

Open Call for Consulting Services

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| Title: | Support to the RCC Secretariat in preparing the 2025 Report on the Implementation of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans Action Plan (GARI) |
| RCC Department: | Programme Department |
| Number of consultants: | Consulting companies/ consortia of individual consultants or individual professionals |
| Reporting to: | RCC Secretariat |
| Duration: | January – June 2026 |
| Reference Number: | 083-025 |

I. BACKGROUND

In October 2021, the leaders of the Western Balkans endorsed the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Sofia Declaration on the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans 2021-2030 (GAWB), known as the GAWB Action Plan.

The GAWB Action Plan outlines 58 actions and seven roadmaps across key thematic areas: climate policy, sustainable energy, sustainable mobility, circular economy, depollution, sustainable agriculture and food supply, and the protection of nature and biodiversity. It exemplifies the principle of "turning words into actions" by defining concrete steps, identifying supporting organisations, and establishing indicative timeframes for implementation.

In line with the Sofia Declaration mandate, the RCC leads the monitoring of GAWB Action Plan implementation through the Annual Report on the Implementation of the GAWB Action Plan (GARI). This monitoring process is a collaborative effort involving the Western Balkans Six (WB6), regional partners (such as the EnCS, TCPC, SWG RRD, and IUCN), European Commission, and other key stakeholders, using predefined qualitative and quantitative indicators. Following the publication of 2024 GARI, the RCC will develop the 2025 GARI to evaluate progress in implementing the GAWB Action Plan. Using the methodology established in 2024 report, the 2025 GARI will provide an overview of progress across 58 actions and identify bottlenecks and delays in execution. Its findings are anticipated for endorsement at the 2026 Annual Ministerial Meeting on GAWB, providing a roadmap for future actions and corrective measures.

II. DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Objectives of the assignment

1. **Draft the 2025 edition of GARI:** Develop the Annual Report on the Implementation of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans Action Plan (GAWB AP) for 2025, assessing progress, identifying challenges, and providing actionable insights.

A company/consortium of experts will be engaged for this consultancy (hereinafter referred to as “the consultant”).

This assignment targets all Western Balkans Six (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia).

III. SCOPE OF WORK

Specific Tasks

The scope of the work includes:

Preparation of the Narrative Report of 2025 GARI, which provides a comprehensive and analytical overview of the WB6 progress across all seven components of GAWB Action Plan:

1. **Climate action**
2. **Energy**
3. **Sustainable transport**
4. **Circular economy**
5. **Depollution**
6. **Sustainable agriculture**
7. **Protection of nature and biodiversity**

The Report will offer detailed insights into the advancements made in each area outlined in the GAWB Action Plan. The Report will reflect **both regional and WB6 individual level perspectives and outlooks**, and results vis-à-vis the set objectives (58 actions), **identify main obstacles and include recommendations**.

It will include the overview of quantitative data and its analytical interpretations, including but not limited to tables, graphs and statistics in line with the indicators defined in the Action Plan.

The indicators overview will visually depict the implementation status alongside explanatory narratives, particularly addressing underperformance or delays, with proposals for corrective actions.

The consultant will prepare the calculated regional WB average for each of the indicators provided in the GAWB Action Plan to compare progress since 2016, the baseline year set in the previous

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCP 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

GARI. Preparation of additional indicators, as needed and recommended by consultant, in particular in the CE area, will complement the existing monitoring framework. Additionally, the consultant will provide methodology for data collection and calculation in line with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change guidelines and requirements.

The consultant will liaise with WB6 focal points to collect data from relevant institutions in the region, as needed.

The consultant will liaise with regional coordinators that are listed in the Action Plan to facilitate data collection, processing and reporting such as: Energy Community Secretariat, Transport Community Permanent Secretariat, International Union for Conservation of Nature, Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in South East Europe, Eurostat, European Environment Agency, OECD, and others.

The consultant will cooperate with Western Balkans Six to validate findings and recommendations, and provide advice and support during the presentation of 2025 GARI.

The consultant will cooperate with other stakeholders as needed.

