

Interact Office Vienna
MA27 – European Affairs
Kirchberggasse 33-35/9
1070 Vienna
Austria

Terms of References

External expertise support - request for offers

The engagement of civil society in Interreg

Terms of Reference

On behalf of the Interact Programme, Interact Office Vienna (hosted by the City of Vienna, MA 27) is inviting interested experts to submit a quotation for a short-term contract for a study on the “Engagement of the civil society in Interreg programmes”.

To respond to this call for tenders, interested experts must demonstrate their experience, capacity, suggested approach and methodology to carrying out the assignment given the specification presented in this Terms of Reference.

Context of the assignment

In more than 30 years of Interreg, the stakeholders participating in the programmes have become diverse. Indeed, the role of citizens and civil society organisations (CSOs) is getting more and more important as they can be a relevant force in making public investment more efficient and effective. Citizen participation and empowerment is an essential emblem of legitimacy and accountability in policy-making. This drive for efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and ownership very well aligns with the partnership principle: a key principle that applies to all the stages of the programming: in designing, implementing, and evaluating programmes and projects.

The genuine and meaningful involvement of citizens and civil society organisations into the programmes can be a clear example of how Interreg not only works for the people, by encouraging regions and countries to tackle challenges together but also with the people. In the context of Interreg programmes citizens are of key importance as they, often, are the ultimate beneficiaries from project results.

This cooperation between citizens, civil society actors and institutions can be strongly supported and promoted through different fields of actions in the 2014-2020 programming period: through all the policy objectives and specific objectives and especially through the new Interreg-specific objective “A better cooperation governance” (as a demonstration of good governance) and PO5 (calling for a strong involvement of local and regional stakeholders). In addition, small-scale projects and Small Project Funds (which are compulsory elements in CBC programmes), can be excellent tools to support actions close to citizens. Next to that, programmes can put in place dedicated actions funded by their Technical Assistance (TA).

Target group and the key objective

The service provider is expected to deliver a concise study based on desk and (limited) field research by primarily targeting those Interreg programmes wishing to put in place a civil society participation process depending on their context and purpose.

The study aims to:

- Firstly, present a comprehensive picture of the existing level of engagement of citizens and civil society in Interreg programmes (mapping exercise);
- Secondly, identify factors that encourage the involvement of citizens and civil society in Interreg programmes;
- Finally, come up with feasible approaches (methods and tools) to make Interreg programmes more enabling for citizens and civil society.

Requested services, deliverables and timelines

The external service provider is requested to provide the following service, respectively deliverables:

Service/Deliverable	Description	Indicative timeline
Definition of civil society in Interreg	Discuss and agree on a definition of civil society involvement in Interreg programmes as the basis for the assignment.	1 week after the start
Questionnaire for an online survey	<p>The external service provider should develop the contents of a questionnaire covering the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- the level of engagement of citizens and civil society in Interreg programmes;- the intensity of engagement of citizens and civil society in Interreg programmes;- the factors that encourage and/or hinder the engagement of citizens and civil society in Interreg. <p>Interact will conduct an online survey among programmes based on the agreed set of questions.</p>	2 – 6 weeks after the start
Follow-up activity	<p>Option A: Follow-up interviews with a smaller group of selected programmes.</p> <p>Option B: Focus group analysis among interested Interreg programmes.</p>	6 – 10 weeks after the start

	<p>The selection of the programmes and the topics to focus on will be jointly agreed upon with Interact experts.</p> <p>The outcome of the exercise will be reflected in the final report.</p>	
Report of findings in form of a study including a presentation.	<p>The final product of the assignment should be the elaboration of a concise report of findings by identifying feasible approach(es) to engage with civil society in Interreg programmes.</p> <p>The report should be at least 15 pages, without considering any possible annexe(s).</p> <p>The report should be summarised in a presentation to be used by Interact.</p>	12 weeks after the start

A more detailed schedule for the deliverables will be agreed upon between Interact experts and the selected service provider during the kick-off meeting.

Copyright and approach

The report shall be developed in close cooperation with Interact experts. The external service provider is requested to participate in online meetings with Interact (kick-off meeting and other meetings) throughout the assignment.

Corresponding to Interact's legal requirements to meet publicity, the deliverables provided under this contract shall be given to Interact with full rights of ownership, including editing and onward sharing. Any visual file must be provided in an editable form, such as vector files. The language of the programme is English, so all services, products and similar must be delivered in English.

Expertise requested

The external service provider is expected to have proficient expertise in:

- evaluation and studies focused on EU territorial development;
- conducting analysis and drafting studies, conclusions and recommendations.

Background material

The external service provider can get acquainted with the following material:

“ENGAGING CITIZENS IN COHESION POLICY”, DG REGIO and OECD Pilot Project Final Report

<https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/486e5a88-en.pdf?expires=1673881126&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=225BDDDBDA70CC263E108941AE16B94CD>

How to apply

In order to be considered for this contract, offers must include:

- 1) Outline the understanding of the tasks and the methodology including an indicative timeframe (workdays).
- 2) CVs of the team to work on this assignment and outline of their role in this work.
- 3) Examples of similar work conducted;
- 4) Set out a financial proposal providing separate lump sums (excl. VAT) for delivery of all tasks listed, either including Option A or Option B.

Detailed proposals must be submitted by email to besiana.ninka@interact-eu.net by noon (12 PM CET) on **24 March 2023** and shall be addressed to:

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Offers will be assessed according to quality and price, especially taking into account the service provider's previous experience in similar assignments.

The services to be provided to Interact shall be directly procured according to Austria Procurement Law (§ 31 Abs 11 BVergG 2018) and will be contracted by the City of Vienna, Municipal Department 27 on the basis of the general contracting conditions of the City of Vienna¹.

Please note, any expenses incurred in the preparation of offers will not be reimbursed.

Further questions

If you have any questions about the above tender, please email besiana.ninka@interact-eu.net.

¹ See Allgemeine Vertragsbestimmungen der Stadt Wien für Leistungen

<https://www.wien.gv.at/wirtschaft/auftraggeber-stadt/vertragsbestimmungen/pdf/wd313-2018.pdf>