



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
Ministry of Economy and Finance

SPECIAL SECRETARIAT FOR EUROPEAN
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND AND COHESION
FUND PROGRAMMES

MANAGING AUTHORITY "INTERREG 2021-2027"

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Subject: Open call for expression of interest for the establishment of the INTERREG 2021-2027 Assessors Registry and the evaluation of the content of project proposals, submitted for funding in the framework of the INTERREG VI-A "GREECE-BULGARIA 2021-2027" Programme

Taking into consideration:

1. Article 90 of the Code of Legislation for the Government and governmental bodies, which was ratified by the first article of the Presidential Decree 63/2005 "Codification of legislation for the Government and government bodies" (Government Gazette 98/A/22.4.2005), which was kept in force by par. 22 of article 119 of Law 4622/2019 (A' 133).
2. Law 4914/2022 "Management, control and implementation of development interventions for the Programming Period 2021-2027, establishment of a Public Company "National Register of Young Enterprises S.A." and other provisions" (A' 61) and in particular articles 11 par. 9 and 63 par. 29 thereof.
3. Presidential Decree 77/2023 "Establishment of Ministry and renaming of Ministries - Establishment, abolition and renaming of General and Special Secretariats - Transfer of responsibilities, service units, staff positions and supervised entities" (Government Gazette 130/A'/27.06.2023), as amended with PD 82/2023 (Government Gazette 139/A'/01.08.2023).
4. Presidential Decree 79/2023 "Appointment of Ministers and Deputy Ministers" (Government Gazette 131/A' /27.06.2023).
5. Presidential Decree 63/2020 "Establishment of General and Special Secretariats, transfer of responsibilities between General Secretariats" (A' 156).
6. Joint Decision No. 86593/2020 (Government Gazette 628/Y.O.D.D/13-08-2020) of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Development and Investments "Appointment of Special Secretary for the Management of Programs of the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund of the Ministry of Development and Investments".

7. Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24th of June 2021, "Definition of the common provisions for the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund+, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund, and fiscal rules for these Funds and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for the Financial Support of Border Management and Visa Policy".
8. Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24th of June 2021, "On the specific provisions governing the 'European Territorial Cooperation' (Interreg) objective, which is supported by the European Regional Development Fund and the external financing mechanisms".
9. Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 240/2014 of 7 January 2014, on the European code of conduct on partnership in the framework of the European Structural and Investment Funds.
10. The Cross-Border Cooperation Programme (Interreg VI-A) "Greece-Bulgaria 2021-2027" approval by the European Commission on 13/9/2022 under Decision Number C (2022) 6635.
11. Ministerial Decision No. 3411/16-01-2023 (Government Gazette B' 183/18-01-2023) "Scope, competences and internal structure of the Special Service "Interreg 2021-2027" of article 9 and paragraph 8 of article 65 of law 4914/2022 and of the Joint Secretariats of the Interreg Programs of article 11 of the same law and repeal of: a) No. 109283/EYTHY 1012/23.10.2015 (B' 2362) Decision of the Deputy Minister of Economy, Development and Tourism and b) No. 300539/YD/1605/14.4.2016 (B' 1453) Joint Decision of the Ministers of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction and Economy, Development and Tourism", as amended and in force.
12. Joint Ministerial Decision No. 44429/12-05-2023 titled "Establishment of the Special Assessors Registry for the evaluation of the content of project proposals for funding submitted within the framework of INTERREG Cooperation Programmes for the Programming Period 2021-2027, for the management of which the Managing Authority "INTERREG 2021-2027" is responsible of".
13. The need to conduct the evaluations of the operations to be funded, which are submitted within the framework of the Interreg VI-A Cooperation Programme "Greece-Bulgaria 2021-2027", whose management is the responsibility of the MA INTERREG 2021-2027.

A. Introduction

Managing Authority "INTERREG 2021-2027", is the Managing Authority responsible for the management and monitoring of the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme INTERREG VI-A "GREECE-BULGARIA 2021-2027".

The Managing Authority issues the present call for expressions of interest, aiming at attracting assessors and enrolling them in the INTERREG Assessors Registry, in order for them to assist the Managing Authority (hereinafter referred to as MA) in the evaluation of project proposals, which will be submitted within the framework of the "GREECE-BULGARIA 2021-2027" Programme, during the entire 2021-2027 programming period.

