



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME)

Call for expression of interest for the establishment of a list of experts to assist the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (EASME) with tasks in connection with the Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs (COSME)

1. Contracting party

Executive Agency for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

European Commission

B-1049 Brussels

<http://ec.europa.eu/easme>

2. Objective of the call of expression of interest

The Executive Agency for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (EASME) (formerly called the Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation)¹ invites applications from individuals with a view to be included in the Commission database of experts. EASME could call on experts in connection with evaluation and monitoring activities relating to the implementation of the Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs (COSME) (2014-2020)².

Subject to the applicable criteria and procedures established by Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002³ and Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 of 29.10.2012 on the rules of application of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union⁴, EASME may appoint external experts to assist with the:

- (1) Evaluation of proposals in response to calls for proposals aiming at implementing the COSME programme
- (2) Evaluation of finished, ongoing activities or projects under COSME
- (3) Monitoring of the implementation of actions carried out under COSME.

To this end, EASME is looking for experts in the following fields:

- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) competitiveness
- Enhancing SMEs innovation capacity
- Internationalisation of SMEs
- Advice on EU access to finance
- Support for innovation and technology transfer
- Entrepreneurship training
- Improving business environment
- Intellectual property rights (IPR)

¹ Commission Implementing Decision 2013/771/EU of 17/12/2013 establishing the "Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises" and repealing Decisions 2004/20/EC and 2007/372/EC (OJ L 341/73, 18.12.2013).

² Regulation (EU) No 1287/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing a Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (COSME) (2014 to 2020) and repealing Decision No 1639/2006/EC (OJ L 347/33, 20.12.2013).

³ OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1.

⁴ OJ L 362, 31.12.2012, p. 1

3. Registration procedure

1. Individuals are invited to apply as independent experts via the "Participant Portal" after selecting the COSME programme. They indicate clearly their domain or domains of competence in the list above at the following website address:

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/experts/index.html>

2. All exchanges with experts, including the conclusion of contracts for their appointment and any amendment thereto, shall be carried out through the electronic exchange systems set up in accordance with Article 287(4) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No. 1268/20123.

By submitting their application via the website address mentioned in subparagraph 1), experts agree to accept using the electronic exchange system for interactions with the Commission or EASME. All communication made through the electronic exchange system (including signature of the contract, amendments, notifications, requests for payment, etc.) are considered equivalent to paper document, shall be admissible as evidence in legal proceedings, shall be deemed to be the original of the document and shall enjoy legal presumption of its authenticity and integrity, provided it does not contain any dynamic features capable of automatically changing it. The electronic signatures shall have the equivalent legal effect of handwritten signatures.

3. The relevant services will access the expert's applications if all sections are duly updated and completed. Areas of expertise and professional experience should be adequately detailed and documented. An application is considered complete once confirmed as valid in the online electronic exchange system.

Experts who already registered in the database of independent experts drawn up for the implementation of the research programmes and who wish to apply for the COSME programme, are invited to declare their interest in being considered for COSME assignments by duly updating their area of expertise in line with the new set of COSME specialist fields and pre-defined areas. This must be done via the "Participant Portal" at the address mentioned above.

4. Expenditure on preparing and submitting expressions of interest will not be reimbursed by EASME.

4. Validity of the registration

The registration of the experts is valid for the duration of the multi-annual COSME programme. Experts may submit an application at any time prior to the last three months of validity of the list.

Experts may withdraw their application at any moment during the period of validity of the registration by written notice to the contracting party.

5. Selection of the experts

EASME will call on experts for assistance for evaluation and monitoring of activities as indicated above in point 2. To this end, EASME will draw up a list of experts who meet the

criteria set out at point 6 and will evaluate the selection criteria indicated in point 6.2 based on the information provided by the experts in their online application.

Depending on the evaluation or monitoring activity, the contracting party will invite either all experts entered on the list or only some of them on the basis of the skills, experience and knowledge necessary and in accordance with the principles of non-discrimination, equal treatment and absence of conflict of interests.

EASME will implement appropriate mechanisms to ensure a reasonable rotation of independent experts for evaluations from one year to the next.

6. Criteria for the inclusion in the list

1. 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 judgement of a competent party 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 party 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 party 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 judgement 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 party 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.

Prior to the signature of their contract, the experts must confirm in the "Participant Portal" at the address mentioned above 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.

2. Selection criteria:

In order to be selected, the experts must fulfil the following requirements:

- (a) hold a university degree;
- (b) have at least five years of professional experience, including at least three years acquired in one of the topics mentioned in point 5;
- (c) appropriate working knowledge of English.

7. **Contracting**

Prior to the signature of their contract, the **experts** must:

- confirm in the "Participant Portal" at the address mentioned above that they are not in one of the situations quoted in point 6.1 (exclusion criteria)
- attest that they agree to abide by the terms of the code of conduct (including confidentiality aspects) in the electronic exchange system. In particular, they will be required to sign a declaration certifying that there is no conflict of interest at the time of contracting and that they undertake to inform EASME if any conflict should arise in the course of their duties.

Prior to the signature of their contract, EASME may request the selected experts to present supporting documents (i.e., copy of university degree and certificates of working experience).

Contracts signed under this call for expressions of interest will be standard expert contracts concluded with a fixed fee of €450 (four hundred and fifty euro) per working day. Travel and subsistence expenses will be reimbursed under the conditions set out in the contract.

As a general rule, contracts will not cumulatively **exceed 30 days per year**.

8. **Place of work**

As required, tasks may be carried out at the EASME premises, at any other premises where an event organised by EASME will take place, or remotely, using electronic communication tools.

9. **Processing of personal data**

The personal data collected in the context of the present call will be processed in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 45/2001⁵ "on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement

⁵ Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 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

of such data”. Details concerning the processing of the experts’ personal data are available on the privacy statement in the Participant Portal at the address mentioned above.

The 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 European Commission, if the experts are in one of the situations mentioned in:

—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

—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).

10. Ex-post transparency

The names of experts who have assisted EASME in the implementation of COSME together with the subject of their tasks shall be published annually on the EASME website. Such information shall be collected, processed and published in accordance with Regulation (EC) No. 45/2001.

If an expert has concluded a contract of more than €15 000, the name, the locality (region of origin), amount, and subject of the contract shall be published on the EASME website no later than 30 June of the year following contract award. The information shall be removed two years after the year of contract award.