



CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

addressed to independent thematic experts for the 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.

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.

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 thematic experts with the assessment of project proposals submitted to the programme within calls.

This call for expression of interest is open until 31.12.2025.



3. Description of the assignment

Tasks to be accomplished

The tasks to be accomplished by the expert consist of the quality assessment of project proposals, under the coordination of the MA/JS include 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 online briefing meeting with the MA/JS
- Assessment of project proposals according to the quality assessment criteria applicable to the relevant call for proposals along the following categories:
 - Relevance
 - Partnership
 - Implementation (including budget)

Experts have to appraise each criterion following detailed guiding questions with a score. The score has to be justified by a clear qualitative statement, in English language, highlighting the strengths and shortcomings of the project proposal. In case a project proposal passes a certain quality threshold for the total score, also recommendations for amendments should be provided by the expert, if applicable.

The assessment carried out by the expert has to be documented in an assessment grid for each project proposal assessed. The grid will have to be filled in online through a system set in place by the programme.

As part of the assignment, experts have to ensure their availability to discuss their assessment with the MA/JS in the frame of a consensus building process, if needed.

The assessment work will 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 a relevant competences and professional experience in one or more programme specific objectives (SOs), within the thematic fields specified in the Interreg CE Programme document¹ for each SO:

Priority 1:

- SO 1.1 Strengthening innovation capacities in central Europe
- SO 1.2 Strengthening skills for smart specialisation, industrial transition and entrepreneurship in central Europe

¹ Available under <https://www.interreg-central.eu/documents>

**Priority 2:**

- SO 2.1 Supporting the energy transition to a climate-neutral central Europe
- SO 2.2 Increasing the resilience to climate change risks in central Europe
- SO 2.3 Taking circular economy forward in central Europe
- SO 2.4 Safeguarding the environment in central Europe
- SO 2.5 Greening urban mobility in central Europe

Priority 3:

- SO 3.1 Improving transport connections of rural and peripheral regions in central Europe

Priority 4:

- SO 4.1 Strengthening governance for integrated territorial development in central Europe

Experts will be selected against the following requirements:

- Holding a university degree, preferably in matters of relevance for one or more programme SOs;
- Having 7 or more years professional experience (following the award of the university degree) at the date of submission of their application, acquired in matters related to one or more programme SOs;
- Having previous experience in regions covered by the Interreg CE Programme;
- Having previous experience in assessment of project proposals under national, European or international funding programmes;
- Being fluent in speaking, reading and writing in English.

Expertise and previous experience on EU cohesion policy and European Territorial Cooperation/Interreg 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. 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/thematicexperts>

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 format². 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.

² <https://europa.eu/europass/en>



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 and specific thematic requirements.

Selection

Experts will be selected by the MA/JS against the selection criteria specified under § 4, taking into consideration the thematic features of the call for proposals under which to perform the assessment of the received applications. 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 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. 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).

6. Fee

The expert is entitled to a fee of EUR 450 (VAT excluded) for each project proposal assessed according to the description provided under § 3. This expert fee refers to the full assessment of a proposal submitted under a standard call. In case of calls for proposals with simplified application forms and/or a limited number of criteria to be assessed, this fee might be reduced proportionally. In such cases, the expert fee will be communicated to the expert prior contracting.

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 thematic experts, please address info@interreg-central.eu.