



Hungary-Romania
Cross-Border Co-operation
Programme 2007-2013

The Programme is co-financed
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Development Fund



NDA National Development Agency

Call for applications

For setting up a pool of project evaluator experts

On behalf of the **Hungarian National Development Agency**, acting as a **Managing Authority (MA)** in the framework of the Hungary-Romania Cross Border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013, the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) of the Programme is calling for applications for setting up a pool of project evaluator expert database.

The **aim of the call** is to identify and select qualified and experienced professionals for establishing a pool of assessor experts and thus to ensure a proper technical and quality evaluation of the projects submitted under the Hungary-Romania Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013, and by this to contribute to the efficient use of the funds available within the programme.

The experts admitted in the database – following the submission of the projects – will provide technical assistance to the JTS in evaluating and selecting the eligible projects. The pool will be set up for the entire programme period and will be functional until terminated.

In order to be eligible applications and applicants have to comply with the criteria listed in the **Terms of Reference** annexed to this call that also contains other important details related to the tasks to be performed.

It is important to note that being an expert in the database does not automatically imply the obligations of the JTS to award a contract to the expert, this being influenced by the number and type of calls submitted in the frame of different calls.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. Programme information

The European Commission approved the Hungary-Romania Cross-Border Co-operation Operational Programme 2007-2013 (hereinafter referred as HU-RO CBP) on 21st of December 2007. The HU-RO CBP has the objective to bring people, communities and economic actors of the border area closer to each other in order to facilitate the joint development of the co-operation area, building upon key strengths of the border region. The target area is composed of: Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Hajdú-Bihar, Békés and Csongrád counties in Hungary and Satu-Mare, Bihor, Arad and Timis counties in Romania. The programme is financed through the European Regional Development Fund of the European Union, completed with the national co-financing of the two Member States, with funds totalling up to 275 million EUR for the whole implementation period of the programme.

In the frame of the programme financial support will be given to organizations and institutions from the countries mentioned above, thorough competitive, public calls for proposals, in order to implement their cross border co-operation projects. The project selection, the supervision and strategic decision making within the programme are the tasks of the Joint Monitoring and/or Steering Committees, in which the Member States are equally represented. In this, the two bodies are assisted by the Joint Technical Secretariat of the programme, which is preparing the necessary information for the decision making process.

In the framework of the programme there are two types of project application and selection processes used:

- The one step procedure is linked to the so-called soft projects requires full applications submitted by the applicants. In this case the programme does not require the submission of complex supporting documentation.
- The two step procedure refers to infrastructural development projects. In the first phase only concept notes are submitted that shortly describe the project idea and present a budget summary. Only selected concept notes enter the second phase when also several documents linked to infrastructural development have to be submitted, like drawings and feasibility study.

The first call for proposals in the one step method appeared in October 15, 2008, with the submission deadline on the 30th of January 2009. The second call for proposals, being the first step of the two step procedure was published on the 3rd of December, 2009, with the submission deadline on the 16th of February, 2009.

More information about the programme is available on the programmes' website: www.huro-cbc.eu, as well as on: www.vati.hu, www.nfu.hu, or www.mdpl.ro websites.

1.2. The aim of the call for the pool of experts

Projects submitted in the frame of the programme have to be selected in due time and under proper quality standards in order to ensure the fulfillment of programme objectives. The JTS of the programme is responsible for the technical assessment of the submitted projects, however does not have at its disposal all the potentially required thematic expertise and therefore depending on the need identified from the submitted proposals specific experts will be contracted in order to support the JTS in the technical and quality assessment of the project proposals.

The **aim of the call** is to establish a database of independent experts who will provide for the impartial technical evaluation of projects submitted under the HU-RO CBP and by this to contribute to the efficient use of the available funds. The experts selected to the pool will provide technical assistance to the JTS in evaluating and selecting projects submitted to the Programme.

