

Terms of Reference for the Provision of Consultancy Services on Procurement Policies, Procedures, and Methodologies to RedCLARA

Background and Context

Over the course of its twenty years of existence, together with the national networks comprising its membership, RedCLARA has contributed to the construction and deployment of a powerful digital platform to support the work of universities and research centres across the region. The individuals and institutions who both individually and collectively have contributed to this effort strongly believe in the *primus inter pares* role of education, science, and innovation in sustaining and promoting the economic and social development of our countries. Multiple accomplishments have been achieved over the years, such as the successful implementation of over twelve major projects supported by various institutions and organizations such as the European Commission, the Inter-American Development Bank, ECLAC, and the OAS, as well as the creation and support of organizations that now independently but significantly complement the role of RedCLARA, such as SCALAC, La Referencia, and LACNET.

Nevertheless, despite the significance of these achievements, the most important one has been the ability to establish and maintain enduring cooperation among the majority of countries in the region. With a great diversity of conditions and resources, these countries have managed to forge a common agenda and a governance model that have served as the foundation and support for their work.

In recent years, we have significantly expanded our infrastructure with very strong support from the European Commission for the BELL A project. With BELL A we have reached a very important milestone, guaranteeing a direct high-capacity connection through the EllaLink cable that directly connects Europe to Latin America. It should be noted that the significance of this connectivity is not the infrastructure itself, but what this infrastructure represents in terms of the willingness and openness to cooperation between both continents. The digital divide that concerns us so deeply is not only an infrastructure gap, but also primarily a knowledge gap.

This knowledge is essential to mobilize creativity and innovation in all areas of society. In this sense, RedCLARA is expanding its scope, aspiring to play a central role in leveraging digital transformation technologies to address and find solutions to some of the problems and major challenges we face today.

BELL A II is the project currently being implemented by RedCLARA with the support and co-financing of the Directorate of International Alliances of the European Union (DG-INTPA). The general objective of the BELL A II project is ***to strengthen and expand the Latin American and Caribbean***

digital ecosystem, facilitating relationships and sharing among Latin American, Caribbean, and European companies, research centres, educational institutions, and academic networks, to contribute to the achievement of the region's strategic goals, with a focus on strengthening education, science, technology, and innovation.

Its specific goals are:

1. To design, build, and operate digital infrastructure capable of guaranteeing the proper connectivity of Peru, Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras with the rest of the BELLA infrastructure, particularly with the submarine cable connecting Europe with Latin America since 2021. Depending on a feasibility analysis, community priorities, and the availability of economic resources, the project also considers the possibility of its expansion to some of the following countries: Caribbean nations, Mexico, Belize, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Uruguay.
2. To increase the adoption and use of digital transformation technologies to develop digital research and education solutions.
3. To intensify cooperative relations with European digital education and research ecosystems to promote the exchange of knowledge, access to best practices, and the creation of the dialogue spaces necessary for the design, formulation, and execution of innovative research and education projects.
4. To collaborate with European Union initiatives such as the EU-LAC Digital Alliance to develop capabilities in the application of digital transformation technologies to foster innovation in the public and private sectors.

In this context, BELLA II must undertake a series of procurement and investment processes to maximize the use of available resources in accordance with the methods and procedures accepted by the European Union.

Objectives of the Consultancy

To design policies, processes, and methods for RedCLARA's procurements and investments, with a special focus on supporting the achievement of the objectives of the BELLA II project. Among other aspects, this should include the analysis of negotiation models such as competitive dialogue and any other that the consultant may consider applicable within the context of the project. This design must meet the following conditions:

- Promote the transparency of the processes.
- Ensure equal opportunities for all participants.
- Establish procedures differentiated by procurement or investment range.
- To the extent possible, allow the flexibility and efficiency necessary for decision-making in a dynamic and changing context.
- Comply with all requirements generally established for projects financed by the European Union and, particularly, in the legal and contractual context of the project.
- Provide sufficient elements documenting the decision-making processes related to procurements and investments.

Scope of the Consultancy

- To conduct an in-depth review of existing procurement policies and methodologies.
- To conduct an analysis of best practices in the telecommunication industry's procurement or investment processes.
- To conduct an in-depth review of the policies, procedures, and methodologies related to procurements and investments defined by the European Commission and multilateral banks.
- To propose to RedCLARA the policies, procedures, and methodologies considered pertinent within the context of the BELLA II project's objectives.
- To design, together with RedCLARA, the negotiation methodology to be used with companies that have applied or will apply to participate in the BELLA II project as co-investors or suppliers.
- To provide support for specific consultations throughout the continuous negotiation process required by the project.

Deliverables

- A report on existing purchasing policies and methodologies, and best practices in the telecommunications industry.
- A report detailing the policies, procedures, and methodologies of the European Commission that apply in the contractual context of the BELLA II project.
- Preparation of the document outlining the policies, procedures, and methodologies identified during the consultancy process to be used by RedCLARA.
- A document outlining possible negotiation methodologies and detailing the negotiation strategy considering only the methodologies that apply based on the project's objectives.

Duration

The consultancy is expected to be completed within two months from the date on which the contract is signed.

Qualifications and Experience

- Knowledge and proven experience supporting or leading telecommunications service procurement processes.
- Knowledge and proven experience developing or supporting public tender processes.
- Knowledge and proven experience in procurement processes within projects funded by the European Commission.
- Knowledge and proven experience in designing, developing, and implementing procurement policies, methodologies, and processes.

Reports and Communication

The consultancy is expected to work jointly with RedCLARA throughout the two-month period of activity. The area responsible for this process is the Finance Department, and the person in charge

is the organization's finance director. However, there will be ongoing interactions with various members of the organization at different levels, as required by the consultancy.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposal assessment will prioritize experience and knowledge over the cost of the consultancy. The consultancy will be assigned to the individual or organization that demonstrates the most experience in the topics to be addressed.

Submission of Proposals

Proposals must be submitted via email before midnight (23:59 GMT-4), May 14 2024.

Send your proposal to BELLAII.Consultorias@redclara.net. Please include the following text in the email subject line: TdR-BELLAII-A001.

Questions will be received until May 9 at 23:59 GMT-4.