



Annex 1

TERMS OF REFERENCE

for experts ('assessors') to assist in the evaluation of grant applications received in the framework of the call for proposals

Reference: 757/1

EU SUPPORT TO ROMA INCLUSION Strengthening Local Communities Towards Roma Inclusion

TERMS OF REFERENCE

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Programme *EU Support to Roma Inclusion - Strengthening Local Communities towards Roma Inclusion* is implemented by the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM) and financed by the European Union through IPA 2016. The towns and municipalities of Serbia and their Roma citizens are the primary beneficiaries of the Programme via improved planning, financial management and services delivered by local governments and local service providers who work with Roma people at the local level. The Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy, as the leading state institution responsible for Roma inclusion and therefore for coordinating the implementation of the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma for the 2016-2025 in the Republic of Serbia and its associated action plan, is the lead beneficiary institution providing main policy directions for the implementation of the Programme.

The Roma community is one of the poorest and most vulnerable groups in Serbia with acute social problems and with 78 % of population facing risk of poverty (Serbia: 25.4%)¹. The data that reveal their economic powerlessness indicate that most of Roma households' income comes from social assistance. The data from the Report on the *Implementation of the Strategy for Social inclusion of Roma in Serbia 2016-2025*, clearly presents particularly unfavourable position of Roma on the labour market with unemployment rates of 41,8% in 2016 (Serbia: 15.3%). Since Roma employment is one of the major policy areas recognised within the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma in the Republic of Serbia 2016 – 2025, with the stipulated measures focused on inclusion of Roma in working age into the formal labour market and on increase of their employability and economic empowerment, the Programme give special attention to this topic. According to the *First National Report on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction*, Roma constitute a particularly vulnerable group on the labour market. The majority of Roma are excluded from the employment system, formally they are not economically active and are predominantly registered as unemployed. Data on Roma economic structure demonstrate the low position of Roma in social ladder. According to the 2011 population census, as much as 72.1% Roma are economically inactive, while over a half of the active ones (59%) do not work. Roma are a community with high unemployment rate and, as a rule, perform the least paid jobs—mostly those in which skills are acquired through work, rather than formal education—which have the lowest professional reputation². All problems that prevent greater inclusion and engagement of the Roma population in the formal labour market are part of a broader, multidimensional and unfavourable social status of the Roma community in the Republic of Serbia. In this sense, the segments of employment and economic empowerment should be seen as contributors to the overall improvement of the situation of Roma men and women in the Republic of Serbia, which is of crucial importance for the achieving complete inclusiveness, participation and democracy in modern society.

Issues related to the exercise of the right to work and employment among Roma are the following: the existing active employment policy measures are not enough; funds for the development of entrepreneurship among the Roma have not been established; most Roma get work engagement thanks to the "grey economy"; most Roma are outside the system of the persons registered at the National Employment Service due to different reasons; Roma men and women working the hardest and most dangerous jobs for the lowest salaries etc. The most serious systemic barriers affecting Roma employment are: discrimination; low level of education, functional literacy and knowledge of Serbian language; lack of local policies for active recruitment of Roma; absence of personal documentation. However, active employment programmes are still not sufficiently focused on members of the most vulnerable groups, and training programmes for the ones with lower education, such as Roma, have been almost completely neglected.

¹ Report on the Implementation of the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma in Serbia 2016-2025 in 2016, page 89.

² *Roma in Serbia*, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, <http://pod2.stat.gov.rs/ObjavljenjePublikacije/Popis2011/Romi.pdf>

The financial support for the local level, within this Programme, should tackle a prioritised set of issues in the area of employment identified in line with the National Strategy for Roma inclusion, Operational conclusions from the seminar "Social inclusion of Roma in the Republic of Serbia" 2017³, LAPs for Roma inclusion and/or other local strategic/action planning documents covering Roma issues. In addition, set of issues in the area of anti-discrimination policy and equal opportunities should be processed in order to introduce effective and efficient mechanisms to combat discrimination and create conditions in which Roma can exercise all human and minority rights. Special focus of this Programme will be paid to the empowerment of Roma women and youth.

The Contracting Authority of the present Call for Proposals is Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities – National Association of Local Authorities in Serbia (SCTM).

The **global objective** of the present Call for Proposals is to strengthen the position of Roma population in local communities through implementation of prioritised national and local strategic measures

The **specific objective(s)** of the present Call for Proposals is to improve social and economic position of Roma population through employment measures implemented by local communities and to support activities aiming at combating discrimination and promoting equality of Roma population

The overall indicative amount made available under the Call for Proposals is **EUR 2,000,000** with planned size of grants between EUR 40,000 and 60,000. Co-financing of the grants is envisaged between 60% - 90% of the total eligible costs of the proposed action.

