

Development of System for Management of Cohesion Policy

Terms of Reference for Assignment of a Senior Non-Key Expert on State Aid

1. Background

This assignment shall be carried out within the framework of the project “Development of the System for the Management of Cohesion Policy” financed by European Union under IPA III, 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 the 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 **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**.

The Project started on 11 July 2019 and shall last until 10 April 2025. Support to achievement of Result 2 shall accommodate the new approach by the European Commission aiming at accelerating convergence of the current IPA structures to the management and control systems established in EU Member States that benefit from Cohesion Policy funds, through the preparation and implementation of Operational Programmes (OPs) under IPA III in the period 2024-2027.

The assignment of the Senior Non-Key Expert on State aid shall be framed within the third project component aimed, among others, at increasing the capacities of institutions which will be responsible for implementation of the future Cohesion Policy programmes' implementation in Serbia.

2. Description of the Assignment

The selected Expert will support the Beneficiary, and especially the Cross-Border Cooperation Department of the Ministry of European Integration, in increasing the knowledge of the staff in relation to State aid issues in European Territorial Cooperation programmes, targeting both EU Member States and non-Member States.

The Expert shall prepare and deliver a training session in which the unique challenges and requirements of State aid compliance in CBC programmes will be emphasized. Unlike national programmes, which often focus on national implementation under a single jurisdiction, CBC programmes must achieve harmonized compliance across borders, considering variations in national legislation. To address these complexities, the expert will provide practical examples and case studies illustrating the application of State aid principles to project eligibility, funding mechanisms, and reporting, including the preparation of application offers. The practical value of the training lies in enhancing the capacities and knowledge of individuals working on ETC programmes. Through the training, they will acquire skills necessary for their work, including conducting training on the preparation of project proposals, evaluating project proposals (including verifying compliance with State aid rules), with the aim of improving users' understanding of State aid during project proposal preparation. Considering that Serbian legislation in this area is still in the process of alignment, it is particularly important to gain insights from the ETC perspective on how EU Member States achieved compliance. Additionally, the Expert shall support the ETC Department of MEI with counselling services related to State aid issues, according to the needs.

The Expert shall prepare a brief report which describes the work that was conducted, its results, and put forward recommendations that can be made to the Beneficiary from the expert's perspective. The Expert shall work under the direct supervision of the Team Leader and in cooperation with the Key Expert 2, if necessary.

3. Expert profile

Required Qualifications and Skills

University Degree (Master/PhD).

Fluency in both written and spoken English and Serbian.

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

Very good organisational, coordination and reporting skills.

General Professional Experience

Min. 8 years relevant professional experience in State aid in the EU Member States and/or in candidate countries.

Experience in preparation and/or implementation of European Territorial Cooperation programmes and/or projects in the field of State aid.

Specific Professional Experience

Min. 5 years of specific experience in advisory related to State aid issues for institutions preparing and/or implementing programmes financed from EU funds.

Min. 5 years of specific experience in delivering training on State aid for institutions and bodies preparing and/or implementing programmes financed from EU funds in EU Member States or/and candidate countries.



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: 10 February – 10 April 2025.

Total number of working days: up to 10.

No work during week-ends allowed, except if duly authorised by the Contracting Authority.