

Technical Assistance for the Interreg (VI-A) IPA III CBC 'Greece-North Macedonia 2021-2027' Programme  
(CCI: 2021TC16IPCB009)

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR)**

FOR A NON-KEY EXPERT

- Position: **Antenna Officer of the Joint Secretariat** (hereinafter "the JS Antenna Officer")  
for Interreg (VI-A) IPA III CBC 'Greece-North Macedonia 2021-2027' Programme
- Location: JS Antenna Office in Bitola, North Macedonia
- Project: Technical Assistance for the Interreg (VI-A) IPA III CBC 'Greece-North Macedonia  
2021-2027' Programme (hereinafter "TA INTERREG (VI-A) IPA CBC GR-NMK")
- Expected duration: **225 (two hundred twenty-five) working days per year,**  
Jan 2024 - Dec 2029 (6 years)

### **The Interreg (VI-A) IPA III CBC 'Greece-North Macedonia 2021-2027' Programme in a nutshell**

With the Commission Implementing Decision *C(2022) 8646/ 23.11.2022*, the (Interreg VI-A) IPA CBC Greece-North Macedonia for the period 2021-2027 has been approved. To fulfil its Policy Objectives, the Programme will be implemented on four Priority Axes: 1. Transition to a low carbon Economy 2. Strategic focus on Prespas area 3. Support and upgrade of Health and Social Services 4. Improving governance for cooperation. By combining the thematic priorities, the overall strategy statement of the Programme is: **"to enhance territorial cohesion by improving living standards and employment opportunities holding respect to the environment and by using the natural resources for tourism"**. The Programme covers the regions of Greece: Thessaloniki, Kilkis, Pella, Serres from the Region of Central Macedonia and Florina and Kozani from the Region of Western Macedonia North Macedonia: Vardar, Southwest, Southeast, and Pelagonia regions. The programme budget amounts to **33.312.500,00 €** with an **80-20% co-financing rate** between EU contribution and national counterpart.

### **Technical Assistance project (What is technical assistance?)**

Technical assistance (TA) is designed to finance the programme's management and implementation structures. It will employ all programme staff; finance programme processes for administration; monitors, evaluation, and communication activities; audits and controls; activities of the Antenna Officer etc. TA is part of the overall programme budget and is crucial for successful programme implementation.

In the 2014-2020 programming period, TA was an individual priority axis, along with other "content"-related priority axes. In the 2021-2027 period, TA is no longer a separate priority axis, it is part of the financial allocation of each priority (i.e., it is still part of the overall programme budget, but is simply not

an individual priority axis as such). A retention of 5% is applied to the TA amount as it is applied to all interim payments included in the payment applications to the EC in the 2021-2027 period.

### **Programme Communication strategy**

A dynamic Communication Strategy will capture the different stages of Programme implementation. It will be prepared at the beginning of the Programme implementation. The Strategy will cover the entire Programme Period, including the provision of planning, implementation and evaluation. The needs for communication activities are different throughout the phases of the Programme cycle. In the beginning, the Programme shall target applicants while the need to capitalise on results grows towards the end of the Programme period. The captured periods (e.g. annual, bi-annual) will be defined in line with expectations and the specific characteristics of Programme Policy Objectives. The communication strategy will be funded by the technical assistance. Programme Authorities are committed to keeping the communication budget at the same level as the previous Programme 2014-2020. To augment the Communication impact, support from all programme bodies, including the JS Antenna office network, will be employed under the service contract terms.

This service contract and all subsequent ones will provide support to the work of the National Authority's Operating Structure (NA/OS) in North Macedonia and of the Managing Authority in ensuring efficient set-up, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Programme. This will be achieved through the establishment and operation of a Joint Secretariat (JS) whose main office is located in Thessaloniki Greece and its Antenna office in Bitola, North Macedonia.