More specifically, the assessors who will be enrolled in the Registry, will be invited to carry out Stage B2 of the evaluation process, which involves the evaluation and scoring of proposals that have been qualified in terms of completeness and eligibility in previous phases, as specified in the approved methodology and the approved criteria/groups of criteria, by the Monitoring Committee of the Programme.

This call for expression of interest is based on: a) the provisions of Articles 11(9) and 63(29) of Law No. 4914/2022 "Management, Control, and Implementation of Development Interventions for the Programming Period 2021-2027, Establishment of the Anonymous Company 'National Register of New Businesses S.A.' and other provisions" (Government Gazette 61/A/21.3.2022), and b) the Joint Ministerial Decision No. 44429/12-05-2023 titled "Establishment of the Special Assessors Registry for the evaluation of the content of project proposals for funding submitted within the framework of INTERREG Cooperation Programmes

for the Programming Period 2021-2027, for the management of which the Managing Authority "INTERREG 2021-2027" is responsible of."

B. Short overview of the Cooperation Programme "Greece-Bulgaria 2021-2027"

GENERAL

The Interreg VI-A Greece - Bulgaria Programme aims to promote integrated regional development. Through cross-border cooperation, communities located in border areas seek to promote the socioeconomic development of the border area, develop economies of scale and overcome their peripheral positioning. The Programme Strategy emphasizes on specific objectives that can contribute in bridging the gap of regional, social and economic disparities in the cross-border area and promoting sustainable development.

The official language of the Programme is English.

ELIGIBLE AREA

Interreg VI-A Greece – Bulgaria Programme 2021-2027 is implemented at the NUTS III administrative area surrounding the 475 km border line that separates the two countries, plus the Regional Units of Thessaloniki, Kavala and Thasos. The border line stretches West to East from the tri-border point between Greece, Bulgaria and North Macedonia to the similar one between Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey. The region includes:

- 7 Greek Regional Units: Evros, Xanthi, Rodopi, Drama, Kavala of the Eastern Macedonia -Thrace Region, Serres and Thessaloniki of Central Macedonia Region
- 4 Bulgarian Regions: Blagoevgrad of South West Region, Haskovo, Smolyan, Kardzhali of South Central Region.

PROGRAMME'S BUDGET

The budget of the Programme amounts to 83.953.682,00€, of which 67.162.945€ is the contribution of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and 16.790.737€ is the national participation of the cooperating countries.

STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAMME

According to the joint development needs of the cross-border area the Programme is structured as follows:

·Policy Objective 2- a greener, low-carbon Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate adaptation and risk prevention and management

Policy Objective 3 - a more Connected Europe, with strategic transport and digital networks

Policy Objective 4 - a more social and inclusive Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights

Priorities and the Specific Objectives are:

·Priority 1: A more Resilient and Greener Greece-Bulgaria Cross Border Territory

RS02.4. Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience taking into account eco-system based approaches

RS02.6. Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient Economy

RS02.7. Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution

·Priority 2: A more accessible Greece-Bulgaria Cross Border Territory

RSO3.2. Developing and enhancing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility

Priority 3: A more Inclusive Greece-Bulgaria Cross Border Territory

RSO4.2. Improving equal access to inclusive and quality services in education, training and lifelong learning through developing accessible infrastructure, including by fostering resilience for distance and on-line education and training

RSO4.6. Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation

C. Required Qualifications

Individuals, EU or non-EU citizens, have the right to register in the Registry of Assessors.

Candidates should have experience in at least one of the Priorities and in at least one of the Specific Objectives per Priority , as outlined in the above point B of the present call and more specifically in P1, R.S.O. 2.6. & 2.7 and P3 R.S.O. 4.2 & R.S.O. 4.6. Candidates apply according to their experience in one or more Priorities/Specific Objectives, and they are being categorized, upon registration, according to the Specific Objective they have declared.

