

TRIPLE P TOURISM PROJECT
Open Call for Consultancy Services
Culture and Adventure Tourism Development and Promotion

TERMS OF REFERENCE:	Development of Illyricum Trail as a new regional cultural tourism route in Western Balkans Six
Title:	Creating Sustainability and Marketing Portfolio for the Illyricum Trail
RCC Department:	Programme Department Project: Triple P Tourism in SEE: Promotion, Policy and Pilots
Eligible:	Respective consulting companies or not-for-profit tourism promotion and development organisations
Reporting to:	RCC Secretariat
Duration:	Dec 2020 – Apr 2021
Deadline for Application:	10 December 2020, at 15.00 CET
Reference number:	102-020
Price ceiling:	EUR 44,000

I. BACKGROUND

Purpose

The purpose of this assignment is to provide assistance to the RCC Triple P Tourism in SEE project team and the tourism industry of the Western Balkans Six (WB6) in creation of sustainability and marketing portfolio of the Illyricum Trail (ILYT) in terms of developing collaborative marketing platform that provides interested service providers along the ILYT with opportunity to effectively present their services and offers to the potential clients, further promote developed platform to the wider European travel community and create preconditions for the European certification of the ILYT.

This assignment will offer tangible grounds for calling for a long-lasting commitment of the interested stakeholders within WB6 economies to accepting opportunities of the ILYT development as a sustainable cultural tourism product. It will also be an added value in preparation of supportive documents and filling the dossier in the application process of cultural route certification before the Council of Europe (CoE)/European Institute for Cultural Routes (EICR) during the next round of certification of European Cultural Routes.

Background information

Tourism is one of the priority sectors in the Western Balkan economies, with its significant potential for regional cooperation as direct and indirect contributor to the employment, export and GDP growth. RCC's Triple P Tourism Project, a three-year initiative funded by the EU, focuses on the 6 IPA II beneficiaries in the Western Balkans with the aim to improve the quality of the tourism offer by creating joint products to foster regional integration in the tourism sector and its joint global promotion, as well as tackle tourism policy challenges. Two tourism niche fields that are in focus are adventure and cultural tourism.

One of the priority areas in the RCC Triple P cultural tourism product development is creation of a new regional cultural route Illyricum Trail - archaeological heritage of the Roman period. It is being pursued through integration of archaeological localities as a branch-route of the Council of Europe (CoE) certified European cultural route - the Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route. The Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route (RER-DWR) is listed among the 38 Cultural Routes, certified in 2015 (and re-certified in 2019) by the European Institute of Cultural Routes under the auspices of the CoE. Linking the two themes from different aspects of cultural life, archaeology and wine, which have common points in the Roman era, has since been supported by this key motive - a call to travel. The extension of the Route to the Illyrian region follows the same basic principle. The visitor can count on visiting representative archaeological sites from the target period of the Roman Empire, which allow interpretation and understanding of the way in which the inhabitants lived at that time.

Illyricum Trail Product Development

Over the past two years, RCC Triple P Tourism project has completed several stages of the product development that included: route concept with historical background, identification, evaluation and selection of 9 archaeological sites in 4 economies, improved visibility and market uptake, internal cohesion and competence building.

Over the last two years, reinforced with two consecutive Actions supported by RCC Triple-P Project and its cultural tourism development segment, ILYT was created as a baseline/platform for further development of a competitive tourism product. Some basic product development elements have been implemented focusing on visitors experience, local ownership and issues related to connectivity along localities included in the Trail. The next phase will constitute the tourism product as such. The process of transferring existing cultural heritage into a consumable and sustainable tourism product requires both the long-term commitment and investment. For one well-grounded tourism product it takes a minimum 3-5 years before it achieves wider recognisability and reaches the market.

Apart from the increased awareness about the Roman-based heritage, in the upcoming period it is essential to develop a network of partnerships among the stakeholders and a strong marketing portfolio that will serve as the conduit for tourists to effectively engage with the archaeological sites along the Trail. Furthermore, as many of these sites are located in areas far-flung from regular tourist paths, the creation of the ILYT marketing and sustainability portfolio and consequent European certification will bring economic stimulation to areas currently underserved by tourism traffic and also keep tourists in the region for a longer period of time.

