

## **Open Call for Consulting Services**

<b>Subject:</b>	Training needs assessment and outline of training strategies to raise parliamentary technical capacities and awareness on Common Regional Market.
<b>Title:</b>	Technical assistance to prepare ‘Training needs assessment and outline of training strategies to raise parliamentary technical capacities and awareness on Common Regional Market’
<b>RCC Department:</b>	Political Department
<b>Starting Date:</b>	20 February 2024
<b>Reporting to:</b>	RCC Secretariat
<b>Duration:</b>	20 February 2024 – 20 April 2024
<b>Eligible:</b>	Respective consulting companies, individual consultants, consortia of individual consultants
<b>Application Deadline:</b>	15 February 2024
<b>Reference Number:</b>	006-024

### **Terms of Reference:**

#### **I. PURPOSE**

The overall objective of the consultancy is to identify specific training needs of technical staff of the Western Balkans Parliaments related to Common Regional Market (CRM) and its deliverables, as well as propose relevant future training strategies to raise their technical capacities and awareness.

To this end, a consultant will be engaged to assist Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) to prepare training needs assessment for technical staff of Parliamentary committees (advisors) and propose relevant training strategies to raise parliamentary technical capacities and awareness on CRM.

#### **II. BACKGROUND**

Leaders of the Western Balkans Six agreed at Sofia Summit in November 2020 to enhance economic cooperation in the region by developing the Common Regional Market, based on the

EU rules and standards, with the aim to increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of the region and bring it closer to the EU markets. The Common Regional Market builds on the achievements of the Regional Economic Area (REA), aiming to have a transformative effect by putting the region on the map for global investors, thereby creating jobs and offering greater choices at lower prices for its consumers, and enabling people to work throughout the region<sup>1</sup>.

Implementation of CRM and the ambitious Action Plan put forward require an increased level of information and awareness of all stakeholders, including the national parliaments. Current involvement of national parliaments in the regional cooperation process has been rather limited, despite their recurrently expressed interest to be meaningfully involved, as a good prerequisite to enhance the oversight role of the Parliaments, contribute to strengthening political stability, and improve political climate of the Western Balkans region.

Since November 2020, RCC has been providing assistance to Conference of Parliamentary Committees on European Integration/Affairs of the States Participating in the Stabilisation and Association Process in South-East Europe (COSAP) to support the efforts towards strengthening parliamentary cooperation within the Berlin Process. In this context, RCC prepared the following regional assessments:

- Strengthening the role of Parliaments of the Western Balkans region in the Berlin Process<sup>2</sup>;
- Assessing and strengthening the institutional capacities of parliaments of the Western Balkans region related to the Common Regional Market<sup>3</sup>.

Findings of both these assessments confirmed the wide support of parliamentarians to enhancing Parliaments' involvement in the regional agenda, but also that the level of awareness and information still remains low. Therefore, one of the main recommendations of the assessments is to prepare a tailor-made needs assessment for the technical staff in order to facilitate the work of pertinent parliamentary committees when scrutinising legal initiatives with CRM relevance. Consequently, tailor-made capacity building programmes for MPs will be elaborated by the RCC with the aim of providing the necessary information, skills and knowledge regarding CRM content, its components, and their actual work related to it.

National Parliaments play a crucial role in shaping and approving not only domestic structural reforms proposed by governments but also regional agreements that address economic, societal, environmental, and political challenges faced by the region. In this context, proper information sharing and building capacities of the parliaments would prove beneficial in providing an opportunity for national parliaments to feed in their views and to timely scrutinise and approve such agreements.

Strong involvement of parliaments in pushing forward the regional agenda is sometimes hindered not only by the executive nature of the process but also by the lack of technical and institutional capacity of parliaments themselves. Therefore, the level of

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<sup>1</sup> See further: <https://www.rcc.int/pages/143/common-regional-market>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.rcc.int/pubs/110/strengthening-the-role-of-parliaments-of-the-western-balkans-region-in-the-berlin-process>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.rcc.int/pubs/165/assessing-and-strengthening-the-institutional-capacities-of-parliaments-of-the-western-balkans-region-related-to-the-common-regional-market>

information and engagement of the technical staff will be assessed through interviews followed by a regional workshop that will aim to identify the needs and areas to be strengthened in order to facilitate the work of parliamentary committees when scrutinising legal initiatives with a regional relevance. Based on this needs assessment, adequate future training strategies should be proposed that will enable addressing the gaps identified and, thereby, build technical capacities.