The expertise sought from the experts that will be included in the pool refers to:

- Experts, as described in 4.1. from the present Terms of Reference, as well as in point I. in the Application Form, that are able to evaluate whole projects submitted under the one step procedure, as well as concept notes, i.e. both from professional and financial point of view.
- Experts, as described in 4.1. from the present Terms of Reference, as well as in point I. in the Application Form, that are able to evaluate whole projects submitted in the second step of the two-step procedure, including drawings, feasibility studies and other supporting documents required for an infrastructural development project with or without the capacity to assess the financial parts of the investment, i.e. cost benefit analyses, etc.
- Financial experts who are able to make the financial evaluation of the investment projects.

2. GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1. Beneficiary

The call is published by the HU-RO JTS, situated in VÁTI Kht, which is also the beneficiary of the procedure.

2.2. Call's objectives

To invite interested candidates possessing adequate experience and knowledge in the areas mentioned in the present ToR and to create a list of project evaluation experts who will contribute to a high quality project evaluation and selection process within Hungary-Romania Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013.

2.3. The tasks to be fulfilled

The experts included in the database – following the submission of the projects – will provide technical assistance to HU-RO JTS in evaluating the applications and their documentations and in preparing the decision related to the selection of the eligible projects.

- a) Qualitative evaluation of the project proposals using the given criteria and in the prescribed form (in case of scoring, besides the written evaluation, the justification for the awarded points is also needed). The experts shall analyze all professional parts of a project documentation both from a professional and financial point of view in order to assess the correctness and coherence of the documentation. The assessment shall cover when relevant the evaluation of the feasibility study and planning documentation (drawings) and/or the economical and financial documentation, as well.
- b) Provide help in the preparation of the decision regarding the acceptance or rejection of the project proposals, part of which is a summary – based on a professional justification - of the project documentation;
- c) To provide further additional comments in exceptional and justified cases at the request of the JTS.

To ensure impartial, professional and smooth assessment process experts will be given proper documentation and guidelines based on the Assessment and Evaluation Manual adopted by the JMC. Furthermore experts will have to attend a training regarding the evaluation process and they will have to follow the instructions of the responsible programme managers during the assessment process. The evaluation grids and the professional justification shall be completed electronically and handed over to the JTS, bearing the signature of the evaluation expert.

2.4. Expected results

A database will be created forming a pool of experts who will provide assistance to the HU-RO JTS in evaluating and preparing the decision in case of submitted project proposals. All experts that comply with the criteria set in the present call will be included in the database, priority having those with the most expertise and knowledge in the chosen field. The contracting of experts will be linked to the calls for proposals based on the number of projects and the areas of intervention opened, taking into consideration the availability of experts in that given period, too. Those with more professional experience will have priority in each case.

3. PLACE AND DURATION

3.1. Place

The place of execution is either Budapest, or the location of the expert. Nevertheless experts might be invited to perform certain tasks in Budapest, Hungary, as well as to joint JSC meetings, if

proved necessary. Before contracting for a specific evaluation period experts will have to go through a training and exam in Budapest¹.

3.2. Project duration

The pool will be created for the entire programme implementation period, thus being valid until the 31st of December 2015, if not being terminated earlier by the JTS.

Corresponding to the rhythm of the publications of call for proposals, experts will be contracted on an individual basis from the pool based on individual or service contracts. Experts will be contracted depending on the publication of the calls, the number of projects to be evaluated and the need of expertise by the JTS, respectively the availability of the expert. It is to be expected that the evaluation sessions corresponding to the first two calls will be starting at the end of March, 2009, ending in April, respectively May.

Experts might remain in the pool for the entire programme period. The pool will be up-dated from time to time; incl. with the publication of new calls for expression of interest in case there will be a shortage of experts.

Experts will be free to resign from the pool, as well as the JTS also reserves the right to remove experts from the list in case of insufficient performance, repeated unavailability or if problems rise regarding the impartiality and/or confidentiality of an expert.

4. REQUIREMENTS

Experts in general must possess solid knowledge in one of the key areas of intervention of the programme and/or financial field, as well as, of the regulations related to the European Funds. Nevertheless they should have practical experience in the preparation or evaluation of project documentation or parts of project documentation, as well.

4.1 Professional requirements

- Experts shall have a **relevant university degree** connected to one of the key areas of interventions, actions of the programme or finances, thus:
 - Road and/or railway construction, development of IT, business and R&D infrastructure, water and waste management: university degree, or equivalent in engineering or a similar field.
 - Environmental protection: university degree, or equivalent in environmental sciences or a similar field.
 - Development of tourism: university degree, or equivalent in tourism, geography or a similar field.

