

Terms of Reference

Regional Expert - Support for creation of a Report addressing Digital Transformation in the WBs with special reference to e-public services

Title	Regional Expert
Type	Service contract
Application Deadline	15 December 2022
Reference/Contractor	POLICY ANSWERS
Contacts	Project lead, contact for this agreement: Sanja Damjanovic (s.damjanovic@gsi.de)
Eligible:	Organizations or Individual consultant

1 Introduction and Background

POLICY ANSWERS R&I POLICY making, implementation AND Support in the WEsteRn BalkanS) is a project funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101058873.

POLICY ANSWERS (supports policy coordination in the Western Balkans and with the EC and the EU. 14 partner organisations, representing network nodes in the region and EU expert organisations, support policy dialogue through formal meetings (such as ministerial and steering platform and ad-hoc policy meetings), monitoring and agenda setting, capacity building and implementation of the EU's Western Balkan Agenda, as well as the alignment of thematic priorities. The project implements regional pilot activities and offers an information hub based on the westernbalkans-infohub.eu online information platform. The partners provide analytical evidence via monitoring and mapping activities of the stakeholder ecosystem, of the implementation of the Western Balkans Agenda and of the Western Balkans' integration into the European Research Area as well as via strategic foresight.

POLICY ANSWERS also allows for tailored and targeted capacity building activities in the Western Balkans as well as regional alignment of priorities in relation to the digital transformation, the green agenda and towards healthy societies. Pilot activities provide learning opportunities on policy and programme level and reach out to final beneficiaries related to improved academia-industry cooperation, researcher mobility, inclusion of youth in policy processes, promotion of research infrastructures and increased innovation skills in all areas.

This activity aims to provide comprehensive profiles of the WB economies (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*¹, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia) indicating the current situation and policy recommendations for decision makers in the region, addressing the Digital transformation in general, with special reference to e-Government strategy and e-public services, which is one of the key EU priorities and part of the Digital Compass proposed by the EC (Work Package 4 of the project, Tasks 4.1). This call and relevant activities are coordinated by the GSI Helmholtzzentrum fuer Schwerionenforschung GmbH (GSI) in cooperation with all participating partners.

Detailed information about the activities is available at the following website www.westernbalkans-infohub.eu.

Upon award of the service contract, the contracting institution will share further information.

2 Description of the Scope and Purpose of the Service

This call requests the provision of the following services for ‘Regional Expert - Support for creation of a Report addressing Digital Transformation in the WBs with special reference to e-public services’, in detail the following work shall be carried out:

- Conduct studies on each economy in the WBs on the framework conditions, such as infrastructures, legislations, national policies and practices as well as human resources for e-Government and digitalization of public services aligned with the Digital compass proposed by the EC. Study will include the framework of e-business in public administration, addressing the legislation framework for the development and implementation of e-government services, e-payment and trust services; development of infrastructure and architecture of e-government; analysis of types of e-government services, stages of planning and implementation of e-government;
- Create a set of recommendations per WB economy in terms of challenges and effects, emphasizing in particular the best e-Government projects and services and their impact on society and the economy;
- Provide a set of recommendations based on obstacles and barriers in the development of e-government and those which affect the efficiency of the functioning of already developed e-services;
- Share and discuss the initial findings with relevant stakeholders within an event to be organized by POLICY ANSWERS, collect comments and recommendations; Revise the findings based on feedback received.

¹ 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.

- Submit a final report with all reference materials which includes chapters for each WB economy, underline recommendations per economy, but also draw out recommendations on regional level.

Methodology

The proposed methodology for the service is:

- Desk research
- Interviews with minimum 12 (twelve) key experts (two interviews per WB economy) and 2 experts from EU member countries representing good practice examples

Expected Deliverables

Please note that the materials used in the framework of this service shall be published on the project website (www.westernbalkans-infohub.eu) and, unless otherwise agreed in writing, made available under open creative commons license CC-BY (see <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>).

Implementation period

1 February 2023 to 31 December 2023 - Bilateral meetings between the regional expert and the contractor can be organized during the implementation period based on a need or request.

