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Call for the set up of a pool of independent assessors in charge of the evaluation of proposals submitted under the Joint Operational Programme “Black Sea 2007-2013”

The **Romanian Ministry of Regional Development and Housing**, acting as **Joint Managing Authority (JMA)** for the Joint Operational Programme “Black Sea 2007-2013”, is calling for applications for setting up a pool of independent assessors’ database.

The **aim of the call** is to identify and select qualified and experienced professionals for establishing a **pool of assessors** and thus to ensure a proper technical and quality evaluation of the proposals that will be submitted under the Joint Operational Programme “Black Sea 2007-2013”, and by this to contribute to the efficient use of the funds available within the programme.

The independent assessors admitted in the database - following the submission of the applications - will provide technical assistance to the **Selection Committee (SC)** in evaluating the eligible actions. The pool will be set up for the entire programme period and will be functional until terminated in 2013.

In order to be eligible, the applicants have to comply with the criteria listed that also contain other important details related to the tasks to be performed.

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



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1. Background

The Joint Operational Programme Black Sea 2007-2013 is an EU co-financed programme part of the cross-border cooperation component within the new European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). The Programme has been approved by European Commission decision C (2008) 7406 of November 27th, 2008.

It involves ten countries, some of them including their whole national territory (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and R. Moldova), while some others including those regions closest to the Basin (Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine). The ten countries include four states (Greece, Armenia, Azerbaijan and R. Moldova) that are not physically on the coast of the Black Sea, but clearly integrated or connected to the Black Sea Basin in terms of historical, economic, cultural, social and environmental factors. The other six countries (Bulgaria, Romania, Russia, Turkey, Georgia and Ukraine) have direct access to the Black Sea.

The global objective of the programme is to achieve stronger regional partnerships and cooperation. By doing so, the programme aims to contribute to its key wider objective: “a stronger and more sustainable economic and social development of the regions of the Black Sea Basin”. The Joint Managing Authority (JMA) of the Programme is the Ministry of Regional Development and Housing, located in Bucharest (Romania). More information is available at www.blacksea-cbc.net.

The Programme aims at financing cross-border cooperation actions focusing on three priorities:

1. Supporting cross border partnerships for economic development based on combined resources
2. Sharing resources and competencies for environmental protection and conservation
3. Supporting cultural and educational initiatives for the establishment of a common cultural environment in the Basin

Actions financed under the Programme will be selected through calls for proposals. The evaluation of proposals will be carried out by the Selection Committee (SC): this joint structure, chaired by the JMA, is composed by five voting members - representing five participating countries to the Programme, selected on the basis of a rotation mechanism. The SC will be supported by a team of independent assessors - recruited by the JMA and responsible for the assessment of applications.

More information about the programme and application pack for the first call for proposals is available on the programmes' website: www.blacksea-cbc.net.



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2. Invitation

The Joint Managing Authority hereby invites applications from individuals with a view to set up a pool of independent assessors to provide assistance to the SC in the evaluation of proposals. Interested candidates are invited to apply in accordance with the provisions of this notice (see section 6).

3. Description of the assignment

Selected assessors will be asked to assist the SC in the technical and financial evaluation of the proposals submitted under the different calls in line with the Evaluation Grid approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC).

Assessors will have to complete each section of the Evaluation Grid (see below) with clear comments for each sub-section, duly substantiating the score given at each stage. The final evaluation for each proposal should contain sufficient information to justify the total score assigned.

Evaluation Grid¹

Section	Maximum Score
Selection criteria	
1. Technical, financial and operational capacity of the partnership	20
1.1 Do the Applicant and its partners have sufficient and proven experience in project management ?	5
1.2 What is the level of technical expertise of the Applicant and partners? (notably knowledge of the issues to be addressed)	5
1.3 Do the Applicant and its partners have sufficient management capacity ? (including staff, equipment and ability to handle the Budget for the Action)	5
1.4 Do the Applicant and its partners have stable and sufficient financial resources ?	5
Award criteria	
2. Relevance	25
2.1 How relevant is the proposal to the chosen programme's and Call for Proposals' objective and priority ?	5

¹ This Evaluation Grid only applies to the first Call for Proposals. The subsequent evaluation grids might be changed.



