

Republic of Albania
Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation

Western Balkans Trade and Transport Facilitation Project – Albania

Terms of Reference
Consultancy Selection – Individual Consultant

for

Environment, Social and Citizen Engagement Specialist

Ref. No: WBTF-ALB-411D-1

1. BACKGROUND

The Government of Albania has received a financing from the World Bank for the “Western Balkans Trade and Transport Facilitation” project. The Program includes two phases which will be implemented over five years each. The project “Western Balkans Trade and Transport Facilitation” is part of the first phase of the joint Program for the Western Balkans countries, which intends to facilitate the achievement of their governments’ goal of reducing trade costs and increasing transport efficiency through a longer-term, adaptive, and continuous engagement. Phase 1 includes Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia.

The project proposes an integrated approach including three connected dimensions, to help reduce trade costs and increase transport efficiency in the Western Balkans. These include measures aimed at: (i) Facilitating cross- border movement of goods, (ii) enhancing transport efficiency and predictability; (iii) enhancing market access for trade in services and investments.

Albania attained a middle-income status in 2008 and weather the international financial crisis without falling into the recession. This impressive achievement was due to strong growth prior to the 2008 financial crisis when growth averaged 5.7 percent (2001-08), driven mostly by domestic consumption, boosted by foreign transfers and remittances. From 2002 to 2008, poverty declined from 25.4 percent to 12.5 percent. However, the financial crisis of 2008 slowed down the growth to around 2 percent (average 2009-15). Only over the last two years the growth started picking up (growth was 3.4 and 3.8 percent in 2016 and 2017 respectively). However, concerns about competitiveness of Albania’s economy remain as share of merchandise export in GDP is still below 7 percent, one of the lowest levels in Europe. While Albania is ranked 24th in terms of trading across borders in the 2018 Doing Business surveys, it does not perform well in other competitiveness indicators on its trade and transport infrastructure. Albania is ranked 75th out of 137 countries in the 2017-18 Global Competitiveness Index (GCI). In the GCI executive surveys, the executives scored Albania 4 out of 7 for the burden of customs procedures (with a rank of 77th) and 3.2 out of 7 for the quality of its transport infrastructure (with a rank of 92nd). In the 2016 Logistics Performance Index (LPI) that is a narrower competitiveness measure, Albania is ranked 117th out of 160 countries, where it scored the lowest in the category measuring the quality of its trade and transport infrastructure.

Regarding the arrangements for the implementation of the project, the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation - MEKI has established a Project Implementation Unit (PIU). The PIU shall ensure technical implementation of the project.

This process would be complemented by small technical teams to support project implementation in each of the participating ministries and agencies.

The purpose of these Terms of Reference is to define the scope of work and tasks of the Environment, Social and Citizen Engagement Specialist, part of the Project Implementation Unit in Albania for the Western Balkans Trade and Transport Facilitation Project. This project will be implemented in its first phase in Albania, Serbia, and Republic of North Macedonia. Each country will set up a Project Implementation Unit (PIU) to help the execution, implementation, and monitoring of the project.

MEKI intends to engage a highly qualified consultant (local individual expert) to provide services as Environment, Social and Citizen Engagement specialist. The successful candidate will work closely with the Head of PIU and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that the project is managed efficiently and in compliance with the objectives of the Project Appraisal Document (PAD), the Project's Legal Agreement and Financing Agreement, the Project Operating Manual (POM) and the Project's ESMF.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The main objective is to plan, implement, monitor and control all Project's environmental and social activities by components, in close cooperation with the PIU's staff and other stakeholder agencies as described in the POM.

The Consultant will support the MEKI in preparation of environmental and social due diligence documentation for the overall Project, as per Project's ESMF. This basic document facilitates screening, assessment, and management of environmental and social issues for activities / subprojects during Project implementation, while considering and ensuring compliance with the national regulation and relevant ESF Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs) for this Project. These include:

- ESS1 Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts.
- ESS2 Labor and Working Conditions.
- ESS3 Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management.
- ESS4 Community Health.
- ESS5 Involuntary Resettlement.
- ESS10 Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure.

