

## CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST addressed to independent experts for the State aid assessment of project proposals within the Interreg NEXT Poland – Ukraine 2021-2027

The Joint Secretariat (JS) of the Interreg NEXT Poland – Ukraine 2021-2027 Programme is launching call for independent state aid experts to evaluate applications submitted within the Programme priorities HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT, ACCESSIBILITY, TOURISM, COOPERATION, BORDERS (large infrastructure and regular projects).

### Background information

The overall aim of the Interreg NEXT Poland – Ukraine 2021-2027 Programme is to support cross-border development processes in the borderland of Poland and Ukraine, in line with the Interreg objectives laid down in Interreg Regulation (2021/1059). The focus is on the non-profit projects with the cross-border effect within the Polish-Ukrainian local and regional partnerships.

The Programme will provide up to 90% co-financing (on the grant contract basis) for the projects approved by the Monitoring Committee. The Programme language is English. For more information on the Interreg NEXT Poland – Ukraine please visit: [www.pl-ua.eu](http://www.pl-ua.eu).

### Objective

The aim of the call for external experts is to invite qualified candidates to join the Pool of Assessors. The assessors will assist the Programme in their personal capacity as independent experts for the assessment of the State aid relevance of project proposals submitted to the Programme within calls in the framework of 2021-2027, also providing recommendations to ensure the compliance of affected proposals with the State aid discipline. This first call for expression of interest is open until 15 April 2024.

### Tasks to be accomplished

The tasks include:

1. Acquaintance of relevant programme documents and support materials (e.g. Programme Manual, templates and procedures);
2. Participation in an on-line briefing meetings if necessary;
3. Assessment of the State aid compliance of project proposals, with regard specifically to the following:
  - Analysis of the status and roles of organisations and bodies participating in the project, determining whether public funds granted within the project qualify as State aid;

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- Assessment on the occurrence of indirect State aid to third parties outside the project, benefitting of project activities as target groups, including the identification of the concerned project activities, deliverables and outputs (special evaluation template is provided);
- Delivering specific questions to the information provided in the applications to have the full scope of the future project (if necessary);
- Analysis of the eligible costs in the application/ calculation of the state aid (if identified).

The assessment of the State aid relevance of project proposals is to be performed on the basis of information included by applicants in the application form. The assessment work carried out by the expert is to be documented through one State aid assessment grid for each assessed project proposal, prepared according to a template provided by the MA/JS. The expert is expected to complete each section of the assessment grid, providing comprehensive information to justify the presence or absence of State aid as well as providing recommendations for ensuring the compliance of the concerned project proposal with the State aid discipline.

As part of the assignment, and if needed, the expert has to ensure her/his availability to discuss their assessment with the MA/JS in the frame of a consensus building process.

The assessment work is to be done remotely by the expert at her/his own premises. Selected experts have to use their own IT tools. The number of project proposals that will be assigned by the MA/JS to an expert may vary depending on the thematic scope and number of proposals received.

The assessment of the assigned applications has to be performed and finalised (i.e. submission of filled-in assessment grids) according to a time schedule agreed with the MA/JS.

Detailed description of the tasks and requirements is included in the draft of the contract (to be downloaded, Polish version).

### Remuneration

The expert is entitled to a maximum fee of EUR 300 (gross) per each application evaluated (EUR 170 for the evaluation part and additional EUR 130 for the calculation part). One expert may receive more than one application for evaluation within one call.

### Requirements regarding the profiles of the experts

Experts shall hold relevant competences and professional experience in State aid matters. They will be selected against the following requirements:

- Holding a university degree;
- Having at least 5 years of professional experience, following the award of the university degree, in State aid discipline;
- Having a proven experience in the application of the State aid discipline as well as knowledge of judgments provided by the European Court of Justice;
- Having a proven knowledge of EU programmes and in particular of programmes funded within Structural Funds;

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- Having excellent analytical and judgment skills;
- Being fluent in speaking, reading and writing in English and Polish;
- Being computer literate (namely proficient with Word and Excel).

Expertise and previous experience in the application of the State aid discipline within Interreg/European Territorial Cooperation programmes is considered an advantage.

### Application and selection procedure

Applications may be submitted at any time, however the deadline for participating in the assessment of project proposals received under the first call for proposals and for the first 7 large infrastructure projects is **15 April 2024**. Applications submitted after this date will be considered only for the assessment of future calls for project proposals. Interested experts who fulfil the above-described requirements should submit their applications by e-mail to the following address: [js@pl-ua.eu](mailto:js@pl-ua.eu). Please use the enclosed application form to provide the requested information. Application must be submitted as an electronically signed document or as a signed scan. Only those candidates who meet the set out criteria will be included in the pool of experts. The successful experts will be informed about their inclusion in Programme's pool for the State aid assessment. Experts will be included in the pool for the entire Programming period 2021-2027. However, it shall be noted that the inclusion in the experts' pool does not guarantee the selection and appointment for assessment of project proposals.