

Open Call for Consulting Services

Subject: Common Regional Market Action Plan 2.0 / Human Capital Development

Title: **Regional Assessment of Facilitation of Labour Mobility and Work Permit Procedures in the Western Balkans Six (WB6)**

RCC Department: Programme Department

Eligible: Consortia of individual consultants or individual consultant (operating within a company or independently)

Reporting to: RCC Secretariat / Programme Department

Duration: June – August 2026

Deadline for application: 25 June 2026

Reference Number: 049-026

I. Background

The Common Regional Market Action Plan 2025-2028 (CRM 2.0), endorsed by the Western Balkans Six (WB6) Leaders, identifies labour mobility, skills development, and improved economic opportunities as important priorities for strengthening regional competitiveness and accelerating convergence with the European Union Single Market. Within the Human Capital Development pillar, CRM 2.0 foresees measures aimed at closing the skills gap, facilitating mobility of workers and professionals, and improving labour market adaptability across the region.

Building on progress achieved through regional mobility arrangements and recognition frameworks, the CRM 2.0 Action Plan envisages enabling “portability of social rights and more lenient approach to working permits issues within the WB6” under Measure 4.2 “Close the skills gap”.

While regional initiatives related to professional qualifications and social security coordination are being advanced through separate processes and instruments, additional attention is needed to assess administrative and regulatory barriers affecting intra-regional labour mobility and access to labour markets within the WB6.

Against the backdrop of demographic decline, labour shortages, skills mismatches, and increasing labour mobility pressures, WB6 are increasingly seeking practical approaches to

facilitate labour mobility while maintaining alignment with relevant EU approaches and practices related to labour market access and mobility of workers.

In this context, the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) seeks specialised technical assistance to conduct a regional assessment of existing legal, administrative, and institutional frameworks related to work permit procedures and labour market access within the WB6, and to identify practical options and recommendations for facilitating intra-regional labour mobility.

II. Objective and Scope of the Assignment

The objective of this assignment is to support the RCC in assessing existing frameworks, procedures, and barriers related to intra-WB6 labour mobility and work permit procedures, and to provide practical recommendations and policy options for facilitating access to labour markets within the WB6.

The assessment shall focus primarily on administrative and regulatory aspects related to labour market access and work permit procedures affecting workers moving within the WB6.

Where relevant, these processes may be referenced only to ensure complementarity and policy coherence.

The assessment is expected to:

- map and compare existing work permit regimes and administrative procedures across the WB6;
- identify barriers, bottlenecks, and inconsistencies affecting intra-regional labour mobility;
- identify practical options for administrative facilitation and simplification;
- review relevant EU approaches and selected comparative practices relevant to labour mobility facilitation;
- provide operational and policy recommendations for gradual facilitation of labour mobility within the WB6.

The assignment shall not duplicate ongoing regional processes related to:

- recognition of professional qualifications;
- social security coordination and portability of social rights;
- migration and asylum policy frameworks.

The assessment shall distinguish, where relevant, between administrative barriers related to labour market access and those arising from regulated professions and professional qualification recognition frameworks.

III. Description of Tasks

Under the direct supervision of the RCC Secretariat, the Consultant(s) shall undertake the following tasks:

- Conduct a regional comparative assessment of existing legal, administrative, and institutional frameworks related to work permit procedures and labour market access within the WB6; map and compare relevant procedures and practices, including: permit categories; documentation requirements; timelines and administrative procedures; institutional responsibilities; labour market tests; quotas and exemptions; employer

obligations; renewal procedures; digitalisation and interoperability aspects; and other relevant administrative elements affecting labour mobility;

- Identify administrative, regulatory, and practical barriers affecting intra-WB6 labour mobility from both worker and employer perspectives;
- Review relevant EU approaches and selected comparative regional practices related to labour mobility facilitation and administrative simplification;
- Conduct targeted consultations with relevant institutions and stakeholders across the WB6 to validate findings and identify practical facilitation needs and opportunities;
- Develop practical recommendations and possible policy options for facilitating labour mobility and simplifying work permit procedures within the WB6;
- Prepare and revise outputs in close coordination with the RCC Secretariat, including incorporation of comments and feedback received during consultations and review processes.

IV. Methodology

The Consultant(s) is expected to apply a methodology combining analytical review, comparative assessment, and stakeholder consultations to ensure that the resulting outputs are operationally feasible and aligned with regional labour market realities and policy priorities.