JS Antenna Officer legal arrangements is a Technical Assistance contract used;

### **TA Project Overall Objectives**

In line with the Terms of Reference for Technical Assistance multiannual budget plan under the Programme for the 2024-2029 allocations, the Antenna Officer shall discharge his/her duties for at least 225 working days per year in a period Jan 2024- Dec 2029 under the direction of the Head of Managing Authority, be responsible for:

- Participation in preparation, organisation and management of Calls for Proposals and all related steps;
- Assist the JS team in monitoring and reporting on the implementation of projects in North Macedonia;
- Assist the National Operating structure of the Programme and Joint Secretariat in monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the programme;
- Provision of information and advice to potential applicants and beneficiaries;
- Fulfilment of any other tasks assigned by the Head of Managing Authority and of JS Coordinator or the Operating structure staff appointed by the Ministry of Local Self Government in North Macedonia (e.g. preparation of different reports, TA project activity plans, monitoring tables, programme publicity materials, organising EC Day campaigns and other events in North Macedonia etc.)
- Provision of translation as required.

Formally, the JS Antenna Officer will report regularly to the JS Coordinator, as well as to Head of CBC and of a Programme Officer appointed by the Ministry of Local Self Government in North Macedonia, through reports and timesheets.

The position includes travelling, mainly throughout the programme area for the following reasons:

- a) support JS team and National Operating structure staff during the monitoring visits of project partners in North Macedonia that will be implemented under the Cooperation Programme;
- b) attending the coordination meetings between the two main management bodies of the programme (MA/JS and NA/OS) and the joint MC meetings, as well as any other meetings/events in the field.

c) participation in the Interreg/ National Contact Points (NCPs) meetings organized by Interact.

Generally, the work of the Antenna Officer shall be coordinated by the National Operating structure of the Programme in Skopje, North Macedonia, and the work plans are linked to annual programme planning, with regular activity reporting and ongoing communication with the Managing Authority and the Technical Secretariat in Thessaloniki, Greece.

The Antenna Officer's role in a range of areas shall include: providing place-specific detail/inputs to the programme; supporting programme generation tasks; building engagement with local/strategic stakeholders; giving the programmes direct territorial 'roots'/representation across the whole programme area; breaking down cultural/linguistic/perceptual barriers; delivering direct/tailored assistance to project partners in North Macedonia; supporting dissemination and communication activities; enhancing synergies; and informing future planning.

In addition, the Antenna Officer position shall include roles in communication, independent organisation of events, visiting IPA projects, consulting on visibility issues and on national public procurement rules.

The antenna shall facilitate the liaison between the MA/JS and the regional/national authorities, strengthening programme ownership

The Antenna shall have a role in providing support to programme Monitoring Committee members in North Macedonia with input and advice and facilitating decision-making at the national level.

Antenna shall provide its representation on programme committees/working groups, e.g. on working groups within JS (monitoring on the sites, evaluation, communication, capitalisation) and observers in Monitoring Committee meetings which allows shared understandings of decisions.

Regarding the IPA projects, the role played by the Antenna Officer shall be as practical as offering a place for project partnerships to meet, moving to more active project partnership building and advisory work.

Having regard to **project generation activities**, the Antenna Officer shall have key roles as the "programme interface", promoting connectivity/accessibility/visibility to local partners as well as providing administrative services on request. Particular functions include the following:

- **Access to information** - Providing an initial point of contact for information on the programme, procedures and processes, giving information as requested
- **Technical advice** - Offering advice on, e.g. national roles, regulations and procedures and how they relate to projects/partners
- **Initial assessments** - Conduct preliminary assessments of beneficiary eligibility – capacity and legal status and carry out specific checks, e.g. anti-fraud checks.
- **Active, mobilisation role** - Identifying and mobilising cross-border and transnational cooperation actions: working with local contacts and networks, 'community building' to actively generate interest and communicating and developing project ideas and using tailored system to mobilise interest in calls which reflects regional specificities.
- **Guiding (not just informing) beneficiaries** when calls are issued and directly promoting calls to potential partners, e.g. boosting project quality, e.g. through capacity to work in national languages and supporting partner search activities and partnership building and partnerships maintaining links with (potential) applicants and beneficiaries on an ongoing basis, not just around calls.
- **Closer engagement** between MA/JS and Antenna Officer in the lead-up to the first call as a means of ensuring consistency shared understandings and knowledge e.g. regular meetings and even provision of,

or role in, some tailored partner training on management of projects / monitoring / programme rules/communication.

