

The project : “Technical Assistance for Implementation, Management and Control of the INTERREG IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme between Greece- Republic of North Macedonia 2014-2020”

Ref.: **CCI 2014TC16I5CB009**

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)**

### **Designing and Creating an online newsletter**

#### **FOR THE MINISTRY OF LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENT – THE NATIONAL AUTHORITY OF THE PROGRAMME**

##### **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this TOR is to solicit offers for designing and creating electronic newsletters in each semester and one an electronic almanac by the end of the Programme, seeking services from qualified company by engaging a key expert who will work closely and solely on the services and for the needs of the National Authority Operating Structure, (“the National Authority of the Programme”).

Namely, The National Authority of the Programme seeks to compile/design an online newsletter with focus on the TA project activities in country as mentioned below in section 3.1. and of the IPA project partners in the field of the two priority axis as mentioned in section 3.2. of this TOR.

The online newsletter should be an effective, an attractive and well-functioning created each semester in a period of 48 months that commences from the date of signature of the service contract up to 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 2023, the subject of final approvals and payments of the services.

By the end of the Programme period namely, in the first week of December 2023 we pursue to issue an electronic almanac that will consist all relevant communication activities, data and information on implemented and therefore acquitted all IPA projects in Republic of North Macedonia governed by the INTERREG IPA CBC Programme Greece – Republic of North Macedonia 2014-2020.

The content of both: electronic newsletters’ issues by each semester and of electronic almanac at the end of this services should provide measurable outcomes that will be useful to highlight EU participation in the IPA projects/ interventions in the frame of the INTERREG IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Greece – Republic of North Macedonia 2014-2020.

The content of e-newsletters will be determined by the National Authority in close cooperation with Joint Secretariat and with the Managing Authority of the Programme, a body responsible for implementation of the Communication Strategy of the INTERREG IPA CBC Programme Greece- Republic of North Macedonia 2014-2020. (as is foreseen by Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Regulation (EU) No.447/2014.)

This services requested by the National Authority is a regular activity under the Technical Assistance Project for implementation, monitoring and control of the INTERREG IPA CBC Greece and Republic of North Macedonia 2014-2020 Programme that the funding is ruled by the Decision of the Joint Monitoring Committee on 8 November 2018 hence the approvals of the Multiannual TA budget plan for years 2019 -2013.

This TOR contains sufficient information and instructions to enable qualified Tenderers to prepare and submit tenders and supporting material. To be considered responsive, Tenderers must submit a complete tender documentation that substantially satisfies all requirements as stated in this TOR.

This TOR contains all systems requirements, evaluation criteria, and Tenderers' responsibilities. This TOR also contains all major terms and conditions that the successful Tenderer will be expected to accept.

## **2. Legal Basis**

The following documents have been taken under consideration for the present tender:

- 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 1605/2002
- Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006
- Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal
- Regulation (EU) No.231/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of March 11, 2014 establishing an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II)
- Commission Regulation (EC) No.447/2014 on the specific rules for implementing
- Regulation (EU) No.231/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II)
- The Interreg IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Programme "Greece – Republic of North Macedonia 2014-2020" (hereinafter CP), approved by the European Commission Decision C(2015) 5655 on August 6, 2015 [CCI 2014 TC 16 I5CB 009]
- The European Transparency Initiative;
- The Communication Strategy of the Interreg IPA CBC "Greece- Republic of North Macedonia 2014-2020"

## **3. Background**

European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) known as INTERREG is one of the two goals of EU cohesion policy and provides a framework for the implementation of joint actions and policy exchanges between national, regional and local actors from different Member States.

The INTERREG IPA II Cross border cooperation(CBC) Programme Greece –Republic of North Macedonia 2014-2020 overall strategy is to 'to enhance territorial cohesion by improving living standards and employment opportunities holding respect to the environment and by using natural resources for tourism'.