Indicative Timetable and Milestones

Call opening	18 November 2022
Deadline for Submission	15 December 2022
Assessment	10 January 2023
Information on Assessment Results	20 January 2023
Signature of agreement	31 January 2023
Service Implementation	February 1- December 31, 2023
Interim Payment (40% of the total budget)	30 July 2023
Final Payment	31 December 2023

Milestones related to Service Implementation

Milestone to be achieved	Weight in total	Deadline
M1- Detailed work plan to be agreed	10%	February 2023
M2- Progress report (2-6 pages)	25%	April 2023
M3- Interim report for each WB economy, including brief interview results (5-10 pages)	40%	July 2023
M4- Stakeholder Conference- Presentation of the initial findings; conducting discussions and collect comments and recommendations	60%	September 2023
M5 Draft report	80%	17 November 2023
M6 Final reports (approx. 15-20 pages) plus references, interview documentation, presentations	100%	15 December 2023

Language

Working language is English

Quality Assurance

The service provider shall perform the service with reasonable care and skills and in accordance with the best commercial practices and standards in the industry of similar services. Milestones indicated above are used for performance evaluation. Each Milestone has to be accepted by the Contractor before continuing the next activities. If the quality or progress do not match the agreed standards, Contractor reserve the right to terminate the contract. In such cases, due payment will be calculated according to the completion of the work, as indicated above (*Weight in total*). Unless otherwise is agreed with the Contractor, delays are not acceptable and will be considered as not achieving the quality criteria.

Funding and Reimbursement

The maximum budget is 10 000 EURO for the above described tasks within this service contract. This lump-sum budget includes the service fee, travel and daily allowances for the travel to the relevant events, interviews as well as VAT and any other taxes and duties. No additional payment will be made.

This Service will be funded by the POLICY ANSWERS project². This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101058873 for the project "R&I POLICY making, implementation and support in the Western Balkans" (POLICY ANSWERS).

² www.westernbalkans-infohub.eu

3 Application, selection, contracting and payment procedure

Required qualification/skills/experiences of the Service Provider

- Education: Masters degree in fields relevant for the assignment. PhD is an advantage.
- Experience: Experience in working with research and innovation relevant stakeholders in the Western Balkans and/or EU. Proven knowledge of the region. Proven analytical skills. Proven experience in report writing. Proven communication skills working with different stakeholders.
- Language requirements: Excellent English written and spoken; advanced knowledge of a local language spoken in the WB region is also a must.

Submission of Application

Applications must be submitted online until December 15, 2022 by the following link: [Online Application form](#)

The form must be filled out thoroughly. The following documents are to be submitted additionally via e-mail to Sanja Damjanovic s.damjanovic@gsi.de and policy-answers@westernbalkans-infohub.eu

- Max. 3-4 pages implementation plan
- CV including information on work experiences, skills and qualifications;
- Related references from previous work
- Price offer

Deadline for the submission of the online application as well as accompanying documents via e-mail with referencing to this ToR is **December 15, 2022, 17:00 CET**

Selection

The selection will be based on the completeness of the application, price, corresponding competences of the applicant as well as convincing implementation plan. References will be reviewed additionally. Telephone interviews with suitable candidates can be held between 18 December 2022 and 6 January 2023, if deemed necessary.

The Contractor reserves the right not to place any order. Costs for necessary document preparation by the Applicants to this call for tender will not be reimbursed.

Contracting procedure for Service Provider

The selected expert will be informed until **January 20, 2023** on the result of the selection procedure. The service provider will sign an agreement with the Contractor, latest by **January 31, 2023**. The duration of the contract will last from **February 1 until December 31, 2023**.

Completion of the Service & Payment

Service will be carried out as outlined under ***Indicative Timetable and Milestones***, and considering the quality assurance. 40% of the total sum will be paid in July 2023 as interim payment, upon successful completion of the Milestone 3- Interim report including brief interview results (5-10 pages). If the contract has to be terminated during the service period due to not achieving one or more Milestones and other quality concerns, then the payment will be done only for the completed work, according to the weight indicated for each Milestone.