All subprojects to be financed under Project must undergo an environmental and social screening in the manner described in the ESMF. The Consultant would perform this process when reviewing and evaluating sub-projects and inform potential applicants on environmental and social requirements for sub-projects evaluation, in order to be able to implement them in an environmentally and socially acceptable manner.

Screening is the first step in the process of thorough analysis of sub-projects, and its purpose is to identify potential impacts of the proposed sub-projects and define measures aimed at preventing or minimizing negative impacts. Specifically, the screening would identify environmental and social risks related to the proposed sub-project and determine the type of

impact assessment documentation needed for sub-project implementation. Sub-projects unacceptable due to the nature of the proposed activities would be rejected.

The main task of the Consultant is to ensure compliance with the environmental and social policies triggered under the Project. In the sense of wide consultations, compliance should be ensured and the issues of possible environmental and social impacts at the level of measures should be streamlined at the beginning of the policy development process. This is why the involvement of the Consultant is to provide inputs/comments to these documents to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the Project.

3. SCOPE OF WORK

The specific functions and responsibilities of the E&S Consultant will be:

Task 1 - As part of the ESMF, the Consultant will be responsible for the preparation, and supervision of implementation, of all the relevant ESS instruments as per the Project's ESMF.

Task 2 - As part of the ESMF, the Consultant will conduct the whole environmental and social (E&S) screening process and determine the E&S impacts and vulnerabilities, assess an environment/social risk category/level, and identify risk management opportunities/strategies as to determine the adequate ESS instrument to be applied for the received applications (subproject proposals). This will be done to:

- Ensure compliance with the Bank exclusion list,
- Ensure that no subproject with substantial or high risks (impacts) type will be supported, but only those with moderate or low risks (impacts).
- Ensure that subprojects/grants will not necessitate involuntary land acquisition or any form of resettlement, and
- Ensure that no Bank Safeguard standards other than ESS1, ESS2, ESS3, ESS4, ESS5 and ESS10 are relevant for proposed sub-project Any activities corresponding to the Bank Projects with Moderate risk will be required to have an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) in place prior to approval that would identify potential environmental impacts and provide adequate mitigation measures.
- Any activities corresponding to the Bank Category 2 ("Moderate Risk") Projects will be required to have an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) in place prior to approval that would identify potential environmental impacts and provide adequate mitigation measures.
- Carry out consultations with Stakeholders and provide a channel for feedback on relevant aspects of project activities, especially on those impacted and on vulnerable groups.
- Oversee the functioning of the grievance mechanism of the program and collate information on management of grievances and their timely resolution.
- Ensure that stakeholder consultation, human rights, labor conditions, cultural heritage, and social inclusion of all sectors of society are addressed as required.
- Keep the Grievance log and produce Semi –annual Grievance Report.

Task 3 - Evaluate the subproject based on the Environmental and Social Checklist (ESMF – Annex 02) and Ethic Self-Assessment provided by Applicant (ESMF – Annex 01C). The

Checklist presents a simple tool for identification of Project-related potential environmental and social impacts. This would also help simplify the decision-making process whether the subproject can be financed, or it is on Exclusion Lists (ESMF- Annex 01), as well as whether a site-specific ESMP is needed.

Determine the category of subprojects – depending on subproject type, location, sensitivity and scope, nature and intensity of environmental and social risks and impacts.

Task 4 - Advise applicants on the content and scope of the Environmental and Social Checklist (ESMF – Annex 02) and Ethic Self-Assessment provided by Applicant (ESMF – Annex 01C), as needed.

Advise applicants on the content and scope of site-specific ESMPs, as needed.

Task 5 - Assist the PIU and MEKI and the applicants in information dissemination and conducting public consultations of draft ESMP/ESMP Checklist, preparation of minutes of the meetings and finalization of the documents;