¹ Experts that participated in the training and passed the exam once will not have to go through further trainings until the end of the programming period, except in cases when the process of the evaluation or the criteria go through changes. In case when the evaluation concerns concept notes the HURO JTS will try to assure the possibility of testing through phone and/or on-line.

- Business and co-operation and co-operation between educational, cultural and other institutions, cooperation on the labour market: university degree, or equivalent in social sciences.
- Health care and risk prevention: university degree, or equivalent in medical sciences or legal studies.
- Development of newscast, media: university degree, or equivalent in journalism or related social sciences.
- Research and development: university degree, or equivalent in any specific field of natural, social or applied sciences.
- Finances: university degree, or equivalent in finances or economical studies.
- Experts shall have proved **professional expertise** and knowledge in one of the fields covered by the programme or finances.

Each expert selected shall possess a solid knowledge regarding the national legislation (Hungarian and/or Romanian) of its own country, in the field of his/her professional expertise. For the full list of the field of expertise please see point I. of the Application Form.

- Experts shall have **practical experience** in at least two of the following fields **or** in the **field of evaluation** of EU Funded Projects:
 - Implementation/management of EU funded projects;
 - Elaboration of EU funded projects;
 - Elaboration/preparation of technical and economic feasibility studies;
 - Elaboration/preparation of cost-benefit analyses;
 - Elaboration of financial plans or complex budgets;
 - Elaboration/preparation of environmental assessments;
 - Elaboration/preparation of technical, construction-related documentation;
- Experts, excluding pure financial ones, shall have **programme specific** experience and/or knowledge, thus:
 - Experience in the evaluation of INTERREG and/or Phare CBC projects, as well as sound knowledge of cross-border cooperation, OR
 - Thorough knowledge of the programme area, as well as the planning and regional/local development documents and strategies.

4.2 Minimum criteria

Only candidates fulfilling the following minimum requirements will be taken into consideration:

- University degree in a relevant field;
- 3-5 years of professional experience in the selected field or fields;
- Proficiency in either Hungarian or Romanian languages;

- Oral and written fluency in English, that will be the language of preparing the assessment documents;
- Practical experience in one of the phases of project cycle management/elaboration of projects or parts of projects, respectively implementation of projects or project evaluation;
- Programme specific knowledge – not relevant for financial experts;
- IT literacy and skills;

4.3 Assets

Considering the characteristics of the assignment, the experts selected, should possess solid knowledge of the legal environment: regulations related to the management of the EU Structural Funds, especially the European Regional Development Fund, the conditions and requirements applicable in case of community programmes, respectively the legal background of the EU funded projects' evaluation and selection requirements. Knowledge in this sense will be considered as an asset during the evaluation phase.

The knowledge of both Hungarian and Romanian languages will be considered an asset, as well as complying with more than one criteria listed under practical EU funds related experience or programme specific knowledge.

The poly-qualification of the expert is considered to be an asset (having both professional/technical and financial expertise).

5. APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

5.1. Requirements referring to the offers

Interested applicants shall submit the following documents in one original and two copies:

- Application form filled in electronically in English (see Annex 1)
- Detailed CV in English (only EU format accepted²)
- Copies of diplomas, certificates, references proving the experience and knowledge in the selected field of professional expertise as well as other documents considered as relevant, like proof of language skills, etc.

The application form and the CV shall be attached in one electronic copy, as well, on a portable device, CD, DVD, etc.

5.2. Submission of offers

The offers shall be submitted in three copies (one original and two copies), together with the electronic copy in a sealed envelope through post to the following address.

² Please note that EU format CV is not equivalent with Phare format CV-s.

**Hungarian Public Nonprofit Company for Regional Development and Town Planning
(VÁTI Kht)
Territorial Co-operation Programmes Division
Joint Technical Secretariat, Hungary – Romania CBC Programme**

**HU -1016 Budapest
Gellérthegy str. 30-32.**

The deadline for submission is **2nd of March, 2009.**

Each envelope, besides the name and address of the applicant, shall contain the following wording: **“Call for Assessors – HU-RO CBP 2007-2013”**

And

“Not to be opened before the opening session! / Csak a bontási ülésen nyitandó fel! / A se deschide numai în cadrul sesiunii de evaluare!”

