

REPUBLIC OF KOSOVA

MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (MED) KOSOVO DIGITAL ECONOMY (KODE) PROJECT

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Consulting Services – International Individual Consultant

Country: Kosovo

Project: Kosovo Digital Economy (KODE)

Project ID: P164188

Loan No.: 6285-XK

Assignment Title: International Individual Consultant for Setting up Kosovo's National Research Education Network (NREN).

Ref No. KODE/IC/2.2.2/2019

Issued on: May 16, 2019

BACKGROUND

The Government of Kosovo has received credit from the International Development Association (IDA) (hereinafter 'the Bank') for a Kosovo Digital Economy (KODE) Project in the amount of 20,7 million EUR. The KODE Project aims to improve access to better quality and high-speed broadband services in project areas and to online knowledge sources, services and labour markets among citizens, and public and academic institutions.

It is foreseen that the Project will achieve its development objective through two main sets of activities: (1) expanding access of Kosovars to high-speed and better quality digital infrastructure; and (2) support Kosovars to take advantage of regional and global Digital Economy (DE) opportunities, especially for income generation, usage of services, and learning, thus triggering the growth of a DE in Kosovo.

The Project is structured along three components: (1) Digital Inclusion, (2) Digital Work and Empowerment, and (3) Project Implementation Support. It is foreseen that subcomponent 2.2. under the component (2) will finance (i) set up a National Research and Education Network (NREN) to improve access of students, researches and educators of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in Kosovo to knowledge, research networks and (ii) connect NREN to the pan-European academic network GEANT. MED plans to conduct a set of feasibility studies to inform implementation of the subcomponent 2.2. This terms of reference (ToR) concerns above mentioned feasibility studies.

The KODE is implemented by the Ministry of Economic Development (MED) that provides strategic direction and technical oversight to the entire Project. MED oversees the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector development and executes this mandate through the Department of Post, Telecommunication and Information Technology (the Department), which for

the purposes of the Project will act as the lead implementing agency and will carry the primary responsibility for all Components of the Project.

The need for the activities under the Sub-component 2.2 stems from the fact that universities and colleges in Kosovo are poorly interconnected and are practically unable to engage in knowledge exchange or research collaboration with European partners. At present, Kosovo's HEIs often overpay for broadband services that do not meet (in terms of quality) their needs. Out of all countries in the region, only Kosovo has not yet set up a NREN interconnecting its HEIs. This limits participation in the GÉANT, which links NRENs in the EU and beyond (overall 110 such networks) to high-speed broadband at low cost and provides access to a range of research and innovation services.

It is envisaged that KODE-funded NREN for Kosovo will have its own organizational structure, national status, physical network nationally, connecting the country's HEIs among themselves and with the GÉANT network. It shall provide a range of services designed for its users (HEIs and, over time, potentially primary and secondary schools, and other entities) in full support of the national research and education process, among them the most important one is the provision of high-speed broadband connectivity. Although Kosovo NREN requires considerable initial investment, it will be a cost-efficient alternative to conventional ways to boost connectivity and communication within the academic community. Once established and operational for universities, Kosovo NREN will offer membership possibilities with a view of increasing its beneficiaries' base and connecting them to a high-speed broadband network at a lesser cost.

A set of feasibility studies shall determine the most optimal way to ensure a high-speed broadband network in nine cities of Kosovo (Pristina, Gjilan, Ferizaj, Prizren, Gjakova, Peja, Mitrovica, Podujeva, Lipjan), thus providing interconnectivity to all of Kosovo's HEIs, at one or more points of presence for each entity. This network will have to be distinguished from other networks by performance, services, and other advantages offered to the community. It is planned that the preferred network topology will be comprised of at least one interconnected optical ring network. Pristina, as the capital city with the highest population and with the highest number of HEIs, will have to be provided with a metropolitan ring network with a minimum of 10 Gbps backbone capacity. The rest of the cities will be connected using another ring(s), whenever possible. It is foreseen that this proposed topology would increase the network reliability and availability, as there will not be any single points of failure; it is also well aligned with the geographical distribution of the cities. Other uncovered cities will have closer access points for connecting to the network. Feasibility studies would need to consider the ability to upgrade the data rate in the future without having to reinvest into a new platform. It is essential that the network implementation should be adaptable to respond to arising bandwidth requirements.

OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT

To conduct a set of feasibility studies to support the development, set up and operation of the Kosovo NREN from the business and administrative perspectives.

Specific objectives of the assignment are the following:

Objective 1: To develop the Kosovo's NREN operational model;

Objective 2: To develop the Kosovo's NREN business model;

Objective 3: To prepare the eligibility criteria for the future Kosovo's NREN staff members;
Objective 4: To develop cohesive training manuals for Kosovo's NREN staff

DETAILED SCOPE OF WORK

Objective 1: To develop the Kosovo's NREN operational model.

As part of this objective at least the following should be conducted:

- To develop Kosovo's NREN organizational design, which should translate the chosen business model, and which should be based on international best practices and take into account a specific context of Kosovo. The design should cover the following key aspects:
 - Kosovo's NREN strategy, incl. among others its vision, mission, competitive advantage and development plan;
 - Organizational structure for Kosovo's NREN, incl. statutes, organizational chart, roles, responsibilities and accountabilities, distribution of decision-making power, etc.;
 - Draft Acceptable Use Policies (AUP) and a Connection Policy (CP) in order to promote proper use of resources based on the best-known practices and aligned with the Kosovo's NREN mission;
 - Outline of the proposed key organizational processes, incl. mechanisms for coordination and collaboration;
 - Outline of the proposed staff management rules such as Rewards system (e.g. the system of incentives and rewards, KPI, performance management tools); and
 - Talent management strategy, incl. the strategy for attraction, retention, and development of human resources from the perspective of continued upskilling.

