

Project Brief

Project Brief: Bilko

“ **Project:** Bilko — Balkan Accounting SaaS **Version:** 0.1 **Date:** 2026-02-23
Author: John (AI Director) **Status:** Draft **Reviewers:** Alem Bašić (CEO)

Document History

Version	Date	Author	Changes
0.1	2026-02-23	John (AI Director)	Initial draft

1. Executive Summary

“ There is no modern, cloud-native accounting platform built for Balkan SMBs. The 348,000+ active small businesses in Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina are forced to choose between expensive ERP platforms (Pantheon, Minimax) that are over-engineered for their needs, or manual processes in spreadsheets that fail regulatory requirements. Bilko solves this by offering Fiken-inspired cloud accounting — simple, compliant, affordable — with full local tax compliance (Serbian SEF e-invoicing, Croatian eRačun, BiH PDV) and support for local languages and currencies. Phase 1 targets Serbia with a €8-25/month SaaS model, validated by Croatia's January 2026 e-invoicing mandate as a forcing function across the region. Budget: €17K. Timeline: MVP launch by May 2026. CEO approval granted 2026-02-20.

2. Business Context & Market Opportunity

2.1 Business Context

The Balkan region is in a period of rapid digital transformation of business administration. Serbia made e-invoicing (SEF) mandatory for all B2B transactions in 2023. Croatia mandated eRačun (HR-FISK) for all businesses from January 2026. Bosnia-Herzegovina's CPF e-invoice platform is expected to follow by 2027. This regulatory wave is forcing hundreds of thousands of SMBs to abandon paper and spreadsheet workflows and adopt digital accounting tools — now.

The current market options are:

- **Pantheon / minimax** — complex, desktop-first ERP solutions that cost as much as a part-time secretary. Over-engineered for SMBs.
- **QuickBooks / Xero** — global tools with no Balkan tax compliance, no local language, no SEF/eRačun integration.
- **Manual Excel + accountant** — still the default for most micro businesses; entirely non-compliant from 2023+ onwards.

This creates a clear market gap: a simple, cloud-native, affordable tool that handles local compliance out of the box. Fiken (Norway) proved this model works — it captured 50%+ of the Norwegian SMB market by doing accounting simply, not by adding more features.

2.2 Market Opportunity

Dimension	Current State	Opportunity
Market Size (TAM)	€50-150M annually across 3 countries	348K+ active SMBs × €8-25/month × 12 months
Serbia SAM	300K+ active businesses; 90K+ VAT-registered	Immediate addressable: 50K cloud-ready SMBs
Croatia SAM	140K+ active SMBs; eRačun mandate Jan 2026	30K SMBs actively searching for tools now
Growth Rate	+15% annual digitalization of SMB finance	Regulatory mandates accelerating adoption
Key Trend	SEF (2023) + eRačun (2026) + CPF (2027) wave	Regulatory forcing function = organic demand

2.3 Strategic Fit

This project directly supports:

- **Strategic Goal:** ALAI Holding's transition from services-only to product + services revenue model
- **OKR / Initiative:** First ALAI SaaS product generating ARR by Q3 2026
- **Alignment with ALAI mission:** "We build digital. You build business." — Bilko is exactly that: ALAI builds the digital accounting infrastructure so Balkan SMBs can focus on their business.

3. Problem Statement

3.1 Core Problem

Balkan small business owners cannot find affordable, compliant, simple cloud accounting software in their language. Every available option is either too expensive (Pantheon), not compliant with local tax law (QuickBooks/Xero), or too complex for a 5-person business (any ERP). As e-invoicing mandates tighten, the cost of inaction — fines, manual processes, accountant overhead — is rising rapidly.

3.2 Pain Points

#	Pain Point	Affected Stakeholder	Measurable Impact
P-01	No simple cloud accounting tool with SEF e-invoicing support	Serbian SMB owners	Fines up to 500,000 RSD for non-compliant invoicing; hours of manual work per invoice
P-02	Pantheon costs 3-5x more than Fiken's Norwegian equivalent	Budget-conscious SMBs	~€150-200/month vs. target €25/month — 6-8x price difference
P-03	No local language support in global tools (QuickBooks/Xero)	Non-English-speaking owners	Onboarding failure; accounting errors from mistranslated concepts
P-04	Accountants managing multiple clients have no unified view	Bookkeepers / accountants	2-3 hours per client per month in manual data reconciliation
P-05	No multi-currency support for BAM/RSD/EUR in local tools	Importers/exporters	Manual exchange rate calculations; errors in VAT reporting

3.3 Current State Gaps

Current Process/System: Most Balkan SMBs use one of: (a) Excel + manual accountant for monthly reconciliation, (b) Pantheon/Minimax installed on local PC, (c) no accounting at all for micro-businesses below VAT threshold.

