

Open Call for Consulting Services

Subject:	Green Agenda for the Western Balkans Action Plan
Title:	Development of the Western Balkans Six Climate Adaptation Strategy
RCC Department:	Programme Department
Eligible:	Consulting companies/bidding consortia of individual consultants or individual professionals
Reporting to:	RCC Secretariat
Duration:	March – September 2026
Reference Number:	024-026

Background:

The Western Balkans Six (WB6) have reaffirmed their commitment to work towards achieving climate neutrality by 2050, in alignment with the European Green Deal and the European Climate Law. This commitment was first articulated at the Sofia Summit in 2020 through endorsement of Sofia Declaration and operationalised through the Action Plan for the implementation of the Sofia Declaration on the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans (GAWB AP) endorsed at the Brdo Summit in October 2021. It has since been further strengthened through Revised GAWB Action Plan and subsequent political declarations, including the Dubrovnik Declaration on the GAWB, which underscored climate resilience and adaptation as core pillars of the region's sustainable development and EU integration pathway.

Recognising that climate impacts are already intensifying across the region, manifesting through more frequent and severe floods, droughts, heatwaves, wildfires, biodiversity loss, and damage to critical infrastructure, the WB6 have jointly acknowledged that climate adaptation is no longer optional. Rather, it constitutes a strategic prerequisite for economic stability, social resilience, environmental protection, and alignment with EU policies.

In this context, the Revised GAWB Action Plan foresees development of a WB6 Climate Adaptation Strategy by 2026 to provide a coherent regional framework for strengthening climate resilience by 2030, with a long-term vision towards a fully climate-adapted WB6 by 2050.

The WB6 Climate Adaptation Strategy will be developed in alignment with:

- EU Adaptation Strategy and relevant EU sectoral policies;
- European Climate Law;
- EU Water Resilience agenda;

- EU nature restoration and biodiversity objectives and others.

As a preparatory and enabling step, WB6 endorsed a WB6 Climate Adaptation Roadmap in 2025, which provides strategic guidance, priority areas, and actionable recommendations for regional cooperation on adaptation. The Roadmap provided an overview of steps needed for alignment with EU policies and global best practices, while identifying gaps, investment needs, and opportunities for coordinated action under the climate pillar of the GAWB Action Plan. The Roadmap is recognised as a critical prerequisite for the development of the WB6 Climate Adaptation Strategy and as a key input into the ongoing implementation of the GAWB Action Plan, strengthening the region's collective response to climate risks and enhancing preparedness for EU accession.

II. DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Objective of the assignment

The objective of this consultancy is to provide expert technical support to the RCC Secretariat for preparation of **WB6 Climate Adaptation Strategy**.

The Strategy will articulate a shared regional vision for climate resilience, define regional strategic objectives, and identify priority adaptation actions, flagship projects and initiatives at the regional level, while setting out opportunities for coordinated regional approaches across key adaptation themes. It is anticipated that the WB6 Climate Adaptation Strategy will be endorsed at the third GAWB Ministerial meeting.

III. SCOPE OF WORK

Specific Tasks

The Consultant shall support the development of the WB6 Climate Adaptation Strategy as a shared regional framework by undertaking the following tasks:

1. **Define the strategic framework and regional added value**
 - 1.1. Articulate a shared regional vision for climate resilience
 - 1.2. Define regional strategic objectives, priority adaptation themes, and flagship regional projects and initiatives where joint approaches, shared tools, or coordinated action deliver clear regional benefits
 - 1.3. Position climate adaptation as an enabling condition for sustainable development, economic resilience, and social well-being
2. **Analyse existing evidence**
 - 2.1. Review and synthesize relevant climate data, assessments, and projections for the WB6
 - 2.2. Identify gaps and opportunities where enhanced regional coordination and approach would add value
3. **Set strategic adaptation priorities**
 - 3.1. Identify priority adaptation domains requiring regional coordination (e.g. water resilience, ecosystems and nature-based solutions, climate-resilient infrastructure, disaster risk management)

- 3.2. Define indicative regional initiatives, cooperation mechanisms, and enabling measures
- 3.3. Focus on strategic directions rather than exhaustive action lists
- 4. **Support consultation and finalisation of the document**
 - 4.1. Facilitate stakeholder consultations, including the extended meeting of the Regional Working Group on Green Agenda for the Western Balkans scheduled for 26 March
 - 4.2. Integrate feedback from WB6 authorities, the RCC Secretariat, and regional and international partners
 - 4.3. Prepare the final Strategy document and a concise strategic summary for technical and political-level endorsement

The assignment shall follow a **strategic, evidence-based and participatory approach**, emphasising:

- regional value added
- coherence with EU policy frameworks
- long-term resilience and systems thinking

The Consultant will engage directly with the RCC Secretariat, RWG GAWB, including colleagues in charge of climate adaptation, and other relevant institutions to gather the necessary information. This engagement is essential for ensuring that the recommendations are grounded in regional realities and that key stakeholders are involved in shaping the adaptation strategies.