## **II DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Objectives and scope of the assignment**

The objectives of this engagement are two-fold: first the organisation of sequenced interviews followed by a tailored regional workshop with the parliamentary technical staff frequently engaged in scrutinising legislation relevant to the Common Regional Market<sup>4</sup>. Focus of the workshop will be to identify the needs for training based on participant's inputs, and prepare a comprehensive list of regional needs. Second, based on the identified needs propose regional training strategies to raise parliamentary technical capacities and awareness on Common Regional Market.

Therefore, based on the sequenced interviews and the regional workshop, a Training Needs Report should be prepared providing comprehensive information on the current level of familiarity of the parliamentary staff with the commitments undertaken by the respective governments in the framework of the Berlin Process and on the parliaments' role in supporting the implementation of such commitments. Major focus will be placed on assessing the level of familiarity with CRM and its deliverables, and preparing a comprehensive list of regional training needs.

Additionally, the Report should provide concrete suggestions and recommendations related to future regional training strategies to raise parliamentary technical capacities and awareness on Common Regional Market. Conclusions and recommendations of this document will be the basis for planning and designing concrete regional training activities, to be delivered by the RCC, to strengthen the parliamentary institutional capacities in support of the regional economic integration agenda.

### **Specific Tasks**

The tasks specified herewith are:

- In each WB economy, in cooperation with the Parliament Administration, identify relevant parliamentary advisors from the parliamentary committees/bodies scrutinising legal acts envisaged by or related to the Common Regional Market Action Plan;
- Complete interviews/questionnaires with the identified parliamentary advisors to identify regional needs for training of parliamentary technical staff in each of the WB Parliaments;

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<sup>4</sup> Identification of the relevant persons to participate in the workshop may be based also on the mapping of the parliamentary committees/ bodies in charge of every given action envisaged by the CRM Action Plan prepared by RCC.

- In coordination with RCC organise a tailored regional workshop to identify regional needs for training of parliamentary technical staff based on their input;
- Prepare a consolidated Needs Assessment Report containing:
  - Comprehensive information on the level of familiarity of the parliamentary advisors with the Common Regional Market;
  - Identification of the training needs of parliamentary staff related to regional cooperation agenda and a comprehensive priority list of regional needs;
  - Identification/proposal of the most effective delivery methods and applicable regional training strategies/approaches for parliamentary staff to be taken in consideration for the future by RCC;
  - Based on the identified needs propose regional training strategies to raise parliamentary technical capacities and awareness on CRM and regional cooperation.

The applicant is expected to have knowledge of other relevant projects, activities and interventions in the area to avoid overlapping.

### **Lines of Communication**

The consultant will report to the Political Department of the RCC Secretariat throughout the duration of the contract. Comments and recommendations provided by the RCC should be duly incorporated in the final version of the deliverables.

### **Timeframe**

The total duration of the engagement will be from 20 February to 20 April 2024.

	<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Due date</b>
1	Familiarise with RCC and other initiatives relevant to the role of parliaments in pushing forward the regional agenda	20 February 2024
2	Identify representatives of relevant parliamentary committees (technical staff) to be interviewed and conduct the set of interviews (online)	28 February 2024
3	Organise a regional workshop (2 representatives from each Parliament) to discuss the preliminary findings from the interviews and prepare a consolidated list of regional needs	By 15 March 2024
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare a consolidated Needs Assessment Report containing:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Comprehensive information on the level of familiarity of the parliamentary advisors with the Common Regional Market;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	12 April 2024

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identification of the training needs of parliamentary staff related to regional cooperation agenda and a comprehensive list of regional needs;</li> <li>○ Identification of the most effective delivery methods and applicable regional training strategies/approaches for parliamentary staff;</li> <li>○ Based on the identified needs propose regional training strategies to raise parliamentary technical capacities and awareness on Common Regional Market and regional cooperation.</li> </ul>	
5	Consult with RCC regarding the consolidated first draft of the report	15 April 2024
6	Present the final document with all comments and suggestions from RCC and stakeholders duly reflected	20 April 2024