Objective 2: To develop the Kosovo's NREN business model.

As part of this objective at least the following should be conducted:

- Develop Kosovo's NREN business model and value proposition, and a 5-year business plan. Beyond regular items, a business model, and business plan should suggest and elaborate:
 - Key partnerships (both in-country and international) to develop Kosovo's NREN, esp. from the standpoint of GÉANT membership; their roles and responsibilities;
 - Recommended portfolio of Kosovo's NREN applications and services
 - Financing options for the launch and operations of Kosovo's NREN; and
 - Timeline for specific actions and next steps for the key public and private sector partners.

Objective 3: To prepare the eligibility criteria for the future Kosovo's NREN staff members

As part of this objective at least the following should be conducted:

- ToRs for the Kosovo's NREN staff members; and
- ToRs for potential internship program.

Objective 4: To develop cohesive training manuals for Kosovo's NREN and users' staff for the services to be used

As part of this objective at least the following should be conducted:

- Design the manual content and schedule (program) based on the recommended services to be offered by Kosovo's NREN; and
- Manual for using GEANT services.

The deliverables under this contract shall be prepared in English language and are listed in the Table in the section "Timeline, Deliverables and Payment Schedule" of this document.

REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

The consultant will report to and work under the direction of the Project Implementation Unit within the Department.

The consultant will work in close collaboration with the consultant selected to implement the KODE Project's contract "Individual Consultant for Setting up Network for Kosovo NREN".

Completion of the contract (deliverable 4) is linked with the KODE Project's goods contract under "Establishing of NREN".

MED'S CONTRIBUTION

As needed, the MED will provide office space, internet connection, for the consultant when on mission in Kosovo.

QUALIFICATIONS

The performance of the above-mentioned activities requires a professional that has a good academic and professional multi-disciplinary knowledge and experience of all or a subset of the following fields:

- University/higher education in Telecommunications, Business Administration, Humanities or Economics background.
- At least eight (8) years of professional experience in related field, (telecommunications, academia).
- Demonstrated capability in the delivery of the activities foreseen under this consultancy, especially experience on the operational policies of NRENS, their business models, statutes and organizational design;
- Demonstrated experience in advising and/or working with governments and/or private sector on the topics outlined in this ToR;
- Good understanding of digital economy development dynamics in Kosovo, in the Western Balkan region and more widely;
- Experience working on international donor-financed projects, manifested by practical experience of administrative, monitoring and reporting procedures in place would be an advantage;
- Work experience in Kosovo or other countries of South Eastern Europe is an advantage;
- Excellent experience of data collection and validation methods;

- Extensive professional relationships with peers in public and private education/research institutions or ISPs
- Excellent project management skills, including quality assurance; ability to deliver high-quality outputs in a high-pressure multicultural environment; and
- Excellent command of English, with the ability to deliver high-quality report writing, presentation, and communication skills, with experience in communicating and engaging with high-level decision makers in the public and private sectors.

START OF WORK AND DURATION OF THE CONTRACT

The level of effort is estimated to be 70 working days. During the duration of the contract the consultant shall undertake at least 2 missions to Kosovo to discuss the preparation, present the deliverables, etc.

The contract is expected to be started in June 2019. The duration of the assignment is estimated to last for two years from the contract signature, subject to completion of the KODE Project’s goods contract “Establishing of NREN”.

Organization and costs of trips of the consultant to Pristina, Kosovo shall be covered by consultant.

TIMELINE, DELIVARBLES AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Objective	Deliverable		Deadline (months after contract signing)	Payment (% of total payment)
1	1	Kosovo NREN organizational design, statutes, operational policies and procedures.	3	20
2	2	Kosovo NREN business model and 5 years business plan including financial options; and 1 mission;	3	35
3	3	ToRs for Kosovo NREN staff; and ToRs for potential internship program;	4	15
4	4	Design and document the trainings, in line with the recommended services to be offered by Kosovo NREN and its appropriate service levels (at least Edugain, Eduroam, Cloud, and VC/collaboration tool to be included); and 1 mission.	Deadline for completion of the task is linked with the KODE Project’s goods contract in sub component “Establishing NREN”	30

Ministry of Economic Development now invites eligible International Individuals (‘consultants’) to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should submit their CV accompanied with proof demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services.

The Consultant will be selected using Individual Consultancy procedures in accordance with the World Bank’s Procurement Regulation for Investment Project Financing Borrowers for Goods, Works, Non-Consulting and Consulting Services, July 2016, as amended.

The selection criteria are:

- (i) General qualifications to REOI (30%),
- (ii) Relevant experience with similar assignments (50%) and
- (iii) Relevant experience in region (20%).

Further information can be obtained at the email address below during office hours – 09.00 to 16.00 hours.

Expressions of interest (CV and related document's) must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person) or by e-mail, no later than May 31, 2019 at 16:00 h.

Ministry of Economic Development

1st floor, office no. 107

”Mother Theresa” street, no. 36

10000, Prishtine - Kosova

E-mail: mzhe.tik@rks-gov.net