Employment and Social Affairs Platform 2 – ESAP 2

Terms of Reference:	Upgrade of the existing ESAP Online Platform and development of new features, hosting and maintenance
Contracting Authority:	Regional Cooperation Council Secretariat
Reporting to:	RCC Secretariat
Duration:	25 August 2020 until 31 October 2022
Number of Posts:	Company from the information technology sector
Extended Deadline:	17 August July 2020

1. Background

The *Employment and Social Affairs Platform* (ESAP 2) is a regional project financed by the European Commission and jointly implemented by the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in the 6 Western Balkan economies. ESAP 2 is a continuation of the ESAP project, which was implemented between 2016 and 2019, aimed at strengthening regional cooperation and institutional capacities of national administrations, employers' and workers' organisations, enabling them to develop and effectively implement labour market and social policy reforms in their EU enlargement process. The project team is based in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The three specific objectives of **RCC-implemented action** of the ESAP 2 project are directed towards:

1. The **Informal Employment and Undeclared Work in cooperation with ILO -** component will support improved policies for tackling undeclared work through enhanced cooperation and operationalisation at central level of a holistic/strategic compliance approach, generate evidence on what works with regard to transition to formality in the region, and improve capacities to produce more reliable data on the multiple facets of informality.

2. The **Employment Policies and Measures** - component will support strengthening institutional capacities of Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs and Public Employment Services in developing, monitoring and evaluating priority labour market policies and measures including measures outlined in Economic Reform Programmes.

3. **The Western Balkans engagement in EU Employment and Social Policies -** component will increase the exposure of Western Balkan officials from Ministries of Labour and Public Employment Services to EU-wide networks and processes, including the EU Public Employment Service network through benchlearning, and support peer learning in the process of alignment with the EU acquis and the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

The three specific objectives of the **ILO-implemented action** of the Employment and Social Affairs Platform project are directed towards:

1. **Informal Employment and Undeclared Work in cooperation with RCC:** This component aims to create an enabling environment for effective and evidence-based policy design and implementation to facilitate transition to formality by generating reliable quantitative and qualitative evidence that distinguishes between measures, mechanism or approaches that are capable of effectively and sustainably facilitating transition to formality and those that do not have those qualities.

2. **Labour Inspection:** The labour inspection component seeks to increase capacities and outreach of Labour Inspectorates (LI) to prevent and combat informal employment and undeclared work through increased regional knowledge, peer learning and improved practices within the Network of LIs in the Western Balkans.

3. **Social Dialogue:** The social dialogue component aims to improve effectiveness of tripartite and bipartite social dialogue in improving working and living standards of women and men. ESAP will focus on establishment of online regional and national performance-monitoring tools for and with participation of Economic and Social Councils; development of regional guidelines for the promotion of collective bargaining in select economic sectors with active participation of tripartite social actors; development of online regional policy and performance tools in the area of labour dispute resolution and industrial relations and regular update of the Database on Industrial Relations and Working Conditions.

The Platform

The existing regional Western Balkans platform on employment and social affairs has been jointly developed by RCC and ILO during the implementation of ESAP (www.esap.online). The platform promotes the activities implemented by ESAP and aims to extend to include ESAP 2 with all relevant news, as well as to continue facilitating the exchange of experience, good practices, data and information between economies in the region. The platform has been developed to complement in-person activities and meetings under the objective of strengthening regional cooperation and institutional capacity of Western Balkans governments.

The platform currently facilitates constituents' and partners' access to the tools, documentation and data produced by ESAP project; furthermore it allows the exchange of information and support through online assistance and discussion fora. In the current set-up the platform is composed of both public and private domains. The public domain contains relevant information about the project activities and from several databases. The private

domain contains materials and documents targeted at the direct beneficiaries of the project as well as communities of practice on the priority topics of the project.

It has an open-access portal for access to information/documents aimed at public consumption and a private component aimed at providing relevant Communities of Practice such as WB Ministries of Labour, Public Employment Services, Labour Inspectorates, Economic and Social Councils, social partners and experts in the field to grow and communicate effectively.

