

## INTERREG VI-A ROMANIA-HUNGARY PROGRAMME

CALL FOR  
EXTERNAL EVALUATORS

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

[www.interreg-rohu.eu](http://www.interreg-rohu.eu)



## Romania - Hungary

### BACKGROUND

The Interreg VI-A Romania-Hungary Programme (ROHU Programme) is a territorial cooperation programme between two member states, Romania, and Hungary, funded through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), with a total allocation of 175,940,025.00 EUR (out of which 80% ERDF, in amount of 140,752,020.00 EUR). The Programme area (PA) is composed of 4 counties on the Romanian side and 4 counties (NUTS 3 political and administrative units) on the Hungarian side, as follows: Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Hajdú-Bihar, Békés, Csongrád-Csanád in Hungary; Satu Mare, Bihor, Arad, Timiș in Romania.

The vision for the ROHU Programme is a greener, more resilient, and cohesive cross-border region between Romania and Hungary, with an enhanced understanding of cooperation opportunities, increased trust, and reduced barriers to cooperation, towards Agenda 2030 common targets with a more sustainable cooperation framework.

The Managing Authority (hereinafter referred to MA) for Interreg VI-A Romania-Hungary Programme within Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration launched the 1st open call on 28 June 2023, with deadline for submission of SOFT project proposals on 27 September 2023 and of HARD project proposals on 27 December 2023.

With reference to Chapter 4 of the INTERREG Programme document: Selecting of operations will be carried out through assessment with the involvement of external evaluators relevant for the field of interventions, from both sides of the border, working in mixed pairs (1 RO and 1 HU), to ensure the territorial, legal and holistic embeddedness and synergies with the national and local state of play.

In accordance with the internal work procedures, MA delegates to BRECO – as Joint Secretariat (JS) the contracting of the RO external evaluators.

The contracting of the HU external evaluators is ensured by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Hungary, acting as National Authority in the ROHU Programme.

Detailed information about the Programme priorities and objectives is available at the following link: <https://interreg-rohu.eu/en/discover-the-rohu-programme/>.

### PURPOSE

The scope of the procurement of assessment services is to support the Assessment Working Group (AWG) in the qualitative assessment (strategic and operational) of applications submitted within the calls for proposals under the Interreg VI-A Romania-Hungary Programme.

The submitted applications will be assessed from the quality point of view (strategic and operational) by external evaluators, in accordance with the assessment criteria set out in Annex D.1 - Quality Assessment Grid/Annex D.1.1- Quality Assessment Grid P2P to the Applicant's Guide.

## Romania - Hungary

The number of external evaluators assigned to applications shall be set in accordance with the complexity of applications to be assessed.

In this respect, Oradea Regional Office for Cross Border Cooperation (BRECO) invites interested external evaluators to submit their offers in compliance with the requirements mentioned below.

### SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED

The main task of external evaluators is to undertake a quality assessment (strategic and operational) of applications submitted under calls for proposals of the Interreg VI-A Romania-Hungary Programme and to fill in the assessment grids, accordingly.

Assessment of applications shall be made exclusively online, by using the electronic monitoring system of the Programme (Jems), on the basis of information included by applicants in the application forms, in English language, and in the timeframe allocated by the coordinator of the assessment process.

An online briefing meeting including a training session on how to perform the assessment in Jems during the quality assessment process shall be provided to all evaluators (RO and HU), before starting the assessment process. Moreover, throughout the entire assessment process, if needed, the JS will provide support regarding Jems to all evaluators.

The quality assessment (strategic and operational) of each application will be carried out by two external evaluators, in English language, in accordance with the provisions of the relevant Applicant's Guide, the assessment criteria set out in the Quality Assessment Grid (Annex D.1&D1.1) and with the Assessment and Selection Methodology, which describes the assessment process.

Based on the Jems access rights, each external evaluator will independently carry out the assigned duties, performing cross-checks of the information included in the application forms (correlation between different sections and its annexes, as applicable).

External evaluators have to appraise each sub-criterion with a score, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the application, strongly and clearly justifying the score awarded, and providing assessment conclusions per each criterion. External evaluators are expected to give comments on each criterion and in their comments, explicitly refer to the elements of analysis under the relevant criteria. The comments on each criterion have to reflect and justify the score given.

As their comments could be used to provide feedback to applicants, External evaluators must draft their comments in English and must pay particular attention to clarity, consistency, and appropriate level of detailing.

The comments and recommendations provided shall be concise, clear, observing the proportionality in terms of activities versus efficient financial management, and instead of expressions like "it seems

## Romania - Hungary

that ....., it looks like....., project activities could lead to ....., it is possible to reach the outcome or results, the project budget seems to be overestimated etc.” clear explanations in detail and professional opinions shall be provided in the Grid filled in by the external evaluators.

In case of recommending an application for funding, also recommendations for necessary amendments during the contracting phase should be provided if necessary.

In case of insufficient information for a correct qualitative assessment, clarifications shall be asked, through the AWG secretary.

External evaluators have to ensure their availability to review their assessments in the following indicative, but non-exhaustive cases:

- comments do not correspond to scores given in the assessment grid (incoherence);
- assessment grids contain formulation or expressions that are vague, as indicated as examples in the previous paragraph;
- the comments and recommendations do not sufficiently justify the awarded score(s);
- discrepancies, including contradictory comments between the two assessment grids of the same application;
- failure to apply the assessment rules established in the relevant Applicants' Guide / Assessment and Selection Methodology;
- grids are of low quality showing superficial consideration of the application.