The Programme have been approved by the European Commission Decision C(2015)5655/06.08.2015

According to the Finance Agreement with European Commission (the EU) as an integral part of, the Bilateral Agreement is signed between Greece and Republic of North Macedonia with regard to particular rules, governing the respective relationship between the Managing Authority (MA) including the Joint Secretariat (JS), the Certifying Authority (CA) and the Audit Authority (AA) of the Programme and respective National Authority (the Ministry of Local Self Government -IPA II beneficiary) concerning the implementation, management and control of the Programme.

The Programme is jointly implemented under the 'share management' mode with responsibility of the Joint Management Body of the Programme – Managing Authority (MA).

In terms of information and publicity and of the Interreg Programme's brand identity, the correct name of the Programme is essential in all official documents, project outputs and advertising materials.

The Programme is financed from the European Budget under the Regulation (EU) No.231/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March, 2014 establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession assistance. (IPA II)

### **3.1. Technical Assistance (TA) Project**

Technical Assistance's objective is to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of the management and implementation of the Interreg IPA CBC Programme "Greece- Republic of North Macedonia 2014-2020. It aims: 1) at the technical, organizational and administrative support of the implementation of the projects and actions of the programme, 2) at the effective monitoring of the implementation of the programme and 3) on diffusion of information about the programme.

It supports a range of activities and tools such as studies, events, communication strategy etc. that are instrumental to achieving the above objective of the project. Technical Assistance ensures a sound basis for the implementation of the Programme, comprising actions related to Programme management, implementation, monitoring, control, evaluation, information and publicity.

In terms of information and publicity, the TA project's strategy aims to raise awareness about the EU co-funded Projects in the Programme, to ensure transparency as far as access to the Funds is concerned and to disseminate its results.

Co-funded Projects in Republic of North Macedonia enable the European Union (EU) to demonstrate in a practical way how the EU affects the everyday life of citizens.

### **3.2. Current affairs within the Programme**

Currently, the National Authority of the Programme (Ministry of Local Self Government in the Republic of North Macedonia) in cooperation with the Joint Management Body of the Programme – Managing Authority (MA) and Joint Secretariat through the shared technical assistance project ensures a sound basis to 40 project of 1 call for project proposals implementing actions on a selected thematic priorities structured into two priority axis, (excluding technical assistance) which reflect the needs and challenges of the Programme area:

- PA 1: Development and Support of Local Economy and
- PA 2: Protection of Environment – Transportation. The project partners are consisted of organizations like academic institutions and grass-root support organizations as well as state partners.

#### **4. Objectives and Results**

The purpose of this section is to clearly and concisely states what the assignment expected to achieve, and who the target audience is.

The overall aim creating an online newsletter is to offer best practices designed to enable the development of a dynamic communication approach to wider audience for both, to acknowledge the role of the EU funding and to promote the objectives and achievements of the actions under the projects partnership agreements in the Programme from both sides of the border.

##### **4.1. Indicative strategic choices and the content of e-newsletter**

The overall content including designed headlines of issued newsletters should have sufficient relevance to the type of readers targeting the focused audience in the Programme (all IPA project partners and stakeholders) and a certain segment of broad audience in the Republic of North Macedonia that brings a unique perspective – integration in the European Union.

The subject line of e- newsletter with one or two lines should be an eye-catching - 35 characters or fewer. It should include the name of the e-newsletter, issue number and a reference to something specific within that issue of the e-newsletter.

To encourage interaction with subscribers beyond their e-mails inbox, the content should invite the readers to send feedback, to share the newsletters with friends or offer personalization and also should ask the reader to act whether it's something as specific as "Sign up for an event" or as general as " Learn more", "Find more articles in/visit the Programme website" etc.

The design should allow to insert examples of common calls to action (CTA).

The electronic almanac, its design and its content must be agreed in details in coordination with Operating Structure and Antenna Officer based in Bitola and with Joint Secretariat based in Thessaloniki that apparently are to be approved by the National Authority and of the Managing Authority of the Programme.

