

Development of System for Management of Cohesion Policy

Terms of Reference for Assignment of

Senior Non-Key Expert

for on-the-job training related to IPA III Internal Control Framework under IPA III multi-annual Operational Programmes

1. Background

This assignment shall be carried out within the framework of project “Development of the System for the Management of Cohesion Policy” financed by European Union under IPA, having as Project Partner and Main Beneficiary the Ministry of European Integration (MEI).

The overall objective is to prepare the Serbian public administration for the effective implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy in the Republic of Serbia. The purpose of the contract is to set up and enhance the capacities of all relevant stakeholders for timely and efficient preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects supported by Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund.

The results to be achieved by the Contractor are as follows:

Result 1: Legal and institutional framework for the implementation of EU Cohesion Policy in place.

Result 2: Relevant planning and programming documents for IPA III multi-annual programming prepared.

Result 3: Capacities of institutions and bodies nominated for preparation / implementation of multi-annual Operational Programmes under IPA with a view of their future role under Cohesion Policy, as well as partners and potential beneficiaries at national level, and as appropriate at sub-national level, increased via Capacity Building programmes.

The Project started on 11 July 2019 and was extended until 10 January 2025 to take into account the European Commission's new approach aimed at accelerating the convergence of current IPA structures with the management and control systems established in EU Member States receiving Cohesion Policy funding through the preparation and implementation of **Operational Programmes (OPs) under IPA III in the period 2021-2027**.

It is predicted that preparation and management of Operational Programmes under the indirect management with the Republic of Serbia method of implementation shall contribute to improving the level of preparedness for Chapter 22 “Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments”. Operational Programmes provide a multi-year fiscally framed plan for investments, with a predictable implementation of a pipeline of flagship projects in the medium term, which is mirroring the programming process by EU Member States under the EU Cohesion Policy. For the period 2024 – 2027 Serbia has prepared two multi-annual Operational Programmes under IPA III: Operational Programme Environment and Energy for Serbia 2024 – 2027 and Operational

Programme Employment, Skills and Social Inclusion for Serbia 20224 – 2027. The IPA III Operational Programmes for the period 2024-2027 will be implemented by the designated Managing Authorities and Intermediate Bodies.

The assignment is embedded in the 3rd Result of the project, concentrating on coaching and advising the relevant institutions in regard to the process of preparation of the specific aspects of the Internal and Control System, including preparation of the Annual Management Declaration.

As the implementation of the above-mentioned Operational Programmes is about to be started, there is a need to prepare the Annual Management Declarations for both OPs by the relevant Managing Authorities. Due to the lack of experience of the staff of the MAs in preparing the Declarations, there is a need to assign the external expert to assist them in this task by coaching and advising on the best approach to organising the process of preparation of the Declaration, including internal organisation, coordination with other institutions, conducting on-the-spot checks, etc.

The Contracting Authority for the above-mentioned project is the **EU Delegation to the Republic of Serbia (EUD)**. The Service Contractor is **GIZ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH in consortium with Mott MacDonald, Archidata and Ismeri**.

2. Description of the Assignment

The selected Expert shall support the Managing Authorities of multi-annual Operational Programmes under IPA III (the Ministry of Mining and Energy in the capacity of the MA for the Operational Programme Environment and Energy for Serbia 2024 – 2027 and the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy in the capacity of the MA for the Operational Programme Employment, Skills and Social Inclusion for Serbia 20224 – 2027) in preparation of the Management Declarations for the Programmes.

The approach to be confirmed at the start of the mission, is as follows:

- 1) Meeting with the relevant Managing Authorities of the Operational Programmes to discuss the mission work plan, gather information and agree on the joint work modalities.
- 2) Advising the relevant staff of the MAs on the issues related to the preparation of development of the Management Declaration, i.e. internal organisation, coordination with other institutions, conducting on-the-spot checks and other issues related to the preparation for development of the Management Declaration.
- 3) Assisting the MAs with preparation of the Management Declaration for 2024.
- 4) On-the-job training and coaching for the MAs related to preparation for conducting the process of development of the Management Declarations in the coming years, including the responsibilities and coordination with other bodies in the system.

The Expert shall prepare brief monthly reports which describe the work that was conducted, its results, and put forward recommendations that can be made to the Beneficiary from the expert's perspective. Monthly reports prepared by using the Project template, will be submitted to the KE2 and the Team Leader.

3. Profile of the Expert

Required Qualifications and Skills

University Degree at Master's level (4 or more years).

Certificate of Internal Auditor in course of validity or experience gained in audit position in the last ten years in Audit Authority or Internal Audit Service or National Authorising Officer Support Office (desirable).

Fluency in written and spoken English. Knowledge of the Serbian language is highly desirable.

Advanced Computer literacy (MS Office including Excel, PowerPoint, Internet).

Very good communication and presentation skills.

General Professional Experience

Min. 8 years relevant professional experience.

Knowledge of the internal control framework for EU funds management and internal control, procedures and rules.

Specific Professional Experience

Min. 5 years of specific experience in compliance assessment of EU funds management systems, and/or monitoring of internal control systems for EU funds management or, alternatively, min. 5 years of specific experience in audit of EU funds.

3. Location, duration, (provisional) start/end date

Location: the expert will be working in Belgrade, Serbia, at Project Office and other locations in Belgrade. Missions outside Belgrade could also prove necessary – these shall have to be pre-authorised by the Team Leader and the Contracting Authority.

Starting/ending date: November – December 2025.

Total number of working days: up to 30

Home-based work for preparing the training and reporting allowed if duly authorised by the Contracting Authority.