

# Terms of Reference

## Expert promoting EU funding opportunities for companies

Title	Promote EU funding opportunities for companies
Application Deadline	October 15
Reference	POLICY ANSWERS-
Contacts	Legal representative: Wolfgang Michalek ( <a href="mailto:michalek@zsi.at">michalek@zsi.at</a> ) Project lead, contact for this agreement: Elke Dall and Desiree Pecarz ( <a href="mailto:policy-answers@westernbalkans-infohub.eu">policy-answers@westernbalkans-infohub.eu</a> ; <a href="mailto:dall@zsi.at">dall@zsi.at</a> ; <a href="mailto:pecarz@zsi.at">pecarz@zsi.at</a> )

### 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](http://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 is placed in the frame of the targeted capacity building activities (Work Package 3 of the project) in ALBANIA (Task 3.1) which is coordinated by

Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI) in cooperation with the National Agency for Research and Innovation (NASRI) as Associated Partner.

Horizon Europe and other EU programmes offer a series of opportunities for SMEs, such as the EIC or the EIT. Furthermore, Albania allocated 100.000 euro to the EUREKA call. EUREKA, COST and other stakeholders are interested in supporting the region in its participation. Albanian stakeholders such as NASRI as NCP for Horizon Europe and EUREKA, SME owners, innovation managers, chambers of commerce as well as stakeholders abroad need to be systematically addressed in order to improve the uptake as the opportunities have so far not been taken up by the Albanian SMEs. There is a lack of awareness on the one hand and implementation capacities on the other side. The pipeline of projects in the SME sector needs to be further supported and pushed, and SME absorption capacities need to be strengthened.

Thus, more hands-on support for companies to address the opportunities is needed, providing individual guidance e.g. on partner search and proposal preparation.

Detailed information about the activities is available at the following website [www.westernbalkans-infohub.eu](http://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 [repeat title of the service], in detail the following work shall be carried out:

- The service provider shall support matchmaking by exploiting existing services and cooperation platforms (EUREKA Association, EEN, clusters, EIT, COST, EU4TECH, etc.) and developing new guidance with the aim of sparking the submission of joint proposals.
- The service provider shall match Albanian companies with their international peers e.g. in countries eligible to apply for Horizon Europe, EIT, EUREKA, COST to be able to jointly apply for innovation funding. The service provider shall support SMEs who do not have the capacity to actively search cooperation partners in foreign countries
- The service provider shall identify and contact the target group in Albania and to this end cooperate closely with NASRI who supports the identification of the target SMEs. Furthermore, the service provider shall be in touch with chambers of commerce and SME associations to spread the information and offer the specific support.
- The service provider shall identify suitable opportunities for SMEs (e.g. open calls).

- The service provider shall explain partner search possibilities and strategies and explore the potential of the target group.
- The service provider shall identify, propose and eventually support contacting matching partners and organise suitable matchmaking activities (e.g. meetings at events, visits, use international matchmaking activities) with the final objective to develop joint proposals ideas and proposal.
- The service provider shall then explain the processes and support the forming consortia about the requirements for submission and proposal preparation.

The following methodological aspects should be taken into account:

The service provider is expected to suggest the most suitable methodology for successful completion of the assignment. A methodological overview needs to be an integral part of the application.

**Expected Deliverables**

- Work Plan with a list of SME target group with initial plans for suitable opportunities and matches
- SMART outcome: at least 10 companies supported to seek matches out of which at least 6 lead to submissions to the international calls (EIC, EIT, EUREKA, etc.) by October 2023

Please note that the materials used in the framework of this agreement shall be published on the project website 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**

October 2022-December 2023.

**Expected deadlines and tentative timeline**

Promotion is planned for January 2023 and October 2023.

**Requested deliverables, outputs and reporting**

Work plan including initial identification of the target group and opportunities	November/December 2022
Interim report (if applicable, 1-3 pages)	April 2023
Final report (3 to max. 10 pages) including confirmation of submission of at least 6 proposals submitted and at least 10 companies consulted to seek matches; results of a satisfaction survey related to the contract by the involved SMEs and the expert	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.

### ***Funding and Reimbursement***

The maximum budget for the above described tasks to be delivered is 15.000 EURO. This maximum budget includes the service fee, travel and daily allowances for the travel to any events as well as VAT and any other taxes and duties.

This Service will be funded by the POLICY ANSWERS project<sup>1</sup>. 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).

## **3 Application, selection and contracting procedure**

### ***Required qualification/skills/experiences of the Service Provider***

- Education: Expert with masters degree in fields relevant for the assignment. Any certification and training in relation to EU programme applications is an advantage.
- Experience: Minimum of 10 years' experience in similar activities. Proven knowledge of the region of the Western Balkans. Experience in working with SMEs towards receiving EU funding in the Western Balkans. Working experience in Albania is an advantage. Experience in the area of research and innovation programmes such as Horizon 2020 / Horizon Europe, EIC, EIT, partnerships, EUREKA, EU4TECH PoC, etc. Proven analytical and proposal writing skills.
- Language requirements: Excellent English written and spoken. Knowledge of Albanian is an advantage.

### ***Application***

The application from the Service Provider shall include the following documents:

- Price and details in relation to the expected time to be invested (daily or hourly rate)
- Skills: CV or description of the implementing organisation including information in relation to the required qualifications/skills/experiences
- Content: Short implementation plan
- Optional: letters of references and recommendations

### ***Submission of application***

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.westernbalkans-infohub.eu](http://www.westernbalkans-infohub.eu)



Please submit the required documents for the application per e-mail to:  
Zentrum für Soziale Innovation / Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI), Austria  
c/o Elke Dall  
[policy-answers@westernbalkans-infohub.eu](mailto:policy-answers@westernbalkans-infohub.eu); CC: [dall@zsi.at](mailto:dall@zsi.at); [pecarz@zsi.at](mailto:pecarz@zsi.at)

**Deadline** for the submission of an application referencing to this ToR is October 15, 2022, 23:59 CET (**date of entry of the e-mail**).

### ***Selection***

The best value for price principle will be applied, thus the following criteria will be taken into account:

- Price
- Skills
- Content of the short implementation plan
- Optional: references.

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 October 30, 2022 on the result of the selection procedure. The contract with the Service Provider will be established shortly after the selection.