



Interreg



EUROPEAN UNION

Danube Transnational Programme



Terms of Reference

Roster of external experts (assessors)





Programme co-funded by the European Union

1. Introduction

The Danube Transnational Programme 2014-2020 (DTP) is supporting transnational cooperation projects between partners that promote economic, environmental and social development by elaborating joint solutions, concrete outputs and results enabling further implementations such as further initiatives and investments.

The Danube Transnational Programme comprises 14 countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Germany – Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine – partly). As part of the European Territorial Cooperation programmes, the DTP is primarily designed for further territorial integration through enhanced cooperation in specific policy fields. Given its overall budget size, the cooperation programmes cannot target large-scale investment interventions and consequent major economic impact.

The programme will focus on four thematic priorities:

1. Innovative and socially responsible Danube Region (foster eco-innovation, knowledge transfer, cluster policy, social innovation and skilled entrepreneurship including technological and non-technological innovation aspects, research and development)
2. Environment and Culture responsible Danube Region (preserve and manage the diversity of natural and cultural assets, maintain major ecological corridors along river systems, disaster prevention and disaster management)
3. Better connected Danube Region (improve regional connectivity to the TEN-T network, environmentally-friendly transport systems, regional energy planning and – coordination)
4. Well governed Danube Region (strengthen multilevel- and transnational governance in areas with major societal challenges, more effective governance of the EUSDR and complex transnational project development)

Target groups are regional and local authorities, development agencies, universities and research institutes, chambers of commerce, innovation centres and other relevant actors in the field of innovation, economic development, environment, transport, energy and institutional capacity as well as governance of the EUSDR. More information about the Danube programme is available in the following link: www.interreg-danube.eu

The implementation of the programme is coordinated by joint structures (Managing Authority, hereinafter MA and Joint Secretariat, hereinafter JS) set up in Budapest, Hungary (contracting party). The Joint Secretariat (JS) is in charge of the technical implementation of the Programme, including the communication activities. It supports the Managing Authority in programme coordination and implementation.

2. Invitation

Beside the day-to-day management of the programme, the Joint Secretariat (JS) is responsible for carrying out the technical assessment of the submitted project proposals.

As the JS does not have at its disposal the full capacity to carry out a professional assessment in a due timeframe, the Managing Authority (MA) invites expert assessors for applications with a view to build a roster of experts to support the JS in the assessment of project proposals.

The procurement procedure includes 2 rounds:

I. In the first round a roster of experts will be set up according to the selection criteria specified in point 1 section I.

Interested persons who are compliant with the selection criteria are invited to apply in accordance with the provisions of this notice.

The Partner States of the Programme will contribute to the procurement procedure by advertising this Terms of Reference in their Country in order to establish the roster of experts.

II. In the second round according to the award criteria specified in point 1 section II. a number of experts will be contracted individually for each priority.

I. Setting up the roster of experts for quality assessments of the project proposals

1. Selection criteria of experts for getting into the roster of experts

1.1. Experts are required to have:

- an advanced university level degree attested by a diploma;
- participation in at least 30 project assessments;
- participation in ETC programmes project assessment, preferably transnational programmes;
- proved knowledge of the intervention logic and of other logic models;
- proved experience in the fields of expertise of the programme (according to section 2.1.);
- very good English skills, mainly writing.

1.2. It is considered **as an asset** in the selection process:

- thorough knowledge of European policy-making and regional policy, with a special regard to the European Territorial Cooperation Objective;
- in-depth knowledge of the social and economic features of Danube Region;
- proved knowledge of the rules and procedures of EU cooperation instruments (preferably ETC);

2. In order to be selected into the roster of experts, experts need to submit the following documents:

- detailed CV in Europass format. The CV submitted has to contain all relevant information connected to the requirements listed in point 1. of this section

Experts fulfil all requirements (1.1.-1.2.) will be selected into the roster of experts. Please be informed that experts either selected or not selected into the roster of experts will not receive any official information of the result of the first round.

2.1. Competence areas of thematic experts per priority areas

PA 1: Innovative and socially responsible Danube region

- cluster development
- product & service development and new technologies
- social innovation and social services
- eco-innovation and bio-economy
- open innovation through smart specialisation (RIS3 platforms)
- technological and applied research (e.g. Extreme light infrastructure, laser development)
- key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies
- research, development and innovation incentive mechanisms;
- science/industrial park development;
- regional development policy expertise related to innovation (infrastructural framework conditions, policy instruments for research & innovation, European Research Infrastructure, regional markets, quadruple helix);
- high tech industry specialists (advanced engineering, automotive, ICT, creative industries, life science, urban technologies, smart factory design);
- norms and standards for innovation (including intellectual property rights; public procurement);
- innovative learning systems

