

Open Call for Consulting Services

Title:	Cross-border pipeline development for Technology Transfer Offices in the Western Balkans
RCC Department:	Programme Department
Duration:	September - December 2022
Application Deadline:	16 September 2022 by 12:00CET
Reference Number	073-022
Eligible:	Consulting companies / consortia of individual consultants/ individual consultants

TERMS OF REFERENCE:

I. BACKGROUND

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

The CRM's Regional Innovation Area component aims to support, inter alia, development of innovation infrastructure in the WB, including Technology Transfer Offices (TTOs) in the region. The specific purpose of the assignment is to: (1) provide follow-up capacity building to the region's TTOs through (2) building a pipeline of ambitious project concepts/proposals that would be suitable for existing cross-border funding opportunities and (3) additionally encourage regional cooperation and networking.

II. OBJECTIVES

Rational for the action

The assignment is the follow-up action to the RCC's [Technology Transfer Support Programme in the Western Balkans](#) (Programme 2021) implemented in 2021 that provided capacity building to and facilitated regional networking of the region's TTOs. The Programme 2021 provided capacity building support following the end of two major initiatives to build capacity for technology transfer in the region implemented between 2017 and 2022. The 2017-2019 IPA-funded EU4Tech (Technology transfer capacity building in the Western Balkans) focused strongly on skills development through workshops and mentoring of individual TTOs. The more recent 2020-2022 EU4Tech PoC (Western Balkans Proof of Concept Scheme) took a significant step forward in capacity building by offering specialised technical assistance (TA) to 40+ technology/knowledge-based projects at the Technology Readiness Level 3. The TA team offered hands-on assistance to research teams and TTOs to move their projects closer to the market. This learning-by-doing was extremely powerful. However, knowledge spillovers were not as significant as they might have been had there been scope for teams from different institutions and WB economies to have worked together such as on collaborative/joint cross-border Proof of Concept projects. Such projects would have allowed the pooling of knowledge and sharing of their learning experiences. Similarly, although over 40 projects were matured to provide a pipeline of technology-based innovation projects for each WB economy, they were small projects that struggled to scale and realise their regional potential despite clear market opportunities across the WB and in the EU.

Although the funding landscape for innovation in the Western Balkans is continuing to develop with two innovation funds now operating in Serbia and North Macedonia, and the third (Montenegro) under development, these instruments focus on domestic projects and funding is limited, making them unsuitable for larger and more ambitious projects. While some funding is available from the EU (e.g. Horizon Europe), there is currently no initiative to build a pipeline of ambitious projects at the regional level in the Western Balkans, despite anticipated opportunities for funding such projects under IPA III. The lack of cross-border collaboration opportunities is also holding back capacity building in the TTOs. Previous informal networking initiatives by the RCC have established that TTOs in the Western Balkans are at very different stages of development and lack critical mass. Sharing of good practice has been sighted as an objective by the informal TTO network members. They have also indicated that being able to work together on TT projects would be the optimum approach to developing their capacities and building on initiatives that are happening simultaneously but often in isolation in each of

the economies. Such an approach would also start to leverage other existing regional initiatives such as the Network of Open Access Research Infrastructures in the WB and forthcoming capacity building for DIHs.

III. SCOPE OF WORK

Specific Tasks

This consultancy's key objective is to provide additional capacity building for the region's TTOs through building a pipeline of ambitious project concepts/proposals that would be suitable for existing cross-border funding opportunities by involving teams from the WB and facilitating additional networking.

More specific tasks are to:

- Identify suitable funding opportunities for such a pipeline,
- Support regional teams to develop a minimum of three – preferably five – project concepts to full funding proposals,
- Ensure that capacity building of TTOs is an integral part of the overall project plan, e.g. by including more than one TTO in each consortium and developing an internal plan for each project taken to a full proposal that will ensure knowledge spillovers,
- Support the RCC and its partners to develop policy measures that will enable more ambitious regional-level projects to be funded for the benefit of the CRM, including creating new jobs and encouraging brain circulation,
- Conduct evaluation among participating TTOs and submit a detailed final report with a set of recommendations for the future actions.

Methodology

The consultants are expected to suggest the most suitable methodology for successful completion of the assignment. This may include, but is not limited to, a mix of online and onsite activities, depending on potential new Covid-19 related travel restrictions that may be imposed by the region's authorities.