The existing ESAP platform was developed on the base of the custom-built Content Management System (CMS) called Site Edit CMS for web content management, interconnected with the customised Moodle application for collaborative features such as forums, messaging, document sharing, discussion boards and such. Both applications are based on the open-source licensing model which enables full further customisation and maintenance.

2. Objective

The objective of this assignment is to upgrade, expand and maintain the ESAP Online Platform, including extending its functions, user friendliness and creating a modern and coherent visual identity. The platform will (a) complement in-person activities implemented under the ESAP 2 project through information on work-related activities, relevant news and feature stories; (b) facilitate the exchange of experience, good practices, data and information between economies in the region and the European Union; (c) promote online interaction and knowledge sharing among stakeholders involved in employment and social affairs in the region; and (d) serve as a regional pool of labour market-related information for the purpose of reporting, scientific research, and awareness raising.

3. Scope of Service

3.1 Platform Concept

The ESAP Online Platform is structured as custom-built Content Management System, i.e. Site Edit CMS for web content management, interconnected with the customised Moodle application containing a public layer, a private layer and an individual layer.

The contractor will revamp the moodle theme and the general layout to create a modern and coherent visual identity.

The contractor needs to upgrade, improve functionality and update the **Public Layer** accessible to general public, including:

- General information regarding the ESAP project and platform;
- Project's components descriptions, key tasks, results, etc.;
- Contact details of key team members and general contact details;
- Tenders/open calls/vacancies;
- Social media feeds/links of RCC and ILO and social media share options (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, You Tube, LinkedIn);
- News and story section to include multimedia contents;

- Calendar of events (upcoming and past)
  - Investigate and choose plugins and options for effective management and visualisation of calendar;
- Regular Databases summary section featuring summaries of data presented in visual manner (infographics/graphs) based on agreed set of indicators, drawn from the closed databases;
- Upgrade Media Gallery (photo/video/infographics) into a dynamic one;
- Links to ESAP implementers (RCC/ILO) and the stakeholder institutions;
- Search feature of the public part of the platform;
- Add as many databases as needed which should have a feature through which selected samples of information could be presented in a simplified and easy to understand fashion that could be further shared with media and public at large;
- Update The library with relevant documents;
- Aggregation of content/resources from other websites/platforms, by enabling the integration of external RSS feed systems, e.g. RCC, ILO, European Commission, the World Bank, OECD, etc.;
- FAQ section explaining how databases function and how the data can be accessed.

The contractor needs to upgrade and update the **Private Community Layer** where specific information on project activities is accessible to registered members only. The current layer allows for creation of as many private communities as the need arises. Within these spaces, only members with credentials and permissions are allowed to access content and interact with other members. Example of content and features are listed below:

- Project documentation;
- Working papers uploaded by members;
- Discussion board/chat forum – Improve the synchronous and asynchronous communication systems on the platform;
- Database on cases for peaceful settlement of labour disputes containing cases in a form of word/pdf documents;
- Hyperlink to the public part of the CEELEX database developed by ILO;
- Meeting agendas and minutes;
- Directory of members;
- File sharing.

The contractor needs to upgrade and update the **Individual Layer** where each registered member can provide personal information, e.g. *name, surname, position, membership to project activities, photo*. This information should be accessible to registered members and the administrator only.

3.2 Functionalities

Below is a list of functionalities that need to be developed or revised and upgraded as required:

General:

- *Search:*

- ✓ Improve search functionality to allow users to search through all content they are authorised to access including the content within files.

- *Text editor:*

  - ✓ Improve the text editor (sometimes referred to as the 'HTML editor'). Many of these icons and functions should be familiar to anyone who uses a word processor.

  - ✓ Create a Multi-language editor (English, Albanian, Macedonian, Serbian/Bosnian/Croatian/Montenegrin)

- *Tagging and Commenting including:*

  - ✓ Registered users should be able to Tag and Comment all content.

  - - *File management:*
  - ✓ Providing easy way to present materials to users;
  - ✓ Once uploaded files appear as thumbnails for easy recognition;
  - ✓ Providing easy way to edit uploaded files and archive them;
  - ✓ Show the date of upload and edits;
  - ✓ Enable users to search through files and file contents.