The evaluation of the subject grant scheme is to be performed in line with the regulations defined in the latest version of the Practical guide – PRAG 2018.

Detailed information on the present Call for Proposals is available at the following site:

<http://www.skgo.org/strane/337>.

2. OBJECTIVE, PURPOSE & EXPECTED RESULTS

2.1. Overall objective

To recruit assessors to assist the Contracting Authority in the selection of the best proposals received under the Call for Proposals "*EU Support to Roma Inclusion - Strengthening Local Communities towards Roma Inclusion*" and to achieve a high-quality, complete and coherent selection process of projects in line with the criteria set in the guidelines for applicants.

2.2. Results to be achieved by the contractor

- Assessors will carry out the technical assessment of concept notes in accordance with guidelines to be provided by the Contracting Authority and which are based on the published evaluation grids. Approximately 80 concept notes are expected. Each concept note has to be assessed individually by two assessors.

³ The outcome of the Seminar is the joint preparation of the Operational Conclusions by the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the European Commission. The Operational Conclusions represent the undertaken obligations which are to be implemented to further improve the status of the Roma national minority in the Republic of Serbia.

- Assessors will carry out the technical and financial assessment of full applications in accordance with guidelines to be provided by the Contracting Authority and which are based on the published evaluation grids. Approximately 50 full applications are expected. Each full application has to be assessed individually by two assessors.
- Assessors will carry out administrative check of the applicants, affiliated entities and the action of the applications that have been provisionally selected, in accordance with guidelines to be provided by the Contracting Authority. At least 33 provisionally selected applications are expected. Each application should be assessed individually by one assessor.
- Assessors will prepare conclusions for each of the above-mentioned evaluation phases and presentations to the Evaluation Committee.
- Assessors will prepare assessors' report and propose a ranking list of projects for funding on the basis of the table of scorings included in the assessors' report.

These assessments will be used by the Evaluation Committee in the process of selecting the best proposals.

3. SCOPE OF THE WORK

3.1. General

The objective of assignment of assessors is to assist the Evaluation Committee in selecting the best proposals in line with the criteria set for this Call for Proposals based on well documented high-quality assessment process.

3.2. Specific activities

Assessors are bound by a Declaration of Impartiality and Confidentiality⁴ to be signed before starting each phase of the assessment. If an assessor believes there might be a situation of conflict of interests in relation to one or more applicants, he/she must inform the Contracting Authority immediately. In addition, strict confidentiality is required from the experts involved in the implementation of this Contract, notably on the assessments of individual applications.

(1) Role and tasks of assessors

The Call is launched as an open Call for Proposals. It implies that there will be two stages of the evaluation of proposals. In the first stage of the assessment, submitted concept notes will be evaluated, including the administrative check, as foreseen by the respective open procedure (Step 1). The second stage will cover evaluation of full application forms, submitted by the applicants who passed the first stage (concept notes evaluation) (Step 2). The eligibility checks will be done by Evaluation Committee after provisional selection of the full applications with the support of Assessors, if needed (final step).

The Guidelines for assessment of Applications, together with the evaluation grids shall prescribe how the assessors should appraise the applications in each phase of the evaluation. These Guidelines will be submitted to assessors at the beginning of their task and the assessors are obliged to strictly adhere to the Guidelines provisions.

⁴ A standard document will be made available by the Contracting Authority

Assessors should provide written technical and financial assessments to the Contracting Authority of concept notes and full applications (this includes the verification of the budget proposed by the applicants for the action, assessing its overall coherence and particularly its cost-effectiveness, with an emphasis on the identification of potential anomalies and/or overpriced items or budget lines).

At least two assessors must assess each concept note and each full application, working independently of each other.

The assessments must be undertaken in accordance with the guidelines and instructions provided by the Evaluation Committee. These are based on the published evaluation grids in the Guidelines for Applicants. The overall assessment should be based on the scores obtained under each subheading, added up by heading and the final score is the arithmetical average of the scores given by the assessors.

Each application must be assessed on its own merits and not by comparing different applications. External assessors are expected to bring their own experience of the sector and project implementation to bear in the analysis of each proposal.

The assessors may be invited to the Evaluation Committee to justify and discuss his/her assessment of the proposals. Likewise, the assessors are expected to attend the introductory briefing session which will be held by the Contracting Authority, as well as any other meeting in the course of implementation of their tasks.

Assessors will be engaged in the period from February 2019 and at latest until May 2019.