Key Gaps:

- No cloud-native option: all local tools require local installation or expensive server licensing
- No regulatory compliance out of the box: SEF integration requires custom development in all existing tools
- No modern UX: Pantheon's interface has not meaningfully changed since 2010

Cost of Inaction: An SMB owner ignoring SEF compliance in Serbia faces fines up to 500,000 RSD (~€4,250) per violation. Additionally, manual accounting for a 10-invoice/month business costs approximately 4-6 hours/month of owner time or €80-150/month in accountant fees — 3-6× what Bilko will charge.

4. Proposed Solution Overview

4.1 Solution Description

Bilko is a cloud SaaS accounting platform built for Balkan SMBs. It handles invoicing (with SEF e-invoicing for Serbia and eRačun for Croatia), expense tracking, bank reconciliation, VAT reporting, and double-entry bookkeeping — all in a simple, modern interface available in Serbian, Bosnian, and Croatian. Priced at €8-25/month, it undercuts every existing compliant solution in the market.

4.2 Key Capabilities

#	Capability	Addresses Pain Point	Priority
CAP-01	SEF e-invoicing (Serbia) — create, sign, submit, track	P-01	Must Have
CAP-02	VAT/PDV auto-calculation (20% RS, 17% BA, 25% HR)	P-01, P-02	Must Have
CAP-03	Simple invoicing UI (6-step wizard, PDF, email delivery)	P-02, P-03	Must Have
CAP-04	Multi-currency (BAM, RSD, EUR, USD) with exchange rate locking	P-05	Must Have
CAP-05	Bank statement CSV import + auto-reconciliation	P-04	Must Have

#	Capability	Addresses Pain Point	Priority
CAP-06	Double-entry bookkeeping + Chart of Accounts (Balkan GAAP)	P-04	Must Have
CAP-07	Multi-user RBAC (owner, admin, accountant, viewer)	P-04	Must Have
CAP-08	P&L, Balance Sheet, VAT reports + PDF/Excel export	P-04	Must Have

4.3 Solution Architecture (High Level)

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graph LR
  A[SMB Owner / Accountant] --> B[Bilko Web App\nNext.js 15]
  B --> C[Bilko API\nExpress + TypeScript]
  C --> D[(PostgreSQL\nPrisma ORM)]
  C --> E[SEF Platform\nefaktura.gov.rs]
  C --> F[Email Provider\nPDF delivery]
  C --> G[Exchange Rate API\nECB / fixer.io]

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4.4 Platforms & Channels

- Web Application (Next.js 15, responsive / PWA installable)
- iOS Mobile App — Phase 2
- Android Mobile App — Phase 2
- API / Backend Service (Express + TypeScript)
- Admin Dashboard (included in web app)

5. Key Benefits & ROI Projection

5.1 Quantified Benefits

Benefit Category	Description	Estimated Annual Value
Revenue	SaaS subscriptions — 500 orgs × €180 avg ARR Year 1	€90,000 Year 1
Revenue growth	+30% Year 2, +50% Year 3 as Croatia + BiH launch	€270,000 Year 3

Benefit Category	Description	Estimated Annual Value
Cost avoided	No need to build custom regulatory tools for each project	€20,000/year saved in client project overhead
Market credibility	Bilko as reference for ALAI's product-building capability	Non-quantifiable; high strategic value
Total Year 1 Benefit		~€110,000

5.2 ROI Calculation

Metric	Value
Total Investment (Phase 1)	€17,000
Total Annual Benefit (Year 1)	€90,000
Payback Period	~3 months after launch
3-Year ROI	>1,500% (conservative)
Net Present Value (3yr, 10% discount)	~€300,000+

Assumptions: 500 paying orgs Year 1, avg €15/month, 30% growth Year 2, 50% growth Year 3. Conservative; Fiken reached 50K orgs in 5 years from comparable market.

5.3 Qualitative Benefits

- **Brand/Reputation:** Bilko establishes ALAI as a product company, not just a consulting firm
- **Competitive Advantage:** First-mover advantage in cloud-native Balkan accounting; regulatory moat (SEF/eRačun compliance is complex to replicate)
- **Risk Reduction:** ARR from Bilko reduces ALAI's dependence on consulting revenue volatility
- **Employee/User Experience:** Accountants manage clients from one platform; SMBs spend less time on compliance

