

Roma Integration

Reference number: 015-022
Open Call for Professional Services

Terms of Reference:	Promoting changing narratives towards Roma integration
Contracting Authority:	Regional Cooperation Council Secretariat
RCC Department:	Roma Integration 2020 Action Team
Reporting to:	Roma Integration 2020 Action Team Leader
Application Deadline:	11 February 2022
Timeframe:	February 2022 – June 2022
Duration:	4 months
Eligible:	Consortia or individual entities, media agencies, news agencies, newspapers, magazines, radio stations, television stations, Internet portals whose reporting covers Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia and/or Serbia and is in language spoken in the respective economies.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

I. BACKGROUND

Purpose

The purpose of this assignment is to encourage media to promote unity and open space for discussions, objectiveness and positive narratives on Roma integration as the first objective. The second objective of this call is to support the communication and visibility action of the Roma Integration project.

Changing Roma narratives in media is a community-media partnership that aims to change adverse racial and discriminatory narratives and their representation in the society by promoting truthful, objective and constructive information presented to the public in a friendly way.

Visibility and communication actions are aimed at strengthening public awareness of the risks and losses from social exclusion and increased xenophobia and negative perceptions of Roma that were further increased during COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, including specific observations related to the situation amongst Roma population in the mainstream articles such as employment, housing, education, health, civil registration, non-discrimination, and EU enlargement process is of the utmost importance, as well as including opinions and observations of different representatives that deal with Roma specific issues, both from Roma organisations and government representatives.

Background Information

The Roma Integration action is implemented by the Regional Cooperation Council's (RCC) Roma Integration Action Team. It is funded by the European Union and the Open Society Foundations. The action is in line with the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies and the EU accession process.

The overall objective of the Roma Integration action is to contribute to reducing the socio-economic gap between the Roma¹ and non-Roma population in the Western Balkans and Turkey in the areas of employment and housing, as well as education, health, civil registration and non-discrimination. Specifically, the action supports the governments in the region to increase the implementation rate and budgetary allocations for Roma integration policies through:

- direct support and technical assistance to the governments to advance existing institutional and policy mechanisms and policy framework for Roma integration, including promotion of proper budgeting, monitoring and reporting;
- annual assistance to reporting and review of reports in line with the EU reporting;
- direct support and technical assistance to the governments for mainstreaming Roma integration into relevant sectoral policies and reforms, and implementation of effective measures, particularly in employment and housing;
- National Platforms on Roma integration issues;
- regional fact-finding analyses and informed regional discussions through conferences for exchange of knowledge and regional standard setting;
- participation and input at EU level processes related to Roma issues;
- mainstreaming Roma issues within the core work of RCC;
- media dissemination activities challenging negative narratives on Roma integration, as well as action's visibility activities;
- regular high level/task force discussions on Roma issues at regional level.

¹ The term "Roma" within the action is used in line with the EU terminology, as an umbrella term which includes groups of people who have more or less similar cultural characteristics, such as Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians, Dom, Lom, Sinti, Travellers, Kalé, Gens du voyage, etc., whether sedentary or not.

In October 2020, the European Commission presented the new EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation. While the previous framework focused primarily on socio-economic integration, the new reinforced and reformed EU Roma strategic framework sets out a comprehensive three-pillar approach. This approach complements the socio-economic inclusion of marginalised Roma with fostering equality and promoting participation, stressing out that all Roma should have the opportunity to realise their full potential and engage in political, social, economic and cultural life. Therefore, the topic of discrimination and antigypsyism is put very high on the agenda, being a root of all challenges Roma face. Therefore, together with the above mentioned activities, the Action Team specifically works on the topic of antigypsyism, for which the media support is particularly helpful.

II. DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Objectives and scope of the assignment

The objective is to ensure public presence of important topics targeting Roma in all spheres and policies of the Western Balkans as well as strengthen narratives that will raise public awareness against discrimination of Roma and xenophobia in a way that is objective, appealing and outreaching.

