



Terms of Reference

Call for External Evaluators for Quality Assurance of DTP project “Excellence-in-ReSTI”

Title	Call for External Evaluators for Quality Assurance of DTP project “Excellence-in-ReSTI”	
Work Leader:	package	Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI)
Related package:	Work	WP1 – Management
Related Activity:		Task 1.4 – Monitoring, Quality Assurance and Coordination with DTP
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Project Number		DTP1-1-450-1.2
Start date of Project:		01/02/2017
Duration:		29 months
Publication date of Call:		18 May 2018

Project Excellence-in-ReSTI is co-funded by the European Union through European Regional Development (ERDF) and Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) funding.

Abstract This is a call for an External Evaluator to provide a report on the quality of the overall project management procedures and performance of DTP project Excellence-in-ReSTI.

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1 Introduction

Excellence in research, social and technological innovation project management (hereinafter: Excellence-in-ReSTI) is a cooperation project funded by the Danube Transnational Programme (DTP), one of the financing instruments of the European Territorial Cooperation. DTP promotes economic, social and territorial cohesion in the Danube Region countries; i.e. Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany – Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria –, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and 5 non-EU countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Ukraine – four provinces: Chernivetska Oblast, Ivano-Frankiviska Oblast, Zakarpatska Oblast and Odessa Oblast) through policy integration in selected thematic priority areas.

Excellence-in-ReSTI aims at removing gaps in knowledge and skills in managing social and technological innovation projects. The general goal is to create an environment in which interested stakeholders can find easy-to-use checklists, learning modules and advice with a specifically tailored content regarding the management of R&D&I projects.

Project activities encompass building-up networks, identifying gaps and opportunities, elaborating policy recommendations, creating national and regional roadmaps and strategy, developing guidelines, creating a curricula and learning system, all aimed at supporting R&D&I projects in the Danube Region. Excellence-in-ReSTI is primarily targeted towards young graduates and early-stage R&D&I project managers and administrators engaged in different kinds of public and private institutions (including NGOs and civil society organisations).

In particular the main project outcomes of Excellence-in-ReSTI are the following:

- Development and implementation of an innovative **blended learning programme** consisting of online courses and face-to-face meetings devoted to spreading excellence in R&D&I management, leadership and administration
- Establishment and implementation of the Excellence-in-ReSTI **Infodesk**
- Creation of the regional **roadmaps and strategy**, based on national background reports

In particular the project specific objectives of Excellence-in-ReSTI are the following:

- Increase competences in the implementation of ReSTI projects
- Develop strategies to improve ReSTI project participation
- Increase employability of young graduates as ReSTI project managers

The Excellence-in-ReSTI project started in February 2017 and will last until July 2019. It is implemented by a consortium of 11 organisations from 9 countries.

Detailed information on the project is available at its website:

<http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/excellence-in-resti>

Information on the Danube Transnational Programme in general is available at the official webpage: <http://www.interreg-danube.eu>

One of the activities of the project, which is directly addressed by these Terms of Reference (ToR) is called Monitoring, Quality Assurance and Cooperation with DTP (Activity 1.4), in the framework of which external expertise is included to provide independent feedback on the timely and quality implementation of activities and delivery of outputs.

2 Task Description

Objective and expected result

An external evaluator is selected through the process described in this ToR in order to provide quality assurance from a procedural and outcome perspective. The objective is to analyse the available project data in a systematic way for the purposes of **assessing the quality of the overall project management procedures and performance** of project Excellence-in-ReSTI.

In this respect, the evaluator has to evaluate the following two project aspects:

- **internal management procedures** set up and adopted by the project consortium (incl. five (5) WP1 “Management” and WP2 “Communication” deliverables)
- **deliverables and outputs** finalised by the project consortium or, in certain cases, individual partner(s) (altogether seventeen (17) thematic WP deliverables, and eight (8) thematic WP outputs – each output is comprised of more deliverables)

Based on the available data and the information within the Application Form and relevant DTP documents, the quality assurance should focus on the following criteria:

- The general functioning of the consortium is adequate for achieving project purposes
- The progress of activities is in line with the overall project planning
- The adopted project management procedures (and relevant templates) are adequate for project purposes / in line with DTP requirements
- The project quality assurance procedures (and relevant templates) are adequate for project purposes / in line with DTP requirements
- The project deliverables are achieved in time / in a good quality / within the envisaged budget / through adequate project partnership / in line with the project specific objectives
- The project outputs are achieved in time / in a good quality / within the envisaged budget / through adequate project partnership / in line with the project specific objectives
- The project outputs contribute to the achievement of programme thematic objectives and project specific objectives; in this regard a quality report for each delivered output should be compiled with information on the EU added value and future sustainability and replicability perspectives

The evaluation process will result in a **quality assurance report on the overall project performance and management** (min. 20 A4 pages with annexes, written in Times New Roman 12-point font size, single space and 1-inch margins) which should include at least the following:

- **Summary of the project implementation** (in terms of management structure and procedures, as well as finished deliverables and outputs)
- **Data quality assessment** in terms of completeness, accuracy, comparability and reporting limits
- Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (**SWOT**) identified within the project management procedures and performance

- **Impact assessment** of project deliverables and outputs in terms of whether the target values and specific objectives foreseen in the Application Form were achieved and are in line with the horizontal objectives and relevant DTP Priority Area targets
- **Recommendations** for improving the quality of future project performance and management, as well as potential corrective actions to be taken
- **Quality reports** for each finished project outputs – as **Annexes** (altogether 8)

All data will be provided by ZSI as Project Lead Partner after the end of the 3rd project period (July 2018).