Language to be used for both: electronic newsletters and almanac issued should be English, and Macedonian (the official languages applicable in the Programme) and Albanian (based on the national legislation in force in Republic of North Macedonia).

The both, an electronic newsletters issued by numbers each semester and of electronic almanac at the end of this assignment should be optimized for reading and viewing in an e-mail setting and should be archived by posting them in the website of the Ministry of Local Self Government as a downloadable PDF doc where potential subscribers can preview archived newsletters before choosing to subscribe and also giving to the newsletters/almanac longer shelf life.

#### **5. Scope of assignment**

In the above context, Ministry of Local Self Government (the National Authority) invites candidates/tenderer with the following tasks:

Design and Creating an online newsletter including:

- Drafting a concept for online newsletter (based on NA and JS/MA Design and Content Guidelines – only available in English and/or Macedonian language/s);
- Creating technical solution for a template of a newsletter which is feasible to adaptation (professional layout in Adobe in Design and Photoshop);
- Image processing on NA's image material (colour correction, resizing);
- Cooperate with the NA Programme Officer or his substitute for newsletters content, image selections and processing);
- Work with NA's webpage admin to up-load the online newsletter on the Ministry of Local Self Government's website.

## 6. Expert Required

The purpose of this section is to specify the professional requirements of the individual and/or team who will undertake the assignment.

- *Skills or attributes-based approach*, in which the skills and other qualities of the whole team are specified, but not the exact number of team members or specific composition of the team
- Proven strong practical background in graphic web design;
- Show a clear and professional style of design with an understanding to implement these skills in an official Ministry of Local Self Government (NA) setting;
- Proven experience of graphic production in publishing/printing products with knowledge of printing process (offset and digital) and colour management;
- Good understanding of new and evolving technologies and digital platforms;
- Knowledge of standard software packages (MS Office-MS Access-MS Visio-Adobe Acrobat);
- Knowledge and experience of European funding programmes/projects;
- Fluently in English and Macedonian languages. Ability to work in other languages (Greek, and/or Albanian) would be an advantage.
- A minimum of three (3) project references with EU Programmes/IPA Projects and/or with government agencies and/or bigger business companies from business sector to same or similar scope must be provided. The projects must have occurred within the last 60 months.

For each project and/or reference name, please include the following:

- ✓ Project name;
- ✓ Name and address of client;
- ✓ Client contact person (name, position, e-mail address, current phone number);
- ✓ Period of contract;
- ✓ Description of services provided;
- ✓ Amount of the contract; and
- ✓ Status and comments.

## 7. Application requirement

- Interested tenderer are kindly requested formalize their interest by sending an offer including price without VAT according to the terms in the tender dossier under A. Instruction to Tenderers **b8b\_Itt\_en** sections 4.1. and 4.2.
- Personal statement in which you express your consent with the treatment of your personal(company's) data by the Ministry of Local Self Government

## 8. Deadline for submission the tender

➤ **Friday, January 10, 2020 until 12:00 hrs, LT**

- before the above mentioned deadline to:  
**National Authority**  
Ministry of Local Self-Government  
Department for European Union  
Ms. Hajrie Ahmed, Programme Officer  
"Kiril and Metodij 54, 1000 Skopje  
email: [hajrie.office@gmail.com](mailto:hajrie.office@gmail.com)

**8.1. Schedule :** The following (see in the next page of this TOR) is the schedule for this tender process that is conform the dates indicated in the tender dossier under A. Instruction to Tenderers **b8b\_Itt\_en** section 2.

