



Call for Experts for the thematic evaluation of INTERREG IVC applications

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Authorities and stakeholders at local and regional level have a vital role to play in the achievement of the EU's strategies for growth, jobs and sustainable development. The exchange, sharing and transfer of policy experience, knowledge and good practices will contribute to the success of this objective.

The INTERREG IVC Programme is part of the European Territorial Cooperation Objective of the Structural Fund policies for the period 2007-2013. It aims, by means of interregional cooperation, to improve the effectiveness of regional development policies and contribute to economic modernisation and increased competitiveness of Europe, by

- enabling local and regional actors across the EU to exchange their experiences and knowledge;
- matching regions less experienced in a certain policy field with more advanced regions;
- ensuring the transfer of good practices into Structural Funds mainstream programmes.

The INTERREG IVC Programme is financed through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), whose principles and regulations are laid down in Council Regulation N° 1083/2006 (General Regulation), Council and Parliament Regulation N° 1080/2006 (ERDF Regulation) and Commission Regulation N° 1828/2006 (Implementation Regulation). The principles and regulations for projects developed within the Programme are laid down in the Operational Programme, which was officially approved by the European Commission on 11th September 2007. The working language of the Programme is English and all information related to INTERREG IVC can be found on the following website: <http://www.interreg4c.net>

The Programme is divided into two thematic priorities related to the EU strategy for growth and sustainable development known as the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies. Each of the thematic priorities is divided in different sub-themes listed in section 3.2 (b) of this document.

The project selection is organised through open calls for proposals. The first call was launched on 21st September 2007 and was closed on 15th January 2008. The provisional dates for the second call are a launch in June 2008 and a closing in October 2008.

Applications have to be submitted under one of the programme's sub-themes. The JTS is responsible for the applications' assessment and provides recommendations to the INTERREG IVC Monitoring Committee. This Committee decided during its meeting on 11th September 2007 that the JTS may be assisted by external experts in the quality assessment of applications.

1.2 Invitation

The INTERREG IVC programme hereby invites applications from experts / consultancy firm with a view to establish a pool of independent external experts providing assistance to the JTS in the thematic evaluation of project applications.

Interested persons are invited to apply in accordance with the provisions of this notice. Applicants should be part of an enterprise or have a self-employed status.

The aim is to select one main expert per programme's sub-theme. These experts will then be contacted for the thematic evaluation of applications in her/his specific domain of expertise. Following a ranking list (see also point 4.4), back-up experts will also be selected in each sub-theme. They will be contacted in the following cases:

- unavailability of the main expert,
- specific expertise in a domain not covered by the main expert,
- necessity to share the evaluations in case of numerous applications received in the same sub-theme.

The selection of the experts will be carried out according to the methodology described in point 4.4.

2. Scope of the thematic evaluation

The experts will provide the JTS in Lille with a technical evaluation of the theme tackled for each application submitted to the programme. This short analysis will cover the following issues:

- Relevance of the theme tackled

- Is the theme tackled clearly in line with the selection of the programme's sub-theme?
- Is this theme obviously related to regional development and/or EU Structural Funds policies? Is it clearly in line with the competences of regional and local authorities or, more generally, is it clearly related to local and regional development issues?
- Is the theme of clear European added-value (i.e. is it relevant not only to the partners of the project but also to other public authorities outside the partnership)? Can this theme be considered of general interest in the context of EU regional policy? (*see also last paragraph of Section 1.1 in the Programme Manual*)

- Innovative character of the theme tackled

- Is the innovative character of the proposed theme clearly demonstrated? Are the expected results different from the results already achieved in other projects and / or programmes? More generally, are these expected results updated according to the most recent developments in the domain tackled?
- Are there any strong similarities between the application assessed and other INTERREG IVC applications the assessor is aware of?

- Relevance of the partnership for the theme tackled

- Are the appropriate partners involved to solve the issue tackled? Do these partners have a clear competence in the theme addressed?

In exceptional and justified cases, further additional comments may be requested by the Secretariat. However, the experts' evaluation note will be limited to short document in English. A standard template for this note is provided as Annex 2. The experts' feed-back will be based on Sections 1, 2 and 5 of the eligible application forms submitted to the Joint Technical Secretariat (the application form template is available at http://www.interreg4c.net/load/2007-10-12_IVC_Application_Form_Final.zip) and on the knowledge and experience of the experts in the respective themes addressed by the applications.

3. Required profile

3.1 Formal requirement

The services provided by the experts will have to be in English, which is the working language of the Programme. Therefore, applicants must be fluent in English (written and spoken).

3.2 Competence areas

Applicants need to demonstrate:

a/ a practical experience in the implementation of regional development policies,

Practical experience in regional development policies can be demonstrated through

- work experience in a local or regional public authority or in another organisations in charge of the implementation of a specific regional / local policy,
- work experience in a ministry in charge of regional development,
- experience in managing EU Structural Funds projects or programmes,
- etc.

b/ a proven expertise in one of the sub-themes of the INTERREG IVC programme.

Under Priority 1:

Innovation and the knowledge economy

1. innovation, research and technology development;
2. entrepreneurship and SMEs;
3. the information society;
4. employment, human capital and education.

Under Priority 2:

Environment and risk prevention

5. natural and technological risks
including 6. climate change;
7. water management;
8. waste prevention and management;
9. biodiversity and preservation of natural heritage
including 10. air quality;
11. energy and 12. sustainable transport;
13. cultural heritage and landscape.

Further information on the above sub-themes can be found in the Operational Programme available on the following link: http://www.interreg4c.net/load/2007-07-26_INTERREG_IVC_OP_final.pdf

It is strongly recommended that the applicants have a minimum of 5 years work experience.

4. Application procedure

4.1. Duration and timetable

This INTERREG IVC pool of experts set up under this call will be related to the thematic assessment of the first two calls for proposal of the Programme. In any case, it will be valid at the latest until 30 June 2009. Applications of the experts must be valid until the same date.

The first call for projects was closed on the 15th January 2008. The closure date of the second call is expected to be fixed in October 2008. The eligible applications are expected to be sent by email to the selected experts six weeks after these closing dates. It is estimated that the production of one evaluation note will take a maximum of one half day for the expert. The deadline for submitting these evaluation notes will obviously depend on the number of applications to be assessed by the expert.

4.2. Fee for the evaluation

The fixed rate for the evaluation will be EUR 200 (excluding VAT) per project evaluation note. In case of additional request from the JTS not related to the questions stated in point 2, this rate could go up to EUR 300 (excluding VAT) per project evaluation note.

4.3. Submission of applications

Applications will be composed of the two following documents:

- the 'Expert Application Form' (Annex 1),
- a detailed CV.

Offers should be submitted via email to the INTERREG IVC JTS in Lille at info@interreg4c.net by **22 February 2008, 5 pm** at the latest.

4.4. Selection

The selection of candidates will be carried out by the INTERREG IVC Secretariat. It will be based on the criteria defined in point 3. The following scoring system will be applied:

- 5 excellent
- 4 good
- 3 adequate
- 2 poor
- 1 very poor
- 0 knock-out criteria

Criteria	Weight
1. Experience in regional development policies	25% (5 points)
2. Experience in one of the programme's sub-themes	75% (15 points)

5. Additional information

5.1. Conflict of interest

To ensure the independence of candidates evaluations and project monitoring and, where appropriate, other tasks, selected independent experts will have to sign a declaration certifying that there is no conflict of interest at the time of selection and that they undertake to inform the Joint Technical Secretariat if any conflict should arise in the course of providing their opinion or carrying out their duties.

5.2. Confidentiality

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