Assessment by assessors is based on the following:

Concept note evaluation

- Relevance of the action
- Design of the action

Full application evaluation

- Financial and operational capacity of the applicant and its partners
- Effectiveness and feasibility of the action
- Sustainability of the action
- Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action

Each assessor has therefore to be familiar with the Guidelines for Applicants for the relevant Call for Proposals and other relevant documents such as *the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma for the 2016-2025 in the Republic of Serbia and its associated action plan, the Report on the Implementation of the Strategy for Social inclusion of Roma in Serbia 2016-2025, National Report on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction, the Operational Conclusions by the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the European Commission, Anti-discrimination Strategy, etc.*

Assessment will notably be organised on basis of the following instructions:

- For each stage/step (i.e. Step 1: Concept note evaluation; Step 2: Full application evaluation) of the call evaluation, the Contracting Authority will organise a briefing session in Belgrade to be attended by all assessors, in order to clarify the Call for Proposals' objectives, management structure and other particularities linked to the Call and the specific evaluation criteria to be taken into consideration when assessing the proposals;
- Assessors must provide a comment for each score in each sub-section, and they must provide an overall comment on the strengths and weaknesses of each proposal. Eventually, the Assessor must provide a justified opinion if the proposal should be proposed for financing or not;
- Assessors must ensure that their comments and scores are coherent (there cannot be more than 5 points difference), and that a high score is not accompanied by negative comments, and vice versa;
- Assessor is expected to bring his/her own experience of the sector & project implementation to bear in the analysis of each proposal;
- While assessing the project Concept note, the Assessors are required to prepare the assessment of the relevance and design of the proposed action following the instructions of the Concept note evaluation grid;
- Assessors will submit their evaluations to the Secretary of the Evaluation Committee. The Evaluation Committee will check the quality and coherence of the Assessors' scores and comments. Should the assessments not satisfy the quality expected by the Contracting Authority, it may return the applications to the Assessor for a re-assessment by the same or another expert. Each evaluation grid will be initialised by the Assessor;
- Each Assessor will submit a recapitulative list, duly signed, of all assessed applications mentioning the scores for each Chapter of the evaluation grid and all Assessor's relevant conclusions or specific comments;
- While assessing the full application form, the Assessors are required to prepare the assessment of the description of the action, its consistency with the objectives of the Call for Proposals, quality, expected impact, sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the proposed action following the instructions of the full application form evaluation grid;
- While assessing the full application form, the Assessors are required to prepare the assessment of the budget, item by item, with clear explanatory notes per specific budget items analysing if they are necessary and realistic or not;
- While assessing the full application form, the Assessors are required to prepare the assessment of the logical framework matrix (all matrix cells) analysing logical intervention of the project proposal;
- A recapitulative list of all assessed applications mentioning the scores for each Chapter of the evaluation grid and all Assessors' relevant conclusions or specific comments table with descending scores for all applications will be prepared by Assessors. On basis of the duly filled Assessors' evaluation grids, the Secretary of the Evaluation Committee will establish recapitulative tables mentioning the scores for each Chapter of the evaluation grid and the

Assessors' relevant conclusions or specific comments. These tables will be submitted to the Evaluation Committee at the end of each evaluation phase for decision;

- Assessors are expected to provide briefing on the outcome of the assessment to the Evaluation Committee after each phase of the evaluation.

(2) Role and tasks of the Evaluation Committee

The Evaluation Committee is appointed by the Contracting Authority comprising a non-voting chairperson, a non-voting secretary and an odd number of voting members (minimum of three). Its role is to advise the Contracting Authority on contract award in accordance with pre-established criteria.

The chairperson is responsible for coordinating the evaluation process in accordance with the procedures in the practical guide and for ensuring its impartiality and transparency. The secretary to the Committee is responsible for carrying out all administrative tasks connected with the evaluation procedure. These include circulating and collecting the declarations of impartiality and confidentiality and keeping the minutes and any other relevant records and documents.

Where the proposals received are particularly numerous or highly technical, all or part of the detailed examination may be carried out by Assessors so that the Evaluation Committee may conduct its deliberations on the basis of their assessments, including the opinion of the EU delegation in the country where the proposed action will take place.

Assessors work under the supervision of the chairperson of the Evaluation Committee.

Should the assessments not satisfy the quality expected by the Contracting Authority, it may return the applications to the contractor and ask for a re-assessment by the same or another expert.

Eligibility verification of the provisionally selected applications will be done by the Evaluation Committee.

4. LOGISTICS AND TIMING

4.1. Location

Location of the assignment will be in the Republic of Serbia.

4.2. Start date and period of implementation

Assessors are expected to provide services in period February 2019 – May 2019, following the opening and administrative checks of the submitted concept notes. Evaluation of the concept notes is expected to be conducted during March 2019.

Evaluation of the full applications is expected to be conducted in period April 2019 – May 2019.

Eligibility verification of the provisionally selected applications by the Evaluation Committee is expected to be conducted in May 2019.

The above stated dates are indicative and will depend on the actual requirements of the evaluation process.

5. REQUIREMENTS

5.1. Staff

Experts have a crucial role in implementing the contract. These terms of reference contain the required experts' profiles.