Tentative Date	Description
<b>11 December, 2019.....</b>	<b>Issue Date of Invitation to Tender</b>
16 December, 2019.....	Information meeting -Deadline for Submission of Questions
3 January 2020 .....	Deadline for the National Authority's Response to Questions
<b>10 January, 2020.....</b>	<b>Tender Submission Deadline (Due Date)</b>
17 January, 2020.....	Selected tenderers invited to present their design
17 January, 2020.....	Recommendation to the Head of National Authority for Award
20 January, 2020.....	Decision communicated to Tenderers
31 January, 2020.....	Award of Contract
<b>31 January, 2020.....</b>	<b>Start Date of the Contract</b>

## 9. Procedure for Submitting Inquiries

Questions or requests for clarification pertaining to this tender should be submitted by email (not by telephone) solely to: [hajrie.office@gmail.com](mailto:hajrie.office@gmail.com)

All questions must be submitted by the deadline indicated in the Schedule set out in Section 7 of the tender dossier under A. Instruction to Tenderers **b8b\_Itt\_en**. The National Authority may determine that a tender is non-responsive if the Tenderer has had contact with any other representative of the National Authority Operating Structure staff.

### 9.1. An information meeting will be held on 16 December, 2019 at 12.00 hrs at Ministry of Local Self Government premises ("the National Authority of the Programme") Sector EU/ Department for ETCs / Unit -INTERREG IPA CBC Programme Greece-Republic of North Macedonia Address: Str. St. Kiril and Metodij 54, 1000 Skopje to answer any questions on the tender dossier which have been forwarded in writing or are raised at the meeting.

Minutes will be taken during the meeting and these will be sent – together with any clarification in response to written requests that are not addressed during the meeting – in writing to all the tenderers at the latest 11 calendar days before the deadline for submitting tenders.

The tenderers must meet all costs of attending this meeting.

## 10. Procedure for Submitting Tenders

Proposals shall be submitted to the National Authority by email to [hajrie.office@gmail.com](mailto:hajrie.office@gmail.com) and by hard and electronic copy (CD or USB), together with any additional materials, to the following address no later than the date and time stated in the Schedule set out in tender dossier under A. Instruction to Tenderers **b8b\_Itt\_en** Section 8

Tenders must be sent to the contracting authority before **10 January, 2020 at 12:00.**

They must include the requested documents

Tenderers are responsible for ensuring receipt of the tender documents at the designated place and by the deadline stated above.



## **11. Evaluation Procedure and Criteria**

The National Authority intends to select the economically most advantageous offer for the National Authority based on the award criteria described in Section 11.7 below in this TOR. The selected Tenderer will not be based solely on quoted pricing. The National Authority reserves the right to contract or to reject any or all Tenders and to waive any informality in Tenders received whenever such rejection or waiver is in the best interest of the National Authority.

### **11.1. Tenderers' Responsiveness**

Bidders are advised that failure to comply with the general instructions and submittal requirements, including required attachments, may result in non-acceptance of a Tender.

### **11.2. Methodology to be evaluated**

The section on methodology describes how the mission might be carried out, including the main methods to be used to collect, analyse, record and report information.

*This section therefore includes a description of:*

- Main phases in preparatory activities, field work (if considered necessary), analysis, report drafting, feedback, editing, report finalization
- How IPA project beneficiaries will be involved and the participation promoted, including specific target groups general audience inclusive of (such as women, the poor and other vulnerable groups such as the disabled)
- The location and duration of mission activities
- The data / information collection tools that will be used, including any planned surveys, questionnaires, field observations, reference to administrative records in Operating Structure/National Authority (Ministry of Local Self Government) and Programme management reports, etc
- How data will be analyzed and recorded and presented in the form of e-report
- How and when specific e- reports will be produced

### **11.3 Reporting requirements**

This section of the TOR should clearly specify the reporting requirements, and might include details of:

- Table of contents for the required report (i.e. for a design or an evaluation report), including annexes
- Anticipated length of the report
- Language to be used
- Format and font to be used
- Computer software programmes to be used
- Submission date(s) for drafts and final e-copies and hard copies
- To whom the report(s) should be submitted
- Number of copies to be produced, and whether in hard copy and/or e-copy
- Presentation of the contents of the interim (final) report(s) when and to whom
- Responsibilities for interim (final) report(s) production and its submissions

### **11.4 Evaluation of the back-up function:**

The tenderer shall be giving a description of the support facilities (back-stopping) that they will provide to the key expert during the implementation of the contract.