Methodology

The selected evaluator will be in the duty to draft and consolidate a report on the quality of the overall project management and performance of project Excellence-in-ReSTI.

The evaluator will work on the basis of the data provided by ZSI as Lead Partner either through direct electronic means (e-mail attachments) or as access to electronic data storage systems (internal cloud). It is the responsibility of ZSI to provide all available data to evaluator in a timely manner and in good quality and, if requested, provide further information and clarification regarding the data input. The evaluator should also assess the quality of the data received in his/her report.

ZSI will give access to the following project data:

- finished deliverables and outputs
- deliverables and outputs in progress at the time of the evaluation process, if needed
- entire project progress reports (first 2 periods) and, if needed, individual partner reports (taking into account data protection regulations)
- other internal documents, including templates and guidelines or minutes of internal project meetings
- DTP manuals and strategic documents including information on programme priorities, thematic and specific objectives, as well as Priority Area targets to be followed by project Excellence-in-ReSTI
- any other documents requested by evaluator and available for ZSI without additional effort

Upon receipt of the following project data, the following tasks and activities are requested from the evaluator:

- study and analysis of the project data provided
- study and analysis of the relevant DTP manuals and strategic documents
- elaboration of a project SWOT analysis
- elaboration of output quality reports
- quality assurance evaluation based on the relevant criteria
- drafting of the first draft quality assurance report
- participation in the review meeting for clarification of any outstanding issues
- revision of first draft report and consolidation of final report

Within the framework of the above activities and tasks, the selected evaluator may follow his/her own evaluation method, takes full responsibility to overview and manage the entire quality assurance process, as well as is in charge for the drafting and consolidation of the draft report based on data input from the project Lead Partner and for the compilation of the final project quality assurance report incl. recommendations and output quality reports.

The evaluator will be assisted by the project Lead Partner for data provision and clarification purposes throughout the whole project duration, as well as will be available for further clarification and detailed discussion during the review meeting.

Tentative implementation period

July 2018 to December 2018 (6 months)

Tentative Timeline

Publication of Call for External Evaluator – 18 May 2018

Selection and Contracting of External Evaluator – until end of June 2018

Provision of data by ZSI – from mid-July 2018

Analysis of data and drafting of the first report – mid-July– November 2018

Review meeting between ZSI and External Evaluator – November 2018

Finalisation and submission of evaluation report – December 2018

Funding and Reimbursement

The external quality assurance will be funded exclusively through the Excellence-in-ReSTI project.

The maximum budget for each single evaluator for the above described tasks to be delivered is up to **EUR 5,000**. This maximum budget includes the travel costs and daily allowances for the travel (review meeting).

Delays in performance are not acceptable.

3 Selection and contracting procedure

The external evaluator will be selected in a call for evaluators' procedure. These Terms of Reference will be published at the website of Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI) and distributed by ZSI as relevant Work Package and Activity Leader.

Required qualification/skills/experiences of the external evaluator

- university degree in a science or technology field
- profound knowledge on international research strategies and funding programmes, including macroregional strategies, and proven analytical skills (minimum of 10 years of experience evidenced by the CV)
- excellent research project manager capabilities (minimum of 10 years of experience evidenced by the CV and comprehensive list of scientific projects or (research) management positions) and readiness to be engaged hands-on in the preparation of the report
- fluency in English (proven by a list of publications)

The external evaluator is not allowed to be employed by one of the Excellence-in-ReSTI project consortium partners

Application

An application for the position of the external evaluator shall include the following documents:

- a cover letter/e-mail with short description of the motivation
- a CV, highlighting relevant experience, reference projects and publications
- a short implementation plan (min. 2–3 A4 pages with Times New Roman 12-point font size, single space and 1-inch margins) which shall sketch out the specific evaluation methodology
- a cost plan including the working days foreseen for the evaluation process

Submission of application

Please submit the required documents for the application with subject *External Evaluator of DTP project "Excellence-in-ReSTI"* per e-mail to:

Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI), Austria

c/o Gabor Szüdi

e-mail: szudi@zsi.at

Deadline for the submission of an application is **Thursday, 8 June 2018 17:00 CET (date of entry of the e-mail)**.

Selection

A selection committee will be convened to select the *external evaluator*. This selection committee will be composed by the *Quality Manager, Project Manager* and *two (2) representatives of project partners*.

Telephone interviews with suitable candidates may be held in second half June 2018, if deemed necessary.

The Contractor reserves the right not to place any order. Costs for necessary document preparation by the applicants to this call for tender will not be reimbursed. This call for tender is not subject to the conditions of the Austrian Public Procurement Law.

Contracting procedure for external expert

The applicants and the selected *external evaluator* will be informed until **30 June 2018** on the result of the selection procedure. The contract with the scientific evaluators will be established by the Excellence-in-ReSTI project shortly after the selection of the evaluator. As soon as the contract is concluded, the evaluator will get access to data and necessary documents.

The duration of the contracts with the evaluators will last from July 2018 (earliest) until 31 December 2018.