

Consultant for a Post-Merger Strategy Development

RECI-FoBBIZ is seeking an experienced consultant to support our organisation in the development of our first joint strategy following the recent merger of RECI (Swiss Network for Education and International Cooperation) and FoBBIZ (Swiss Forum for Skills Development and International Cooperation).

Following this merger, RECI-FoBBIZ is entering a crucial transition year in 2026. A key priority is to co-create a new, shared strategic direction together with our members and our Board, building on the strengths of both organisations and positioning the network for greater impact. We are therefore looking for a consultant to facilitate and support a participatory, merger-aware strategy process.

Objective of the assignment

The consultant will support RECI-FoBBIZ in developing a clear, actionable strategy that defines our shared vision, strategic priorities, implications for our governance structure and an implementation roadmap. The process will be participatory and will actively involve network members, the Board, and selected external stakeholders. The consultant will act as a neutral facilitator and provide methodological expertise, analysis and drafting support. In the process, the consultant will also support identity-building and post-merger cohesion.

Key tasks may include

- Designing and facilitating a participatory strategy process
- Conducting situation analysis and stakeholder consultations
- Facilitating in-person and online workshops with members and Board
- Setting up the strategy process in a way that supports the development of a shared identity and culture following the merger
- Drafting the strategy framework and implementation roadmap
- Supporting the validation and finalisation of the strategy document

Profile and requirements of the consultant

- Experienced strategy consultant
- Proven experience working with Swiss NGOs in international cooperation
- Strong experience in facilitating participatory processes and bringing together diverse stakeholders
- Affinity for network and member-based organisations
- Availability for approximately **12–16 days between April and September 2026**
- Availability for on-site workshops in Bern (09 June 2026)
- Very good command of English
- Knowledge of German and French (for reading documents)
- Knowledge of Education and Vocational Skills Development (VSD) topics in international cooperation is an asset, as well as familiarity with key national and international actors
- Understanding of advocacy work in a network organisation is an asset

Further details on the context, objectives, timeline and expected deliverables are outlined in the attached concept note.

Interested consultants are invited to submit a short expression of interest including:

- A brief track record of relevant experience
- Proposed daily rate
- Availability during the indicated period
- CV or organisational profile
- A brief (max. 1 page) outline of the proposed process and methodology for the strategy development, based on the attached concept note

Please send your expression of interest recruitment@reci-education.ch by **21 February 2026**.

Concept note for the strategy process

Purpose of the contract

To develop a clear, actionable strategy that defines the shared vision of RECI-FoBBIZ members, strategic priorities, governance implications, and implementation roadmap, supported by an external expert to ensure neutrality, a well-structured process, and best practice. The strategy process will also support the consolidation of a new joint identity and working culture following the recent merger of the formerly independent networks of RECI and FoBBIZ.

Context: Recent Merger and Organisational Diversity

RECI-FoBBIZ is the result of the merger between two distinct networks with different histories, sizes, thematic foci and ways of working:

- Both networks are specialised in education: while FoBBIZ was focused on Vocational Skills Development (VSD), RECI thematically covered SDG4 (Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All), with three sub-thematic foci.
- The two networks differed in nature and size, which resulted in markedly different levels of governance complexity.
- The two networks merged through the formal integration of FoBBIZ into the Association RECI. The Association was renamed “RECI-FoBBIZ” and committed to building on the identities, histories, and strengths of both former networks to develop a joint, integrated organisation during the 2026 transition year.

The strategy process will explicitly address this context by helping to integrate these different organisational cultures, governance traditions, and strengths into a coherent and shared future model. To achieve this, it will be a participatory process, actively involving the network members, to secure their commitment, ownership and buy-in.

Scope and Objectives

- Clarify RECI-FoBBIZ' vision, mission, value proposition, and long-term ambition.
- Support the formation of a shared identity and culture, building on the complementary strengths of both formerly independent networks and fostering ownership and collaboration among members.
- Ensure RECI-FoBBIZ' relevance: Identify 3–5 strategic priorities aligned with members' needs and the external context.
- Define roles, decision-making principles, and collaboration mechanisms appropriate to the new, integrated structure.
- Produce a practical implementation plan with measurable outcomes.

Approach and Methodology

- Key principles: inclusivity, transparency, co-creation.
- External support provides facilitation, analysis, benchmarking, and drafting, and acts as a neutral party in navigating differences stemming from the merger.
- Participatory process involving board, network members, and (external) key stakeholders from both legacy networks.
- Merger-aware design: deliberate reflection on values, ways of working, and decision-making cultures of the former networks.
- Evidence-based inputs: document review, interviews/focus groups, surveys, and a strategy workshop designed to foster shared understanding.
- Iterative validation with clear decision points to build ownership and trust.

Deliverables

- Situation analysis and stakeholder synthesis, including merger-related insights.
- Strategic framework (vision, priorities, objectives, success indicators) reflecting the joint identity.
- Governance and operational implications for the integrated network.
- 12–24-month implementation roadmap with clear responsibilities.
- Final strategy document and executive summary.

Governance and Roles

- Steering group (SG) consisting of board representatives: oversight, strategic guidance, and decision-making. Back office participating in SG meetings.
- RECI-FoBBIZ back office: coordination, communication, and stakeholder engagement.
- External consultant: facilitation, analysis, drafting, and support to identity and culture-building.
- Board: is updated regularly by back office, takes decisions in case of changes in plan and consultation agreement.

Important Stakeholders

- RECI-FoBBIZ Members
- SDC
- FoBBIZ Sounding Board
- GCE/ENACE
- NORRAG and their global network of experts
- SwissFoundations: Group of Friends of Education

Success Criteria

- Shared ownership and relevance of the strategy across members from both legacy networks.
- A clearly articulated joint identity and coherent way of working.
- Strategic priorities translated into concrete, time-bound actions.
- Clear accountability and monitoring framework.

Risks and Mitigation

- Cultural fragmentation → structured reflection and facilitated dialogue.
- Limited engagement → early alignment and concise, inclusive approach.
- Scope creep → fixed milestones and decision gates.
- Implementation gap → roadmap with owners and indicators.

Timeline and Milestones

| Timeline | End of February | Beginning of April | Mid-April | (Ideally) before summer break | July, August | September | Mid-October |
|-----------|--|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| Phase | Preparation | Initiation | Analysis | Co-creation | Drafting | Validation | Approval |
| Milestone | Appointment of Steering Group by board. | Project kick-off; agreed scope and governance of this process, workplan; explicit framing of merger context. | Situation analysis and stakeholder insights validated, including perspectives from both former networks. Mapping of stakeholders and comparable networks. | Strategy workshop with members completed; shared priorities and core identity elements agreed. | Draft strategy and implementation roadmap delivered. Mid-August: draft to SDC. | Feedback consolidated; revisions completed with attention to cultural integration. | Strategy approved; handover session and next-steps plan. |
| Comments | Formation of Steering Group; selecting and contracting of external facilitator | As soon as consultant has been identified, not earlier than with start of new back office | Surveys, interviews, focus groups, online workshops, etc. | General Assembly (GA) and Strategy workshop June 9 (face-to-face in Bern) | Ensure some availability of members of the steering group during this time | Keep the possibility to organise further (online) workshops, focus groups, etc. if necessary | Board meeting mid-October: approval |