The description of the back-up function should include a list of staff, units, capacity of permanent staff regularly intervening as experts on similar projects, provision of expertise in the region/country of origin as well as partner countries, organisational structure, etc. which are supposed to ensure that function, as well as the available quality systems and knowledge capitalisation methods and tools, within the respective members of the consortium

A permanent capacity of staff regularly intervening as experts on similar projects should be considered as an advantage for providing support to key expert on the ground. By contrast, a service contractor which is exclusively employing free-lance expert (i.e. non-permanent) should be considered to have a less robust backstopping capacity.

If the tenderer is providing expertise in its region/country of origin as well as in partner countries it may be considered as an ability to disseminate innovation.

If the tenderer has design, research, laboratory or even innovation function, or whether it collaborates with academic research centre, it may be considered an advantage.

#### **11.5. Evaluation of experts:**

Even if exceptionally key expert is required there is no specific evaluation criterion for the key expert but the assessment is part of the strategy.

The key expert shall generally not be interviewed.

Note that civil servants and other staff of the public administration of the partner country shall only be approved to work as expert if well justified.

The justification should be submitted with the tender and shall include information on the added value the expert will bring, on any potential interference or conflict of interest of the proposed expert in his/her function as expert and his/her present or previous functions working as civil servant as well as proof that the expert is detached or on personal leave.

The summary table below should be understood as a guideline for the evaluator's judgement on an individual line of the evaluation grid.

**Note that only tenders with average score of 75 points or more are considered technically acceptable and qualify for the financial evaluation.**

The assessments of offers made by evaluators initially, will be discussed in the final evaluation meeting(s) after presentation of the newsletter's design and content from the finalist tenderers and each evaluator will make adjustments to the initial assessments after this discussion.

#### **11.6. Work plan and time-schedule**

This section should provide a summary of the anticipated work plan and time schedule, based on an analysis of the newsletters' issues to be created, the proposed method, and the reporting requirements.

The work plan may be presented in more or less details depending on whether or not the contracting authority has a clear idea of how the mission will be carried out, and to what extent it wants tenderers to propose their own methodology, team composition and/or work plan.



### 11.7. Evaluation criteria

All received tenders will be evaluated and scored by the Selection Committee based on the following Evaluation Criteria:		<b>Weighting (Maximum Points)</b>
<b>Award Criteria</b>		
Organisation and methodology	Racionale Strategy Back-up function Involvement of consorsium Timetable of activities	80
Costs of services	Offered cost	20
<b>Total Points</b>		<b>100</b>

### 11.8. Presentation of Proposed Design and content

The finalist tenderer who are invited to make presentations to the Selection Committee, as set out in the Schedule in Section 9.1 of this TOR, must demonstrate the ability to proposed solution demonstrating innovative approach of designs and content structures for the proposed e-newsletters and electronic almanac that will meet the National Authority's Requirements. The selected tenderer should also be prepared to answer any questions necessary to allow the Selection Committee to fully understand how the proposed content and design meets the requirements sets in this TOR.

## 12. Terms of Payment

Tenderers shall base their offer on the terms of payments described in the draft contract and special conditions Article 29 (29.1). docs for the tender dossier.