The circumstances under the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions require that tourism industry seeks different avenues both for promotion and product development. It is foreseen that once travel restrictions are removed the first waves of travel would seek new, lesser known destinations that are able to attract through a different new story they tell. Further, it is foreseen that travellers will seek destinations with small number of visitors that offer high portion of their programme in open spaces. The localities of the ILYT perfectly correspond to all those requirements, thus their potential for tourism activity in post COVID-19 period is high. For that reason it is of utmost importance to enable the ILYT sites to confirm a strong network that enables quality heritage interpretation and quality product delivery, as well as to develop strong promotional tools and channels, such as VR presentation and web presence to enable effective presentation and promotion of the ILYT sites. The aspects of strengthening the network and digital promotion will position ILYT sites to be ready for visitors as the travel restrictions are removed, opening first for regional and with time for international travel market.

II. DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Objectives and scope of the assignment

The objective of this assignment is to enable progress of the route and its consistent marketing positioning focused on unique cultural and gastronomic experience of the legacy of the Roman Empire. Creating operational pre-conditions for continuous collaborative effort in translating ILYT into a consumable tourism product, based on efficient management and marketing, commitment to high-quality services to visitors, local ownership and collaborative funding, is a baseline for long-term sustainability of the ILYT.

The expected output is sustainability platform and collaborative marketing for interested service providers along the ILYT to effectively present their services and offers to the potential clients, further promote developed platform to the wider European travel community and create preconditions for the European certification of the ILYT.

The development of the platform in question will include: creating VR 360° content for selected ILYT sites presenting the relevant site, surrounding destination and services available at the destination (accommodation, restaurants, vineries, short trips, etc.), networking and coalition building among stakeholders included in the VR content, and further designing of the Route Management Structure to be suitable for European certification and awareness-raising campaign.

The collaborative marketing and sustainability platform development will incorporate the following duties:

- Design and implement new management structures of the ILYT to carry out sustainability processes focusing on collaborative marketing and European certification.

- Creation and production of the VR 360° content to present archaeology and tourism potential of the ILYT, based on VR 360° presentation of archaeological sites included in ILYT from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia including presentations of related tourism services, such are, for example, accommodation facilities, vine&gastronomy offer, guiding tours, and ensuring that products meet quality and standards of already existing ILYT interpretation and presentation portfolio.
- Creation of the virtual travel-tour along the ILYT trail putting together 9 ILYT localities into one comprehensive VR.
- Design and implementation of an awareness raising campaign – digital-based promotion of the new marketing and sustainability ILYT platform to the regional and European travel community, including creation of a separate webpage for presentation of newly created virtual travel tour. Creation of a separate web-page for the presentation of the virtual travel tour serving as a landing page for the subsequent awareness rising campaign.

Deliverables

The following deliverables will be produced and transferred to the RCC Triple P Tourism project during the course of the assignment, in the following timeline:

Deliverable	Deadline	Expected Level of Effort (LoE)
List of standard indicators for the development of virtual travel tour	Second half of December 2020 (dependant on COVID-19 circumstances)	5 days
Virtual travel tour along the ILYT trail putting together 9 ILYT localities into one comprehensive VR journey	December 2020 - January 2021 (dependant on weather and COVID-19 circumstances)	20 days
Source market analyses and activity action plan	End of January 2021	15 days
At least 20 stakeholders/service providers along ILYT committed to continue participating in future collaborative marketing activities, accepting paying annual fee starting from 2021	First half of February 2021	10 days

Separate webpage dedicated to the presentation of the produced virtual travel tour	First half of February 2021	10 days
Implemented awareness raising campaign	March - April 2021	25 days
Established new ILYT management structure and Final report.	15 April 2021	5 days

In all its stages, the deliverables will be developed in close consultation with the RCC Triple P Tourism in SEE project team.

In the first stage when a detailed outline and methodology of work are to be developed in cooperation with the RCC Triple P Tourism Project a preparatory meeting of the consultant(s) will be held in Sarajevo (alternatively online due to COVID-19).

