



Open Call for Consulting Services

Subject:	Technical assistance to the RCC Secretariat in quality control of SecuriMeter 2026 (including support to Balkan Barometer PO and BO) draft surveys and its quantitative analysis of primary data
RCC Department:	Political Department
Eligible:	Individual consultants
Reporting to:	RCC Secretariat
Duration:	10 March 2026 – 31 December 2026 - (60 working days)
Deadline for Application:	1 March 2026
Reference number:	013-026

TERMS OF REFERENCE

I BACKGROUND

Purpose

The purpose of the consultancy is to assist the RCC Secretariat in ensuring the quality of Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) SecuriMeter questionnaire (including support to Balkan Barometer PO and BO) and carrying out its internal empirical analysis of the primary data of SecuriMeter (and BB) for reporting to its stakeholders.

Background Information

Since 2021, the RCC has been engaged in measuring the attitudes, experiences and perceptions of the general public in the Western Balkans concerning the security situation. Continuation of the Public Opinion Survey on security issues remains one of the key priorities, which will help understand citizens' perceptions along the lines of the main security challenges, and also help practitioners and governments to improve their course of action.

The previous five editions of the SecuriMeter, issued respectively in 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025, have been received with great interest. They are complementary to the data collected by the RCC's Balkan Barometer (Public Opinion - PO and Business Opinion - BO), as well as the data

collected by public administrations and regional and international partners. According to numerous feedbacks, citations, and the overall usage of data sets, both the governments and the CSO/NGO sector have shown a great need for this type of survey.

The sixth edition will maintain the same broad methodology (if needed, to be reconceptualised with the inputs from this Consultancy) and cover a similar range of topics, while also introducing new ones that address current security trends, and abandon old ones that are not relevant in the current context.

The SecuriMeter 2026 Survey aims, to some extent, to recalibrate its focus to embrace new security challenges. Based on discussions at the last Annual Security Coordination Conference held in Skopje and consultations with our Italian partners, there is a consensus that the SecuriMeter should be sharpened as an analytical tool beyond the annual reiteration of questionnaires, aligning more closely with other RCC actions.

The survey will continue to cover traditional security threats and challenges and will try to keep a similar range of topics. Additionally, the 2026 iteration seeks to deepen the understanding of both traditional and non-traditional security challenges, emphasizing human security¹ and the socioeconomic factors that influence perceptions of safety and security. However, the questionnaire will be updated in its sixth edition to fully address the current security-related challenges and reflect them through a carefully crafted set of indicators, aiming to improve survey questions and methodology to collect and analyse more reliable data.

The survey will also address non-traditional threats such as cybercrimes, social media disinformation, extreme climate events, and the security effects of pandemics.

RCC Secretariat will prepare the first draft of the questionnaire for the sixth edition (**in English, plus additional checked translations - 30 April**). The initial draft questionnaire includes the following chapters, but is subject to change, depending on recalibration of the overall objectives of the activity:

(Structure from 2025 edition):

- General security perceptions (6 questions)
- Personal security perceptions (5 questions)
- Categories of security-related problems in economy (7 questions)
- Migration (3 questions)
- Emigration intentions, human security and resilience (10 questions)

¹ **The Human Security Concept** was thoroughly discussed at the last Jumbo Conference through a dedicated Session and all participants agreed upon the necessity to be further elaborated and measured through the SecuriMeter. Whereas, traditional security seeks to defend states from external aggression, the human security is people-centred. The important dimensions are to entail the well-being of individuals and respond to ordinary people's needs in dealing with sources of threats. It has seven segments such as: Economic security, Food security, Health security, Environmental security, Personal security, Community security, and Political security.

- Personal trust and trust in institutions (6 questions)
- Corruption (3 questions)
- Emerging security threats (7 questions)
- Demographic control groups (11 questions)

According to the RCC's work plan, once the quality of the draft questionnaire is confirmed with regard to its objectivity to minimise any unintentional measurement error, based on the available scientific knowledge, the data collection phase will be initiated. **(Data Collection Stage - Fieldwork (Simultaneous for All Surveys - 15 May – 15 June - estimated))** Each question should be clear and explicitly state its measurement purpose, ensuring alignment with the survey's objectives. Clear objectives will enable the adjustment of the questionnaire to optimally reflect desired outcomes.

Previous editions of the survey had a sample size of 1,000 respondents per economy, totalling 6,000 across the region. For the upcoming edition of the surveys (SecuriMeter and Balkan Barometer), the sampling will be recalibrated based on recommendations from the academic expert (Contractor of this ToR) to ensure improved representation and accuracy. Samples should be probability-based and economy-level representative of the resident population aged 18 and above. The coverage area should include the entire economy, including rural areas, and the sampling frame should represent the entire population of the 18+ age group. Data weighting should be used to ensure an economy-level representative sample for each economy. In addition to taking into account disproportional sampling across regions, data should be weighted by gender, age, education, economic activity, and socio-economic status. A data collection consultant company will be contracted through a separate tender.

