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# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## Partner country

Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of Serbia

## Contracting authority

Municipality of Vratsa

## Country background

In a new, flexible economy in which local culture, society and travel experience become part of the tourism value chain, it is vital to promote the existing resources by involving the local communities and thus attracting larger share of tourists. Regardless of the high tourist potential of the BG-SR border region, the destination remains less popular for tourists, compared to others within both countries. For the last 5 years (2013-2017) for Bulgaria an average of just 4% of all overnight stays have been realized within the region. The region remains highly unpopular among foreign tourists, compared to the nearby capital - Sofia, which attracts more than 6% alone each year. As for the CB region, the ratio between domestic and foreign visitors can get as high as 2.5 times: less than 2% of all overnight stays for the country have been realized by foreigners in the CB area. The situation on the Serbian side of the border is quite similar. The share of overnight stays for a period of 5 years (2012-2016) is 15% on the average. Stays are highly concentrated within the districts of Zajecar (where the spa resort Sokobanja is located), and the city of Nis. Apart from this city, the other parts of the region remain several times less popular among foreign visitors. The major tourist destination in Serbian side of the border region according to the number of nights is Sokobanja, which was also leader in visitors for 2013, 2014, while for 2015 and 2016 the District of Nis attracted the most people. For Bulgaria, Sofia district is well ahead for each of the past 5 years both in terms of overnight stays and visitors, followed by district of Kyustendil, where the spa resort Sapareva Banya and the Rila monastery are located. Other common problems to be solved are the declining demographic trend both sides and brain-drain of young people, as well as the highly fragmented economy. Identified challenge is investing in effective valorisation and efficient management of the territory. In such a context partners of the project spotted the opportunity to promote development of tourism initiatives called “Quest Tours” thus valorising the resources for diversified tourism in the entire border area through collaboration with local communities.

## Current situation in the sector

The project CB007.2.13.225 „QuesTour - Valorization and capitalization of unexplored tourism cultural and historical routes in the cross-border region Bulgaria-Serbia” is co-funded by the European Union, through Interreg – IPA CBC Bulgaria – Serbia Programme 2014-2020, CCI Number 2014TC16I5CB007, Subsidy contract No RD-02-29-59/14.04.2020.

QuesTour will boost the level of community involvement and dedication to the sustainable use of CBC natural, cultural and historical resources. The project covers the entire border region including 6 districts in Bulgaria and 7 districts in Serbia targeting at 2 Million of residents. It will valorise and spice up the tourism experience through pilot initiatives by engaging local community. Training stakeholders and decision-makers so they can develop knowledge on common local and individual issues regarding responsible tourism development will improve the capitalisation of natural and cultural resources.

Through a series of networking initiatives and joint events, the project will test a new strategic approach aiming to achieve attitudinal changes and engagement of the entire population. QuesTour will explore the CB cultural and historical heritage and facts kept through the ages through the conduction of tourist networking initiatives, workshop and competition for young people aiming to engage them to participate more actively in the society. Through the expertise of all partners (PPs) of the project, the project will broaden its impact. National Tourism Cluster "Bulgarian Guide" (Lead partner) is experienced in sustainable tourism development and will contribute to the dissemination of the results outside the eligible region which will have further impact on the entire countries, not only the border region. ENECA (PP2) will strengthen the partnership through its expertise in capacity building activities and initiatives, educating local stakeholders. Municipality of Vratsa (PP3) will contribute to the promotion of common traditions and history in the border region. The project will enhance the engagement of residents and local service providers as valued partners in building a better recognizable tourism destination.

## Related programmes and other donor activities

CBC programme "Interreg - IPA CBC Bulgaria-Serbia" (CCI Number 2014TC16I5CB007)

# OBJECTIVE, PURPOSE & EXPECTED RESULTS

## Overall objective

**The overall objective** of the project of which this contract will be a part is as follows:

The project aims to boost the tourism potential of the CBC region through sustainable use of natural, cultural and historical resources by involving local communities and tourist providers.

**Project specific objectives are:** to strengthen the awareness of sustainable and responsible tourism development in the border region; to foster recognition of the destination by joint collaborating actions exploring the natural, cultural and historical resources; to enhance the cultural interaction and networking among local communities; to create an interactive environment for collaboration and capacity building activities in the tourism and supporting industries.

## Purpose

The purpose of this contract is as follows:

The purpose of this contract is providing service for conducting of events planned by the Municipality of Vratsa (PP3) within project CB007.2.13.225 „QuesTour - Valorization and capitalization of unexplored tourism cultural and historical routes in the cross-border region Bulgaria-Serbia”.