### **Supporting project delivery and results**

As the results focus intensified for Interreg programmes, the role of the Antenna Officer in project delivery and results became increasingly important. Expectations are that the Antenna Officer can help in a variety of ways to support smooth project implementation through the provision of ongoing advice and assistance:

- be fundamental for the understanding and application of national regulatory framework and project implementation processes
- supporting project leaders and partners through the life of their project in the definition, implementation and administrative and financial monitoring of their project

### **RESPONSIBILITIES AND TASKS OF THE NON KEY EXPERT**

The division of tasks and responsibilities amongst the single employee of the JS Antenna will depend on the internal organization of work. Naturally, the Antenna Officer will follow activities, tasks and responsibilities in the territory of North Macedonia. Following are the tasks and responsibilities that will be divided amongst the JS / National Operating structure in North Macedonia and Antenna Officer:

#### ***Managing technical assistance multiannual budget plan 2023-2029***

- Managing implementation of activities under the Technical Assistance Service Contracts (TASC)
  - Reports on technical assistance activities performed under TASC – North Macedonia part (interim, annual and final report)
  - Ensuring visibility on outputs produced under TASC
  - Preparing procurement documentation for supplies or services under TASC
  - Prepare requests for costs under TASCs (apart from the salaries of the Antenna officer and those incurred under sub-contracts) to be approved ex-ante by the National Operating Structure
  - Prepare claims for costs under TASCs to be approved ex-ante from the Contracting Authority. (hereof, the Head of National Authority of the Programme)
  - Manage the resulting procurement procedure and contracts, including checks on invoices and related technical documentation.
  - Prepare the incidental expenditures that will be considered by the Contracting Authority for “no objection” and must be directed through the Antenna Office (installation Petty Cash Management), excluding the travel costs of key and non-key experts participating in missions undertaken under this contract.
- Provide information to the National Operating Structure on technical assistance activities performed under the TASC-North Macedonia part, with financial implications, upon request.

#### ***Calls for Proposals***

- Participate in the preparation and realisation of partner search forums;
- Ensure publication of Calls for Proposals in all appropriate media in North Macedonia;
- Organise and participate in workshops for potential applicants in North Macedonia;
- Answer relevant queries on Calls for Proposals from interested applicants by the given deadlines;
- Supporting the IPA beneficiaries during the contracting procedures (budgetary clearing);
- Draft lists of subsidy contracts awarded for publication;
- Record statistical information on each Call for Proposals.

### ***Project monitoring***

- Assist in Drafting an Implementation Package for beneficiaries;
- Co-organize with JS and participate in Implementation Seminars for beneficiaries in North Macedonia;
- Maintain a help line for project partners /IPA project beneficiaries;
- Assist the Operating structure in drafting an indicative monitoring visit schedule in the North Macedonia part;
- Conduct monitoring visits with the JS Project officers in charge, draft monitoring visit reports and follow up in terms of information and visibility actions undertaken by the IPA beneficiaries;
- Keep relevant up-to-date IPA project partners' information in electronic form.

### ***Programme monitoring***

- Provide substantial input in Drafting Annual Implementation Reports (or equivalent documentation for Joint Monitoring Committees if requested) and the Final Implementation report;
- Assist MA/JS and NA/OS in the programme implementation;
- Provide any relevant information to the National Operating Structure in North Macedonia as required.

### ***Publicity, visibility and information***

- Provide the information for the update of the programme website;
- Participate in the organisation of events as indicated in the JS work plans, timetables for Calls for Proposals, and/or Communication Action Plan;
- Participate in the preparation and production of printed materials as indicated in JS work plans and/or Communication Action Plans.

### ***Other***

- Report on any identified irregularities immediately;
- File all documents as appropriate, in physical and electronic form;
- Fulfilment of any other tasks assigned by the Head of Managing Authority and of National Authority, of JS Coordinator, or National Operating Structure of the Programme.

