

## Open Call for Consultancy Services

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Support to RCC Secretariat for the Creation of Western Balkans' Research and Innovation Infrastructure Roadmap</b>
<b>Contracting Authority:</b>	<b>RCC Secretariat</b>
<b>Reporting to:</b>	<b>RCC Secretariat</b>
<b>Duration:</b>	<b>1 September 2021 – 30 November 2021</b>
<b>Eligibility:</b>	<b>Individual experts/ respective consulting companies/ /individual experts within bidding consortia</b>
<b>Reference Number:</b>	<b>060-021</b>
<b>Application Deadline:</b>	<b>24<sup>th</sup> August 2021</b>

### **I BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

The Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) was established in 2008 as a regionally owned and led framework. It works under the political guidance of the SEECP to promote regional cooperation and European and Euro-Atlantic integration of South East Europe (SEE). The areas of cooperation in the framework of the RCC are: Economic and Social Development, with a particular focus on Economic Competitiveness, Human Capital Development, Digital Integration and Sustainable Growth and Climate Change Resilience; Political Cooperation, Good Governance and Security, as well as gender mainstreaming.

The purpose of the assignment is to support the implementation of the Common Regional Market (hereinafter: CRM) Action Plan. The Leaders of the Western Balkans endorsed the Declaration on CRM and the respective CRM Action Plan 2021-2024 in the Sofia Summit within the Berlin Process in November 2020. The CRM aims to enable unobstructed flow of goods, services, capital and people, making the region more attractive for investment and trade, while accelerating convergence with the European Union (EU), to bring about prosperity to citizens of the Western Balkans.

The CRM's Regional Innovation Area (RIA) aims to *build a dynamic regional innovation ecosystem* by supporting the region's businesses in priority industry sectors to innovate, grow and contribute to European and global value chains. One of the RIA's key actions is development of the regional innovation infrastructure. By innovation infrastructure, we understand innovation centres, technology transfer offices, digital innovation hubs, science and technology parks, accelerators, business incubators, venture capital funds, and so on. Research Infrastructures (RIs) are defined\* as facilities, resources and services that are used by the research communities to conduct research and foster innovation in their fields. RIs include: major scientific equipment (or sets of instruments), knowledge-based resources such as collections, archives and scientific data, e-infrastructures, such as data and computing systems and communication networks and any other tools that are essential to achieving excellence in research and innovation.

The Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) aims to facilitate development of innovation infrastructure by creating the first Western Balkans' Roadmap of Research and Innovation Infrastructures (WB Roadmap). Having in mind that Montenegro and Serbia have created their RIs roadmaps, during the last six months, the RCC supported the creation of RI roadmaps in four Western Balkans economies: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), Kosovo\* and North Macedonia. Following the successful completion of the above-mentioned assignment, the region has agreed to create a regional map of Research and Innovation Infrastructures - WB Roadmap. The WB Roadmap will contribute to the mobility of researchers, a better uptake of innovative practices by businesses in the region, improved scientific cooperation and collaboration in the Western Balkans, building functional links between academia and industry to enable development of existing, and creating new enterprises, and encouraging growth of entrepreneurial universities in the region.

The specific purpose of the assignment is to:

- identify strategic fields for the future investments in research and innovation infrastructure (R&II) with a potential to contribute to economic development and post-covid recovery;
- encourage regional cooperation among research institutions and businesses;

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\* According to the Regulation (EU) No 1291/2013 of 11 December 2013.

- encourage better absorption of available EU funds and programs to spearhead research excellence and commercialisation of knowledge.

## **I. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE ASSIGNMENT**

### **Objective:**

The key objective of the assignment is to create the Western Balkans' Roadmap of Research and Innovation Infrastructures (WB Roadmap). The purpose of this WB Roadmap is to:

- support WB ministries in charge of Research & Innovation long-term infrastructure planning and creating (implementing) strategic documents in the future, with an emphasis on Smart Specialisation Strategies;
- identify potential for implementation of public policies on research & innovation and enabling infrastructures;
- contribute to the economic development and strengthening international competitiveness of both research and business communities in the Western Balkans.