- *Notifications including:*

  - ✓ Users can receive message alerts in a form of automatic email notifications when other users post in a subscribed discussion forum;

  - ✓ Users can set preferences for receiving messages and notifications in their User profile page;

  - ✓ Discussion forum/community managers can moderate forum/community content using email notifications (approve content to be posted).

- *Improve secure authentication and registration*:

Administration:

- *Creation of private space:*

  - ✓ Allowing admin to easily create new private spaces and categorise them;

  - ✓ Allowing admin to close or archive private spaces.

- *Manage user accounts and user roles and permissions:*

  - ✓ Accounts can be created, updated and deleted by administrator(s);

  - ✓ Allowing admin to manage role capabilities;

  - ✓ Allow different role capabilities: e.g. Admin *(can do everything on site),* Manager *(can manage and add content to selected sections),* User *(can access and participate where permitted).*

- *Interoperability (to be part of the design and fixed in the layout);*

   ✓ Enable integration of external RSS feed systems, e.g. *from RCC and ILO websites;*

   ✓ Enable integration of social media and external sharing of contents of the Public layer on social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, You Tube);

   ✓ Enable integration of file sharing systems, e.g. *Google Docs or Dropbox.*

- *Security recommendations:*

   ✓ Allow security overview report for Admin;

   ✓ Set up password policy in agreement with the client (password reset, password requirements, e.g. complexity, length, password change over time);

   ✓ Use of a dedicated server;

   ✓ Use platform established security checklists and best practices.

Community management:

- *Group management*

   ✓ Allow setting up groups with different capabilities and access.

- *Collaborative tools and activities*

   ✓ Allow users to have a real-time synchronous discussion (chat);

   ✓ Creating and conducting surveys to collect feedback.

3.3 Design

Taking into consideration the design concept and features required, the following are the services needed:

- Upgrade, improve functionality and visual feel of the existing website, using the current site map and technology

- Improve the platform theme and layout entailing:

   o Revision of the Moodle theme and general layout in order to apply a modern and coherent visual identity;

   o Addition of graphic customised elements in the Moodle theme to enhance the impact of the homepage;

   o Creation of unique icons and visual elements to make the online experience easy and remarkable, in particular it would be advisable to design a set of icons for the following items: "documents", "links", "community of practice" instead of present icons that are not designed to catch the eye of user;

   o Creation of unique icons and visual elements in order to apply a modern and coherent visual identity.

Mobile device compatibility and mobile application: The Online Platform graphic theme is mobile responsive and platform navigation is carried out across desktop computers and mobile devices. Additionally, the development of a mobile application is envisaged in order to facilitate access and interaction. The application should feature key functionalities of the platform.

Overall design: the provider should provide at least 3 visual design proposals for the platform based on which the further architecture would be built in regular consultations with RCC and ILO.

3.4 Content

The content refers to Western Balkans labour market publications, policies and programmes, regional analysis and research.

Content is available in the following variants:

- **Public library:** the platform constitutes an entry point for an organised set of documents (policies and programmes, analysis and research, labour market resources). These public libraries have centralised admin control.
- **Databases:** searchable databases for specific purposes and user groups will be designed.
- **Structured members self-publishing:** members can contribute with their own resources in private project communities which are not available to the general public.
- **Content integration:** access to integrated feeds from other institutions' websites, e.g. RCC, ILO, World Bank, OECD, etc.

Supported activities:	Tools:
- **Content management** (uploading, organising, search)	- Case databases - File sharing - Tagging - Commenting - Searching - Archiving - Notifications - Access control

- **Open-ended conversations:**

The ESAP Online Platform hosts open-ended conversations as one of the primary vehicles for learning and sharing. For example, private communities built around project activities can host multi-topic conversations where distinct conversations proceed in parallel with multiple threads. This will include:

- Chatting and communication systems entailing improvement of synchronous and asynchronous communication systems on the platform;

- Chatting plugins or other options for chatting and communication.

Open-ended conversations should target selected community topics and be for small groups of members aiming to help each other. Language instructions should be clear to avoid misunderstandings.