6. High-Level Requirements

#	Requirement	Type	Priority	Notes
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HLR-01	Create and submit SEF e-invoices to efaktura.gov.rs	Functional	Must Have	Serbia launch blocker
HLR-02	Auto-calculate Serbian PDV (20% standard, 10% reduced)	Functional	Must Have	
HLR-03	Double-entry bookkeeping with Balkan Chart of Accounts	Functional	Must Have	All 3 countries
HLR-04	Multi-currency support: BAM, RSD, EUR, USD	Functional	Must Have	
HLR-05	GDPR-aligned data handling; user data export	Non-Functional	Must Have	EU-adjacent regulatory context
HLR-06	Multi-tenant organization isolation	Non-Functional	Must Have	SaaS security requirement
HLR-07	Page load < 1 second (subsequent), < 3 seconds (initial)	Non-Functional	Must Have	
HLR-08	Support 10,000 concurrent organizations	Non-Functional	Must Have	Scale target
HLR-09	Croatian eRačun (HR-FISK) integration	Functional	Should Have	Phase 2
HLR-10	AI-assisted bookkeeping suggestions	Functional	Could Have	Phase 2+

7. Competitive Landscape

Alternative	Type	Strengths	Weaknesses	Why We Win
Pantheon	Direct competitor (ERP)	Established brand; full accounting features; local market presence	Desktop-first, over-complex for SMBs, expensive (€150+/month), poor UX	Bilko is cloud-native, 6x cheaper, Fiken-simple UX
Minimax	Direct competitor	Feature-complete, regional presence	Old architecture, not cloud-native, no mobile, limited SEF support	Bilko is modern stack, better UX, lower price

Alternative	Type	Strengths	Weaknesses	Why We Win
QuickBooks / Xero	Indirect competitor	Global brand, polished UX	No SEF/eRačun, no local languages, no local currency compliance, €30-50/month	Bilko wins on compliance and local language — they cannot compete
Fiken (Norway)	Inspiration / adjacent	Proven model, NPS 70+, 50K+ orgs	Norway only; no Balkan presence	Bilko IS Fiken for the Balkans

Our Unique Value Proposition: The only cloud accounting platform built specifically for Balkan SMBs — with SEF e-invoicing, local language, local currency, and Fiken-level UX simplicity, at an affordable monthly price.

8. Resource Requirements

8.1 Team

Role	Effort	Source
AI Director / PM	Full-time oversight	John (ALAI)
Backend Development	6-8 weeks (AI-assisted)	ALAI builder agents (Sonnet)
Frontend Development	2-3 weeks (connect to API)	ALAI builder agents (Sonnet)
QA / Testing	2 weeks	ALAI validator agents
DevOps	1 week setup + ongoing	ALAI builder agent
Balkan regulatory advisor	As needed	Asmir Merdžanović (SnowIT)

8.2 Budget Summary

Category	Estimated Cost (EUR)
Development	€8,500
Design	€1,500
Infrastructure	€1,200
Licenses / APIs	€800
Contingency (17%)	€2,500
Total	€17,000

8.3 Timeline

Phase	Duration	Start
Backend development (50 endpoints)	2 weeks	2026-02-23
SEF integration	1 week	2026-03-09
Frontend → API connection	1 week	2026-03-09
Alpha testing	1 week	2026-03-23
Beta program	2 weeks	2026-04-07
Production launch (Serbia)	1 day	2026-05-01
Total Duration	~10 weeks	2026-02-23

9. Go / No-Go Decision Criteria

9.1 Go Criteria (ALL must be met)

- Budget approved: €17,000 Phase 1 — APPROVED by Alem 2026-02-20
- Key stakeholders aligned on scope and timeline — CEO approval 2026-02-20
- All 8 pipeline gates passed (Market Research through CEO Approval) — PASSED 2026-02-20
- Tech stack decided — Next.js 15 + Express + PostgreSQL confirmed
- Database schema complete — 15 models defined and validated
- SEF API access confirmed — pending
- Serbian legal entity (ALAI Tech d.o.o.) registration — in progress

9.2 No-Go Triggers (ANY is sufficient to stop)

- Serbian tax authority mandates software certification blocking MVP
- SEF API fundamentally incompatible with planned UBL 2.1 approach
- Budget overrun exceeds €17,000 ceiling without CEO reapproval
- Legal blocker in Serbian company registration that prevents operation

9.3 Decision

Dimension	Decision	Decision Maker	Date
Proceed with development	GO	Alem Bašić (CEO)	2026-02-20
Budget approved	Yes — €17K ceiling	Alem Bašić	2026-02-20
Resource allocation approved	Yes	Alem Bašić	2026-02-20

Approval

Role	Name	Date	Signature
Author	John (AI Director)	2026-02-23	
Reviewer			
AI Director (John)	John	2026-02-23	
Project Sponsor	Alem Bašić		
CEO (Alem)	Alem Bašić		

Revision #3

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