## **II DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Specific tasks:**

The hired experts will be tasked to:

- Meet online with the RCC Secretariat during the second week of September 2021 to agree on the implementation plan and methodology;
- Establish contacts with the line ministries in all Western Balkans economies to obtain the existing roadmaps of research infrastructures and overviews of key innovation infrastructures. The six RI roadmaps must be the basis for creating the WB Roadmap;
- Conduct comparative analysis of existing RIs and key innovation infrastructures in the region against the background of the most productive scientific disciplines measured by the number of scholarly papers published in international peer-reviewed journals (ex. by analysing trends on Web of Science and Scopus databases – note that the experts are not expected to conduct in-depth bibliometric or scientometric analyses, but rather to provide a rough overview that allows for better understanding of the regional scientific context);

- Prepare recommendations on strategic outlook for the development of region's major R&IIs in view of supporting industrial and more broadly economic development as defined by the CRM AP 2021-2024 including, but not limited to:
  - o R&IIs within individual Western Balkans economies that could act as regional R&IIs and
  - o practical guidance on bringing R&IIs closer to industry.
- Complete draft of WB Roadmap and
- Complete final version of WB Roadmap.

The experts are encouraged to suggest additional elements that could assist the region's efforts towards developing a dynamic regional innovation ecosystem and potential linkages with existing/emerging and nearby research infrastructures.

The final WB Roadmap document should include, but should not be limited to, the following:

- Scope and purpose of the document;
- Overview of existing RI roadmaps in all Western Balkans economies with key similarities to feed into the WB Roadmap, having in mind the broader European strategic RI planning context;
- Comparative analysis as described above;
- Set of strategic recommendations for the development of region's R&IIs in medium to long-term.

The assignment will be implemented in two phases, in close consultation with the RCC and Western Balkans economies.

## **Methodology**

The experts are expected to propose the best methodological approach for undertaking the assignment. However, the following guiding principles should be taken into consideration:

- i. Desk review of primary and secondary sources;
- ii. Active communication/consultations with the representatives of the WB6 economies (relevant institutions, private sector, etc.);

- iii. Reliance on existing documents created by, and initiatives led by the RCC (ex. Map of Digital Innovation Hubs, Network of Open Access Research Infrastructures, etc.);
- iv. Any other method applicable.

### **Lines of Communication**

The experts will report to the RCC Secretariat/Expert on Human Capital Development. Each deliverable will be sent to the RCC Secretariat for approval within the set deadlines. The RCC Secretariat will conduct a quality assessment and approval of each deliverable.

### **Timeframe**

The total duration of the engagement will be four months, starting on 01 September 2021 and finishing by 31 December 2021. Note that the RCC may require the expert(s) to attend at most two events to present the WB Roadmap in Q1 2022, which will be communicated by the end of assignment.

The assignment will consist of two phases.

The first phase will include preparation of a detailed work methodology and implementation action plan. The methodology will be discussed in a preparatory meeting in the second week of September 2021 between the contracted experts and the RCC, and finalised by **17<sup>th</sup> September 2021**.

The second phase involves implementation of agreed activities in accordance with the detailed action plan. During the implementation phase, experts will ensure the RCC Secretariat is constantly informed and consulted about key developments. The experts will deliver the following outputs during the implementation phase:

1. Established contacts with, and gathered key documents from, the line ministries in all WB economies by **24<sup>th</sup> September 2021**;
2. Comparative analysis of RI roadmaps in WB economies completed by **20<sup>th</sup> November 2021**;
3. Completed draft of the WB Roadmap by **6<sup>th</sup> December 2021**;

4. Completed final version of the WB Roadmap by **20<sup>th</sup> December 2021**.

The engaged experts should be available for a maximum of two presentations of the process and deliverables in official meetings/conferences covering Research Infrastructures in the Western Balkans (note that presentations may require the expert(s) to attend events after the completion of all tasks in Q1 2022).

The experts are expected to use up to 60 days for this assignment.

### **Deliverables**

<b>DELIVERABLE</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet online with the RCC Secretariat</li> </ul>	10 September 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree on the implementation plan and methodology</li> </ul>	17 September 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish contacts with the line ministries in all WB economies</li> </ul>	24 September 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comparative analysis of RI maps in WB economies completed</li> </ul>	20 November 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft of WB Roadmap completed</li> </ul>	6 December 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final version of WB Roadmap completed</li> </ul>	20 December 2021

### **III COMPETENCIES**

The RCC is looking for a team of at least two experts with strong background in research infrastructures including knowledge, demonstrated experience and understanding of the ESFRI principles and European Research Area. A demonstrated experience in creating research infrastructure roadmaps, and knowledge and understanding of the Western Balkans region is an advantage.