Prior to the initiation of the data collection, the contractor of this assignment will assist the RCC in confirming the scientific quality of sampling methodology to be recommended by the data collection consultant company.

After the data collection phase, the RCC will receive the primary data in line with STATA and SPSS format. The Consultant will embark on its internal quantitative analysis of the primary data. In this stage, the RCC will initiate its analysis through generating several new indicators based on the primary data. The initial stage of the analysis will be descriptive by cross-tabbing and correlating several indicators.

Thereafter, the RCC aims to construct empirical models based on those indicators to measure the existing patterns and identify statistically significant predictors relevant to human security and resilience. As an example, the RCC plans to construct econometric models to predict the level of fear, the level of trust in institutions, emigration intentions among different demographic groups (such as age, gender, profession, minority status or ethnical background, etc.), or overall human security situation in the WB6, and to profile those who feel most insecure in the region. The RCC

will also make sure that the results of its models based on SecuriMeter data and patterns detected are in line with the main trends in SEE Inclusive Growth Index (SEE IGI), which is a composite index that measures inclusive growth performance of the SEE region in comparison with the EU member states.

This survey aims to preserve an annual frequency in the future, enabling monitoring and comparing the evolution of security perceptions in WB6.

The survey will be carried out through face-to-face or online interviews with residents of each of the WB6.

The key findings will be publicly presented at the next Regional Security Coordination Conference, aka Jumbo 2026, a high-level event with all main security organisations, partners, and other relevant stakeholders.

More information about #SecuriMeter on dedicated webpage – [Link](#)

Thematic Focus for 2026:

Key themes for SecuriMeter 2026 include Personal Trust and Trust in Institutions, reflecting a decline in trust levels across the region.

The survey will continue to cover traditional security threats and challenges and will try to keep a similar range of topics. Additionally, the 2026 iteration seeks to deepen the understanding of both traditional and non-traditional security challenges, emphasising human security² and the socioeconomic factors that influence perceptions of safety and security. However, the questionnaire (current 49 thematic questions, plus 20 demographic ones) will be, if necessary, updated in its sixth edition to address the current traditional and non-traditional security-related challenges and reflect them through a carefully crafted set of indicators, aiming to improve survey questions and methodology to collect and analyse more reliable data.

In addition, the SecuriMeter 2026 aims to advance the Econometric Trust Model and to improve variable design (corruption, institutional performance, service delivery), including generating economy-specific trust predictors. Additionally, while SecuriMeter already generates valuable insights into many security dimensions, there is a need, and an opportunity, to elevate its analytical relevance even further. The proposed activity seeks to push the SecuriMeter into a more useful tool capable of explaining why certain security perceptions emerge and how they are shaped by underlying conditions.

² **The Human Security Concept** was thoroughly discussed at the last Jumbo Conference through a dedicated Session and all participants agreed upon the necessity to be further elaborated and measured through the SecuriMeter. Whereas, traditional security seeks to defend states from external aggression, the human security is people-centred. The important dimensions are to entail the well-being of individuals and respond to ordinary people's needs in dealing with sources of threats. It has seven segments such as: Economic security, Food security, Health security, Environmental security, Personal security, Community security, and Political security.

Thematic Focus for the Balkan Barometer will be shared with the Contractor of this ToR in later stages.

Expected results:

- Ensuring the scientific objectivity of RCC SecuriMeter survey of 2026 to minimise the risks of any unintentional measurement biases (including Balkan Barometer surveys);
- Conforming the neutrality of sample to be used for the SecuriMeter and Balkan Barometer 2026;
- The Consultant shall ensure methodological continuity with the Institutional Trust Model introduced in SecuriMeter 2025, enabling longitudinal comparisons and dynamic trend estimation across editions;
- Develop security related indicators based on the primary data;
- Develop indicators to measure trust in institutions, perceptions of corruption, and efficiency of institutions;
- Include demographic indicators to establish control groups based on gender, age, income, education, employment, and residence;
- Academic consultants will assist the RCC in finalising the formulation of survey questions to best measure the intended indicators. The consultants will also advise the RCC to determine the sample size of each Western Balkan economy at the household level within the confidence level of 95% and the error margin of 5%;
- A systematic review of the regularity of survey questions should be proposed and determine whether certain questions should be repeated annually, biennially, or adjusted based on relevance;
- Construct statistically robust econometric models for demographic profiling and predict socioeconomic and political patterns shaping people's perceptions of security, and interpret data.

For this purpose, a consultant (hereinafter: the Consultant) will be engaged to provide technical assistance to the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) as outlined below.

II DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Objectives and Scope of the Assignment

The main objective of the assignment is to assist RCC Secretariat in confirming the scientific objectivity, quality, and relevance of the questionnaire to be used for SecuriMeter 2026 (and to

support Balkan Barometer PO and BO survey questionnaires), the methodology to be employed for sampling in the data collection phase, and in creating empirical models and ensuring their statistical robustness for analysing the primary data.

Specific Tasks

It is envisioned that the Consultant shall carry out the following tasks:

Task 1: Conduct preparatory work

- Familiarise themselves with the RCC, previous SecuriMeter editions, Balkan Barometer PO and BO editions, SEE2030 Strategy, and RCC Strategy and Work Programme 2026/2028;
- Familiarise themselves with the existing surveys, such as the EU Social Survey, Gallup, EU Barometer, and World Values Survey, to ensure best practices and methodological consistency.
- Participate in a kick-off meeting and ongoing consultation with the RCC Secretariat (March 2026 - TBD);
- Agree with the RCC Secretariat on any outstanding issues and/or possible modifications to the scope of work;
- Finalise the methodology and work plan for the implementation of this assignment.

Task 2: Advising to improve the quality of the draft questionnaire

- Obtain inputs from the RCC Secretariat about the draft questionnaires and their objectives, and possible indicators which they aim to measure;
- Propose amendments to the formulation of questions, their numbers and order, and relevance in order to ensure that the questionnaires would enable the RCC to create indicators for empirical models for quantitative analysis phase based on the data to be collected;
- Confirm the scientific objectivity of the text of the draft questionnaire, advise to amend, if necessary, to minimise any measurement biases;
- The Consultant shall advise on operationalising the human security dimensions (economic, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security) within the modelling framework, or will provide other advice in relation to the overall SecuriMeter 2026 objectives.

Final drafting of the questionnaires will be undertaken by the RCC based on the inputs received from the Consultant in this stage.

Task 3: Confirming the sampling methodology to be submitted by data collection Consultant

As mentioned above, a professional survey company will be contracted through a separate tender to collect data. That contractor will help RCC Secretariat in evaluating methodology for the data collection and sampling to be proposed by the survey companies to be contracted for SecuriMeter and Balkan Barometer. The Contractor of this ToR will advise and comment on proposed documents.

In particular, RCC will expect the Consultant in this assignment to help in evaluating and giving final confirmation to the methodology of sampling.

Task 4: Quantitative analysis of the primary data by RCC

The Consultant in this assignment is to be assigned to help RCC in undertaking the following activities:

- The Consultant shall review and operationalise the list of determinants identified through expert consultations during the 10th Regional Security Coordination Conference (JUMBO 2025), integrating these into a coherent modelling framework;
- The Consultant will assist with the development, detailed planning, and initial implementation of a comprehensive RCC (Security) Model, aimed at transforming SecuriMeter from descriptive reporting to providing explanatory and predictive insights;
- Support RCC in defining the conceptual architecture of the Security Model (dependent variable(s), core explanatory clusters, interaction effects, cross-economy comparability);
- Assist in translating expert-identified determinants (Skopje JUMBO WGs 2025) into operationalised survey variables;
- Propose model specification options;
- Provide guidance on how to ensure model replicability in future editions (longitudinal consistency);
- Identify the best suited statistical models for the type of data and security related drivers to be measured – like feelings of trust, fear, or for measuring emigration intentions, etc.
- Construct econometric models and interpret the results of statistical analysis to confirm the robustness of models measuring the drivers and concepts identified. This particular activity may require developing commands in STATA (in do file format) by the Consultant themselves or give guidance to the relevant experts of RCC in commanding STATA;
- Confirm the conformity of RCC's models with the macro level data of SEE Inclusive Growth Index, if applicable;
- Contribute to the analysis report of RCC, which would constitute an input to the final report of SecuriMeter 2026.

The Consultant will provide general guidance on the training and knowledge transfer to RCC staff on the use of STATA software, ensuring the Secretariat is equipped to perform future basic data analyses independently.

Task 5: The Consultant will provide academic support to the RCC's efforts to establish and enhance dialogue with academia related to its activities, particularly on SEE2030. This activity is considered as a general academic advice on the content formation and conceptualisation of RCC's annual gatherings with the academia on SDGs, SEE2030, and its economic development related activities.

The Consultant will protect full confidentiality of the SecuriMeter (and BB) questionnaires, methodologies of the RCC's models, the results of the models developed, and the primary data until these are made publicly availability by the RCC. By accepting these Terms of Reference, and signing the contract with the RCC, the Consultant will accept waiving any type of intellectual or other property rights as an author or co-author of contributions to any written materials or empirical/scientific work to be ultimately owned by the RCC in relation to the SecuriMeter. Any work or data once made publicly available in relation to RCC's SecuriMeter will be free to be used by the Consultant in line with appropriate academic reference rules and best practices.