### **Professional requirements**

The JTS / Antenna Project Officer must fulfil the following conditions and have following minimum qualifications and experience:

#### **Qualifications and skills**

- University degree
- Fluency in both written and spoken English and the official languages in North Macedonia
- Good communication, organizational and presentation skills;
- Creativity, dedication and strong intrinsic motivation, accompanied by a positive attitude towards change and new challenges;
- Computer literacy
- Driving license

#### **General professional experience**

- At least 3 years of professional experience following the University degree. Specific professional experience
- At least 2 years of experience in programme/project management.
- Experience related to project communications, preferably of EU-funded grant contracts
- Experience in at least one EU-funded programme in North Macedonia in the last 3 years and knowledge about INTERREG IPA CBC Programmes in the Western Balkan countries would be considered an asset.

(INTERREG VI-A) IPA CBC Programme is co-financed by the European Union and by the National funds of participating countries under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III). It was approved by the European Commission Decision C (2022) 8646 – 23.11.2022.

## Selection process

The chosen candidate will be recruited at the earliest possible date. The selected candidate will be offered a long-term employment contract under North Macedonia law (estimated period till the end of 2029). In the light of the overall living costs in Bitola/North Macedonia, the selected candidate will be offered a competitive remuneration package, determined individually based on the candidate's qualifications, experience as well as the costs generated by compensation for life separated from the family, in an amount determined by law (if applicable). The working environment of the JS Antenna acknowledges performance, teamwork and initiative, accompanied by an open feedback culture and the development of personal development plans.

## Required documents

- cover letter in English of not more than two pages, explaining the motivation and suitability of the candidate for the vacant JS Antenna Officer position;
- curriculum Vitae (CV) in English with the following declaration signed by the candidate:  
"I agree for my personal data, contained in the C.V., to be processed for recruitment purposes, in conformity with the Law on Personal Data Protection („Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia“ No. 42/20 and 294/21). \*This Law is harmonized with the European regulation in the field of personal data protection, specifically: Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) CELEX No. 32016R0679.  
I agree my application may be forwarded to the institutions involved in the implementation of the Programme i.e. the Ministry of Local Self Government in North Macedonia and relevant institutions from Greece involved in the Programme." Please note that applications without the above statement will not be considered for further recruitment stages.
- copies/scans of documents confirming qualifications, in particular documents confirming university degree and working experience (translation of documents not necessary at the application stage).

## Submission

Applications stating the reference number given above, including all required documents, must be submitted in English by email **by 29 December 2023, 24:00 CET**, to the following email addresses of the **National Authority** - Ministry of Local Self-Government, Department for European Union.

E-mails: [vullnet.arifi1@gmail.com](mailto:vullnet.arifi1@gmail.com) ; [vullnet.arifi@mls.gov.mk](mailto:vullnet.arifi@mls.gov.mk)

## Additional information

- Incomplete applications as well as applications without the reference number given above and/or the statement on personal data protection will not be considered.
- Only applications received by the closing date indicated for this vacancy announcement will be taken into account.
- Only selected candidates will be contacted.
- The submitted application documents will not be returned.
- The interviews will be held at the beginning of **January 2024** on the premises of the Ministry of Local Self-Government in Skopje, North Macedonia (to be confirmed).
- The selected candidate will be obligated to provide documents confirming the university degree and professional experience (translated into English).
- For any further questions on the recruitment process and working conditions, please contact Mr. Vullnet Arifi at [vullnet.arifi1@gmail.com](mailto:vullnet.arifi1@gmail.com), [vullnet.arifi@mls.gov.mk](mailto:vullnet.arifi@mls.gov.mk).

- For any further questions or information on the scope of the position, please contact Mr Vullnet Arifi at [vullnet.arifi1@gmail.com](mailto:vullnet.arifi1@gmail.com), [vullnet.arifi@mls.gov.mk](mailto:vullnet.arifi@mls.gov.mk).
- Ministry of Local Self-Government, the Department for European Union SS. Cyril and Methodius,, N. 54, 1000 Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia, as the administrator of personal data, informs that personal information contained in your CV, cover letter and other documents required in this job advertisement will be processed solely to carry out the recruitment process. Data submission is voluntary. You have the right to access your data and correct them.