## Results to be achieved by the contractor

The Contractor should successfully conduct the events planned by the Contracting Authority, according to the specific requirements detailed in section 4 of this document and should submit the required reports, described in section 7.

# ASSUMPTIONS & RISKS

## Assumptions underlying the project

The implementation of the current contract will support Municipality of Vratsa in the implementation process of the project “QuesTour - Valorization and capitalization of unexplored tourism cultural and historical routes in the cross-border region Bulgaria-Serbia”, and will assure compliance with the EU regulations. The following assumptions can be made in order to reduce the risks related to delay or non-realization of the activities, subject to this Terms of Reference:

• Clear understanding of the contract purpose and tasks on behalf of the Contractor;

• Full cooperation between the Contracting Authority and the Contractor in view to fulfil the tasks on time, with high quality and within the budget limitation;

• Timely information for the respective place and date of the events provided by the Contracting Authority.

## Risks

Potential risks to the successful implementation of the contract include:

3.2.1 Lack of communication and logistical coordination between the Contractor and the Contracting Authority. In order to avoid this risk, the Contractor should be proactive and maintain continuous contact with the relevant representatives of the Contracting Authority. Also, the Contractor must present a detailed work programme for the implementation of each task, subject to present contract.

3.2.2 Insufficient quality of the services provided by the Contractor. In order to avoid this risk the Contractor should use the most reliable and experienced staff/service providers at its disposal. Also, the Contractor must present a statement that the appointed by him sufficient ongoing staff (min. seven experts) will be available for the entire period of the implementation of contract.

3.2.3 Risk of inability to hold events subject to the contract due to a worsened pandemic situation. For the implementation of the activities the risk could be overcome in strict compliance with all sanitary measures and requirements related to the prevention of COVID – 19.

# SCOPE OF THE WORK

## General

### Description of the assignment

The assignment includes all necessary services that the Contractor shall carry out for the overall organization of the events mentioned in p. 4.2. Each event has to be organized separately and on different dates and in different places on the territory of the respective partnering country. For each event the Contractor will have to provide a variety of professional services, such as: Trainers or lecturers, Moderator and Interpreters.

The exact dates and places in the events listed below will be determined by the Contracting Authority in good time before each event so that the Contractor can provide the relevant experts.

### Geographical area to be covered

The eligible area is the Bulgaria – Serbia cross-border region.

### Target groups

Residents of the cross-border region;

Tourist enterprises/establishments in the region;

Youth organisations

## Specific work

**Task 1:**

**Provision of moderating and interpretation services during the “QuesTour” design competition for young people**

The activity aims building awareness on the values of the CB natural, historical and cultural heritage and the involvement of the young people from the border region with the development of sustainable CB tourism products based on the common resources. The competition will be based on design thinking approach and will encourage the youngsters (aged 16-29) (10 SR, 10 BG) from both countries of CBR to develop a joint tour using the resources under the project – Business Model Generator (BMG) for sustainable use of the potential of natural and cultural heritage resources in the border region by involvement of local stakeholders, Datasheets (DS) “Heritage” – at least 100 entries covering the entire border region, QuesTour-platform, pilot Quest Tour scenarios.

The conduct of the competition will be in accordance with a methodology on the competition developed by the project partners.

The event should be held in strict compliance with all sanitary measures and requirements related to the prevention of COVID - 19.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Time (duration)/place**: | Duration of the event – 1 (one) day;  Place: Vratsa Region, Republic of Bulgaria  Time: The contractor will be notified within 10 days before the starting date of event. Related to this, the tenderer must undertake to prepare for participation in the event after ordering/awarding 10 days before the event by the Contracting Authority. |
| **Service 1.1** | **Provision of moderating of the event** |
| **Service description** | The activity envisages moderation of the whole event by one moderator. The moderator should provide logistical support to the participants in the competition. The moderator seeks feedback from the participants by conducting a pre-prepared survey. Prepares a report from the event, which becomes part / appendix to the final report of the contractor. |
| **Maximum estimated budget** | 200 euro |
| **Service 1.2** | **Provision of interpretation services during the event** |
| **Service description** | The activity provides interpretation (BG-SR and SR-BG) by one interpreter during the whole event. |
| **Maximum estimated budget** | 160 euro |

**Task 2:**

**Provision of moderating and interpretation services during the QuesTour Festival in the region of Vratsa**

QuesTour Festival aims to promote a new approach on valorization of common traditions in the CB region and present their potential for spicing up the tourism experience. The 3 days QuesTour Festival will take place in the region of Vratsa – venue will be selected by all partners during the pre-final Virtual meeting and it will be near a specific site from one of the QuesTours. The Festival will demonstrate some elements of the CB culture, customs and traditions, like folklore music and dances, crafts, local meals, etc. Furthermore, the festival shall provide various attractions, quests, competitions, sport games and other outdoor activities divided in separate zone of interests, e.g. crafts, folklore, history. The partners will invite 40 representatives (10 exhibitors and 30 performers – equal number BG&SR) of local communities, musicians, dancers, keepers of traditions, story tellers, craftsmen, etc. who will present festival activities.

