

## **Open Call for Consulting Services**

<b>Subject:</b>	Independent Evaluation of the Integrative Internal Security Governance (IISG) Transition towards the Security Governance Hub for the Western Balkans under the Revised Terms of Reference
<b>Reporting to:</b>	IISG Secretariat
<b>Duration:</b>	July 2026 – November 2026
<b>Eligible:</b>	Consulting companies / Consortia or individual professionals
<b>Reference Number:</b>	050-026
<b>Application Deadline:</b>	<b>29 June 2026</b>

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE:**

#### **I. Background and Justification**

The Integrative Internal Security Governance (IISG) serves as a regional coordination platform supporting cooperation among Western Balkans partners, the European Commission, EU Member States, and relevant international actors in the areas of counter-terrorism and preventing/countering violent extremism, serious and organised crime, border/boundary security, and cybersecurity.

Following the adoption of the revised Terms of Reference in 2025 under the institutional framework of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), the IISG is transitioning towards a Security Governance Hub (SGH) for the Western Balkans.

The revised Security Governance Hub framework expands the role of the IISG beyond a traditional coordination mechanism towards an operational regional governance platform supporting needs assessment, project mapping, donor coordination, analytical support, and strategic communication in the Western Balkans security sector.

In accordance with the Description of the Action (DoA) of the IPA-funded project “Supporting the Integrative Internal Security Governance (IISG) in the Western Balkans” , an independent evaluation shall assess the effectiveness, relevance, sustainability, governance structure, and

operational performance of the IISG under the revised Terms of Reference and its transition towards the Security Governance Hub model and long-term sustainability under RCC leadership.

## **II. Scope of the assignment**

The evaluation shall assess the operational relevance, coordination mechanisms, and added value of all four thematic pillars of the Security Governance Hub through evaluating:

- the operational transformation of the IISG into a regional governance platform supporting needs assessment, project mapping, donor coordination, analytical support, and strategic communication;
- the effectiveness of the IISG/SGH governance and coordination structure;
- the contribution of the IISG/SGH to regional security cooperation in CT/P-CVE, organised crime, border/boundary security, and cybersecurity;
- the quality and usability of the IISG/SGH databases, analytical products, and coordination mechanisms and its effectiveness in donor coordination to avoid duplication of efforts;
- the sustainability and institutional ownership of the SGH model under RCC;
- recommendations for future operationalisation and institutional development of the Security Governance Hub;
- the integration and operational relevance of the cybersecurity pillar within the Security Governance Hub framework;
- the institutional sustainability of the Security Governance Hub within the RCC framework and its long-term integration into regional security governance structures.

The methodology of this independent evaluation should consider the outcomes and recommendations of the previous evaluation of the IISG as well as the reports of the IISG submitted to the European Commission.

The evaluation methodology should assess both the governance and operational dimensions of the Security Governance Hub, including its added value in regional needs assessment, project mapping, donor coordination, analytical support, and strategic communication.

The evaluation shall cover the IISG for the period from May 2024 to December 2026 and follow the guidelines of OECD evaluations of projects and programmes. The methodology should be based on the following principles: Design, Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability, Partnerships and Cooperation<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to the OECD Guidelines for Project and Programme Evaluations.

The evaluation should be based on the proposed key evaluation questions<sup>2</sup>.

<p><b><i>Design and Relevance</i></b></p> <p><i>The questions in this section are focusing on measuring the IISG process with its different governance structures, including the Steering Board, the thematic coordination structures, etc.</i></p> <p><i>Relevance is the extent to which the process is suited to the priorities and policies of the IISG partners/members.</i></p>	
<p>1. To what extent is the current IISG structure fit for purpose to reach the expected results and achievements?</p>	
<p>2. To what extent were the different stakeholders involved in the IISG?</p>	
<p>3. To what extent is the IISG relevant to the beneficiaries' needs?</p>	
<p>4. To what extent does the proposed Security Governance Hub model strengthen regional security coordination, integrated responses, and cooperation among Western Balkans partners and international stakeholders?</p>	
<p><b><i>Effectiveness and Efficiency</i></b></p> <p><i>The questions in this section focus on measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of the decision-making process, the fact of bringing the decision-making level from political to technical level and how this will affect the ACTION, the process of increasing the SGH participation through the access to the database, the Security Governance Hub model in better serving to the increase of regional cooperation on security, etc.</i></p>	
<p>5. To what extent were the planned short-term results achieved within the IISG? What were the contributing factors for achievement or non-achievement?</p>	
<p>6. To what extent were the IISG/SGH methodologies and coordination mechanisms appropriate for effective implementation of the Action and achievement of regional security objectives?</p>	

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<sup>2</sup> The evaluation questions will be reviewed and further refined by the Evaluation Team in the Inception Report.