### III COMPETENCIES

#### Expert Qualifications:

#### Criteria related to the experts delivering the service

<b>Education:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ University or advanced degree in an area directly related to the subject of work.</li> </ul>
<b>Experience:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Minimum of 5 years of relevant experience in parliamentary cooperation, research, delivery of training and training needs assessment, regional cooperation and EU integration;</li> <li>▪ Good knowledge of the Western Balkans region, parliamentary cooperation, Berlin Process, EU integration, and relevant documents, initiatives and strategies;</li> <li>▪ Proven analytical skills and ability to conceptualise and write concisely and clearly;</li> <li>▪ Proven communication and presentation skills and ability to work in an environment requiring liaison and collaboration with multiple actors, including representatives of parliaments and governments, public administration, and other stakeholders.</li> </ul>
<b>Language requirements:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fluency in written and spoken English, as the official language of the RCC;</li> <li>▪ Knowledge of other RCC languages is desirable.</li> </ul>

<b>Other:</b>	▪ N.A.
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### **Core Values**

- Demonstrates integrity and fairness by modelling RCC values and ethical standards;
- She/He 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.

## **IV 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, she/he should clearly explain the reasons for her/his final decision in a comments table.

## **V. APPLICATION RULES**

The application needs to contain the following:

- Technical Offer;
- Financial Offer.

### **Technical Offer**

#### **For companies and consortia of individual consultants:**

- 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 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 (only in case of a bidding of consulting companies);
- CV of an expert(s), 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 describing the main issues, sources of information to be used, timeline and methodology. The work programme should include the initial outline of the content of the assignment;
- 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).

#### **For individual consultants:**

- Letter of interest;
- CV(s) including relevant knowledge and experience, as well as reference list including contact details (e-mail addresses) of referees;
- An outline work programme of a maximum of 5 pages describing the main issues, sources of information to be used, timeline and methodology. The work programme should include the initial outline of the content of the assignment;
- Application Submission Form, Annex I.

### **Financial Offer (Free format)**

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:

- Use a free format for the Budget providing the Global Price for the work to be provided.

NOTE:

- Maximum budget should not exceed EUR 20,000.
- When preparing the financial offer, the applicant should take into account that the fee rates should be broadly consistent with those applicable in the region.

### **Submission of applications:**

**Applications need to be submitted by 15 February 2024, by 17:00 Central European Time to the following address [ProcurementforRcc@rcc.int](mailto: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.

### **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:

<b>EVALUATION GRID</b>	<b>Maximum score</b>
<b>A. Technical Offer (A.1+A.2+A.3)</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>A.1. Work experience, references list:</b> Minimum of 5 years of relevant experience in parliamentary cooperation, research, delivery of training and training needs assessment, regional cooperation and EU integration; Good knowledge of the Western Balkans region, parliamentary cooperation, Berlin Process, EU integration, and relevant documents, initiatives and strategies.	35
<b>A.2. Quality and professional capacity of the consultant(s):</b> CV(s) satisfy the criteria set forth in the Terms of Reference. University or advanced degree in an area directly related to the subject of work. Proven analytical skills and ability to conceptualise and write concisely and clearly; Proven communication and presentation skills and ability to work in an environment requiring liaison and collaboration with multiple actors,	35



including representatives of parliaments and governments, public administration, and other stakeholders.	
<b>A.3 Quality of the concept note:</b> 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>B. Financial Offer/ lowest price has maximum score</b>	<b>100</b>

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](mailto: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](mailto: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: 006-024      Open Call for Consultancy Services**

Subject: Training needs assessment and outline of training strategies to raise parliamentary technical capacities and awareness on Common Regional Market.

**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	

## ANNEX II: STATEMENT OF AVAILABILITY

REF: 006-024

Training needs assessment and outline of training strategies to raise parliamentary technical capacities and awareness on Common Regional Market.

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:

[illegible]