- innovative entrepreneurship including gender aspects

PA 2: Environment and culture responsible Danube region

- water management (resource, supply, quality, quantity)
- water related defence (flood, inland water, droughts)
- hydro-(meteo)logical monitoring and forecasting systems
- river basin management planning and strategies
- tourism development strategies
- ecotourism, environmental friendly tourism, cultural routes;
- cultural and natural heritage conservation and valorisation;
- management of natural, semi-natural ecosystems;
- restoration and management of wildlife / bio-corridors;
- green infrastructure development;
- environment rehabilitation, habitat reconstruction;
- advanced ICT tools of ecosystem mapping, monitoring;
- management of environmental risks caused by nature (floods, droughts, forest fires, etc.);
- technological environmental risk protection, prevention and management (water, soil pollution; handling of dangerous goods);
- emergency response planning and operations
- interoperability of emergency response authorities

PA 3: Better connected and energy responsible Danube region

- European transport strategies, legislation and financial instruments;
- Environmentally-friendly and energy efficient transport systems
- Inland waterway transport, including waterway infrastructure, maintenance and management (considering also the environmental impact), fleet modernisation, port development, efficient movement of cargo and passengers
- multimodal transport solutions and optimisation of interoperability of logistic platforms for freight transportation (organisational and custom solutions) via improvement and harmonisation of procedures and implementation of ICT;
- organisation of public transport links, better connectivity and improvement of safety

- sustainable mobility, including mobility management, on demand public transport, cycling, walking, e-mobility, e-bike and awareness raising towards more sustainable transport modes;
- mobility and accessibility needs of marginal areas or affected by demographic change or tourist areas;
- energy efficiency, renewable energy sources (hydropower, solar, wind, geothermic, biomass, etc.), smart grids
- energy infrastructure and planning, energy storage and distribution, security of energy supply
- spatial planning to accommodate energy generation and transmission

PA 4: Well governed Danube region

- demographic change and related topics like brain drain or effects of demographic developments on urban and/or rural areas
- migration
- labour market policies
- inclusion of vulnerable groups, esp. Roma communities
- education systems and policies (esp. in relation to the above mentioned topics)
- participatory planning processes and involvement of civil society
- urban-rural cooperation and partnership

3. Availability for the roster of experts

The DTP pool of expert set up under this call will be valid until 31 December 2016. Further calls for updating the roster might be possible.

4. Submission of the offers

Documents have to be sent electronically to the MA/JS in Budapest at danube@interreg-danube.eu by 31 March 2016.

Partner States of the DTP Programme will widely disseminate this call within their regions and will inform relevant experts to submit applications. The call will be also advertised on the Programme web-site.

Please be informed that the inclusion in the roster does not guarantee further involvement in any assessment.

II. Selection of the expert from the roster of experts to be contracted with

1. Awarding the contract

Experts to be contracted will be selected on the basis of the following award criteria:

- a.) number of projects over 30 successfully assessed by the expert.
- b.) number of projects successfully assessed in transnational programme by the expert.

For point a.) the experts must include in the CV the number of projects successfully assessed by the expert. The number of projects over 30 will be awarded by using the following method: 31 project 1 point; 32 projects 2 points; 33 projects 3 points etc.

For point b) the experts must include in the CV the number of projects successfully assessed in transnational programme by the expert. The number of project will be awarded by using the following method: 1 project 1 point; 2 projects 2 points; 3 projects 3 points etc.

Finally the total number of calculated for point a.) and point b) will be added. The expert who will have the highest number of point will be contacted with. In case the expert will not be available for the tasks the next in line will be contacted with.

Experts must ensure the reliability and the commitment of timely delivery of high quality outputs. The deadline to complete the tasks will be explicitly communicated by JS in order to enable the expert to decide on his/her availability to fulfil all tasks in time.

All selected experts will be contracted individually. The number of project proposals which will be assigned to the selected assessor may vary depending on the thematic scope and number of proposals received. The MA/JS reserves the right that according to the programme needs for certain priority more than one assessors will be contracted.

2. Tasks of the experts selected to be contracted

The experts' tasks include the following:

- Acquaintance of relevant programme documents (e.g. Danube Transnational Programme document, Applicants Manual, assessment methodology, thematic studies etc.).
- Participation in a briefing meeting with the MA/JS in Budapest.
- Quality assessment of project proposals according to the assessment criteria (further broken down into sub-criteria). 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) strongly 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 Danube Transnational Programme. In case of recommending a project proposal for funding, also

conditions/ 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. As the result of this discussion the experts are expected to supplement/modify their assessment according to the criteria/additional aspects agreed with JS. The assessment work carried out by the expert is to be documented through the filling-in of one assessment grid for each project proposal assessed. The assessment grid to be filled is provided by the MA/JS. If this assessment is not properly provided or the assessment grid is not properly filled in, the JS asks a completion from the expert concerned.

- Furthermore, experts are requested to have understanding of state aid rules under de minimis since state aid is part of the assessment.

3. Conflict of interest and confidentiality

To ensure the independence of the quality assessment to be performed in her/his capacity as “external expert”, the selected experts will have to sign a declaration certifying that there is no conflict of interest 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 jeopardized 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 a declaration.