7. To what extent are the governance, coordination, and decision-making mechanisms of the IISG/SGH effective and efficient?	
8. To what extent are the IISG/SGH databases, project mapping tools, and needs-assessment mechanisms functional, accessible, and strategically useful for regional coordination and donor alignment?	
9. To what extent has the IISG/SGH contributed to improved donor coordination, reduction of duplication, and identification of funding gaps in the Western Balkans security sector?	
<b><i>Sustainability</i></b> <i>Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of the IISG process are likely to continue after donor funding ends.</i>	
10. To what extent is the proposed Security Governance Hub institutionally and operationally sustainable under RCC coordination?	
11. To what extent is the IISG aligned with the policies and strategies of the Western Balkans partners? To what extent is the IISG integrated into central level mechanisms?	
<b><i>Partnerships and cooperation</i></b> <i>The evaluation assesses the partnerships and cooperation established throughout the IISG process as well as their functioning and value, including related processes for cooperation.</i>	
12. To what extent does the IISG/SGH contribute to regional policy coordination, strategic alignment, and operational cooperation among Western Balkans partners, EU institutions, and international stakeholders?	
13. Is there a process for cooperation and partnership under the IISG that is in place, relevant and appropriate?	
14. To what extent does the integration of IISG into the RCC framework improve regional coordination, donor alignment, and strategic coherence in the security sector?	
15. What modalities of cooperation with EU Justice and Home Affairs agencies are the most effective	

and sustainable for the future Security Governance Hub?	
<b><i>Lessons learned and best practices</i></b> <i>Lessons learned concern the learning experiences and insights that were gained throughout the project/programme.</i>	
16. What lessons learned and best practices from the IISG transition towards the Security Governance Hub can support future regional security governance and donor coordination mechanisms in the Western Balkans?	
17. What best practices can be identified from the implementation and setup for the future proposals of the IISG?	

The scope of the assignment includes the following tasks:

- Task 1: Meetings with the IISG Secretariat during the Inception phase. The structure of the final report will be provided;
- Task 2: Preliminary desk review of all relevant IISG documentation, as provided by the IISG team and as further requested by the evaluation team, as well as relevant external documents (e.g. EU local and regional strategies in the Western Balkans; CC documents related to security and to IISG; UN strategies; other relevant strategies and approaches in the region; reports, programme documents, thematic programmes/strategies, internal review reports, programme files, evaluation reports (if available), and any other documents);
- Task 3: Preparation and submission of an inception report (containing preliminary findings/hypotheses of the desk review, draft evaluation questions, data collection instruments, sampling strategy, limitations to the evaluation, and timetable) to the IISG Secretariat for review and clearance before any field mission takes place;
- Task 4: Initial meetings and interviews with the EU DG ENEST, DG HOME, EEAS, RCC representatives, and relevant stakeholders;
- Task 5: Analysis of all available information;
- Task 6: Preparation of the draft evaluation report. The evaluation team submits the draft report to the IISG Secretariat for review. Subsequently, the IISG Secretariat provides the comments to the evaluation team to prepare the final draft report;
- Task 7: Preparation and presentation of the final evaluation report and an Evaluation Brief. The evaluation team incorporates the necessary and requested changes and finalises the evaluation report in accordance with the feedback received. It further includes a PowerPoint presentation on final evaluation findings and recommendations.

## Lines of Communication

Following the completion of activities as defined in the timeframe for the deliverables under these ToR, a detailed report will be prepared and sent to the IISG Secretariat for review and approval.

### III. Timetable and deliverables

<i>Phases</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverables</i>
Phase/Task 1: Kick-off meeting with the IISG Secretariat	One working day / within the first week from the signing of the contract	July 2026 Report on the meeting
Phase /Task 2: Preliminary desk review	15 working days	3 <sup>rd</sup> – 24 <sup>th</sup> of August 2026 Key findings on the preliminary desk review
Phase /Task 3: Preparation/Submission of the inception report	5 working days from preliminary desk review	24 <sup>th</sup> - 31 <sup>st</sup> of August 2026 Draft inception report
Phase /Task 4: Initial meetings and interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Min. 20 semi-structured interviews</li> <li>Min. 50 received responses to the disseminated questionnaire</li> </ul>	15 working days	1 <sup>st</sup> – 21 <sup>st</sup> of September 2026  Reports from the meetings
Phase /Task 5: Analysis of all available information	15 working days	21 <sup>st</sup> of September – 12 <sup>th</sup> of October 2026 Draft analysis
Phase /Task 6: Preparation of the draft evaluation report	10 working days	12 <sup>th</sup> – 26 <sup>th</sup> of October 2026 1st draft of the evaluation report
Phase /Task 7: Preparation of the final evaluation report and an Evaluation Brief	5 days	26 <sup>th</sup> of October – 2 <sup>nd</sup> of November 2026 2nd (final) draft of the evaluation report including the comments from the stakeholders
Phase /Task 7 : Presentation of final evaluation	10 working days after the final report is briefed	16 <sup>th</sup> of November 2026 Final document presented to the IISG Secretariat

