



# CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

addressed to independent experts for the State aid assessment of  
project proposals



Version 1  
02 2022





## 1. Background

The Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme (Interreg CE) is established based on Regulation (EU) No. 2021/1058, Regulation (EU) No. 2021/1059 and Regulation (EU) No. 2021/1060. The Interreg CE Programme for the 2021-2027 period is available at [www.interreg-central.eu](http://www.interreg-central.eu).

Central Europe is a core area of the European Union. Interreg CE covers regions and cities from nine EU Member States: Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

The Interreg CE Programme envisions a united central Europe that cooperates - to become smarter, greener and better connected together. Based on shared needs and a common identity in an area long divided by the 'Iron Curtain', the programme aims for a trustful culture of cooperation beyond administrative borders.

The programme mission is to bring regions and cities together beyond borders to find fitting solutions for their citizens - in a fair and equal way everywhere. It encourages and supports transnational cooperation to make regions more resilient to common challenges that know no borders and which cannot be solved alone. These challenges include among others economic transition processes, climate change, and the long-term socioeconomic consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Interreg CE Programme is organised in four thematic priorities:

1. Cooperating for a smarter central Europe
2. Cooperating for a greener central Europe
3. Cooperating for a better-connected Europe
4. Improving governance for cooperation in central Europe

The total programme budget for projects is around 208 million Euros from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The programme is managed by a structure comprising institutions at the European, national and regional levels. Main decision-making body is the "Monitoring Committee" (MC), 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 (NCPs), that are located in the participating Member States. The programme language is English.

For more information on the Interreg CE Programme and its call for proposals please visit: [www.interreg-central.eu](http://www.interreg-central.eu).

## 2. Objectives and scope

This call for experts invites individuals to express their interest to assist the Interreg CE Programme in their personal capacity as independent experts for the assessment of the State aid relevance of project proposals submitted to the programme within calls, also providing recommendations to ensure the compliance of affected proposals with the State aid discipline.

This call for expression of interest is open until 31.12.2025.



## 3. Description of the assignment

### Tasks to be accomplished

Tasks to be accomplished by the expert consist in the following:

- Acquaintance of relevant programme documents and support materials (e.g. Interreg CE Programme, programme manual, call-specific application package, briefing materials on assessment methodology, templates and procedures, video tutorials);
- Participation in an on-line briefing meeting with the MA/JS;
- Assessment of the State aid compliance of project proposals, with regard specifically to the following:
  - Analysis of the status and roles of organisations and bodies participating in the project, determining whether public funds granted within the project qualify as State aid;
  - Assessment on the occurrence of indirect State aid to third parties outside the project, benefitting of project activities as target groups, including the identification of the concerned project activities, deliverables and outputs.

The assessment of the State aid relevance of project proposals is to be performed on the basis of information included by applicants in the application form. Additional information that may be needed by the experts for performing the assessment of specific project proposals might be requested to the project applicants by the MA/JS in coordination with the expert.

The assessment work carried out by the expert is to be documented through one State aid assessment grid for each assessed project proposal, prepared according to a template provided by the MA/JS. The expert is expected to complete each section of the assessment grid, providing comprehensive information to justify the presence or absence of State aid as well as providing recommendations for ensuring the compliance of the concerned project proposal with the State aid discipline.

As part of the assignment, and if needed, the expert has to ensure her/his availability to discuss their assessment with the MA/JS in the frame of a consensus building process.

The assessment work is to be done remotely by the expert at her/his own premises. Selected experts have to use their own IT tools.

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

The assessment of the assigned applications has to be performed and finalised (i.e. submission of filled-in assessment grids) according to a time schedule agreed with the MA/JS.

## 4. Required expertise and selection criteria

Experts shall hold relevant competences and professional experience in State aid matters. They will be selected against the following requirements:

- Holding a university degree;
- Having at least 5 years of professional experience, following the award of the university degree, in State aid discipline;



- Having a proven experience in the application of the State aid discipline as well as knowledge of judgments provided by the European Court of Justice;
- Having a proven knowledge of EU programmes and in particular of programmes funded within Structural Funds;
- Having excellent analytical and judgment skills;
- Being fluent in speaking, reading and writing in English;
- Being computer literate (namely proficient with Word and Excel).

Expertise and previous experience in the application of the State aid discipline within Interreg/European Territorial Cooperation programmes is considered an advantage.

## 5. Procedure

### Application

Applications may be submitted at any time, however there will be cut-off dates for participating in the selection of experts for each call for proposals. The cut-off dates will be communicated on the programme website under the jobs and tenders page: [www.interreg-central.eu/jobs](http://www.interreg-central.eu/jobs). Applications submitted after this date will be considered only for the assessment of subsequent 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/stateaidexperts>

Interested applicants shall fill in the online questionnaire and upload their CV. To ensure completeness of information, applicants are encouraged to use the EU Europass CV format<sup>1</sup>. If the application is incomplete, (i.e. non-provision of compulsory information or missing CV) or if provided in other languages than English, it will not be considered for selection.

The application will remain valid until the closure of the call for experts (i.e. end of the year 2025). If needed, experts can re-submit an updated application at a later stage.

The submission of an application in the Interreg CE expert portal does not guarantee that an expert will be selected. The selection of experts will depend on programme needs.

### Selection

Experts will be selected by the MA/JS against the selection criteria specified under § 4. The procedure will be objective and follow the principles of non-discrimination and equal opportunities. The MA/JS will to the possible extent seek a gender 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 State aid assessment of project proposals prior to their actual appointment. Experts will need to confirm the absence of conflict of interest (see §7).

### Contracting

The MA will establish a contract with each selected expert, laying down the details regarding the assignment (e.g. tasks and working arrangements, payment).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://europa.eu/europass/en>



## 6. Fee

The expert is entitled to a fee of EUR 300 (VAT excluded) for each project proposal assessed according to the description provided under § 3.

## 7. 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 after the completion of the assignment, the expert must ensure the confidentiality of the information and documents provided by the MA/JS for performing the tasks contracted.

Such independence and confidentiality shall be confirmed by the selected expert by signing an ad-hoc declaration.

## 8. Contact

In case of questions or inquiries regarding the call for State Aid experts, please address [info@interreg-central.eu](mailto:info@interreg-central.eu).