Methodology

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

1. Desk review/research and data collection, processing, validation, visualisation, and interpretation;
2. Communication/interviews/consultations with the representatives of regional organisations, WB administrations and other relevant stakeholders in the respective areas to collect qualitative and quantitative inputs;
3. Any other method applicable.

This assignment will be developed in close consultations with the RCC Secretariat in several stages.

II. LOGISTICS AND TIMING

Timeline

The engagement is expected to start in January and end in June 2026.

Lines of Communication

- The task will be implemented in close consultation with the RCC Secretariat.
- The consultant will submit all reports and timesheets to the RCC Secretariat for review and approval of deliverables.

- The RCC will provide guidelines for efficient finalisation of the assignment.
- The Team Leader will be responsible for the coordination of the team, and communication with RCC staff.
- The Team Leader should keep frequent communication with the RCC in order to discuss all open issues and guide the assignment towards its successful completion.
- As appropriate, meetings with RCC will be organised to agree on expectations and deliverables.

III. REQUIRED OUTPUTS / REPORTING

The following deliverables will be produced and transferred to the RCC Secretariat during the course of the assignment, as per the timeframe specified below:

| | Deliverables | Due date |
|----|---|----------------------------------|
| | 1. Preparation of 2025 GARI | |
| 1. | <p>Prepare the First Draft of detailed methodology and work plan for conducting GARI (which includes the overview of data availability per Pillar, quality of data, identifies gaps at the level of WB6 + proposal to fill in the gaps + extensive overview of qualitative and quantitative indicators to be used for the preparation of 2025 GARI)</p> <p>The First Draft should reflect views and inputs received in consultation processes with the RCC, EC, WB6 and regional partners</p> <p><u>Report needs to be proofread before it is submitted to the RCC</u></p> | End of January 2026 |
| 2. | <p>Gathering, analysing, and processing data—both quantitative (presented through tables and graphs) and qualitative—to form the foundation of a narrative report. This report will offer insights and recommendations at both the regional and individual WB6 levels.</p> <p>Liaising with regional and international partners producing GAWB-related data such as Energy Community, Transport Community, IUCN, SWG RRD, Eurostat and European Environment Agency, etc.</p> <p>Liaising with WB6 to collect and validate data from relevant institutions and regional and international resources + attendance at RWG GAWB meetings online and in person</p> | Throughout January-February 2026 |
| 3. | <p>Providing the first version of the Report on the Implementation of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkan (GARI) with but not limited to the following sections:</p> <p>Executive Summary</p> <p>Methodology</p> <p>Key findings and recommendations both at the regional and individual WB6 level</p> | End of February 2026 |

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| | Overview of progress across all 7 pillars (58 actions) with recommendations for further steps Graphs Data Sources Appendices | |
| 4. | Leading rounds of consultations with RCC, WB6, EC and regional partners on integrating/reflecting comments & providing feedback | March- April 2026 |
| 5. | Preparing the final version of 2025 GARI reflecting and integrating all relevant comments and ensuring quality assurance check Presentation of the Report to RWG GAWB | April- May 2026 |

IV. REQUIREMENTS

The consultant should propose a team comprising experts with extensive knowledge and demonstrated experience across all seven pillars of GAWB Action Plan: Climate Action, Energy, Transport, Circular Economy, Depollution, Biodiversity and Nature Protection, and Agriculture. Additionally, the team leader will oversee the process, ensuring rigorous quality control and consistency throughout the assignment.

It is indispensable that the consultants possess experience in the WB6 region in these areas, familiarity with the most recent developments in the EU, particularly those related to the European Green Deal, good analytical skills, experience in data collection and processing, as well as in drafting high-quality reports and policy recommendations. Potential bidders are encouraged to propose additional team members and auxiliary staff, as they deem appropriate.