The selected entity or entities should analyse the situation within Roma population in the areas defined in the Poznan Declaration: employment, housing, education, health, civil registration, non-discrimination, and include their analysis in their mainstream articles about the given topics. Alongside with the areas defined in the Poznan Declaration, the selected entity or entities should reflect on other topics such as EU enlargement and negotiations, green agenda (access to water, waste collection, recycling, circular economy, air pollution, heating of houses), digital agenda (access to internet/hotspots, registration of online business/entrepreneurship, online education and skills), and position of Roma in these areas. They should also initiate conversations with different representatives that deal with Roma specific issues, both from Roma organisations and government representatives, and include their opinions in the articles. The selected entity or entities should also take action on: enhancing public awareness about progress of the Western Balkans towards the EU and the Roma inclusion within that process; public awareness and understanding of Roma integration process and different aspects and perceptions of this process; public awareness and understanding of different roles of key actions and main stakeholders (communities, EU bodies, governments, civil society); and promoting positive change in narratives related to Roma.

Therefore, it is expected that this assignment will advocate the work done by the Roma Integration project among the wider public by ensuring that:

- The work and cooperation with the project stakeholders is promoted (such as National Roma Contact Points, Roma and pro-Roma civil society organisations);
- The key issues advocated by the Roma Integration Action Team are highlighted (particularly Declaration of Western Balkans partners on Roma Integration within the EU enlargement process/Poznan Declaration);
- The work of Roma Integration Action Team is promoted.

This is expected to be achieved via interviews, articles, objective news, and other forms of information dissemination.

The media coverage should be in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia, and/or Serbia.

Tasks

As part of this assignment the selected entity is to:

- gather information, write articles, research and present the information in an honest and balanced manner to the public;
- include issues of Roma integration in their mainstream articles;
- contact different representatives of governmental and non-governmental organisations that have wide knowledge about different Roma related issues and include their observations in the articles;
- touch upon the topics of social inequality and politics of Roma representation in the Western Balkans, and in particular in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia and/or Serbia;
- present expert knowledge and viewpoints on the issues of Roma integration;
- initiate public and political discourses among various stakeholders;
- ensure Roma presentation and share positive life stories;
- take part in events organised by the Roma Integration Action Team;
- make a summary rate of interest shown for the topic.

Deliverables

The selected entity should be able to provide at least five (6) published targeted or mainstream articles on the mentioned topics regarding Roma inclusion, out of which one (1) should be front page covers for printed media, or featured news for online media, or broadcasted in prime time for television/radio.

Lines of Communication and Reporting

The selected entity will work closely with the Action Team, which shall provide guidance to efficiently conduct the work and approve deliverables. The Action Team shall ensure the required communication is disseminated to designated officials and partners.

Timeframe

The Roma Integration Action Team will engage an entity in the period from **25 February 2022 to 25 June 2022**.

PROFILE AND COMPETENCIES

Qualifications

Experience:	Minimum 3 years of relevant experience; Working and covering topics in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia, and Serbia in the languages spoken in the respective economies; Familiarity with national strategies on Roma integration; Proven record of expertise in reporting on public policy preferably on Roma integration or/and another relevant policy; Integrity, authenticity and transparency in reporting; Mass media products involving autonomous professionals.
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Language requirements:	Fluency in English, as the official language of the RCC; Fluency in the languages spoken in the Western Balkan region.
Other:	To provide services that inform, educate, enlighten and enrich the public and help inform civil discourse.

Core Values and Competencies

- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability;
- Demonstrates professional competence to meet responsibilities deadlines;
- Generates innovative and practical storytelling to challenging situations;
- Ability and integrity to perform the tasks impartially and objectively, without any conflict of interest.

III. QUALITY CONTROL

The selected entity should ensure an internal quality control during the engagement. The quality control should ensure that the deliverables comply with the agreed requirements and meet adequate quality standards. Deliverables, particularly written articles and content when mentioning or quoting the involved parties such as RCC, Roma Integration, Open Society Foundations and the EU Commission should reflect the views of the stakeholders and is owned by them.