Methodology

The consultancy is expected to propose the best methodological approach for undertaking this task. However, the following guiding principles should be taken into consideration:

- i. Desk review of primary and secondary information;
- ii. Communication/interviews/consultations/focus groups with the representatives of the Western Balkans Six economies (national coordination mechanisms on governmental and local level, private sector, academia, CSOs, etc.) and relevant regional and international organisations;
- iii. Any other method applicable.

Lines of Communication

The consultant(s) will work in close coordination and under guidance of the RCC Triple P Tourism in SEE project Cultural Tourism Expert and the Project Leader, and RCC Secretariat. Each deliverable will be sent within the set deadlines. RCC Triple P Tourism in SEE project will conduct a quality assessment and approval of each deliverable.

Timeframe

The engagement is expected to start in December 2020 and end in April 2021.

III. COMPETENCES

The bidders should have thorough understanding of the tourism development trends in the WB6 in particular cultural tourism products, and rich experience in developing collaborative tourism product platforms/structures. Experience in management of cultural routes is required. Knowledge and understanding of the recent developments of the RCC Triple P Project, in particular new regional cultural route Illyricum Trail will be considered an asset.

Education and Experience

Requirements concerning education and work experience and skills must be relevant to the specific assignment, but as a general rule, candidates with the following experience (as a minimum) are encouraged to apply:

Education:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced degree in tourism, economics, business, community development, tourism management, marketing, social sciences or other areas directly related to the subject of work.
Experience:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 10 years of demonstrable work experience in tourism development strategies and promotion, research and data collection and analyses, business strategies development or a related field (corresponding to the selected area); At least 5 years of demonstrable work experience in managing of the European cultural route; Knowledge of development of successful collaborative marketing platforms/structures/coalitions and cultural tourism products and in particular knowledge about the ILYT mission and development will be an asset; Proven experience in working with government bodies and local communities, cultural heritage and tourism management sector; 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; Knowledge of the SEE region and experience in working in the region is considered an advantage.
Language requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fluency in English, as the official language of the RCC; Knowledge of other RCC languages is an advantage.
Other:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Familiar with MS Office applications.

Core Values

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

Core Competencies

- Possesses strategic vision, understanding of fundamental concepts and principles of a professional discipline or technical specialty;

- Demonstrates professional competence to meet responsibilities and post requirements and is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines and achieving results;
- Strong analytical capabilities and writing skills;
- 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 and with a multitude of diverse stakeholders; flexibility to change and openness to receiving/integrating feedback;
- Ability to establish and maintain productive partnerships with regional and national partners and stakeholders.

IV. QUALITY CONTROL

The consultant(s) should ensure internal quality control during the implementing and reporting phase of the assignment. The quality control should ensure that the draft reports 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 consultant(s) and will not necessarily reflect those of the Regional Cooperation Council. Therefore, a standard disclaimer reflecting this will be included in the report. 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.

V. APPLICATION RULES

The application needs to contain the following:

For companies and organisations:

- Company profile including a brief description (up to 2 pages) of the company;
- Copy of Company's Registration Certificate;;Financial records - company's balance sheet and profit-and-loss statement for the past 2 years;
- CV(s) of expert(s), outlining relevant knowledge and experience as described in Annex I Terms of References, along with contact details of referees;

- An action plan, up to 1 page, indicating the individual tasks to be undertaken against a timeframe;
- A concept note, up to 2 pages, elaborating proposed methodology for addressing and undertaking individual consultancy tasks; an additional page can be included, where relevant, indicating key stakeholders to be included in the proposed approach;
- List of references for relevant activities implemented over the past 5 years demonstrating relevant experience in the subject matter;
- Application Submission Form (Annex I);
- Financial offer, as per Budget Breakdown (Annex II);
- Signed Statements of Availability (Annex III).

When preparing the financial offer, the applicant should take into account the following:

- The proposed budget should be stated as a lump sum and broken down by key tasks;
- Costs of travel within the WB6, if planned and proposed, should be budgeted and borne by the consultant;
- The fee rates should be broadly consistent with the framework rates applicable in the region for these types of professional services for international and national consultants

Applications need to be submitted via e-mail to ProcurementforRcc@rcc.int by 10 December 2020, 15.00 CET.

When applying, please identify your submission as response to this call by naming the subject line of your message as:

RCC Triple P Tourism – 102-020 (stating the number and title of the consultancy you are applying for).