- Conduct quality control of ESS instruments in line with ESF requirements prior to Bank submission and deal with the comments as may be received from the Bank.
- Carry out, during the upgrading of laboratory infrastructure and existing facilities, that could potentially include some office space renovation activities and before, preliminary assessment and management of E&S risks and impacts, labor and working conditions, pollution prevention, community health and safety.
- Carry out stakeholder engagement and information disclosure.
- Evaluate the monitoring reports of grantees to ensure compliance with the ESMP.
- Undertake site visits and review grantees' compliance with site-specific ESMPs, including determining and suggesting remedial actions; preparation of non-compliance reports and keeping track of respective responses/actions undertaken.
- Keep records of supervision of Project activities in a systemic manner that allows easy search-and-find of all documents upon request.
- Provide recommendation to amend environmental management procedures for the purpose of the implementation of the Bank's E&S requirements.
- Ensure that any Technical Assistance (TA) outputs supported under the Project are consistent with Bank ESF policies.
- Provide support and coordinate with the analytical and M&E experts in analysis of the environment and social impact related topics.
- Provide support to the PIU in preparing regular reports on Project implementation.
- Monitor social and environmental parameters as per the instructions provided in the Project's ESMF.
- Participate in regular Bank's supervision missions.
- Semi-annual reporting on compliance with ESMF, as part of Project semiannual reports.
- Other actions to enable the Project to meet the environmental and social requirements within the legal framework of the Republic of Albania and in accordance with the Bank's environmental and social policies and procedures.

4. QUALIFICATIONS

Expressions of interest to be submitted from interested consultants will be assessed to determine the most qualified individual consultant. The evaluation criteria will be the following:

- (i) General Qualifications, including education, trainings and qualifications (30 points).
- (ii) Adequacy for the Project, including professional experience (60 points).
- (iii) Specific criteria for the assignment (10 points).

The Consultant suitable for this position is expected to have the following expertise, experience, and other soft skills:

- Graduate/Advanced Degree Masters' Degree) in Environmental Sciences, Social, Natural Resources Management, related discipline.
- Minimum of 5 years of relevant professional experience, including applied experience in Environmental & Social risk management in investment projects (international and local).
- Experience in at least 2 international funded projects related to grants for research and/or commercial activities would be an advantage.
- Experience in at least 2 internationally funded projects in the field of environmental and/or social protection.
- Knowledge of international good practice for management of E&S risks, including World Bank ESF/Safeguard's policies and International Finance Corporation (IFC) Sustainability Framework and supporting documents such as Guidance Notes.
- Previous experience with World Bank-funded projects as an environmental and social reviewer and an understanding of their requirements would be an advantage.
- No obstacles for traveling within Albania for various field trips.
- Good analytical skills, ability to think strategically, analyze and synthesize diverse qualitative and quantitative environmentally/socially related data and information.
- Excellent spoken and written Albanian and English.
- Computer skills, including word processing and spreadsheets.

5. TIMING AND DURATION

This assignment is expected to commence in September 2024 and is expected to terminate upon in December 2025. The assignment shall be for a period of 16 months and renewable, subject to satisfactory performance.

6. REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

The Consultant will be primarily required to report, at least once per month (monthly) or as necessary according to Project activities and timeline, to the Head of PIU for approval.

The Consultant should provide/submit Monthly Time Sheets to PIU Director, summarizing key issues and problems encountered on Environment, Social and Health & Safety issues, related needed corrective actions and rationale for actions. The report will include day-to-day tasks undertaken, as well as working days/hours spent on each issue and task, within 10 (ten) days after the end of month for which the report is due.

The Consultant shall proactively prepare ad-hoc reports on any major environmental and social issues arising during Project's implementation, at the MEKI or Bank's request. Any incident on site will be reported to PIU in maximum 24 hours.

The Consultant will provide hard and/or electronic copies of any documents and technical materials developed during the Project in their original electronic format. The reports will be provided in the English/Albanian language.

7. SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED BY THE CLIENT

The MEKI will be responsible for provision of the following:

- Fully equipped office space, with access to the Internet, local telephone line, printing, photocopying and document binding.
- Access to necessary documents; and
- Where the Consultant is required to travel, to site or elsewhere in accordance with the MEKI instruction, all transportation costs.

8. SELECTION AND TERMS OF PAYMENT

The service will be selected under the provisions of the “*World Bank Procurement Regulations for Borrowers under Investment Project Financing*” dated July 1, 2016, revised on November 2017 and August 2018, based on the method of **Selection of Individual Consultants (IC) on Time - Based Assignment**.

The contract, covering all fees costs and expenses, will be entered into between the Consultant and the MEKI. Each monthly timesheet must be firstly approved by the PIU Director.