

TERMS OF REFERENCES

External expertise & services for drafting Report on the analysis of the transnational enabling factors for innovation implementation in SMEs

1. Services to be provided

The services required by the project Increasing the innovation capacity of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME Innovation Capacity Boost), Ref. No. SMEs / BMD 1 / 1.2 / 2481/2017 under the Balkans - Mediterranean program for the period 2014-2020, and partner RECS as contracting authority of this tender, are described below:

Beneficiary countries

Republic of North Macedonia

Project Context

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the BM Region experience hardships in realizing their innovative potential - markets are fragmented, transfer of know-how is under optimal levels and understanding within SMEs regarding innovations needs to be raised. According to the Global Innovation Index for 2015, covering a period of 3 years 2012-2014, RN Macedonia ranks on 56th place, Greece on 45th, Bulgaria on 39th, Albania on 87th, and Cyprus on 34th place out of 141 countries. This information shows that the innovation capacity and potential need to be strengthened in the BM Region and that there is a gap between the countries involved in the project - EU Members possess higher innovation capacity than IPA countries. In addition, since SMEs are the backbone of the European economy, the target of the current project is narrowed to innovations in this size class, including micro, small and medium enterprises.

The project approach is to reduce the innovations gap in the region by combining joint efforts of the partners in equalizing the misbalances between EU and IPA countries and leverage on them to boost innovations in SMEs on transnational level though enabling factors and innovations cauterization. The relevance of the project to the challenges in the program area results from the general outputs and new solutions from the project, namely:

- Sustainable and insightful government statistics regarding **key enabling factors for SME innovations, customized from an implemented information needs analysis of**

the SMEs - new statistical survey that will provide information to public and private sector to reduce the innovation gap

- Free, easily accessible Self-assessment tool for benchmarking each SME standing in the BM **entrepreneurial ecosystem** in the relevant sector - building knowledge and understanding with SMEs management on the importance of innovations and provision of relevant tools to benchmark and take necessary steps to boost innovation or attract external innovation
- Recommender **cluster system for proposing of innovation transnational clusters** that will facilitate the easier and more qualitative proof-of-concept and innovation development - a tool that facilitates networking and transfer of know-how and supports the defragmentation of markets in the Balkan Med region

Project Objectives

The objective of the project is to boost transnational innovation capacity of SMEs and support them to make sustainable network formations, including innovation clusters with other SMEs from the BM region in order to share know how and develop innovations, through bringing together triple helix partners and equipping SMEs with relevant data, tools and systems.

The link between program and project objectives has two aspects.

The first aspect is related to more competitive BM area. The project's general objective is to untap innovation potential within SMEs by making them more self-aware of the importance of innovation strategies and boost regional innovation capacity by the recommendation of innovation clusters at transnational level.

The second aspect is related to the promotion of integrated territorial development. The project envisages for 10 partners from the 5 countries, both EU and IPA member states to collaborate, share experiences and develop innovation tools together.

The innovation clusters that are included in the overall objective of the project will have a transnational effect as they are going to comprise of SMEs from the project partner states and will build on synergies of various SMEs.

Project specific objectives (PSOs) are:

PSO1: Boost SME competitiveness by increasing knowledge and understanding of current innovation capacity and strengthening SME capacity by providing the necessary toolkit and strategies - relevant to SO 1.2 in the part unleashing territorial potential

PSO2: Enable know-how sharing and networking and reduction of the innovations gap by suggesting transnational cluster formations - relevant to SO 1.2 in the part improve the transnational innovation capacity

PSO3: Support policy makers in fact-based decision-making in the area of innovations by providing statistical data for benchmarking on transnational, national, sectoral and SME level - relevant to SO 1.2 in the part improve the transnational innovation capacity

Project activities

WP/	WP/Deliverable Title
WP 1	Project Management & Coordination
WP 2	Project Communication & Dissemination
WP 3	Statistical information for benchmarking
WP 4	Self-assessment tool (SAT)
WP 5	Transnational Innovation Clusters
WP 6	Enabling factors for the successful innovator

2. OBJECTIVE, PURPOSE & EXPECTED RESULTS

The external expertise and services for drafting Report on the analysis of the transnational enabling factors for innovation implementation in SMEs following deliverables from WP 3, WP 4 and WP 5. **WP 3** aimed to collect data relevant for SMEs innovations and to be used later on for benchmarking and as well for policymaking. The WP 3 deliverable is Dataset with matched data and tabulation. **WP4 Self-assessment tool (SAT)** aimed to develop unified self-assessment tool for innovation capacity of SMEs. The SAT is unified, transnational and applicable to SMEs in all BM countries. A Manual for the application of the SAT was developed as well. WP 4 deliverables to be used in the assignment are developed 10 Innovation Action Plans for SMEs that provided the recommended steps for developing and implementing innovations. **WP 5: Transnational Innovation Clusters** will leverage on the developed tools and gathered information from the previous WPs and will add value by ensuring the transnational effect to the project. WP 5 deliverables are:

- Developed Recommender System for formation of transnational innovation clusters
- Recommended composition of formation of pilot transnational innovation clusters in the project countries.

Objective of the assignment

Based on data contained in deliverables from WP 3, 4 and 5, to analyze the enabling factors for transnational innovation clusters.

The specific objective is to draft Report with recommendations.

Purpose

The purpose of the assignment is to identify the key enabling factors that will provide principles for sustainability of transnational clusters and for preparation of Guide for successful innovators.

