



# CALL FOR THEMATIC EXPERTS

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Call addressed to individuals for the establishment of a roster of prospective independent experts for the assessment of project proposals in the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme

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## 1. Background

The Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme is established based on Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013, Regulation (EU) No. 1301/2013 and Regulation (EU) No. 1299/2013. Its Cooperation Programme (CP) has been approved by the European Commission on 16 December 2014<sup>1</sup>.

The Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme supports regional cooperation among central European countries: Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, as well as parts of Germany and Italy. The overall objective of the programme is “cooperating beyond borders in central Europe to make our cities and regions better places to live and work by implementing smart solutions answering to regional challenges in the fields of innovation, low-carbon economy, environment, culture and transport”.

The total programme budget for projects is around 231 million Euros from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The programme should, hence, play a considerable role in strengthening the development efforts of these countries and their regions, while contributing to an integrated development of the entire programme area by supporting transnational cooperation projects with mutual benefit, tangible outputs and concrete results.

The programme focuses on four thematic priorities:

1. Cooperating on innovation to make CENTRAL EUROPE more competitive
2. Cooperating on low carbon strategies in CENTRAL EUROPE
3. Cooperating on natural and cultural resources for sustainable growth in CENTRAL EUROPE
4. Cooperating on transport to better connect CENTRAL EUROPE

Beneficiaries and target groups include public authorities and related entities, regional development and innovation agencies, enterprises (including SMEs), chambers of commerce and other associations, NGOs, financing institutions, technology transfer institutions, universities and research institutes, energy suppliers and management institutions, environmental facilities, education and training organisations, transport operators and infrastructure providers as well as other institutions which are affected by the thematic priorities concerned.

The programme is managed by a structure comprising institutions at the European, national and regional levels. Main decision-making body is the “Monitoring Committee”, which is composed of representatives of the Member States of the Programme. As Managing Authority (MA), the Department for European Affairs of the City of Vienna is responsible for the operational management of the programme. It is supported by a Joint Secretariat (JS), i.e. an international office that is also located in Vienna, and a network of National Contact Points, that are located in the participating Member States. The programme language is English.

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<sup>1</sup> Documents available under [www.interreg-central.eu](http://www.interreg-central.eu)

## 2. Call for applications for assessment of project proposals

The Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE MA hereby invites applications from individuals to apply as prospective independent experts via the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE "Expert Portal" with a view to establishing a roster of independent thematic experts who could be called on to support the MA/JS during the assessment of project proposals.

## 3. Required expertise and profile

Prospective independent experts are expected to have a high level of professional experience in one or more thematic fields as covered by the programme priority axes and the respective programme specific objectives:

### Priority 1:

1.1 To improve sustainable linkages among actors of the innovation systems for strengthening regional innovation capacity in central Europe

1.2 To improve skills and entrepreneurial competences for advancing economic and social innovation in central European regions

### Priority 2:

2.1 To develop and implement solutions for increasing energy efficiency and renewable energy usage in public infrastructures

2.2 To improve territorially based low-carbon energy planning strategies and policies supporting climate change mitigation

2.3 To improve capacities for mobility planning in functional urban areas to lower CO2 emissions

### Priority 3:

3.1 To improve integrated environmental management capacities for the protection and sustainable use of natural heritage and resources

3.2 To improve capacities for the sustainable use of cultural heritage and resources

3.3 To improve environmental management of functional urban areas to make them more liveable places

### Priority 4:

4.1 To improve planning and coordination of regional passenger transport systems for better connections to national and European transport networks

4.2 To improve coordination among freight transport stakeholders for increasing multimodal environmentally-friendly freight solutions

In particular, prospective experts must:

- have a university degree;
- have at least 7 years professional experience (following the award of the university degree) acquired in positions related to one or more thematic fields of the programme priorities and programme specific objectives;
- have proven experience in cohesion policy and/or European territorial cooperation;
- have relevant professional experience in the regions covered by the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme;
- have excellent analytical and evaluation skills;
- be fluent in speaking, reading and writing in English.

Prior experience in assessment of project proposals under national, European or international funding programmes as well as under programmes directly managed by the European Commission is considered as an advantage.

Experts should also dispose of expertise on cross cutting issues such as:

- International cooperation
- Administration, management and/or evaluation of projects, programmes or policies
- Analysis and monitoring of policy measures and instruments
- Use of project results, dissemination, communication and knowledge transfer
- Demographic change
- Sustainable development
- Non-discrimination and equal opportunities

## 4. Application and selection procedure

Applications may be submitted at any time, however the deadline for participating in the selection of experts for the assessment of project proposals received in the framework of a certain call for proposals is **one month prior to the closure of the call**. Applications submitted after this date will be considered only for the assessment of following calls for project proposals.