### III COMPETENCIES

#### Expert Qualifications:

#### Criteria related to the experts delivering the service

<b>Education:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Advanced degree in security and regional cooperation studies or other relevant area, PhD would be considered an asset</li> </ul>
<b>Experience:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ General experience with minimum 2 years in conducting external evaluations of projects, programmes and actions;</li> <li>▪ Experience in evaluating regional governance and donor coordination mechanisms in the Western Balkans and/or EU integration context;</li> <li>▪ In-depth knowledge of regional (institutional) coordination and implementation mechanisms;</li> <li>▪ Experience with EU-funded regional security initiatives;</li> <li>▪ Experience with OECD DAC evaluation methodology;</li> <li>▪ Knowledge of RCC and WB regional cooperation mechanisms;</li> <li>▪ Expertise in donor coordination and institutional governance;</li> <li>▪ Strong analytical skills and ability to clearly synthesize and present findings;</li> <li>▪ Demonstrable experience in writing and reporting on complex multi-sector or multi-economy strategy development and implementation;</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.</li> </ul>
<b>Other:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ N.A.</li> </ul>

#### Composition of the evaluation team:

Role	Number of consultants/ evaluators (local/international)	Specific expertise required and role in the process
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Team leader	Local / international evaluation expert	Experience in developing evaluation methodology and assessing governance mechanisms. Responsibility for the overall evaluation process <sup>3</sup> .
Team member(s)	Local / international experts	Expertise in the areas of countering terrorism, serious and organised crime; border/boundary security, and cybersecurity. Experience in the Western Balkans evaluations in similar field.

### **Core Values**

- Demonstrates integrity and fairness by modelling EU values and ethical standards;
- Independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities defined by the Terms of Reference.

## **IV QUALITY CONTROL**

The companies, consortia of experts should ensure an internal quality control during the implementing and reporting phase of the assignment. 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 hiring entity.

## **V. APPLICATION RULES**

The application needs to contain the following:

- Technical Offer;
- Financial Offer.

### **Technical Offer**

#### **For companies or consortia of 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 consulting companies);
- 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

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<sup>3</sup> The CV of the expert should contain the specific technical expertise needed.



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 authorisation, power of attorney must be attached to the bid;

- Financial records - company's balance sheet and profit-and-loss statement for the past 2 years (only in case of a bidding of consulting companies);
- CV of an expert(s), outlining relevant knowledge and experience as described in the Terms of References, along with contact details of referees;
- An outline work programme of a maximum of 5 pages that the applicant is applying for that will describe the main issues, sources of information to be used, timeline and methodology. The Work Programme should include the initial outline of the content of the work;
- List of references for relevant activities implemented over the past years demonstrating relevant experience in the subject matter;
- Signed Statements of Availability (Annex I).

### **Financial Offer (Free format)**

The financial offer should reflect the following:

- All figures should be expressed in EUR;

When preparing the financial offer, the applicant should consider the following:

- Use a free format for the Budget providing the Global Price for the work to be provided
- The fee rates should be broadly consistent with those applicable in the region

### **Submission of applications:**

**Applications need to be submitted by 29 June 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.

### **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:

<b>EVALUATION GRID</b>	<b>Maximum score</b>
<b>A. Technical Offer (A.1+A.2+A.3)</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>A.1. Work experience, references list:</b> Relevant work experience; evidence of other contracts of the size comparable with that of the tender; experience with clients comparable to the Contracting Authority.	25
<b>A.2. Quality and professional capacity of the consultant(s):</b> CV(s) satisfies the criteria set forth in the Terms of Reference, education and experience demonstrate professional capacity and experience required.	25
<b>A.3 Quality of the concept note:</b> 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.	50
<b>B. Financial Offer/ lowest price has maximum score</b>	<b>100</b>

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 may be held with the selected bidder.**

### **Information on selection of the most favourable bidder**

The RCC Secretariat, as the host entity of the IISG 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](mailto:ProcurementforRcc@rcc.int).

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: 050-026

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:

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