Supported activities:	Tools:
- Online discussions	- Discussion forum - File sharing - Tagging - Commenting - Searching - Archiving - Notifications - Access control

- **Individual participation**

Apart from providing a networking space, the ESAP 2 Online Platform should allow users to access information at their own pace and according to their individual needs. In other words, users should easily use the platform to serve their personal needs and control access to the information. Users can belong to few or multiple communities (which are private spaces).

Supported activities:	Tools:
- Networking and finding others online - Customisation of online profile	- Light member directories with minimal personal information (picture, name, contact, roles, responsibilities, projects) - Editable online profile page - Searching - Notifications - Access control

- **Meetings**

The ESAP 2 Online Platform can work as a link to regular face-to-face meetings where users engage in shared activities for specific time. In particular, the platform can work as a central location to store materials and documents related to meetings, e.g. agenda, minutes, reports and allow users to keep track of what has been implemented or carried out. Blending face-to-face meetings with the online platform allows setting up an appropriate rhythm for the community and provides added value to the virtual platform.

Supported activities:	Tools:
- Scheduling and announcements - Follow-up discussions, questions and comments - Document distribution/sharing	- Shared calendar - File sharing - Discussion forum - Notifications - Access Control

3.5 Data Type and Size of Users

The system must have as much as possible characteristics of an open system.

The system would be used, in an authenticated way, by maximum of 500 users. Public interface would be used by citizens, thus the number of total users may be in few thousands. Number of concurrent users may not be high in everyday use.

The system must be portable in a sense that it can be reused without the need for service provider intervention or software modification. It is acceptable that configuration changes are made in order to use the system in other locations.

The system must be implemented in scalable manner to allow splitting performance load over more resources, adding additional resources or separating specific roles by resources.

If there are dependencies between applications or application parts, these are to be documented or applications bundled.

3.6 Working Language

The public layer of the platform interface shall be available in English.

The private layer should be designed in such a way that specific parts of this layer can, when required, be made available in several languages of the region.

3.7 Platform Hosting

The ESAP 2 Online Platform requires to be hosted on a dedicated server/Cloud, operating 24x7 with stable network connection.

Technical support should be provided through comprehensive documentation (e.g. FAQs or checklists) and email assistance.

Regular site backup is also mandatory.

Taking into consideration all of the above, these are the services needed:

- Website compliance upgrades;
- Platform hosting technical support requests.

3.8 Security

The system must be designed in a way that data security is ensured throughout all processes, data structures and methods of access.

Backend data storage must be protected from unauthorised access, whereas frontend must be accessible only with authentication credentials allowed within the administrative interface of the system.

Appropriate user role system shall be implemented to streamline access to applications. All communication that requires login must be encrypted with SSL (HTTPS).

Application may require users to register and login to the system in order to provide data into the system. In addition, application must have measures implemented to prevent abuse (bot posted information, spam, etc.)

Application should allow anonymous usage wherever data is not posted to the system.

3.9 Platform Maintenance and Support

These are the services needed:

- Regular and full site backup;
- Platform content update when changes are not possible from the content management system user interface;
- Regular and/or automated testing for broken hyperlinks;
- Provide support/training on using the admin interface of the content management system;
- Monitor the server logs to see most popular pages and downloads and generate regular reports;
- Regular response times need to be under 24 hours.

3.10 Platform Training

These are the services needed:

- Provide coaching to staff (either in a form of training or checklists) on content management features;
- Provide coaching to staff (either in a form of training or checklists) on basic administration features.

3.11 Search Engine Optimisation

In line with the site content the provider will perform Search Engine Optimisation in order to position the platform properly in response to relevant searches and be in charge of the following tasks:

- Keyword research and analysis
- Search engine submission
- Web ranking report

4. Timeframe

Deliverable	Due date (from mobilisation)
Inception Report and detailed design	2 weeks
First beta version developed, including all features specified in the scope of work, section 3, reflecting comments from the contracting authority.	5 weeks
Final version of the platform delivered	12 weeks
Regular maintenance	Weeks 13 to 31 October

Deliverable	Due date (from mobilisation)
	2022

Deliverables will be verified against the User Acceptance Tests where a group of users will try using the site and confirm its functionalities.

