



## Open Call for Consulting Services

**Title:** Toolkit for Knowledge Transfer at Public Universities in the WB

**RCC Department:** Programme Department

**Duration:** July – December 2024

**Application Deadline:** 22 July by 24:00CET

**Reference Number** 040-024

**Eligible:** Consulting companies or consortia of individual experts

### TERMS OF REFERENCE:

#### I. BACKGROUND

The Common Regional Market Action Plan 2021-2024 (hereinafter: CRM), endorsed at the Sofia Summit of the Berlin Process in November 2020, aims to enable an unobstructed flow of goods, services, capital and highly skilled labour, making the region more attractive for investment and trade while accelerating convergence of the Western Balkans (WB) with the European Union (EU). Among other things, the CRM's Regional Innovation Area component supports the development of a regional innovation ecosystem, including knowledge transfer from academia to the industry.

The RCC implemented two support programmes designed to assist technology transfer offices at public universities in the Western Balkans in 2021 and 2022. Although successfully implemented, it has been concluded that the region's public universities require capacity building related to wider knowledge transfer, having in mind both their limited technology transfer capacities and the limited capacities of local businesses to absorb sophisticated technologies at scale.

The Western Balkan economies have significantly increased their innovation and Horizon Europe performance in recent years. However, the region's economies are considered Emerging Innovators according to the [European Innovation Scoreboard 2023](#). On average, the region's performance is below 50% of the EU average. While North Macedonia and Serbia are closing the innovation performance gap compared to the EU, this gap is becoming larger for the remaining region's economies. Although the region strongly increased some innovation performance indicators such as most cited publications, other indicators such as innovative SMEs collaborating with other partners or knowledge-intensive services exports suggest stagnation. Strengthening the region's innovation and economic competitiveness requires much stronger links and knowledge transfer between academia and industry in the Western Balkans.

Knowledge transfer between research organisations and industry is a critical process for driving innovation and commercialisation. It involves the flow of knowledge, expertise, and technology from academic and research institutions to companies, enabling them to develop new products, services, and processes. Formal knowledge transfer mechanisms include licensing intellectual property, creating university spin-off companies, and establishing collaborative research projects and partnerships.

## **II. DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Objectives of the assignment**

The purpose of this assignment is to develop a comprehensive toolkit to support knowledge transfer activities between public universities in the Western Balkans and the business community. A toolkit should empower universities and industry partners to collaborate more easily, leveraging each other's strengths for mutual benefit. It will provide a framework for universities to engage with industry partners and transfer research results, discoveries, and technologies. Specifically, a toolkit will provide conceptual tools, practical examples and resources to help researchers, students, and staff effectively engage in knowledge exchange and achieve economic impact. To ensure practical added value, this technical assistance will preferably focus on common regional priority fields identified in Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3) currently under implementation, revision or final preparatory stages in the region. For example, the focus might be on examples in information and communication technologies and food production given the importance of these industries in the Western Balkans.

## **III. SCOPE OF WORK**

### **Specific Tasks**

More specific tasks include:

- Identify and compile successful models of university-industry collaboration – with an emphasis on a more similar Eastern European framework – and adapt them for use in the Western Balkans' context,
- Organise two online regional training sessions on promoting promising funding opportunities and equipping public universities to prepare project proposals focusing on knowledge transfer,
- Facilitate the sharing of resources and best practices across the Western Balkans university community and with external partners, primarily the business community,
- Prepare a set of recommendations for new regional initiatives to encourage knowledge transfer in the future.

A toolkit should feature several sections addressing specific aspects of knowledge transfer:

- *An introduction* should explain the significance of knowledge transfer and its impact on local and/or regional economic development,

- *Models of Collaboration* should provide real-world case studies and successful university-industry models from both regional and international contexts to provide broader perspectives and highlight key elements that can be adapted in the Western Balkans' context. It should feature examples from Eastern Europe to ensure relatability, highlighting specific outcomes, challenges overcome, and lessons learned,
- *A step-by-step guide* should explain how to create knowledge transfer plans (templates and guidelines) including identifying relevant research or technologies, ways of assessing potential industry partners, choosing appropriate transfer models (licencing, spin-offs, joint projects), and evaluating impact,
- *Appendices* should include additional resources, glossary (if needed) and references.

## Methodology

The consultants are expected to suggest a work plan that should include at a minimum: a clear methodological overview covering all specific tasks mentioned above with a clear timeline. The consultants should consider ways of attracting businesses to learn about knowledge transfer opportunities and collaborating with research teams. A toolkit might be translated into local languages if needed, hence it should use plain language, and avoid jargon and overly technical terms. It should have a maximum of 40 pages or 60 pages with appendices.

## IV. LOGISTICS AND TIMING

### Timeline

The engagement is expected to start in July 2024 and end in December 2024.