Task 6: Strategic and Public Engagement Support

- Be available for technical briefings to RCC leadership/staff and partners;
- Participate (if requested) in the public presentation of SecuriMeter 2026 (and BB PO and BO);
- Participate in a technical session during JUMBO 2026 if it aligns with the agenda;
- Provide technical clarification to media or institutional stakeholders, if required;
- Support the preparation of the methodological annex for publication.

Consultant's Analytical Deliverables (Outputs)

- Concept Note of the Security Model (max 5 pages);
- Model Specification Paper (technical note);
- STATA do-files fully documented;
- Methodological Annex for publication;
- Internal RCC briefing slides/talking points (SM and BB) on model interpretations.

After the report's publication, the Consultant will remain available to assist RCC, if requested, with further analysis of the empirical models already developed in previous phases, providing continuous support for additional insights and enhancements until 31 January 2027.

The implementation of the work outlined in these Terms of Reference shall commence on 10 March 2026 and will end on 31 December 2026.

The Consultant would make themselves available for physical presence to meet with the relevant staff members of RCC in case of necessity. Dates of any physical meeting will be determined based on bilateral consultation and confirmation between RCC and the Consultant.

All deliverables in line with each task defined above should be submitted to the RCC in an appropriate format according to the following tentative deadlines.

Task 1: 27 March 2026

Task 2: 07 April 2026

Task 3: 15 May 2026

Task 4: 01 June 2026 – 01 September 2026

The final report to summarise all the activities undertaken for processing the final payment will be delivered within 15 calendar days following the completion of all activities.

III PROFILE AND COMPETENCIES

For this contract, the Consultant is expected to have extensive academic credentials and proven record of the publications in at least one of the areas related to SecuriMeter.

In addition, the Consultant should meet the following requirements:

Qualifications

Education:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PhD in economics or political science with a specialisation in econometrics, economic models, quantitative analysis or related fields.
Experience and skills:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrable academic experience and proven academic publications quantitatively analysing public opinion surveys;• Academic experience in developing econometric models measuring socioeconomic concepts such as trust (trust in institutions and trust in individuals), fear, feeling of insecurity, etc.• Proven experience in econometric modelling of survey data;• Proven analytical skills and ability to conceptualise and write concisely and clearly;• In-depth knowledge of the economies covered by the assignment and familiarity with development issues;• Prior work on governance, institutional trust, or human security is an asset;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication record in peer-reviewed journals preferred; • Strong writing skills (in English); • Ability to be flexible and respond to changes as part of the review and feedback process; and • Proven communication and presentation skills and ability to work in an environment requiring liaison and collaboration with multiple actors.
Language requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluency in English, as the official language of the RCC; • Knowledge of other RCC languages is a plus.
Other:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proven knowledge in STATA or any other similar statistical applications like SPSS or R

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;
- Teamwork: 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 WB6 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 Consultant 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 the findings reported are duly substantiated and that conclusions are supported by relevant judgment criteria.

Quality Control by the Regional Cooperation Council

Each Consultant's outputs shall undergo an external review. The approved outputs will be subject to a quality assessment by the Political Department of the Regional Cooperation Council.

V APPLICATION RULES

The application needs to contain the following:

- Technical Offer;
- Financial Offer.

Technical Offer

- Concept note: Brief methodological approach (2-3 pages);
- CV of consultant, outlining relevant knowledge and experience as described in the Terms of References, along with contact details of referees;
- List of references for relevant activities implemented over the past years demonstrating relevant experience in the subject matter;
- Signed Statement of Availability (Annex I).

Financial Offer (Free format)

The financial offer should reflect the following:

- All figures should be expressed in EUR

NOTE:

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

- Maximum budget should not exceed EUR 20,000.
- The consultancy will require 60 working days.
- Fee rates should be broadly consistent with the regional framework rates for these types of professional services.

VI Availability Clause

The Consultant must remain available for technical consultation until 31 January 2027.

Submission of applications:

Applications need to be submitted by 01 March 2026 through the website link [Apply now](#).

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

VI. EVALUATION RULES:

- The consultancy will be awarded to the highest qualified bidder based on the relevance of skills and expertise to this assignment;
- The applications are evaluated following these criteria:

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 to that of the Call; experience with clients comparable to the Contracting Authority.	35
A.2. Quality and professional capacity of the consultant: CV satisfies 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 concept note 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

ANNEX I: STATEMENT OF AVAILABILITY

REF: 013-026

I hereby declare that I am participating in the above-mentioned open call procedure in my personal capacity and in my own name. I further declare that, in the event that this open call procedure is successful, I am fully able, available, and willing to perform the duties for the period(s) foreseen for the assignment for which my curriculum vitae has been submitted, namely:

Full Name	Available from (Date)	Available until (Date)	Acceptance by signature