Results to be achieved by the Service Provider

The Service Provider shall provide following results:

- Analyzed deliverables from WP 3,4 and 5 and assessment enabling factors for Republic of North Macedonia;
- Report on the analysis of the transnational enabling factors for innovation implementation in SMEs, written and delivered

The above-mentioned results should provide recommendations for transnational innovation clusters.

The contractor will have implemented the assignment tasks in close cooperation with project team.

3. SCOPE OF THE WORK

Description of the assignment

Based on the above-described objectives of the assignments, under the supervision of project team the Service provider through the engagement of at least 1 expert, will ensure expert services for drafting Report on the analysis of the transnational enabling factors for innovation implementation in SMEs.

The tasks that shall be carried out as follows:

- Analyzing of deliverables from WP 3, 4 and 5 and identification of enabling factors for transnational clusters;
- Assessment of enabling factors to be take into consideration for Republic of North Macedonia;
- Deliver a Report on the analysis of the transnational enabling factors for innovation implementation in SMEs.

The contractor will implement those three tasks in close cooperation with project team. Language of the Report is English.

Timing: the assignment has to be completed within a period starting from the date of signing of Contract; until 26th of October 2020

Outputs

- Report on the analysis of the transnational enabling factors for innovation implementation in SMEs.

Responsible body

The experts of the Service provider are responsible for all activities and delivery of results regarding this Contract with the support of Contracting Authority

4. LOGISTICS AND TIMING

Location

The tasks will be carried out on the territories of the Republic of North Macedonia.

Start date & period of the implementation of tasks

The Contractor will have to complete the task by the end of October 2020

5. REQUIREMENTS

Consultancy

- To be registered minimum 3 years (proof: Current Condition Central Register)
- At least 3 years of experience in carrying out research/survey, working with the private sector clusters and ICT companies

It will be taken as advantages

- Report related to ICT sectors.

Experts

The assignment shall be undertaken by a Consulting Organization which will offer at least one expert that shall comply to the requirements.

The **Expert** engaged to undertake the assignment must fulfil the following minimum requirements:

- At least University Degree (preference economics, business and administration, law, finance), MA and PhD will be considered as an asset;
- At least 3 years of expertise in the areas of: entrepreneurship, business plan development, innovation and access to finance for SMEs (proof CV)

Competencies

- Excellent communications and facilitation skills;
- Excellent analytical, presentation and writing skills.

Language Requirements

- English, fluent in both written and oral

Note that civil servants and other staff of the public administration of the beneficiary country cannot be proposed as experts, unless prior written approval has been obtained from the European Commission. All experts must be independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities they take on.

Participation and sub-contracting

Participation in tendering is open to the legal persons, identified at the heading of the invitation and to whom this invitation has been dispatched by email.

Sub-contracting is not allowed.

6. Offer preparation

Language of tenders

The offers, all correspondence and documents related to the tender, exchanged by the tenderer and Project Team must be written in English language.

Period during which tenders are binding

Tenderers are bound by their tenders for 90 days after the deadline for the submission of tenders.

Additional information before the deadline for submission of tenders

Tenderers may submit questions in writing to the following address, specifying the reference and the procurement title:

Foundation for development of SME's – Skopje (RECS-Skopje)

Email: recs@recs.org.mk or telephone: ++381 02 3239 053

Contact person: Svetlana Kirevska

7. Submission of tenders

Tenders **must be received** before **12.00 CET on 07.10.2020**. Tenders must be submitted either by **recorded delivery** (official postal service) with acknowledgment of receipt, or **hand-delivered** (including courier services) against receipt signed by the contracting authority or its representative to: Foundation for development of SME's – Skopje (RECS-Skopje), Str. Mirce Acev n.4 (OGUDU Koco Racin Skopje – office n.48), **1000 Skopje**,

Or by email: recs@recs.org.mk, subject **Report on the analysis of enabling factors**.

Content of tenders

Failure to fulfill the below requirements will constitute an irregularity and may result in rejection of the tender. All tenders submitted must comprise:

- (1) Expression of Interest , including Experience, Methodology and Timetable**
- (2) Current condition Central Register**
- (3) List of experts and CV**
- (4) Financial Offer. Please note that the budget (financial offer) must be provided in EUR with prices without VAT and that you may submit only one offer per this invitation.**
- (5) Financial Identification Form**
- (6) Entity Identification Form**

Tenderers must use the templates provided for points from 3 to 6 with the invitation to tender.

Tenderers are reminded that the provision of false information in this tender procedure may lead to their exclusion from other contracts with the RECS.

The price of the service may not exceed **EUR 7.000,00** excluding VAT.

Payments

Payments under this procurement will be made in Macedonian dinars. No advance payment will be executed in favor of the winner of this procurement procedure.

Payments will be carried out only upon the satisfactory delivery of the Report.

8. Award

Evaluation Grid

	Maximum
ORGANIZATION & METHODOLOGY	
Timetable of activities, including the number of expert days proposed	20
Total score for organization and methodology	20
EXPERTS	
Expert 1 (Max 50 points)	
Qualifications and skills	25
Professional experience	25
Total score for key experts	50
PRICE	30
Overall total score	100

The contract should be signed by 08.10.2020 at the latest and the work should start immediately thereafter until the deadline at the end of October 2020.

The tenderer being administratively compliant and offering the best value for money will be awarded this procurement procedure.

9. Appeals

Tenderers believing that they have been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may file a complaint.



Svetlana Kirevska
Project Manager