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2.2 How relevant to the particular needs and constraints of the target country/countries and/or region(s) is the proposal? In particular, does the proposal demonstrate a real cross-border impact ? (e.g. fulfils at least two of the following criteria: (1) joint development; (2) joint implementation; (3) joint staffing; and/or (4) joint financing)	5x2
2.3 Does the Action have any links with any of the BSB-specific policies implemented in the region, or complementarity or synergies with various actions implemented in the region? (including synergy with other EC initiatives and avoidance of duplication, without overlapping with the actions)	5
2.4 How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (final beneficiaries, target groups)? Have their needs been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?	5
3. Methodology	25
3.1 Are the proposed activities appropriate, practical, and consistent with the objectives and expected outputs and results ? How coherent is the overall design of the Action? (in particular, does it reflect the analysis of the problems involved, take into account external factors and anticipate an evaluation?)	5
3.2 Is the proposed partnership appropriate in terms of number of partners, relevance of partners for the implementation of the Action and their level of involvement satisfactory? (maximum score will only be allocated if the proposal cumulates the following requirements: it involves minimum 3 partners from minimum 3 different countries, the partnership proves to be coherent and it involves the appropriate partners to implement the proposed solution)	5x2
3.3 Is the action plan clear, realistic and feasible?	5
3.4 Does the proposal contain objectively verifiable, measurable and appropriate indicators for measuring the outcome of the Action?	5
4. Sustainability	15
4.1 Is the Action likely to have a tangible impact on the target groups? Is the communication strategy clearly defined in order to ensure an efficient and well-targeted dissemination and capitalisation of the Action results?	5
4.2 Is the proposal likely to have springboard or multiplier effects ? (including scope for replication and extension of the deliverables, dissemination of information, distribution of publications and maintenance of the project website after the end of the Action)	5
4.3 Are the expected results of the proposed Action sustainable : - financially (<i>how will the activities be financed after the funding ends?</i>) - institutionally (<i>will structures allowing the activities to continue be in place at the end of the Action? Will there be local "ownership" of the results of the Action?</i>) - at policy level (where applicable) (<i>what will be the structural impact of the Action – e.g. will it lead to improved legislation, regulations, planning methods, etc?</i>) - environmentally (<i>will the Action have a negative/positive environmental impact?</i>) (maximum score will only be allocated if the proposal contains specific added-value elements, such as promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities)	5



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5. Budget and cost-effectiveness	10
5.1 Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results satisfactory? (in accordance with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness)	5
5.2 Is the proposed expenditure necessary for the implementation of the Action?	5
Additional criteria	
6. Priority for the programme	5
6.1 The Action is an integrated project	5
Maximum total score	100

4. Necessary requirements

To be included in the pool, applicants must fulfil the following requirements:

- be citizen of one of the EU - EEA (European Economic Area) - ENPI - IPA countries
- have a university degree or equivalent qualification;
- at least 5 years of professional experience in the public or private sector in one or more of the competence areas mentioned in section 5;
- be fluent in speaking and writing in English;
- have prior experience in technical and financial assessment of proposals under international/EU funded programmes;
- have a good knowledge of external aid and/or EU-funded actions/programmes, preferably on cross-border, trans-national or interregional cooperation;
- have a good knowledge of the Black Sea JOP application package (Guidelines for Applicants, Grant Application Form and Budget, Grant Contract etc);
- have a good knowledge of Project Cycle Management and Logical Framework approach;
- be computer literate.

The following elements will be considered as additional assets:

- have a relevant professional experience in the Black Sea participating countries;
- Experience in designing and implementing projects/actions under international/EU funded programmes.
- Relevant professional experience in the regions covered by the Black Sea JOP.

5. Competence areas



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Applicants are expected to have skills and knowledge appropriate to the field of expertise in which they might be asked to assist. They should demonstrate high level of professional experience in the public or private sector in one or more of the competence areas mentioned below, grouped according to the three Priorities of the JOP Black Sea 2007-2013:

Priority 1 - Supporting cross border partnerships for economic development based on combined resources

- SMEs and cluster development;
- technologic and scientific transfer;
- research, development and innovation incentive mechanisms;
- support to competitiveness policies;
- public-private partnership;
- investment incentives;
- territorial and spatial planning;
- socio-economic development;
- socio-economic aspects of migration and migration policies;
- transports and logistics;
- circulation and movement of goods and capitals;
- international trade;
- tourism development strategies;
- information and communication technologies;
- local governance processes and public services.

