



TERMS OF REFERENCE

General Information

Implementers	Think for Europe Network (TEN)
Coordinator	European Policy Institute (EPI) – Skopje
Project Title	“WB Reform and Growth Monitor”
Donor	European Commission
Ref. no.	EuropeAid/179703/DH/ACT/Multi
Contract. no.	IPA III/2024/458-693
Position	Expert/s for developing monitoring methodology for Reform Agendas under the Reform and Growth Facility for the Western Balkans
Location	Western Balkans (WB) Region
Start Date	15.02.2025
End Date	15.08.2026
Total Contract	10 500 EUR
Contact person	Simonida Kacarska; Director

PROJECT INFORMATION

The Growth Plan, supported by the Reform and Growth Facility (RGF), aims to provide significantly increased funding for the Western Balkans. It introduces conditionality mechanisms tied to binding reform commitments through Reform Agendas (RAs) and strategic infrastructure projects under the Western Balkan Investment Framework (WBIF). This innovative approach within the EU’s enlargement policy framework offers an unprecedented opportunity for economic growth and regional cooperation.

The "WB Reform and Growth Monitor" project aims to enable civil society organizations (CSOs) in the Western Balkans (WB) to actively contribute to the design and credible implementation of reforms aligned with the four pillars of the Growth Plan for the WB (Growth Plan). The project seeks to strengthen participatory democracy and EU approximation in the region promoting good governance, economic development, and regional cooperation.

The action aims at systematically supporting CSO-led monitoring of reforms linked to the EU accession process and EU-funded strategic infrastructure projects. It also establishes multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms led by CSOs to support the implementation of structural reforms at both national and regional levels. A capacity-building re-granting scheme will enhance the engagement and effectiveness of CSOs in designing and implementing sectoral reforms. Last, a communication and outreach work package will increase public awareness of the implementation, progress, and benefits of the Growth Plan.

The project aims to provide evidence-based analysis and strengthen CSO capacities, offering engagement opportunities in policy and decision-making processes across various thematic areas of the Growth Plan.



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Main tasks and responsibilities:

The aim of this call is to select expert/s to develop and support the piloting of a methodology for monitoring the implementation of selected policy areas of the six national Reform Agendas in the Western Balkans. The monitoring exercise will cover reform steps across all policy areas of the Reform Agendas to be agreed between the coordinator and the selected candidate(s). The policy areas of the Reform Agendas include 1) Governance, Public Administration Reform, and Public Financial Management; 2) Private sector development and business environment; 3) Energy and green transition/Digitalisation; 4) Human capital and 5) Rule of law. This task does not cover monitoring of the project finances through the Western Balkan Investment framework.

The expert/s should set up a methodology intended for biannual monitoring of the implementation of the WB national Reform Agendas, including through development of data gathering instruments and templates. The monitoring exercise will be piloted in the first semester of 2025. Drawing on the lessons learned from the first biannual monitoring, the methodology may be adjusted for following monitoring cycles in the semesters, between December 2025 to August 2026.

The selected expert/s will be responsible for designing, testing, and finalizing a comprehensive, gender-sensitive monitoring methodology for the Reform Agendas. The monitoring exercise will be implemented by team of researchers from the co-applicants in the Western Balkans. The expert/s will provide support to the research team in the piloting phase, to ensure that the methodology is applied in all six countries, providing practical tools for tracking the implementation of reforms, identifying gaps, and offering actionable recommendations for improvement. All of the expert work will be done on-line with the exception of task 3 (see below).

Specific Tasks:

Task 1: Participation in on-line preparatory meetings (February 2025)

Participate in a preparatory meetings with the project team, including the Project Director (PD) and Lead Researcher (LR), to discuss the approach to work, clarify expectations, provide guidelines, and agree on deadlines. The expert/s is/are expected to prepare for the meetings with a proposal on the analytical approach, including a review of existing monitoring frameworks and EU best practices (e.g., NextGenEU, IPA) to inform methodology development and outputs they will deliver. EPI will supply the experts with project documentation, available national Reform Agendas and other background materials upon request.

Task 2: Develop a draft monitoring methodology (February - March 2025)

Review the available WB6 Reform Agendas and supporting documentation and develop a draft Reform Agenda monitoring methodology integrating evidence-based approaches. The draft methodology should include tools and templates for data collection, reporting, and monitoring of selected areas of the Reform Agendas agreed with the coordinator. The draft methodology should take into consideration the regional perspective, and include where possible gender and/or youth sensitive indicators. The draft methodology will be subject to consultations with CSOs and other stakeholders.

Task 3: Participate and present the draft methodology at a regional workshop in Skopje (April 2025)

Participate at a two day regional workshop in Skopje to present and discuss the draft methodology to the research team of the project. Gather feedback in view to revise the methodology based on inputs





received. The workshop will also establish a roadmap for further consultations with other stakeholders. Costs for participation at the workshop will be borne by the organisers.

Task 4: Refine the draft methodology (April 2025)

Co-applicants will organise follow-up consultations with CSOs, business sectors, and public institutions through national round tables in WB6 capitals to discuss the draft methodology. Based on inputs and feedback from researchers gathered during the regional workshop, as well as input and feedback from the national round tables, refine the methodology and data collection instruments to be adaptable to different national contexts. Ensure the methodology aligns with evidence-based approaches and includes clear indicators and reporting templates.

Task 5: Support the piloting and application of the monitoring methodology (May 2025 – August 2026)

Support the piloting and application of the monitoring methodology by all six national organisations. Assist researchers in analysing data to ensure validity, consistency, and adaptability of the methodology. Evaluate the pilot results, identify challenges, and prepare recommendations for the research team and make adjustments to the monitoring methodology if deemed necessary. Collaborate with researchers and CSOs to integrate findings into the first round of bi-annual 'Reform Agenda updates' and national and regional reports. Ensure the process adheres to the timeline and methodological framework.

Task 6: Finalize monitoring methodology booklet (September 2025)

Prepare the finalized methodology as a professionally designed booklet that consolidates the developed tools and templates. Ensure the methodology reflects findings from the pilot phase and revisions based on stakeholder consultations.

Qualifications

- Minimum 10 years of relevant experience in designing, implementing, and evaluating monitoring methodologies, particularly in the context of EU programs and reform processes;
- Proven expertise in EU programs (e.g., NextGenEU, IPA, or similar initiatives) and familiarity with EU enlargement policies, economic governance frameworks, and monitoring systems;
- Demonstrated experience in working with CSOs, governments, and multi-stakeholder platforms, including facilitating consultations and workshops;
- Strong analytical, research, and data interpretation skills, with the ability to translate findings into actionable recommendations;
- Proficiency in designing user-friendly tools and templates for data collection, reporting, and analysis;
- Experience in developing reports and communication materials for policymakers, stakeholders, and the general public;
- Ability to work collaboratively with interdisciplinary teams and adapt methodologies to national and regional contexts;
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills in English, with the ability to present complex information in a clear and accessible manner.



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Remuneration

The total fee for this position is 10,500 EUR gross. Payments will be made in three instalments:

- First payment of 7,000 EUR will be made within 20 days after the completion of tasks 1-4, i.e. submission of the draft methodology and templates.
- Second payment of 1,500 EUR will be made within 20 days of the finalization of the methodology booklet (task 6).
- The remaining 2,000 EUR will be paid upon the successful completion and finalization of task 5 (August 2026).