IV. APPLICATION RULES

The application needs to contain the following:

- Financial offer, in a free format, with the budget breakdown per month;
- Entity profile including a brief description (up to 2 pages) of the entity. In case of a bidding consortium, the team leader should submit the profile of the consortium;
- Copy of Entity's Registration Certificate. In case of a bidding consortium, a corresponding written authorisation, power of attorney is treated accordingly;
- Information on targeted group of media, in case of media outlet applications;
- List of references for relevant activities implemented over the past 3 years demonstrating relevant experience in the subject matter.

Applications need to be submitted by **11 February 2022** to the following address ProcurementforRCC@rcc.int

The applications will be evaluated on the basis of price, entity profile, targeted audience in case of media outlet application, and list of references.

Competency based interview will be held with short listed applicants.

NOTE:

In accordance with the status in the Diplomatic Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, the Regional Cooperation Council Roma Integration Action Team is entitled to exemption from paying VAT and customs duties in Serbia.

No advance payment is foreseen.

The financial offer should present the price both with and without VAT.

ANNEX I:

APPLICATION SUBMISSION FORM

Open Call for Consultancy Services: 015-022

Promoting changing narratives towards Roma integration

One signed copy of this Call for Consultancy Submission Form must be supplied.

1 SUBMITTED by:

Name of the Entity	
Address	
Telephone	
Fax	
e-mail	

2. STATEMENT

[Name of the Authorised person representing the Entity] _____ hereby declares that we have examined and accepted without reserve or restriction the entire contents of the Open Call for Experts, Grounds for Exclusions and Conflict of Interest as such:

Grounds for exclusion

Candidates or bidders will be excluded from participation in a procurement procedure if it is known that:

- (a) They are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- (b) They have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of res judicata;
- (c) They have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the Contracting Officer can justify;
- (d) They have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are

established or with those of the country of the Contracting Officer or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;

- (e) They have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity.

Contracts may not be awarded to candidates or bidders who, during the procurement procedure, are:

- (a) Subject to a conflict of interest;
- (b) Guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the Contracting Officer as a condition of participation in the contract procedure or fail to supply this information.

Conflict of Interest

- a) The Contractor shall take all necessary measures to prevent or end any situation that could compromise the impartial and objective performance of the contract. Such conflict of interests could arise in particular as a result of economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties, or any other relevant connection or shared interest. Any conflict of interests which could arise during performance of the contract must be notified in writing to the Contracting Authority without delay.
- b) The Contracting Authority reserves the right to verify that such measures are adequate and may require additional measures to be taken if necessary. The Consultant shall ensure that their staff, including its management, are not placed in a situation which could give rise to conflict of interests. The Consultant shall replace, immediately and without compensation from the Contracting Authority, any member of its staff exposed to such a situation.
- c) The Contractor shall refrain from any contact which would compromise its independence or that of its personnel. If the Contractor fails to maintain such independence, the Contracting Authority may, without prejudice to compensation for any damage which it may have suffered on this account, terminate the contract forthwith.
- d) The Contractor shall, after the conclusion or termination of the contract, limit its role in connection with the project to the provision of the services. Except with the written permission of the Contracting Authority, the Contractor and any other contractor or supplier with whom the Contractor is associated or affiliated shall be disqualified from the execution of works, supplies or other services for the project in any capacity, including tendering for any part of the project.
- e) Civil servants and other agents of the public administration of the RCC Participants, regardless of their administrative situation, shall not be recruited as experts in contracts financed by the RCC Secretariat.
- f) The Contractor and anyone working under its authority or control in the performance of the contract or on any other activity shall be excluded from access to RCC Secretariat financing available under the same project unless they can prove to the Contracting Authority that the involvement in previous stages of the project does not constitute unfair competition.

We offer to provide the services requested in the Terms of Reference on the basis of supplied documentation subject to this Open Call for Consultancy Services, which comprise our technical offer, and our financial offer.

This Open Call for Consultancy Services is subject to acceptance within the validity period stipulated in the Terms of Reference.

Name and Surname of the Authorized Person Representing the Entity	
Signature	
Date	