Priority 2 - Sharing resources and competencies for environmental protection and conservation

- environment protection;
- water cycle management and fighting against sea and river pollution;
- natural and technological environmental risk protection and management (fires, drought, chemical and hazardous contamination, earthquakes, floods);
- management of natural and protected areas;
- preservation of biodiversity and vulnerable ecosystems;
- energy efficiency and renewable energy sources (hydropower, solar, wind, geothermic, biomass, etc.);
- waste management and recycling ;
- sustainable tourism development strategies.

Priority 3 - Supporting cultural and educational initiatives for the establishment of a common cultural environment in the Basin

- labour and training policies;



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- preservation of cultural, scientific and artistic heritage, and promotion of local identities;
- intercultural dialogue

6. Application

Interested applicants shall submit the following documents:

- Detailed CV in English (EU format);
- One page cover letter (briefly describing appropriate experience, fields of expertise, qualifications, skills and motivation);
- Copies of diplomas, certificates, references proving the experience and knowledge in the one of the above mentioned fields of professional expertise as well as other documents considered as relevant, like proof of language skills, etc. (If the document doesn't include the English version, it should be submitted as official translation into English certified as true by an authorised legal translation agency);
- A copy of valid ID (If the document doesn't include the English version, it should be submitted as official translation into English certified as true by an authorised legal translation agency);
- For civil servant - if they can apply based on their national legislation - necessary permits/authorisation will be requested if they are selected.

Applications should be sent by certified mail (with return receipt) or delivered by hand, in a closed envelope indicating name and surname of the sender and wording "Joint Operational Programme Black Sea 2007-2013 - Call for independent assessors in charge of proposals evaluation", until xx.xx.2009 to the following address:

**MINISTRY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING
JOINT MANAGING AUTHORITY - JOP BLACK SEA 2007-2013
GENERAL DIRECTORATE FOR EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL COOPERATION
LIBERTATII 12
040129 - BUCHAREST
ROMANIA**

7. Selection

The JMA will set up a pool of independent assessors including only those candidates who meet the criteria set out in sections 4 and 5. Inclusion in the pool does not guarantee further involvement in the evaluation process. The JMA selection will ensure transparency and balanced representation of participating countries, while respecting equality of opportunities and non-discrimination principles.



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8. Validity of the pool of assessors

The pool will be set up for the entire programme period and will be functional until terminated. Independent assessors might remain in the pool for the entire programme period. The pool may be up-dated if needed, including with the publication of new calls for expression of interest in case there will be a shortage of independent assessors.

The independent assessors will be free to resign from the pool, as well as the JMA will reserve the right to remove assessors from the list in case of poor performance, repeated unavailability or if problems rise regarding the impartiality and/or confidentiality of an assessor.

9. Fees

The independent assessors will be contracted individually by the JMA following their selection for evaluation tasks. The fixed rate for the evaluation will be EUR 100 (including VAT) per proposal evaluation note. Travel and accommodation costs where applicable will be reimbursed according to standard rules (e.g.: flight tickets in economy class).

10. Conflict of interest

To ensure the independence of proposal evaluation, selected assessors will have to sign a declaration certifying that there is no conflict of interest at the time of appointment and that they undertake to inform the JMA of any situation of conflict, even potential, while carrying out their duties. In general the role as an assessors is incompatible with being a member, observer or advisor in the Joint Monitoring Committee, with the quality of applicant or partner in any of the programme's calls for proposals, as well as, with the quality of performing consultancy or any other programme or project related services in the frame of the Black Sea JOP to any third parties.

11. Confidentiality

Assessors will have to observe complete confidentiality of the information and documents brought to their attention during the whole evaluation process. If selected, before starting the evaluation, the assessors will be requested to submit the "Declaration of Impartiality and Confidentiality".