5. Profile and competencies of the company and team members

Qualifications

Company requirements:

- The company must have previous experience in similar assignments, i.e. experience in developing similar virtual platforms and knowledge management systems;

- The company must be able to demonstrate competencies in database technologies which will be used in the development of the platform.

Qualifications of personnel:

Education:	▪ Relevant post-graduate degree in Data Management, Information Systems, Knowledge Management Systems or equivalent academic credentials
Experience:	Qualifications and Skills Required ▪ More than 5 years' experience developing knowledge management systems ▪ More than 5 years' experience developing online tools and systems ▪ Knowledge of SharePoint, SFDC, and other data management systems ▪ Skills in website programming and application development languages ▪ Experience in the use of open source software preferred ▪ Experience with international clients preferred ▪ Able to interact with professionals of and representatives from the national administrations in the Western Balkans region
Language requirements:	▪ Fluency in English, as the official language of the RCC ▪ Knowledge of other languages from the region desirable

APPLICATION RULES

- Qualified companies are invited to send an application via e-mail to ProcurementforRCC@rcc.int no later than ~~17 August 2020~~ by 17.00 Central European Time;
- 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.

Technical Offer

The Technical Offer must include the following documents:

- Company profile including a brief description (up to 2 pages) of the company;
- Copy of Company's Registration Certificate (in case of legal entities).
- Financial records - company's balance sheet and profit-and-loss statement for the past 2 years (only in case of a bidding of legal entities);
- CV(s) of **the assigned staff**, outlining relevant knowledge and experience;
- Concept note outlining the proposal of the methodology, timeline, the research analytical tools to be used in carrying out the assignment as well as at least one sample of similar work, based on your experience or an explanation of how you would deliver the product based on the information provided in the Terms of Reference;
- List of references for relevant activities implemented over the past 2 years demonstrating relevant experience in the subject matter;
- Application Submission Form (Annex I);
- Signed Statements of Availability (Annex II).

Financial Offer

The proposed offer should be broken down as per the deliverables envisaged in the Terms of Reference and reflected in Annex II.

The financial offer should reflect the following:

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

Evaluation and Selection

- The assignment will be awarded to the highest qualified applicant based on the skills, expertise, and the quality of the concept note and the cost-effectiveness of the financial offer;

- The best value for money is established by weighing technical quality against price on a 80/20 basis;
- Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted for the competency-based interview.

Technical Evaluation

Evaluation grid	Maximum score

Professional capacity of the Staff
    - Education
    - Qualifications and Skills Required
	10
	50

Concept Note	**40**
TOTAL SCORE	**100**

In addition to the results of the application, a competency-based interview will be held with the selected candidates.

Financial Evaluation

Financial Proposal/ cheapest price has maximum score	**100**

ANNEX I: **APPLICATION SUBMISSION FORM**

REF: **054-020**

Title: Upgrade of web design of the existing and development of new features, hosting and maintenance of ESAP Online Platform

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

1   SUBMITTED by:

Name	
Surname	
Address	
Telephone	
Fax	
e-mail	

3   **DECLARATION**

[Name]   _____   hereby declares that we have examined and accepted without reserve or restriction the entire contents of the 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 call for experts on the basis of supplied documentation subject of this call, which comprise our technical offer and our financial offer.

Name and Surname of the Consultant	
Signature	
Date	

ANNEX II: BUDGET BREAKDOWN

REF: 054-020

Description of cost category as per Deliverable	Cost	Total Cost
2 TOTAL COSTS		
3 VAT (if applicable):		
GRAND TOTAL (2+3):		

ANNEX III: STATEMENT OF AVAILABILITY

REF: 0 5 4 - 0 2 0

By representing the Entity_____we agree to participate in the above-mentioned tender procedure. We further declare that we are able and willing to work for the period(s) foreseen for the position for which our CVs have been included in the event that this tender is successful, namely:

Full Name	Available from (Date)	Available until (Date)	Acceptance by signature	Number of man-days associated to each task from the ToR