If an applicant appeals against the quality assessment result, the analysis and resolution of those appeals will be concluded according to the provisions of the relevant Applicants' Guide and Assessment and Selection Methodology.

## GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

In carrying out the quality assessment, the external evaluators must:

- have good knowledge of the [Interreg VI-A Romania-Hungary Programme](#) and at least one of its thematic fields in which the external evaluators may assess applications and the [Applicant's Guide](#);
- have good knowledge of the Assessment and Selection Methodology (which shall be provided by the JS at the beginning of the assessment process);
- follow the instructions provided in the Assessment and Selection Methodology and of the AWG Chair;
- use the Jems and assess the applications according to the Quality Assessment Grids, as annexed to the [Applicant's Guide](#);
- know the content and structure of the application form;
- comply with the rules defined by the Programme for ensuring the impartiality,

## Romania - Hungary

confidentiality, and avoidance of conflict of interest of the evaluation process; evaluators must be aware that failure to comply with these rules shall result in exclusion from the assessment process;

- immediately inform the BRECO or MFA in Hungary if during the assessment, she/he discovers being directly or indirectly connected with an application, which she/he has been asked to evaluate and which impairs her/his impartiality;
- follow the deadlines for finalizing the evaluation of the assigned applications; maximum allocated time per application assessed shall not exceed 2 working days, based on receipt of JS notification.
- be available (by video conferencing platforms, email, or phone) for the Assessment Working Group and/or Monitoring Committee meetings if further explanations on their works are required. As for the frequency, generally, one initial AWG meeting is envisaged per each submission deadline, and 1 closing AWG meeting per SO under each relevant Call.
- ensure reliability and commitment to deliver high quality outputs in due time.

### SERVICES PROVIDER / EXTERNAL EVALUATORS' PROFILE

External evaluators should meet the following requirements:

- university level degree certified by diploma or other document of same legal value;
- experience in performing quality assessment (or equivalent) of project proposals under national, European, or international funding programmes, ideally in transnational/interregional/cross-border cooperation programmes;
- very good command of English language (written, spoken);
- computer skills.

The above criteria are cumulative and shall be proved by professional experience and/or studies, as presented in the Europass format CV. Relevant supporting documents might be requested if considered necessary.

Each external evaluator shall submit, together with his/her/their CV, a Declaration of Availability (Annex 1 to this ToR) stating that the tasks to be performed have been understood by the external evaluator(s) and that he/she/they is/are available for the job and committed to deliver the tasks in time. Also, the signed Agreement for Processing of Personal Data (Annex 3 to this ToR).

The external evaluator should also be aware of the provisions of the Declaration of Impartiality, Confidentiality and Avoidance of Conflict of Interest, which will have to be signed before starting the evaluation (Annex 2 to this ToR).

## Romania - Hungary

### PROCUREMENT PROCESS

Type of the procurement – direct procurement.

Interested external evaluators shall submit their tenders as legal entities authorised according to the relevant legislation (e.g. by CAEN code) to perform such activities/services (e.g., authorised natural person, individual enterprise, limited liability company). The requested documents (PDF format) shall be submitted by email, until 13<sup>th</sup> of October 2023, 17 p.m. (EET), to the following e-mail address: [joint.secretariat@brecoadea.ro](mailto:joint.secretariat@brecoadea.ro).

The offers, consisting of CVs, Declarations (Annex 1), Agreement (Annex 3) and price offer shall be examined in order to assess the compliance with the requirements. The external evaluators are required to submit price offers per application, also indicating the number of applications to be assessed in parallel and altogether. The offers will indicate the exact Euro net price per application, also mentioning the VAT, if the case.

Consequently, depending on the number of applications to be assessed and the price per application as provided by the submitted offers, the Contracting Authority might conclude several procurement contracts.

170 applications were submitted for assessment, out of which 97 people-to-people projects (low complexity, simplified assessment grid, downsized budgets, etc) and 73 normal projects.

The estimated value of the assessment services is net 100 Euro per external evaluator/ per people-to-people project and net 150 Euro per external evaluator/per normal application assessed.

The selection criterion is the lowest price per assessed application, provided that all minimum criteria are met.

The external evaluators will be informed on the result by e-mail.

The assessment work of project applications under the 1<sup>st</sup> open call for proposals shall start in October 2023 and end in December 2023. Please note that this timeline is indicative.

### TERMS OF SERVICES CONTRACT(S)

#### a. Type of contract

External evaluators shall perform their tasks in the framework of services procurement contract(s) concluded with BRECO, as Joint Secretariat, under the Romanian legislation. The services contract(s) will have **approximately 3 months duration, starting in October 2023 (indicatively) and ending no later than 31.12.2023.**

These Terms of Reference shall be annexed to the services contract.

#### b. Location

The work shall be performed remotely, online.

## Romania - Hungary

External evaluators must use functional laptops/desktops of their own. As the evaluators will work remotely, they will be responsible for ensuring from own resources all conditions necessary to perform the assessment process in appropriate conditions.

### **c. Price and Payment**

The services contract(s) shall be concluded in Romanian Lei (RON), at the exchange rate of the European Commission applicable in the month the contract is concluded (the monthly exchange rates of the European Commission are published on: [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts\\_grants/info\\_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro_en.cfm)).

The payment shall be conditioned by the formal acceptance of the assessment services, documented by properly filled-in (all criteria are scored, and professional well documented justification is provided) assessment grids.