5.3. Evaluation criteria and procedures

5.3.1. The receipt and opening

Each offer will be officially registered mentioning the exact date of receipt. All offers will be opened simultaneously, the process being registered by minutes.

5.3.2. Evaluation

The applications will be checked by HU-RO JTS regarding their compliance with the administrative, eligibility and professional criteria. Based on this a ranking of the candidates will be prepared, including a list of candidates proposed to be included in the pool, as well as a list of candidates proposed for rejection. Following the evaluation of the submitted applications, the list of accepted experts will be approved jointly by the relevant institutions participating in the process and validated by the MA

5.3.3. Criteria for professional evaluation

During the professional evaluation, the professional capacity of the applicant to deliver the expected services will be considered.

This will be based on several criteria:

- relevant university degree
- work experience: a minimum of 3-5 years of professional experience
- level of compliance with the professional requirements, i.e.
 - *competence*: knowledge in the field of expertise in the relevant field **and**;

- experience in EU funded project evaluation **or**
 - project cycle management knowledge (elaboration and implementation of projects or parts of projects – strict administrative experience is not to be considered), **as well as**
 - programme specific knowledge (knowledge of cross-border co-operation and/or that of the programme area – not relevant for financial experts.
- assets.

5.4. Informing about the results

HU-RO JTS will initiate the procedure for including the selected experts in the database (depending on subsequent considerations, the list may be refreshed). All applicants will be informed regarding the results of the selection procedure.

6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

All experts applying under the present call for interest shall be aware of the followings:

6.1. Contracting and assignment of work:

Inclusion in the database does not automatically mean that an order is issued for expert services, this being strongly influenced by the number, complexity and topics of the submitted project proposals. Connected to each evaluation session and based on the number of projects to be evaluated and the specific fields of intervention concerned, as well as the availability of experts a number of experts will be selected from the pool and contracted through individual or service contracts for that specific evaluation session by Váti Kht. on behalf of the JTS.

As a general rule, one Romanian and one Hungarian expert, depending on the qualifications of the evaluators, will perform the evaluation.

In each case the time when an order for services is issued will depend on the timeframe of publishing the call for proposals. The JTS is the one liable for selecting the experts for technical evaluation of the proposals from the created database and the selection shall be done by taking the most qualified experts first.

The experts will have to sign a statement of availability when entering the pool of experts.

6.2 Expert fees

Basically there are two types of application and two types of projects to be submitted by applicants and later on assessed by independent and impartial evaluators: soft or light projects submitted in one step application process that do not require specific additional documents and investment projects submitted in a two-step process that require additional supporting documents like feasibility study and planning documentation (drawings, technical designs), as well as technical descriptions.

The assessment of soft projects is planned to take a half of day to maximum one, the evaluation of investment projects one day to maximum one and a half, two, depending on the experience of the expert in evaluation. The evaluation of concept notes shall not take more than 2-3 hours.

The fee offered for the evaluation of the soft projects is 150 EUR, and that for investment projects is 300 EUR, in case the expert is able to evaluate it both from professional and financial point of view, and 250 EUR only for its professional evaluation. The fee for the financial evaluation of investment projects shall be of 150 EUR, and that of the concept notes 80 EUR. Prices are gross amounts, *i.e.* they include VAT.

6.3 Confidentiality and impartiality

Each evaluator will have to sign a declaration of confidentiality and impartiality, which will represent annexes to the contract concluded between the evaluator expert and the Váti Kht. - JTS.

In general the role as an evaluation expert is incompatible with being a member, observer or advisor in the Programme's Joint Monitoring or Steering Committees, with the quality of applicant in any of the programme's calls, as well as, with the quality of performing consultancy or any other programme or project related services in the frame of the HU RO CBP 2007-2013 to any third parties, as well as to any of the programme management bodies.

Experts will have to keep a complete confidentiality of the information and documents brought to their attention during the evaluation process.