partner organisations, recordings of online mentoring sessions; newsletter etc.);
- Interactive features for peer-to-peer exchange (between mentees, mentors and mentees, as per needs).

The proposed digital tool will enable provision of online mentorship programme/sessions, end to end, providing easy peer-to-peer communication and matching between mentors and mentees. The expert/consulting firm will propose best possible scenarios based on the needs of both Networks and featuring the abovementioned attributes for the digital tool.

Task 2: Identify and contact possible volunteer mentors with the following, but not limited to, main profiles: mid-to-senior career stages; academia leaders; young women with STEM career goals and aspirations; renowned women entrepreneurs; start-up facilitators; etc., to be included in the demo version.

In addition, incorporate a Training Needs Assessment (TNA) feature in the digital tool that will facilitate selection and matching process by providing an overview of the training needs and topics for the prospective mentees and facilitate identification of future mentors.

Methodology

The bidder is expected to suggest the most suitable model for successful completion of the assignment, in consultation with RCC. This may include but is not limited to, researching successful examples of local websites that serve as online mentorship support tools/programmes.

Note that a clear methodological overview should be an integral part of the concept note.

III. LOGISTICS AND TIMING

Timeline

The engagement is expected to start end of October 2023 and end on 30 November 2023.

Lines of Communication

- The task will be implemented in close consultation with the RCC Secretariat.

- The contracted bidder will report to the Experts on Competitiveness and Human Capital Development in RCC.
- As appropriate, meetings with RCC experts will be organised to agree on expectations and deliverables.

IV. REQUIRED OUTPUTS / REPORTING

The following deliverables will be produced and transferred to the RCC Secretariat during the course of the assignment, as per the timeframe specified below:

	Deliverables	Due date
1.	Methodology and Work Plan	End of October 2023
2.	Task 1 deliverable	First half (H1) of November 2023
3.	Task 2 deliverable	H1 2023
4.	Final deliverables	24 November 2023

V. REQUIREMENTS

Education:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An advanced university degree (Master’s Degree or equivalent) in computer science or other field of relevance for the assignment.
Experience:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minimum of 5 years of relevant experience in web development and design and/or other related skills; ▪ Proven relevant experience in similar consultancies for a team leader (and team members, if relevant) over the past 5 years; ▪ Proven analytical skills and ability to conceptualise and write concisely and clearly; ▪ Proven communication skills and ability to work in an environment requiring liaison and collaboration with multiple actors including government representatives, international organisations’ representatives, business community, civil society institutions, donors and other stakeholders; ▪ Advanced computer skills (MS Office and internet software).
Language requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fluency in written and spoken English, as the official language of the RCC; ▪ Knowledge of other RCC languages is an advantage.

Core Values

- Demonstrates integrity and fairness by modelling RCC values and ethical standards;
- He/she is 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;
- Team work: 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.

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.

V. APPLICATION RULES

The application needs to contain the following:

- Technical Offer;
- Financial Offer.

Technical Offer

- Company profile including a brief description (up to 2 pages) of the company;
- Copy of Company's Registration Certificate (in case of consulting companies);
- Financial records - company's balance sheet and profit-and-loss statement for the past 2 years;
- CV of an expert(s), outlining relevant knowledge and experience as described in the Terms of References, along with contact details of referees;
- A concept note with a clear methodological overview;
- List of references for relevant activities implemented over the past years demonstrating relevant experience in the subject matter;
- 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.

NOTE:

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.

Submission of applications:

Applications need to be submitted by 16 October 2023, by 17:00 Central European Time to the following address 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. Maximum size of the email should not exceed 15MB. WeTransfer alternative is recommended. Please avoid RAR files.

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:

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 size comparable with that of the tender; experience with clients comparable to the Contracting Authority.	35
A.2. Quality and professional capacity of the consultant(s): CV(s) satisfy the criteria set forth in the Terms of Reference, education and experience demonstrate professional capacity and experience required.	35
A.3 Quality of the concept note: An outline of 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. Financial Offer/ 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 will 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

REF: 051-023 Open Call for Consultancy Services

Subject: Development of a digital platform/solution for online mentoring to the Regional Networks of Women in STEM and Women in Entrepreneurship

One signed copy of this Application Submission Form must be supplied.

1 SUBMITTED by:

	Name(s) and address(es) of the bidder submitting this tender
Full Company Name or Name of the legal entity/ individual consultant	

2 CONTACT PERSON (for this Call)

Name	
Surname	
Address	
Telephone	
Fax	
e-mail	

3 **DECLARATION**

[Company Name or Name of the Individual Consultant] _____ hereby declares that we have examined and accepted without reserve or restriction the entire contents of the Open Call for Consultancy.

And we are not in one of the following situations:

- (a) 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) Have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of res judicata;
- (c) Have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the Contracting Authority can justify;
- (d) Have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the Contracting Authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;
- (e) 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.
- (f) Are civil servants or other agents of the public administration of the RCC Participants, regardless of the administrative situation, excluding us from being recruited as experts in contracts financed by the RCC Secretariat.

We offer to provide the services requested in the open call for consultancy on the basis of supplied documentation subject of this call, which comprise our technical offer and our financial offer.

Name and Surname	
Signature	
Date	