I. The required qualifications for registration are the following:

- a) Accredited University or Technical Educational Institute Degree (Bachelor' s Degree, documented as foreseen by the respective national legislation of the country of origin of the applicant or EU regulations, if applicable), in the fields of Sciences (Engineering, mathematics, physics etc.), Economics, or Technology.
- b) At least 7 years of working experience in the public or private sector in the evaluation and/or management of projects and programmes co-financed by the European Union, and at least 3 years of specialized working experience in the Priority/Specific Objectives, for which they submit their application.
- c) Computer literacy such as word processing, spreadsheet, (Word, Excel etc.), email, internet applications, etc.
- d) Excellent knowledge of the Greek language (documented as foreseen by the respective national legislation of the country of origin of the applicant or EU regulations, if applicable).
- e) Advanced knowledge of the English language (C1 level - documented as foreseen by the respective national legislation of the country of origin of the applicant or EU regulations, if applicable).

II. In addition to the above required qualifications, the following additional qualifications will also be taken into consideration for inclusion in the Registry:

- a. Master's or PhD degree in the fields of issues related to the specific objectives of the programmes.
- b. Registration in other assessors' s registries.
- c. Training in assessing proposals/Programme Evaluation.
- d. Sound knowledge and understanding of the needs of the eligible area of the programme.
- e. Sound knowledge and experience regarding European Cohesion Policy and the EU regulatory framework for the management of European funds.
- f. Sound knowledge of the European Territorial Cooperation Programmes (Interreg).

D. Submission of Documents

For their registration in the Registry, candidates should electronically submit the following documents:

1. Application Form (Template in Annex I).
2. Curriculum Vitae (in EUROPASS format, not exceeding five pages). The Curriculum Vitae must clearly indicate the required work experience, as stated in section C above.
3. Professional Experience table (Template in Annex II), including analytical references to a) the specialized experience in the respective Priority/Specific Objective and b) the good knowledge of the topics referred above in section C. II. d, e & f. Specific reference to the documents, concerning the specialized professional experience or/and sound knowledge of the above topics, should be included in the table.
4. Copy of both sides of the Identity Card or a copy of the Passport.
5. Country and city of domicile for tax purposes, VAT (if any) and fiscal code.
6. Formal Declaration according to Law 1599/86, signed and certified by the proof of a genuine signature, or through gov.gr for Greek Candidates. Equivalent declaration (e.g., Self-Declaration) applicable to the country of origin for candidates of other nationalities. The Declaration should confirm that:
 - all electronically submitted information by the applicant is true, valid, and accurate,
 - the applicant possesses: a) the necessary documents to prove the required qualifications (such as academic degrees, acts of recognition of accreditation if required by the candidate's country of origin, certificates of foreign languages, certificates/declarations of computer skills, etc.), and b) relevant proof of experience, as applicable (employment certificates with employer's signature, National Social Security Entity certificates or equivalent certificates, work contracts, service invoices, etc.), including those referred in the Professional Experience table,
which the applicant commits to provide if requested.
 - the applicant has not been convicted by a final court decision or is subject to pending litigation for the crimes of theft, embezzlement, fraud, extortion, forgery, perjury, bribery, nor has been convicted or is under prosecution for a crime related to professional conduct and activities, such as disloyalty to the service and violation of duty.
 - the applicant undertakes the obligation to provide a criminal record if requested.
 - the applicant has been informed of the obligations and the work that should be undertaken based on the current institutional framework.
 - the applicant accepts the terms and procedures for the training of assessors, as stated in this call for expression of interest.

Formal Declarations that do not include all the above-mentioned formulations of paragraph 6, will not be accepted.

E. Evaluation of Applications and Inclusion in the Registry

The MA sets up a three-member Committee, consisting of MA/JS staff, for the specific purpose of the evaluation of all candidate applications. More specifically, the Committee will evaluate the applications, check the validity of all attached documents, assess the candidate's qualifications and submit its proposal to the Special Secretary for European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund Programmes of the Ministry of Economy and Finance.

Applications which do not include all the necessary supporting documents demonstrating the above formal qualifications, will be rejected.

During the evaluation process of candidates, the Registry's Management Committee may request from the candidates additional supporting documents or other evidence for the qualifications set in their application, if needed.