The team of relevant experts should fulfil the following qualification requirements:

Qualifications:

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| Education: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advanced university degree (minimum Master's Degree or equivalent) in engineering, biology, climatology, chemistry, environmental sciences, economy, energy, physics, agriculture, sociology and/ or other relevant fields necessary to understand the main trends, challenges, and the situation in the WB in the area of decarbonisation, circular economy, air, water and soil pollution, biodiversity, climate policy, methodology and legal framework; ▪ PhD is an advantage; |
| Experience and qualifications: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extensive theoretical knowledge in the relevant fields and a minimum of fifteen (15) and ten (10) years of practical work and/or research experience in the relevant areas for a team leader and team members, respectively; ▪ At least three similar (in scope and complexity) projects completed in the last five years, particularly in the WB6; ▪ Experience in data collection and processing, modelling, developing scenarios, scientific papers and reports in given areas; ▪ Ample and proven understanding of the existing strategic and policy frameworks and the situation in the given areas in the EU (related to the EGD) and the WB region; ▪ Analytical skills and ability to conceptualise and write concisely and clearly in English language; ▪ Experience in performing analytical studies, working with indicators, and drafting recommendations for policymakers; • Proven communication and presentation skills and ability to work in an environment requiring liaison and collaboration with multiple actors including government representatives, international organisations' representatives, business community, civil society institutions, donors and other stakeholders; |
| Language requirements: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fluency in English, as the official working language of the RCC; ▪ Knowledge of local languages in WB6 is considered as an asset; |

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| Other: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full ICT literacy and familiarity with MS Office (or alternative business applications) as a tool necessary for the implementation of the assignment; ▪ Ability to be flexible and respond to changes as part of the review and feedback process. |
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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.

The consultant 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 consultant 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 consultant, they should clearly explain the reasons for their final decision in a comments table.

V. APPLICATION RULES

The application needs to contain the following:

- Technical Offer;
- Financial Offer.

Technical Offer:

The technical offer needs to contain the following:

For the companies and consortia of individual consultants or individual professionals

- 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 bidding consortia of individual consultants or individual professionals 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. A corresponding power of attorney must be attached to the bid;
- CVs of key members of the project team (**maximum 2 pages per expert**), outlining the most relevant knowledge and experience as described in the Terms of Reference;
- Financial records - company's balance sheet and profit-and-loss statement for the past 2 years (only in case of bidding of consulting companies);
- **A concept note of up to 5 pages, concisely and clearly elaborating the proposed methodology** for addressing and undertaking each activity, relevant documents to be taken into account and the concept for the successful finalisation of the assignment; 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 7 years demonstrating relevant experience in the subject matter;
- Signed Statements of Availability (Annex I).

Financial Offer

The financial offer should reflect the following:

- All figures should be expressed in EUR

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

- Maximum budget should not exceed EUR 35,000. Offers above the threshold will not be considered;
- Use a free format for the budget providing 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.

For companies from Bosnia and Herzegovina, VAT should be presented.

Note: According to the Indirect Taxation Authority Instruction and its status of an international organisation, the Regional Cooperation Council Secretariat is entitled to VAT refund and is exempted from customs duties in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Submission of applications:

Applications need to be submitted by 25 December 2025 through the website link [Apply now](#).

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:

| 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 size comparable with that of the tender; experience with clients comparable to the Contracting Authority. | 35 |
| A.2. Quality and professional capacity of the consultant(s): CV(s) satisfy the criteria set forth in the Terms of Reference, education and experience demonstrate professional capacity and experience required. | 35 |
| A.3 Quality of the concept note: 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. Financial Offer/ lowest price has maximum score | 100 |

Score for offer X =

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

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

In addition to the results of the technical and financial evaluation, a competency-based interview will be held with the selected bidder.

Information on selection of the most favourable bidder

The RCC Secretariat shall inform candidates and bidders of decisions reached concerning the award of the contract as soon as possible, including the grounds for any decision not to award a contract for which there has been competitive tendering or to recommence the procedure.

Standard letter of thanks for participation to unsuccessful bidders shall be sent within 15 days after the contract is signed with the awarded bidder.

The candidates and bidders wishing to receive 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: STATEMENT OF AVAILABILITY

REF: 083-025

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 if this tender is successful, namely:

[illegible]