4. Equal Opportunities

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

5. Location and duration

A briefing meeting with the MA/JS will take place in Budapest (Hungary) at the JS premises prior to starting the assessment process. Indicatively, the briefing meeting will be in spring 2016.

The work will be done remotely by the expert (at the premises of the expert). The assessment of the assigned applications will have to be performed and finalised (submission of filled-in assessment grids by email) according to a time schedule as agreed with the MA/JS.

6. Reimbursement

6.1. In case you are contracted as a company:

6.1.1. Amount and payment of expert's fee: The fixed rate for the assessment will be EUR 200 (excluding VAT) per project assessment note.

For the participation of the briefing meeting (see point 5 section II.) the expert is entitled to EUR 300 (excluding VAT). For this briefing meeting no additional assessment fee could be calculated.

Reimbursement of fee for **companies registered in Hungary:** the company selected has to issue an invoice in the following manner: net amount + VAT=gross amount.

Reimbursement of fee for **companies registered in other country than Hungary:** the company has to issue an invoice of the net amount and this amount will be paid to the expert. Regarding the VAT it will be paid to the Hungarian Tax Authority by the Ministry for National Economy itself.

6.1.2. Amount and payments of travel and accommodation cost:

Travel and accommodation cost of an expert will be covered by the MA/JS up to gross EUR 400. Only costs of flight ticket(s), train ticket(s) and the hotel without any costs of food and beverages are eligible.

In case the expert is contracted **as a company (registered either in Hungary or in other country than in Hungary)** the travel and accommodation cost will be reimbursed in the following way: the travel and accommodation cost will be included in the invoice issued by the expert as a separate item from the fee. The cost of travel and accommodation must be supported by the copy of the invoice(s)/documentation issued by the service provider(s) to the name and address of the expert's company. The related travel ticket(s) must be attached as well. The travel and accommodation cost actually paid by the expert must be indicated in the invoice issued by the expert with the exception if the actually paid amount is higher than gross 400 EUR in which case only gross 400 EUR could be indicated in the invoice as this is the maximum amount to be reimbursed for travel and accommodation. The travel and accommodation cost could be calculated between the expert designated for the task by the expert company current residence and Budapest.

Before contracting, the expert is obliged to submit a Declaration on transparency of his/her company. In this declaration, the expert should provide the MA/JS with some basis information of the ownership structure. After the selection, the MA/JS will provide the experts with the template (both English and Hungarian) necessary to be submitted for contracting. If the expert cannot provide the information specified in the requested template, the contract shall not be concluded.

6.2. In case you are contracted as a private person

6.2.1. Amount and payment of expert's fee: The fixed rate for the assessment will be gross 200 EUR (including tax, social charges) per project assessment note.

For the participation of the briefing meeting (see point 5 section II.) the expert is entitled to gross 300 EUR (including tax, social charges). For this briefing meeting no additional assessment fee could be calculated.

Reimbursement of fee for **private person who is a resident for tax purposes in Hungary**: The total amount of fee will be paid after being deducted all common charges (tax, social contribution etc.) in line with the Hungarian law. For this purpose, the private person is obliged to submit a tax declaration on which basis the Ministry is entitled to deduct the tax and other social charges in line with the Hungarian tax regulations. On the basis of total amount of the fee, the Ministry for National Economy will also have to pay additional consideration that is now equivalent with 27%.

Reimbursement of the fee for **private person who is a resident for tax purposes in a country other than Hungary**: the total amount of fee will be paid without the deduction of common charges (tax, social contribution etc.) and the expert is obliged to pay the relevant common charges in line with the expert's residency for tax purposes. In that case the expert has to submit:

- a.) a certification issued in the expert's country of residency for tax purposes to the Ministry for National Economy declaring that tax and other social charges are paid in that country and
- b.) A1 template issued in the expert's country's relevant authority declaring the existence of the expert's social security.

The certification and the content of the A1 template must be translated into English and must be attached to the original.

6.2.2. Amount and payments of travel and accommodation cost:

Travel and accommodation cost of an expert will be covered by the MA/JS up to gross EUR 400. Only costs of flight ticket(s), train ticket(s) and the hotel without any costs of food and beverages are eligible.

In case the expert is contracted **as a private person (either being a resident for tax purposes in Hungary or in other country than Hungary)** the travel and accommodation cost will be reimbursed in the following way: The cost of travelling and accommodation must be supported by original invoice(s)/documentation issued by the service provider to the following name and address: Nemzetgazdasági Minisztérium 1051 Budapest, József nádor tér 2-4. It is to be checked that the invoice issued by the service provider correctly contains the name and address otherwise it can't be reimbursed by the Ministry for National Economy. The related travel ticket(s) must be attached as well. The travel and accommodation cost could be calculated between the expert's current residence and Budapest.

It is to be noted that experts will not receive higher amount than gross 400 EUR even if the invoice has been issued with higher amount than gross 400 EUR.