

Open Call for Consulting Services

Subject:	Provide support to the Regional Cooperation Council in regard to permit granting procedures in the telecommunications sector in the Western Balkans Six (WB6)
Eligible:	Consulting companies/ consortia of individual consultants or individual professionals
Reporting to:	RCC Secretariat / Programme Department
Duration:	March – November 2026
Reference Number:	021-026

TERMS OF REFERENCE:

I. PURPOSE

The main objective of this consultancy is to support the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) in carrying out activities aimed at proposing ways to streamline permit granting procedures in the telecommunications sector in the Western Balkans Six (WB6).

II. BACKGROUND

The Common Regional Market Action Plan 2025-2028 (CRM 2.0)¹ was endorsed by WB6 in October 2024. Digital transformation measures from the CRM 2.0 aim to bring the region closer to the EU Digital Single Market in the areas of digital connectivity, digital economy and cybersecurity. Activities of great importance put forward in the CRM 2.0 are the roaming charges reduction between the region and the EU and the enhancement of business climate in the telecommunications sector by creating more favourable conditions for investments and innovation.

To foster dialogue between the public and private sectors on improving the telecommunications business environment across the WB6, the Advisory and Coordination Group (ACG) was established in 2023. Discussions within this group identified permit granting procedures as one of

¹ <https://www.rcc.int/download/docs/Common%20Regional%20Market%20Action%20Plan%202025-2028.pdf/0e5e72bb8334509a1feb954cdc7a3e54.pdf>

the key obstacles faced by telecommunications operators in the region. In response, the RCC developed two questionnaires, one addressed to WB6 operators and another to local municipalities, to examine these procedures in greater detail. The questionnaire for operators was distributed in mid-August 2025, and an analysis of the responses was prepared in autumn 2025, identifying the main challenges related to permit granting procedures across the WB6. The questionnaire addressed to local municipalities was circulated in early February 2026, with responses expected by the end of the month. Planned follow-up activities include meetings in each WB6 in spring 2026 with stakeholders involved in the permit granting process for telecommunications infrastructure, as well as initiatives aimed at raising political awareness of the importance of this issue across the region.

III. DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Objectives, scope and tasks under the assignment

The overall objective of this consultancy is to further develop activities in WB6 on identifying ways to improve permit granting procedures, taking into account Gigabit Infrastructure Act provisions and other EU acquis related to these procedures, best EU practices, as well as the current state of play and legal frameworks in each WB6.

Specific tasks of the expert are as follows:

1. Following the analysis of operators' questionnaire responses, organise additional consultations with operators in each WB6 in order to better understand the specific challenges they face²;
2. Analyse the responses of WB6 local municipalities to the questionnaire on permit granting procedures;
3. Assist in preparing and attend meetings in all WB6 with the stakeholders dealing with telecommunications permits;
4. Provide further support in shaping actions to improve permit granting procedures in the WB6;
5. Advise on strategies/practical actions aimed at increasing the understanding of and engagement on the importance of effective and streamlined permit granting procedures in each WB6.

Deliverables

Deliverable	Due date
Additional consultations with WB6 operators and analysis of responses of local municipalities to the questionnaire on permit granting procedures	30 March 2026
Inputs outlining key actions to improve permit granting procedures in WB6	10 May 2026

² This analysis will be shared with the expert after signing the contract.

Advice on the ways to raise awareness in each WB6 on the importance of improving and streamlining these procedures	Throughout the consultancy period
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Timeframe

The expert is expected to support implementation of the set of deliverables indicated in the table above, starting in March 2026 and finishing on 1 November 2026.

Lines of Communication

The expert will report to the RCC Secretariat and work closely with the WB Working Group on Connectivity. After completion of activities as defined in the timeframe for deliverables under these Terms of Reference, a detailed report will be prepared and sent to the RCC Secretariat for review and approval.

IV COMPETENCIES

Qualifications:

Education:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree in engineering, economics, business, or other areas directly related to the subject of work.
Experience:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum of 10 years of relevant experience in business, legal and/or regulatory affairs in the field of electronic communications; Minimum of 5 years of relevant experience in dealing with permit granting procedures in the EU MS, while the experience in the region in this regard will be considered as advantage; Proven analytical skills and ability to conceptualise and write concisely and clearly; Experience in working with EU governments and/or EU institutions and/or governments in WB6 is an advantage; In-depth knowledge of WB6 covered by the assignment is an advantage; Experience in writing and reporting on complex analytic and/or strategic projects; 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.
Language requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fluency in written and spoken English, as the official language of the RCC.

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.

V QUALITY CONTROL

The expert should ensure an internal quality control during the implementing and reporting phase of the assignment. The quality control should ensure that the deliverables comply with the above requirements and meet adequate quality standards. The quality control should ensure consistency and coherence between findings, conclusions and recommendations provided.

VI 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

- 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 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 10 years demonstrating relevant experience in the subject matter;
- Signed Statements of Availability (Annex I).

For individual professionals

- CV of expert, outlining relevant knowledge and experience as described in the Terms of References, 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 10 years demonstrating relevant experience in the subject matter;

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:

- 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 11 March 2026 through the website link [Apply now](#).

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. Maximum size of the email should not exceed 15MB.

VII 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
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ANNEX I: STATEMENT OF AVAILABILITY

REF: 021-026

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 if this tender is successful, namely:

[illegible]