Applications can only be submitted via the online expert portal available at the following link:

**<https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/Expertportal>**

The application will be rejected if the dossier is incomplete, (i.e. non-provision of compulsory information or missing CV) or if the CV is provided in other languages than English and/or using other templates of CV than the European Europass CV format<sup>2</sup>.

The MA/JS will build a roster of experts including only those candidates who meet the criteria set out under section 3. Inclusion in the expert roster does not guarantee the selection and appointment for the assessment of project proposals. The MA/JS will notify the experts about their inclusion in the expert roster.

The roster will be valid for 2 years from the date of publication of the present call for experts. Afterwards experts will be requested to update their application.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/curriculum-vitae/templates-instructions>

Independent experts will be selected from the expert roster on the basis of thematic expertise, knowledge and skills appropriate to carry out the assessment of the received applications. The MA/JS will apply non-discriminatory selection criteria and will to the possible extent seek a balanced selection of experts in terms of geographical diversity and gender.

The selected experts will be contacted by the MA/JS inquiring about their availability to participate in the assessment of project proposals prior to their actual appointment.

## 5. Description of the assignment

### 5.1 Objective

The aim of the assignment is to support the MA/JS in the quality assessment of project proposals submitted in response to an Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE call for proposals.

### 5.2 Tasks to be accomplished

The tasks to be accomplished by the expert consist of the content-wise and financial quality assessment of project proposals, to be executed under the coordination of the MA/JS.

The expert tasks include the following:

- Acquaintance of relevant programme documents (e.g. Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Cooperation programme, application package, assessment methodology, thematic studies etc.)
- Participation in a briefing meeting with the MA/JS (optional)
- Quality assessment of project proposals according to the following assessment criteria (further broken down into sub-criteria) as defined in the assessment methodology of the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme:
  - Relevance
  - Partnership
  - Implementation
  - Budget

Experts have to appraise each sub-criterion with a score accompanied by a clear qualitative statement in English language (highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the project proposal) justifying the given score as well as providing assessment conclusions per criterion. Those must be presented in such a way as to justify a funding recommendation or rejection of the proposal by the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme. In case of recommending a project proposal for funding, also recommendations for necessary amendments during the negotiation phase should be provided by the expert. If needed, experts have to ensure their availability to discuss their assessment with the MA/JS in the frame of the harmonisation of assessments.

The assessment work carried out by the expert is to be documented through the filling-in of one assessment grid<sup>3</sup> for each project proposal assessed.

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<sup>3</sup> Template of assessment grid is made available by the MA/JS.

## 6. Independence and confidentiality

To ensure the independence of the quality assessment to be performed in her/his capacity as “independent expert”, prior to the signature of the contract the selected expert will have to sign a declaration certifying that there is no conflict of interest at the time of contracting and that she/he undertakes to inform the MA/JS if any conflict should arise in the course of the assessment.

A conflict of interest exists if the impartial and objective function of an assessor is compromised for reasons involving family, emotional life or political affinity, economic interest or any other shared interest with the project applicants.

Throughout the assessment process, and for the following five years following the completion of the assignment, the expert must ensure the confidentiality of the information and documents as provided by the MA/JS. This shall be certified by the selected expert by signing an ad-hoc declaration.

## 7. Use of tools

Selected experts have to use their own tools (laptop/computers). The assessment grid will be made available online via the electronic monitoring system (eMS) of the programme.

## 8. Equal Opportunities

Equal opportunities policy without distinction on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation will be applied.

## 9. Location and duration

A briefing meeting with the MA/JS might take place in Vienna (Austria) at the JS premises prior to starting the assessment process.

The assessment work will be done remotely by the expert (at the premises of the expert).

The number of project proposals which will be assigned to an expert may vary depending on the thematic scope and number of proposals received and will be agreed between the expert and the MA/JS.

The assessment of the assigned applications will have to be performed and finalised (submission of filled-in assessment grids through eMS) according to a time schedule as agreed with the MA/JS.

## 10. Fee

The expert is entitled to a fee of EUR 450 (VAT excluded) per each project proposal assessed.

In case of attendance to the briefing meeting mentioned under § 5.2, the following applies:

- The expert is entitled to the reimbursement of travel expenses according to the rules applicable to the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme (e.g.: economy flight tickets);
- The expert is entitled to an additional fee of EUR 300 compensating the time spent at the meeting.