Month		MKD
1	<b>Maximum pre-financing payment<sup>1</sup></b> Submitted the design and the content of the 1 <sup>st</sup> issue of e- newsletter and approved services by the Contracting Authority. Payment due: by the end of February, 2020	10 % of the contract value
42 Months	<b>Interim payments split in 7 instalment</b> (Submitted e- newsletters # issued in order per each semester and of interim reports are approved by the Contracting Authority) Payment schedules: 1st installment: July,2020 2nd Installment: end of December 2020 3rd installment: June/July 2021 4th Installment: end of December 2021 5th Installment: July 2022 6th Installment: end of December 2022 7th Installment: June/July 2023	10% of the contract value 10% of the contract value 10% of the contract value 10% of the contract value 10% of the contract value 10% of the contract value 10% of the contract value
5 Month	<b>Balance</b> Submitted last issue of e-newsletter and one issue IPA Projects <u>Electronic Almanac</u> and of the Final report and approved all services by the Contracting Authority when there are no outstanding issues with the services agreed upon by both parties. Payment: 22 December 2023, the latest date.	20% of the contract value
	<b>Total</b>	<Total contract value>

- 12.1. By derogation from Article 30 of the general conditions of the Procurement and Grants for European Union external actions – a Practical Guide. (PRAG), **no pre-financing guarantee is required.**

The payment becomes due; the Tenderer (hereafter the Contractor) shall issue an invoice generated across the Public Revenue Office. Such invoices will be paid when the National Authority (hereafter: the Contracting Authority) confirms that the conditions for the payment have been met.

The payment to Tenderer ('the Contractor') of the amounts due shall be made in the national currency MK Denars according to the conversion monthly rate of the EUR to MK Denars applicable in the European Central Bank (ECB) for the concerning month, subject of the date of issue and submissions of the invoice.

The payment will be made in to the bank account notified by the Tenderer ('the Contractor') to the National Authority ('the Contracting Authority'). Payment shall be authorized and realized from the Ministry of Local Self Government ('the Contracting Authority').

<sup>1</sup> The contractor is not obliged to ask for pre-financing.

**13. General Conditions**

- Please provide all requested information as concisely as possible. All tender documents and communication between the parties should be in English and/or Macedonian Language.
- The amounts are to be stated in MKD Denars.
- All false, incomplete or misleading answers or statements will be grounds for disqualification.
- Neither the Authority nor any Tender shall be bound in any way by any bid or proposal. Only the formal service contract signed by the Authority and the selected Tender will be binding on these parties, and in particular as regards financial consequences.

**14. Miscellaneous Jurisdiction and law applicable to this procurement process and to the contract to be concluded**

- This award procedure shall be governed by internal procedure as laid down in National Authority Procurement Procedures as well as an analogous the provisions of Procurement and Grants for European Union external actions – a Practical Guide. Document providing guidance and formats for procurement procedures, including IPA pre-accession funds. The manual is based on the EU Financial Regulation and the Common Rules and Procedures for the Implementation of the Union's instruments for External Action (Council Regulation 236/2014)
- The successful tenderer will be identified in a Decision of the National Authority which shall be notified in writing to all parties having presented a design and proposed content of the first newsletter issue.
- The contract concluded with the successful contractor shall be governed by the laws of the Republic of North Macedonia
- Any disputes arising out of or relating to this Contract which cannot be settled otherwise shall be referred to the exclusive jurisdiction in accordance with the national legislation of the state of the Contracting Authority.
- The auditing of the use and spending of the public procurement funds by National Authority ("the contracting authority") referred to tender rules of procedures in the Programme shall be performed by the designated First Level Control and the Second Level Control in the Republic of North Macedonia.
- Applicable is also the Law on Audit of Instrument for Pre – Accession Assistance (IPA) (Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No. 66/10, 43/14, 154/15 and 27/16).

**15. Confidentiality**

All offers and negotiations will be handled as confidential subject to the National Authority's rules on public access to documents which largely correspond to those of the EU Transparency Regulation No. 1049/2001.

**16. Cost incurred in connection with the tender procedure**

No costs incurred by Tenderers whether in connection with this tender procedure will be refunded by the National Authority. This covers, in particular, costs related to the production, delivery and follow-up of tender documents, or the negotiation process, if any.

**17. General principles**

Ministry of Local Self Government (National Authority) takes in to account the general principles considering of the cross-cutting issues such as gender equity, environmental impact and good governance were appropriately accounted for and managed from the outset of the project.