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

IV. LOGISTICS AND TIMING

Timeline

The engagement is expected to start in September 2022 and end on 22nd December 2022.

Lines of Communication

- The task will be implemented in close consultation with the RCC Secretariat.
- The contracted bidder will report to the Senior Expert on Human Capital Development at the RCC.
- As appropriate, meetings with RCC experts will be organised to agree on expectations and deliverables.

V. REQUIRED OUTPUTS/REPORTING

	Deliverables	Due date
1.	Detailed Work Plan agreed with the RCC	September 2022
2.	Suitable funding opportunities for a pipeline identified	September 2022
3.	A minimum of three – preferably five – project proposals for funding capacity building of TTOs developed and submitted	19 December 2022
	The RCC supported to develop policy measures that will enable more ambitious regional level projects to be funded for the benefit of the CRM	19 December 2022
	Final report (max 15 pages) submitted including results of an evaluation of participating TTOs & a set of recommendations for the future	22 December 2022

VI. REQUIREMENTS

Expert Qualifications:

Education:	Degree in sciences, engineering, economics, business, or other fields directly related to the assignment. Master's Degree. PhD is an advantage.
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Experience:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minimum of ten or seven years of relevant experience in similar consultancies for a team leader and team members respectively; ▪ Experience in working with WB stakeholders and/or EU institutions in the field of innovation and research is considered an advantage; ▪ At least three similar (in scope and complexity) projects completed in the last five years, particularly in the WB; ▪ Proven analytical skills and ability to conceptualise and write concisely and clearly; ▪ In-depth knowledge of the region covered by the assignment; ▪ Demonstrable experience in writing and reporting on similar assignments (samples of work to be provided); ▪ Proven communication and presentation skills and ability to work in an environment requiring liaison and collaboration with multiple actors including government representatives, businesses, civil society institutions, donors and other stakeholders.
Language requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fluency in written and spoken English, as the official language of the RCC; ▪ Knowledge of other RCC languages is desirable.
Other:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N.A.

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.

Quality Control:

The expert should ensure an internal quality control during the implementing and reporting phase of the assignment. The quality control should ensure that the draft reports and deliverables comply with the above requirements and meet adequate quality standards before sending them to stakeholders for comments. The quality control should ensure consistency and coherence between findings, conclusions and recommendations. It should also ensure that findings reported are duly substantiated and that conclusions are supported by relevant judgment criteria.

The views expressed in the report will be those of the contractor and will not necessarily reflect those of the Regional Cooperation Council. Therefore, a standard disclaimer reflecting this will be included in the reports. In this regard, the expert may or may not accept comments and/or proposals for changes received during the above consultation process. However, when comments/proposals for changes are not agreed by the expert, he/she should clearly explain the reasons for his/her final decision in a comments table.

VII. APPLICATION RULES

Technical Offer:

The technical offer needs to contain the following:

For the companies and consortia of experts

- 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;
- Copy of Company's Registration Certificate (in case of consulting companies);
- 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 authorised 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 (only in case of bidding of consulting companies);
- CVs of experts, outlining relevant knowledge and experience as described in the Terms of References, along with contact details of referees;
- An outline work programme of a maximum of 5 pages;
- 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 III).

Financial offer (Annex II)

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:

- Maximum budget should not exceed EUR 20,000. The offers above the threshold will not be considered.
- Use a free format for the budget providing the global price for the work to be provided.

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.

Note:

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.

Applications need to be submitted via e-mail to ProcurementforRcc@rcc.int by 16 August 2022 by 12:00CET.

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. We transfer alternative is recommended. Please avoid RAR files.

VIII. 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 for 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
A.2. Quality and professional capacity of the consultants: CV satisfies the criteria set forth in the ToR, education and experience demonstrates professional capacity and experience required.	35
A.3 Quality of the Work Plan Work plan outlining proposed action by the consultant, sources of information to be used, timeline and tools to be employed by the consultant;	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, 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 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 appeal.

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:**

Cross-border pipeline development for Technology Transfer Offices in the Western Balkans

REF: 073-022

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

1 SUBMITTED by:

Name of the Entity	
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 staff, 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	