VI. 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 a 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: CVs satisfy the criteria set forth in the ToR, education and experience demonstrate professional capacity and experience required.	35
A.3 Quality of the concept note and Action Plan: Relevance and applicability within the WB6 regional framework; methodologically sound concept/plan, achievable within the defined timeframe.	30
B. Financial Proposal/ lowest price has maximum score	100

Score for offer X =

A: [Total quality score (out of 100) of offer X / 100] * 80

B: [Lowest price / price of offer X] * 20

In addition to the results of the technical and financial evaluation, competency-based interview might be held with the short-listed bidders.

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 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 or to the address of the RCC Secretariat:

Regional Cooperation Council Secretariat
Attention to: Administration Department
Building of the Friendship between Greece and Bosnia and Herzegovina
Trg Bosne i Hercegovine 1/V
71000 Sarajevo
Bosnia and Herzegovina

ANNEX I: APPLICATION SUBMISSION FORM

Open Call for Consultancy Services: Development of Illyricum Trail as a new regional cultural tourism route in Western Balkans Six

REF: 102-020

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

1 SUBMITTED by:

	Name(s) and address(es) of the Entity submitting this Application
Full Name of the Entity	

2 CONTACT PERSON

Name	
Address	
Telephone	
Fax	
e-mail	

3 STATEMENT

[Name of the Authorised person representing the Entity] _____ hereby declares that we have examined and accepted without reserve or restriction the entire contents of the Open Call for Experts, Grounds for Exclusions and Conflict of Interest as such:

Grounds for exclusion

Candidates or bidders will be excluded from participation in a procurement procedure if it is known that:

- (a) They are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- (b) They have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of res judicata;
- (c) They have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the Contracting Officer can justify;
- (d) They have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the Contracting Officer or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;
- (e) They have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity.

Contracts may not be awarded to candidates or bidders who, during the procurement procedure, are:

- (a) Subject to a conflict of interest;
- (b) Guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the Contracting Officer as a condition of participation in the contract procedure or fail to supply this information.

Conflict of Interest

- a) The Contractor shall take all necessary measures to prevent or end any situation that could compromise the impartial and objective performance of the contract. Such conflict of interests could arise in particular as a result of economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties, or any other relevant connection or shared interest. Any conflict of interests which could arise during performance of the contract must be notified in writing to the Contracting Authority without delay.

- b) The Contracting Authority reserves the right to verify that such measures are adequate and may require additional measures to be taken if necessary. The Consultant shall ensure that their staffs, including its management, are not placed in a situation which could give rise to conflict of interests. The Consultant shall replace, immediately and without compensation from the Contracting Authority, any member of its staff exposed to such a situation.
- c) The Contractor shall refrain from any contact which would compromise its independence or that of its personnel. If the Contractor fails to maintain such independence, the Contracting Authority may, without prejudice to compensation for any damage which it may have suffered on this account, terminate the contract forthwith.
- d) The Contractor shall, after the conclusion or termination of the contract, limit its role in connection with the project to the provision of the services. Except with the written permission of the Contracting Authority, the Contractor and any other contractor or supplier with whom the Contractor is associated or affiliated shall be disqualified from the execution of works, supplies or other services for the project in any capacity, including tendering for any part of the project.
- e) Civil servants and other agents of the public administration of the RCC Participants, regardless of their administrative situation, shall not be recruited as experts in contracts financed by the RCC Secretariat.
- f) The Contractor and anyone working under its authority or control in the performance of the contract or on any other activity shall be excluded from access to RCC Secretariat financing available under the same project unless they can prove to the Contracting Authority that the involvement in previous stages of the project does not constitute unfair competition.

We offer to provide the services requested in the Terms of Reference on the basis of supplied documentation subject to this Open Call for Consultancy Services, which comprise our technical offer, and our financial offer.

This Open Call for Consultancy Services is subject to acceptance within the validity period stipulated in the Terms of Reference.

Name	
Signature	
Date	



Co-funded by the EU

ANNEX II: BUDGET BREAKDOWN

REF: 102-020

No	Cost categories	Unit	Total Cost
2	TOTAL COSTS		

ANNEX III: STATEMENT OF AVAILABILITY

REF: 102-020

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



Co-funded by the EU