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 (mix of online and onsite activities);
2. Communication/interviews/consultations with the representatives of regional organisations, WB6 administrations and other relevant stakeholders in the respective areas to collect qualitative inputs;
3. Any other method applicable.

Please note that a clear methodological overview should be an integral part of the concept note.

I. LOGISTICS AND TIMING

Timeline

The engagement is expected to start in March 2026 and end in September 2026.

Lines of Communication

- The task will be implemented in close consultation with the RCC Secretariat.
- The contracted bidder will report to **the Senior Expert on the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans/GAWB Coordinator**.
- As appropriate, meetings with RCC will be organised to agree on expectations and deliverables.

II. 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	
	Work plan and methodology		
1.	Preparation of a detailed work plan and methodological approach Development of preparatory materials for the workshop scheduled for 26 March, including facilitation of the workshop and preparation of its conclusions Analyse and synthesize workshop recommendations into a structured input to be incorporated as an integral component of the Strategy		26 March 2026
2.	Preparation of the First Draft of Climate Adaptation Strategy Gathering, analysing, and processing data both quantitative (presented through tables and graphs) and qualitative Liaising with regional and international partners producing climate related data 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		23 April 2026
2.	Leading rounds of consultations with RCC, WB6, EC, IOs and donors on integrating/reflecting comments & providing feedback		April- June 2026
3.	Preparing the final version of WB6 Climate Adaptation Strategy Presentation of WB6 Climate Adaptation Strategy as needed, and participation at the RWG GAWB meetings and GAWB Ministerial.		June 2026 April- September 2026

III. REQUIREMENTS

The Consultant should possess and demonstrate extensive knowledge and experience in climate policy, including the development of legal and policy frameworks. Expertise in climate modelling is considered an asset. It is essential that the Consultant has experience in the Western Balkans region, specifically in the area of climate adaptation, and is familiar with the latest developments in the EU, particularly those related to the EU Climate Adaptation Strategy. Strong analytical skills, experience in data collection and processing, as well as a proven ability to draft high-quality reports and policy recommendations, are also required. Potential bidders are encouraged to propose additional team members and support staff as they deem necessary to fulfil the task's requirements.

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

Qualifications:

Education:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Advanced university degree (Master's Degree or equivalent) in physics, meteorology, ecology, environmental sciences, climate change, or other relevant fields necessary to understand the main trends, challenges, and the situation in the WB in the area of climate adaptation and climate security policies;▪ PhD is an advantage;
Experience and qualifications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Extensive theoretical knowledge in the relevant fields and a minimum of ten (10) years of relevant experience in the climate policy area;▪ At least three similar (in scope and complexity) projects completed, particularly targeting the WB6;▪ Profound experience in data collection and processing, modelling, developing scenarios and developing scientific papers and reports;▪ Ample and proven understanding of the existing strategic and policy frameworks and the situation in the climate policy area in the EU and the WB region;▪ Proven analytical skills and ability to conceptualise and write concisely and clearly, preferably evidenced by a list of published reports/papers in English;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proven communication and presentation skills and ability to work in an environment requiring liaison and collaboration with multiple stakeholders including government representatives, international organisations' representatives, business community, civil society institutions, donors and other stakeholders; ▪ Advanced computer skills (SDM, MS Office and internet software).
Language requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fluency in written and spoken English, as the official working language of the RCC; ▪ Knowledge of some of WB6 languages will be considered an asset.
Other:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ability to be flexible and respond to changes as part of the review and feedback process.

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 individual WB6 partners and stakeholders.

Quality Control

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 consulting companies and consortia of individual consultants

- Company profile including a brief description (**up to 2 pages**) of the company. In case of a bidding consortium, the team leader should submit the profile of the consortium;
- Copy of Company's/Institution's Registration Certificate;
- In case of bidding consortia of individual consultants participating in this Call, they must indicate the members and show how the work is divided between them. Specifically, all members must name the team leader and authorise this member to represent the consortium and receive payments on behalf of the other members. A corresponding written authorised power of attorney must be attached to the bid;
- CV of an expert(s) (max **5 pages**), outlining relevant knowledge and experience as described in the Terms of Reference, along with contact details of referees;
- 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 years demonstrating relevant experience in the subject matter;
- Signed Statements of Availability (Annex I).

For individual professionals

- CV (max 5 pages), outlining relevant knowledge and experience as described in the Terms of Reference, along with contact details of referees;
- 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 years demonstrating relevant experience in the subject matter;

Financial Offer

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:

- Use a free format for the budget providing the global price for the work to be provided.
 - (Maximum budget should not exceed EUR 24,000)
 - The fee rates should be broadly consistent with those applicable in the region

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 11 March 2026. The offers should be submitted through the web site 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 tender; experience with clients comparable to the Contracting Authority.	35
A.2. Quality and professional capacity of the consultant(s): CV(s) 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 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: 024-026

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:

[illegible]