### **Qualifications**

<b>Education:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Senior expert(s) - PhD degree and at least ten years of experience in research and/or higher education.</li> <li>▪ Junior expert – postgraduate degree (preferably PhD) and at least seven years of experience in research and/or higher education.</li> </ul>
<b>Experience:</b>	<p>Qualifications required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Minimum of ten/seven years of experience in similar tasks;</li> <li>▪ <b>Experience in working on issues related to creating Research Infrastructure Roadmaps with accompanying recommendations;</b></li> <li>▪ Experience of working in the Western Balkans will be considered an asset;</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 government representatives, businesses, international organisations, civil society institutions and other stakeholders.</li> </ul>
<b>Language requirements:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fluency in English, as the official language of the RCC;</li> <li>▪ Knowledge of other RCC languages is an advantage.</li> </ul>
<b>Other:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Familiar with MS Office applications.</li> </ul>

### **Core competencies**

- Demonstrates professional competence to meet responsibilities and post requirements and is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines and achieving results;
- Results-orientation: Plans and produces quality results to meet established goals, generates innovative and practical solutions to challenging situations;

- Communication: Excellent communication skills, including the ability to convey complex concepts and recommendations in a clear and persuasive style tailored to match different audiences;
- Team work: Ability to interact, establish and maintain effective working relations with a culturally diverse team; and
- Client orientation: Ability to establish and maintain productive partnerships with regional and national partners and stakeholders and pro-activeness in identifying the needs of beneficiaries and partners, as well as matching them to appropriate solutions.

### **Core values**

- Demonstrates integrity and fairness by modelling RCC values and ethical standards;
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability.

## **IV QUALITY CONTROL**

The experts should ensure an internal quality control during the implementing and reporting phase of the assignment. The quality control should ensure that both the draft/final documents comply with the above requirements and meet adequate quality standards before sending them to the RCC for comments.

The views expressed in the documents will be those of the contractor and will not necessarily reflect those of the RCC. Therefore, a standard disclaimer reflecting this will be included in the documents. In this regard, the experts 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 experts, they should clearly explain the reasons for their final decision in a comments table.

### **Quality control by the Regional Cooperation Council**

The experts' outputs shall undergo two external reviews. The draft of the WB Roadmap shall be reviewed in parallel by the line ministries in all Western Balkans economies and the RCC. The final version of the WB Roadmap shall be reviewed by the RCC taking into account the comments made by the Western Balkans economies and how the experts have handled these comments. The approved final document will be subject to a quality assessment by Programme Department of the RCC.

## 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);
- CVs of experts, outlining relevant knowledge and experience as described in the Terms of References, along with contact details of referees;
- Concept note outlining the proposal of the methodology, timeline and the research and analytical tools to be used in carrying out 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 Statement of Availability (Annex II).

For individual consultants:

- Letter of interest;
- CV including relevant knowledge and experience, as well as a reference list including contact details (e-mail addresses) of referees;

- Concept note outlining the proposal of the methodology, timeline and the research and analytical tools to be used in carrying out the assignment;
- Application Submission Form, Annex I;
- Statement of Availability, Annex II.

**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:

The proposed budget should include fee rate for consulting services broken down by tasks; the fee rates should be broadly consistent with the regional rates for these types of professional services.

Maximum budget should not exceed EUR 20,000

**Submission of applications:**

**Applications need to be submitted by 24<sup>th</sup> August 2021, 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 the form of copies of the originals.
- **Please note that RAR files are not preferable due to the RCC antispam policy.**

**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> Relevant work experience; evidence of other contracts of the size comparable to that of the Call; experience with clients comparable to the Contracting Authority.	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, education and experience demonstrate professional capacity and experience required.	35
<b>A.3 Quality of the concept note:</b> Concept note outlining the proposal of the methodology, timeline and the research and analytical tools to be used in carrying out the assignment.	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, 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](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: 060-021 Open Call for Consultancy Services**

Subject:

**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 060-021.

And we are not in one of the following situations:

- (a) Bankrupt or being wound up, having our 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 our 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 we 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 of the legal representative	
Signature	
Date	

**ANNEX III: STATEMENT OF AVAILABILITY**

REF: 060-021

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