The results of the applications assessment are communicated to the candidates electronically and/or in writing. Candidates who successfully pass the afore-mentioned process are included in the Registry, following the issuance of a relevant decision by the Special Secretary. The inclusion of an assessor in the Registry does not establish any working relationship with the Public Sector.

The supervision and updating of the Registry of Assessors is an ongoing process, as the Registry may be revised and updated regularly, based on the needs of the Programme. For this reason, the applications submission process will be continuous throughout the programming period.

F. Selection of Assessors from the Registry

The selection of assessors from the Registry is carried out by the Managing Authority, based on the characteristics, thematic priorities and specific objectives of each programme's call.

For the selection of an assessor, the Managing Authority takes into consideration a set of criteria, such as the nature of the proposal, the assessor's expertise, training, and specialization in the specific subject matter, their experience in management, control, and especially their experience in the evaluation of projects or programmes co-financed by the European Union, etc. In the selection process, impartiality, transparency, lack of conflict of interests and territorial balance principles shall be ensured.

Each assessor in the Registry will be notified of his/her designation as an assessor for a specific proposal via email, at least five working (5) days before the proposals' s evaluation starting date. The assessor should accept his/her designation within two (2) working days from the day of notification. Failure to respond or refusal to accept the assignment, leads to the selection of another assessor.

The evaluation result is finalized and delivered to the Managing Authority by the assessor within five (5) working days following the day of the assignment.

The registration of candidates in the Registry does not imply, in any way, that they will be necessarily assigned a proposal for evaluation. Managing Authority is exclusively responsible for this task.

G. Obligations of the Assessors

According to Article 5 of Joint Ministerial Decision No. 44429/12-05-2023, which establishes the Registry, assessors have the following basic obligations:

a. Before undertaking the evaluation, assessors are obliged to participate in training seminars or any other training activities set by the Evaluation Committee, for the purpose of the evaluation.

b. Immediately after the notification of the project proposal to be evaluated, evaluators are required to submit a Declaration of Impartiality, meaning that they must responsibly declare that there is no conflict of interest concerning the subject of the evaluation. In case an assessor becomes aware, before or during the fulfillment of his/her duties, of any conflict of interest, he/she should immediately make a self-exclusion declaration.

c. Assessors are obliged to be familiar with the legal framework governing each Cooperation Programme, the terms of the respective Call for proposals, the rules included in the approved Programme documents. They are also obliged to respect the rules of the European and National regulatory framework in general, etc.

d. Assessors are required to be familiar with and respect the terms and provisions of Joint Ministerial Decision No. 44429/12-05-2023 and the present call for expression of interest.

H. Assessors Remuneration

1. The remuneration of each assessor, for the evaluation of each project proposal, is set at the amount of €300.
2. In the above amount VAT is excluded and all other deductions are included.
3. The expenses arising from the payment of the assessors of the Register will be covered by the Technical Assistance budget of the INTERREG Cooperation Programme "Greece-Bulgaria 2021-2027".
4. The above-mentioned remuneration shall not exceed the amount of three thousand euros (€3,000) per assessor per year.

I. Information

Applications, with all the attached necessary supporting documents, as referred in the present call for expression of interest, can be submitted from the date the present call is uploaded on the MA's website.

Applications will be submitted exclusively in electronic format, to the email address AR_INTERREG@mou.gr, with the subject "Application For the Registry of Assessors of the Managing Authority INTERREG 2021-2027 and the evaluation of proposals submitted under the Greece-Bulgaria 2021-2027 Cooperation Programme."

For more information, interested parties can contact the Managing Authority (Monday to Friday from 9:00 to 15:00) at the following telephone numbers: 2310-469600, 2310-469609, 2310-469641.

The present call, the Joint Ministerial Decision establishing the Registry and other related documents will be posted on the website of the Managing Authority www.interreg.gr and on the website of the Programme <https://greece-bulgaria.eu>.

**THE SPECIAL SECRETARY
FOR ERDF&CF PROGRAMMES**

GEORGIOS ZERVOS

Attached:

- Annex I – Application Form
- Annex II – Professional Experience Table

Internal Distribution:

- Office of the Special Secretary.
- Managing Authority "Interreg 2021-2027": Head of the MA, Unit A'.