The methodology shall include:

- Desk review of relevant regional commitments, domestic legal and administrative frameworks, and existing practices related to labour mobility and work permit procedures within the WB6;
- Comparative analysis of existing procedures and administrative approaches across participating WB6;
- Review of relevant EU approaches and selected comparative regional practices related to labour market access and labour mobility facilitation;
- Targeted consultations with relevant institutions, labour market authorities, employers' organisations, chambers, and other relevant stakeholders;
- Iterative drafting and refinement of outputs in close coordination with the RCC Secretariat, including incorporation of feedback received during consultations and technical review processes.

The methodology shall ensure that the resulting outputs remain practical, proportionate, and operationally relevant while respecting domestic competences and differing levels of administrative readiness across the WB6.

The assessment shall focus on administrative and procedural aspects directly affecting intra-WB6 labour mobility, rather than broader labour market reform issues.

V. Expected Outputs

Under this assignment, the Consultant(s) shall deliver the following outputs:

- Inception Note: outlining the proposed scope, methodology, work plan, and structure of the assessment;
- Draft Regional Assessment Report, providing:

a comparative overview of existing work permit procedures and labour market access frameworks across the WB6; identification of administrative and regulatory barriers affecting intra-WB6 labour mobility; analysis of relevant EU approaches and comparative practices; practical recommendations and policy options for facilitating labour mobility and simplifying administrative procedures;

- Summary Note – consolidating feedback received during consultations and indicating how comments and inputs were addressed in the revised draft;
- Final Consolidated Assessment Report – incorporating comments and revisions and suitable for circulation and further policy consideration within the CRM 2.0 implementation framework.

VI. Indicative Timeline

Phase	Period	Key Activities	Deliverables
1. Inception and scoping	Late June 2026	Kick-off meeting with RCC Secretariat; review of relevant materials; confirmation of methodology and work plan	Inception Note
2. Comparative assessment & consultations	July 2026	Comparative review of legal and administrative frameworks; stakeholder consultations; drafting of assessment	Draft Regional Assessment Report
3. Revision & finalisation	August 2026	Incorporation of feedback; revision and consolidation of outputs	Final Consolidated Assessment Report

VII. Profile of the Consultant(s)

Core Qualifications

- Advanced university degree in law, public policy, labour market policy, economics, public administration, European studies, or another relevant discipline;
- Minimum seven years of progressively responsible professional experience in labour mobility, labour market regulation, employment policy, labour migration administration, or related areas;
- Demonstrated experience in conducting comparative legal, policy, or administrative assessments;
- Experience working on EU-related policy frameworks, regional cooperation initiatives, or labour mobility issues in EU accession or regional cooperation contexts;

- Excellent analytical and drafting skills in English.

Desirable Expertise

- Knowledge of relevant EU approaches related to labour mobility and labour market access, including Chapter 2 - Freedom of Movement for Workers and relevant administrative facilitation practices;
- Familiarity with labour market and mobility challenges in the Western Balkans;
- Experience working with governments, regional organisations, international organisations, or labour market institutions;
- Experience conducting stakeholder consultations and preparing policy-oriented analytical reports;
- Knowledge of one or more regional languages will be considered an asset.

VIII. Application rules

The application needs to contain the following:

- **Technical Offer**
- **Financial Offer**

Technical Offer

The technical offer needs to contain the following:

- CV of the consultant(s) outlining relevant knowledge and professional experience as required in the Terms of Reference, including contact details of referees;
- List of references demonstrating relevant experience in social security coordination, administrative cooperation, or related assignments;
- An outline work programme of a maximum of 4 pages describing the proposed approach, methodology, timeline, and key steps for development of the Assessment;
- Signed Statement of Availability (Annex I).

Applications may be submitted by individual experts or by more than one expert contributing to different aspects of the assignment. In such cases, applicants should clearly indicate the scope of their contribution, i.e. the specific task(s) to which their contribution relates.

Financial Offer

The financial offer should reflect the following:

A single total price for the assignment expressed in EUR.

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

- Budget shall be provided in free format indicating the total cost of services;
- Fee rates should be broadly consistent with those applicable in the region.

Total available budget for this activity shall not exceed EUR 10,000.

Submission of Applications

Applications need to be submitted by **25 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.

IX 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) 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
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