The conduct of the Festival will be in accordance with a concept on the Festival developed by the project partner 3 (Municipality of Vratsa).

The event should be held in strict compliance with all sanitary measures and requirements related to the prevention of COVID - 19.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Time (duration)/place** | Duration of the event – 3 (three) days;  Place\*: Vratsa Region, Republic of Bulgaria  \*The venue will be selected by all partners during the pre-final Virtual meeting and it will be near a specific site from one of the QuesTours.  Time: The contractor will be notified within 10 days before the starting date of event. Related to this, the tenderer must undertake to prepare for participation in the event after ordering / awarding 10 days before the event by the Contracting Authority. |
| **Service 2.1** | **Provision of moderating of the event** |
| **Service description** | The activity envisages moderation of the whole event by three moderators. The moderators should provide logistical support to the participants in the Festival. They should prepare reports from the event, which becomes part / appendix to the final report of the contractor. |
| **Maximum estimated budget** | 600 euro |
| **Service 2.2** | **Provision of interpretation services during the event** |
| **Service description** | The activity provides interpretation (BG-SR and SR-BG) by two interpreters during the whole event - 9 hours for each interpreter. |
| **Maximum estimated budget** | 540 euro |

**Task 3:**

**Provision of moderating for the final dissemination event**

Final dissemination conference will be held in Vratsa with the participation of local stakeholders (10 participants) just after the final partners meeting in Vratsa. Invited will be representatives of the counties/districts’ administrations, stakeholders from the project areas of the countries and representatives of interested public institutions, tourist and youth organizations. The PT will present a summary of the project implementation and the results achieved. The developed platform, application and Quest Tours will be demonstrated to the audience, after which the floor will be given to external experts involved in project implementation.

The event should be held in strict compliance with all sanitary measures and requirements related to the prevention of COVID - 19.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Time (duration)/place** | Duration of the event – 1 day;  Place: Vratsa  Time: The contractor will be notified within 10 days before the starting date of event. Related to this, the tenderer must undertake to prepare for participation in the event after ordering/awarding 10 days before the event by the Contracting Authority. |
| **Service 3.1** | **Provision of moderating of the event** |
| **Service description** | The activity envisages moderation of the whole event by one moderator. The moderator should provide logistical support to the participants in event. The moderator seeks feedback from the participants by conducting a pre-prepared survey. Prepares a report from the event, which becomes part /appendix to the final report of the contractor. |
| **Maximum estimated budget** | 200 euro |

**Task 4:**

**Trainers/lecturers from Vratsa for the Workshop in Pirot**

1-day cross-border Workshop with at least 20 participants from both sides (10 BG and 10 SR) will be held on-line. The aim of the initiative is to improve the competences of the local stakeholders (enterprises, policy makers, etc.) in the field of sustainable and responsible tourism and to present good practices applicable to the CBR.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Time (duration)/place** | Duration of the event – 1 day  The event will be held online |
| **Service 4.1** | **Trainers/lecturers** |
| **Service description** | Two trainers/lecturers from Vratsa will prepare presentations and will participate in the Workshop in the field of sustainable and responsible tourism and to present good practices applicable to the CBR. They should prepare reports on their participation, which will become part / supplement to the final report of the contractor. |
| **Maximum estimated budget** | 640 euro |

## Project management

### Responsible body

Municipality of Vratsa will be Contracting Authority for this contract. The Contracting Authority is responsible for conducting the current tender procedure, signing the service contract and carrying out the overall management and control on the contract implementation.

### Management structure

The Contracting Authority of the public procurement is the mayor of Vratsa municipality. The responsible person for implementation of the tasks related to this project and this contract, in the Contracting Authority is the Cultural Activities Manager. His tasks regarding implementation of the contract connected with the current procedure include: correspondence with the Contractor, appointment of the specific time of events, agendas approval of the events, the hotel for accommodation, etc. The final report will be approved by the Cultural Activities Manager, and the Approval Certificate will be signed by the legal representatives of both parties.

### Facilities to be provided by the contracting authority and/or other parties

No facilities or equipment will be provided by the Contracting Authority.

