

Open Call for Consulting Services

Title:	Foresight Study on Future Competitiveness Trends in the Western Balkans
RCC Department:	Programme Department
Duration:	February– April 2023
Application Deadline:	30 January 2023
Reference Number	105-022
Eligible:	Consulting companies / consortia of 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. The CRM aims to enable an unobstructed flow of goods, services, capital and highly skilled labour, making the region more competitive and attractive for investment and trade, while accelerating the convergence of the Western Balkans (WB) with the European Union (EU).

In October 2021, the European Commission launched a comprehensive study [Strategic Foresight in the Western Balkans: Recovery on the Horizon](#). The study presents three plausible scenarios of how Research & Innovation (R&I) policies could evolve in the Western Balkans by 2035. Instead of describing or predicting the actual environment for R&I policies in 2035, the three scenarios aim to inform the region's policy-makers about different possible futures and assist in taking proactive actions to shape the future.

This assignment is the follow-up action to the Strategic Foresight in the Western Balkans study.

The role of Strategic Foresight is to help businesses and policy-makers cope with such challenges and help understand wider contexts to inform tomorrow's actions. Strategic Foresight helps anticipate future scenarios and provides evidence for designing policies that proactively tackle key economic and social challenges.

II. DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Objectives of the assignment

This consultancy's key task is to prepare the Foresight Study on Future Competitiveness Trends in the Western Balkans in English language. It will complement the European Commission's study [Strategic Foresight in the Western Balkans: Recovery on the Horizon](#) which focused on Science, Technology and

Innovation scenarios. The Study will take into consideration four broad areas of action of the Global Competitiveness Report including enabling environment, human capital, markets and innovation ecosystems. The goal is to enable policy-makers to improve the policies for increasing competitiveness, and develop and promote regional industrial value chains in priority sectors.

III. SCOPE OF WORK

Specific Tasks

This consultancy's key task is to draft the Foresight Study on Future Competitiveness Trends in the Western Balkans.

More specific tasks are to:

- Conduct in-depth desk research to identify and compile a coherent overview of the most impactful competitiveness trends in the Western Balkans by 2035.
- Identify and present separately megatrends that might have the strongest impact on the region's competitiveness.
- Conduct ten to twenty expert interviews with the private sector (businesses, Western Balkans 6 Chamber Investment Forum, Western Balkans Competitiveness and Innovation Accelerator, World Bank, EBRD, etc.) to identify signals of change, trends, and drivers in the area of competitiveness. The selection of experts shall be coordinated with the RCC.
- Organise at least one workshop with experts from different fields of competitiveness and experts from the EU delegations and similar institutions to ensure the versatility of sources and to validate accurate trends.
- Ensure to distinguish between the trends at the (1) European/EU level, (2) the WB level and (3) at the level of individual WB economies wherever possible.

The outcome of the assignment shall be a maximum of 20 pages illustrating the (mega)trends, prepared in English language. The Study shall be easy to read for the intended audience of the business and policy-making communities in the Western Balkans. The Study shall provide scenarios that outline potential futures by 2035 that businesses and policy makers could use to prepare their strategies and position their policies proactively.

Methodology

The consultants are expected to suggest the most suitable methodology for the successful completion of the assignment. This may include, but is not limited to, a mix of online and onsite activities. The concrete scope of the area of competitiveness shall be determined with the RCC at the beginning of the assignment. 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 February 2023 and finish by 14th of April 2023.

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 and Senior Expert on Competitiveness 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.	Work Plan agreed with the RCC	1 st week of February 2023
2.	Megatrends with potentially the strongest impact on the region's competitiveness identified and validated with experts in the region.	March 2023
3.	Final Foresight Study on Future Competitiveness Trends in the Western Balkans distinguishing between the trends at the (1) European/EU level, (2) the WB level and (3) at the level of individual WB economies submitted (max 20 pages).	14 th April 2023

VI. REQUIREMENTS

Expert Qualifications:

A proven **regional expertise** in the Western Balkans in the focal areas of the RCC is required for the implementation of the assignment.

Education:	Degrees in sciences, engineering, economics, business, or other fields directly related to the assignment. The bidder must have team members with Master's Degrees, while team members with PhD is an advantage.
-------------------	---

Experience:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The bidder must have a substantive track record of Strategic Foresight activities, which could entail publications, training activities or the organisation of high-level events on Strategic Foresight; ▪ Experience in working with WB stakeholders and/or EU institutions in the field of innovation and research is considered an advantage; ▪ At least one similar (in scope and complexity) project 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 an advantage.
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 individual 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 II).

Financial Offer (Free format)

The financial offer should reflect the following:

- The figures should be expressed in EUR;
- Use a free format for the budget providing the global price for the work to be provided.
- Maximum budget should not exceed 27,000 EUR

NOTE:

- When preparing the financial offer, the applicant should take into account that the fee rates should be broadly consistent with the regional framework rates for these types of professional services.
- For companies from Bosnia and Herzegovina, VAT should be presented. According to the Indirect Taxation Authority Instruction and its status of an international organisation, the Regional Cooperation Council Secretariat is entitled to VAT refund and is exempted from customs duties in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Applications need to be submitted via e-mail to ProcurementforRcc@rcc.int by 30 January by 17:00CET.

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. WeTransfer 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 demonstrate 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, 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 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****REF: 105-022 Open Call for Consultancy Services**

Subject: Foresight Study on Future Competitiveness Trends in the Western Balkans

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/consortia of individual consultants	

2 CONTACT PERSON (for this Call)

Name	
Surname	
Address	
Telephone	
Fax	
e-mail	

3 **DECLARATION**

[Company Name or Name of the Consortia of Individual Consultants] _____
 hereby declares that we have examined and accepted without reserve or restriction the entire
 contents of the Open Call for Consultancy 105-022.

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	