The total engagement within this assignment is **102 working days**.

In the scope of this assignment at least **2 (two) experts/assessors** will be engaged as described in detail in the Terms of Reference. Each of the experts/assessors will carry out equal proportion of tasks, depending on the number of received Concept Notes and Full applications.

Standard requirements as per **number of Concept Notes / Full applications to be evaluated in one working day**: Depending on the number of applications received the Assessors will be required to assess at least five (5) Concept Notes per working day and at least two (2) Full applications per working day.

Employees of the state and public administration are not allowed to participate as staff/assessors.

5.1.1. Assessors

At least two assessors are to be engaged for this assignment meeting the below presented minimum requirements:

Qualifications and skills:

- University degree or 10 years of relevant experience
- Excellent knowledge of English and Serbian language, written and spoken (assessors will evaluate project applications written in English/Serbian and prepare their assessment in English)
- Good analytical and reporting skills
- Computer literacy

Specific professional experience:

- At least 5 years of working experience in sectors related to the respective Call for Proposals
- Working experience in project management and the logical framework approach to project design and implementation
- Previous experience in at least 1 (one) assessment of the project proposals

Advantages:

- Working experience in EU project management and PRAG procedures will be considered an advantage
- Working experience in working with the local government administration will be considered an advantage

5.2. Facilities

The experts are expected to possess equipment necessary for implementation of tasks. The use of equipment will be covered by the overall fee of the expert.

Each expert must have his/her own IT equipment together with the usual IT programmes for this kind of mission and an access to internet and CD-rom.

The Assessors will be allowed to work home-based, upon agreement with the Contracting Authority.

6. REPORTS

6.1. Reporting requirements

To summarise, in addition to any documents, reports and output specified under the roles and tasks of the assessors, the contractor shall provide the following reports:

Name of report	Content	Time of submission
Assessors' report on opening and administrative checks and Concept Note evaluation	Defined as per Evaluation Report – Step 1 model (in English)	March 2019 (exact date TBC)
Full applications evaluation report	Defined as per Evaluation Report – Step 2 model (in English)	May 2019 (exact date TBC)

Each Assessor will be required to provide full evaluation grid for each of the projects assessed. The grid will contain scores and information on strengths and weaknesses of the Concept Notes / Full applications.

Upon preparation of the Assessors' report for Concept Note evaluation and Full applications evaluation, Assessors will present the results to the Evaluation Committee in a briefing. Main strengths and weaknesses of the project with key reasons for approval/rejection will be stressed.

6.2. Submission & approval of reports

The Contracting Authority for this assignment is **Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities – National association of Local authorities in Serbia**, in the scope of EU SUPPORT TO ROMA INCLUSION - Strengthening Local Communities Towards Roma Inclusion, IPA II (2016).

Two copies of the reports referred to above must be submitted to the Project Manager/Coordinator of the Component identified in the Contract. The reports must be written in English. The Project Manager/Coordinator of the Component is responsible for approving the reports.

* * *

Protection of personal data

If processing your expression of interest involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as your name, address and CV), such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data. Unless indicated otherwise, your reply to this notice and any personal data requested are required for the purposes indicated above in point 4 and will be processed solely for those purposes by the contracting authority indicated in point 1, which is also acting as data controller. Details concerning the processing of your personal data are available on the privacy statement at:

http://ec.europa.eu/dataprotectionofficer/privacystatement_publicprocurement_en.pdf.

Your personal data may be registered in the Early Warning System (EWS) only or both in the EWS and Central Exclusion Database (CED) by the Accounting Officer of the Commission, should you be in one of the situations mentioned in:

- the Commission Decision 2008/969 of 16.12.2008 on the Early Warning System (for more information see the Privacy Statement on

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm),

or

- the Commission Regulation 2008/1302 of 17.12.2008 on the Central Exclusion Database (for more information see the Privacy Statement on

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm#BDCE)

Exclusion criteria

Experts shall be excluded from participation if:

(a) they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;

(b) they or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment of a competent authority of a Member State which has the force of res judicata;

(c) they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify including by decisions of the European Investment Bank and international organisations;

(d) they are not in compliance with their obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;

(e) they or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation, money laundering or any other illegal activity, where such an illegal activity is detrimental to the Union's financial interests;

(f) they are subject to an administrative penalty for being guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the contracting authority as a condition of participation in a procurement procedure or failing to supply information, or being declared to be in serious breach of their obligation under a contract covered by the budget;

g) they have a conflict of interest in connection with the contract; a conflict of interest could arise in particular as a result of economic interests, political or national affinities, family or emotional ties or any other relevant connection or shared interest.

Before signing a contract, experts shall provide a declaration on their honour stating that they are not in one of the situations of exclusion listed above. In case of doubt, they may be requested to provide supporting evidence of non-exclusion.

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