### Lines of Communication

- The task will be implemented in close consultation with the RCC Secretariat.
- The contracted bidder will report to and closely liaise with the RCC's Senior Expert on Human Capital Development.

## V. REQUIRED OUTPUTS/REPORTING

	<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Due date</b>
1.	Work Plan agreed with the RCC	End of July 2024
2.	Established preliminary contacts with at least two, preferably more, businesses interested in knowledge transfer per university (in close cooperation with involved universities)	End of October 2024

3.	Organised two online regional training sessions and tested the applicability of a regional knowledge transfer toolkit draft version	End of November 2024
4.	Completed regional knowledge transfer toolkit	End of December 2024
5.	Prepared a set of recommendations for regional knowledge transfer initiatives as part of the final report	End of December 2024

## VI. REQUIREMENTS

### Expert Qualifications:

<b>Education:</b>	Degree in sciences, engineering, economics, business, or other fields directly related to the assignment. Master's or PhD degree is an advantage.
<b>Experience:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Minimum of seven and five years of proven experience in consultancies dealing directly with knowledge transfer and/or technology transfer for a team leader and team members respectively;</li> <li>▪ Experience in working with WB stakeholders and/or EU institutions in the field of innovation and knowledge commercialisation is considered an advantage;</li> <li>▪ At least three similar (in scope and complexity) consultancies completed in the last five years;</li> <li>▪ Proven analytical skills and ability to conceptualise and write concisely and clearly;</li> <li>▪ Demonstrated experience in writing and reporting on similar assignments (Note: samples of work must be provided);</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, civil society institutions, donors 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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ N.A.</li> </ul>

## **Core Values**

- Demonstrates integrity and fairness by modelling RCC values and ethical standards;
- 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 consultants 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 consultants 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 consultants, they should clearly explain the reasons for their final decision in a comments table.

RCC employees and partners participating in any programme or activity conducted or funded by RCC are prohibited from discriminating based on race, religion, political beliefs, gender,

sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, marital status or national origin.

## **VII. APPLICATION RULES**

### **Technical Offer:**

**The technical offer needs to contain the following:**

- CVs of experts, outlining relevant knowledge and experience as described in the Terms of References, along with contact details of referees (minimum of seven and five years of proven experience in consultancies dealing directly with knowledge transfer and/or technology transfer for a team leader and team members respectively);
- At least three similar (in scope and complexity) consultancies completed in the last five years;
- An outline work plan of a maximum of 5 pages;
- List of references for activities implemented over the past years demonstrating knowledge transfer related experience;
- Only in case of bidding of consulting companies: Company profile including a brief description (up to 2 pages) of the company; Copy of Company's Registration Certificate; and Financial records - company's balance sheet and profit-and-loss statement for the past 2 years;
- Application Submission Form (Annex I);
- Signed Statements of Availability (Annex III).

Financial offer (Annex II)

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:

- Maximum budget should not exceed EUR 20,000. The offers above the threshold will not be considered.
- Use a free format for the budget offering the global price for the work to be provided.
- Fee rates should be broadly consistent with the regional framework rates for these types of professional services.

## Submission of applications:

**Applications need to be submitted by 22 July 2024, by 24:00 Central European Time.**

- Please make sure that the application is submitted in two separate folders one containing Technical Offer and the other Financial Offer. The documents should be submitted in a form of copies of the originals.

## 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:

<b>EVALUATION GRID</b>	<b>Maximum Score</b>	<b>Actual scoring</b>
<b>A. Technical Offer (A.1+A.2+A.3)</b>	<b>100</b>	
<b>A.1. Competencies: Work experience, references list:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Proven experience in knowledge transfer related to this ToR is mandatory;</li><li>• Proven experience in the preparation of tools similar to the one requested in this ToR,</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, civil society institutions, donors and other stakeholders.</li><li>• Experience in working with WB public universities, start-ups, science and innovation centres is considered an advantage;</li></ul>	<b>15</b> <b>10</b> <b>5</b> <b>5</b>	

<p><b>A.2. C.V Quality and professional capacity of the consultants:</b> Degree in sciences, engineering, economics, business, or other fields directly related to the assignment. Master's or PhD degree is an advantage. Minimum of seven (and five) years of proven experience in consultancies dealing directly with knowledge transfer for team leader and members respectively.</p>	<p><b>15</b></p> <p><b>20</b></p>	
<p><b>A.3 Quality of the Work Plan</b> A work plan, up to a maximum of 5 pages, indicating the individual tasks to be undertaken against a timeframe;</p>	<p><b>30</b></p>	
<p><b>B. Financial Proposal/ lowest price has maximum score</b></p>	<p><b>100</b></p>	

**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](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 appeal.

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**

**Open Call for Consultancy Services:**

Toolkit for Knowledge Transfer at Public Universities in the WB

**REF: 040-024**

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

1 SUBMITTED by:

Name of the Entity	
Address	
Telephone	
Fax	
e-mail	

2. 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 staff, 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.

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