# LOGISTICS AND TIMING

## Location

Location of the project activities related to this contract is in Bulgarian and Serbian cross-border region and in the main building of Vratsa Municipality. The locations of the specific events are described in Section 4 of this document.

## Start date & period of implementation of tasks

The intended start date is the date of contract signature and the period of implementation of the contract will be until the completion of all tasks, no later than 14.07.2021. Please see Articles 19.1 and 19.2 of the special conditions for the actual start date and period of implementation.

# REQUIREMENTS

## Staff

Note that civil servants and other staff of the public administration of the partner country, or of international/regional organisations based in the country, shall only be approved to work as experts if well justified. The justification should be submitted with the tender and shall include information on the added value the expert will bring as well as proof that the expert is seconded or on personal leave.

### Key experts

Key experts are not required.

### Other experts, support staff & backstopping

CVs for experts other than the key experts should not be submitted in the tender but the tenderer will have to demonstrate in their offer that they have access to experts with the required profiles.

The contractor shall select and hire other experts as required according to the needs. The selection procedures used by the contractor to select these other experts shall be transparent, and shall be based on pre-defined criteria, including professional qualifications, language skills and work experience.

**Expert 1: Team leader, Trainer/lecturer**

General professional experience

* Minimum 5 years’ experience;

Specific professional experience

* Experience as a Trainer/lecturer in the organization and /or conduct of at least two seminars and/or trainings and/or conferences and/or other equivalent events and as a Team leader at least in one event.

**Expert 2: Trainer/lecturer\***

General professional experience

* Minimum 3 years’ experience

Specific professional experience

* Experience as a Trainer/lecturer in the organization and/or conduct of at least two seminars and/or trainings and/or conferences and/or other equivalent events.

**Expert 3: Moderators – 3 experts\***

General professional experience

* Minimum 1 year experience

Specific professional experience

* Participation as a moderator in the implementation of at least one seminar and/or trainings and/or conference and/or other equivalent events.

**Expert 4: Interpreters – 2 experts**

Language skills

* Excellent command of Serbian and Bulgarian languages

General professional experience

* Minimum 3 years’ experience

Specific professional experience

* Experience in interpretation services at least one seminar and/or trainings and/or conference and/or other equivalent events.

**\* It is possible, provided that the expertise is proved, that the position of expert "Trainer/lecturer" and expert "Moderator" may be combined,** **ie it is possible for the trainers to perform the role of moderator as well, as the expertise covers different activities and periods.**

The costs for backstopping and support staff, as needed, are considered to be included in the tenderer's financial offer.

## Office accommodation

Office accommodation for each expert working on the contract is to be provided by the contractor.

## Facilities to be provided by the contractor

The contractor shall ensure that experts are adequately supported and equipped. In particular it must ensure that there is sufficient administrative, secretarial and interpreting provision to enable experts to concentrate on their primary responsibilities. It must also transfer funds as necessary to support their work under the contract and to ensure that its employees are paid regularly and in a timely fashion.

## Equipment

**No** equipment is to be purchased on behalf of the contracting authority / partner country as part of this service contract or transferred to the contracting authority / partner country at the end of this contract. Any equipment related to this contract which is to be acquired by the partner country must be purchased by means of a separate supply tender procedure.

# REPORTS

## Reporting requirements

The contractor will submit the following reports in English in one original:

* **Final report** no less than 5 pages in free format. This report shall be submitted no later than 10 (ten) business days after the implementation of all tasks under the current Contract. It should provide conclusions and clear evidence of the implementation of all requested services. The final report must be provided along with the corresponding invoice. Approval of the final report by the Contracting Authority will be a basis for balance payment under the contract.

## Submission and approval of reports

The report referred to above must be submitted to the project manager identified in the contract. The project manager is responsible for approving the reports.

# MONITORING AND EVALUATION

## Definition of indicators

Provided services, as follows:

- Moderating of the 1-day Competition in Vratsa;

- Moderating of the 3-days Festival in Vratsa region;

- Interpreter for the 1-day Competition in Vratsa - BG-SR and SR-BG;

- Interpreter for the 3-days Festival in Vratsa region - BG-SR and SR-BG;

- Trainers/lecturers from Vratsa for the Workshop - Pirot;

- Moderating of the final dissemination event.

* 1. **Special requirements**

During implementation of the contract, all national and regional anti-epidemiological measures imposed by the authorities must be respected.

In case of deterioration of the situation with the Coronavirus, the contract will be performed in accordance with Art. 38 Force majeure of the General conditions of the contract (Annex I).