



CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

for PEER REVIEWERS for

MINI AND MATCHING GRANT SCHEME PROGRAM

under IPA 2014 Direct Grant No. 48-00-33/2016-28



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NOTICE OF CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

for PEER REVIEWERS for

MINI AND MATCHING GRANT SCHEME PROGRAM

under IPA 2014 Direct Grant No. 48-00-33/2016-28

1. Contracting authority

Innovation Fund, Veljka Dugoševića 54b, 11000 Belgrade

2. Reference Number:

14SER01/08/31-06-PEER

3. Registration procedure

The objective of this call for expressions of interest is to set up a list of external experts – Peer reviewers for the review of the project proposals (Applications) received under the Mini and Matching Grants Programs financed through IPA 2014 Direct Grant– “New products and services developed by SMEs through research commercialization”.

The interested candidates are invited to submit filled Submission form (on-line application) in English language to the following email address: peer.reviewers@inovacionifond.rs by 12:00 CET on Thursday, 09.05.2019.

It is strongly recommended to submit filled in Submission well in advance and not to wait until the last minute before the deadline. The Submission forms received after the deadline stipulated above will not be taken into consideration.

4. Information to be provided

Interested candidates should provide the following:

1. Filled in Submission form to be submitted to the following email address:
peer.reviewers@inovacionifond.rs

The Contracting Authority reserves right to request supporting documents that confirm the information provided in the Submission form, such as copies of degrees or diplomas, employers' certificates, references, etc.

5. General description of the procedure

Natural persons are invited to submit an expression of interest in accordance with the rules set out in this notice. The Contracting Authority will set up a list of external experts who meet the criteria stipulated at point 10. The external experts who meet the minimum requirements defined under point 10, will be ranked based on criteria stipulated at point 11, and the final list will be drawn up.

The Contracting Authority will propose to sign the contract with up to 70 best ranked external experts from the final list. The experts will be asked to confirm their exclusivity and availability before signing the contract.

The signed contract entails no obligation on the part of the Contracting Authority concerning the allocation of Applications for review, to the external expert.



6. Use of the list resulting from this notice

The list resulting from this notice will be used exclusively for tasks to be carried out in accordance with requirements stipulated in the Terms of reference, with a maximum threshold of €50.000,00 of total payments (including remuneration).

7. Full description of the fields covered by the call for expressions of interest

The Contracting Authority has published the Call for Proposals for MINI GRANTS Program and MATCHING GRANTS Program on March 28, 2019. The deadline for submission of Applications is July 1, 2019. The Applications that will be received under this call will be classified based on its nature under the following fields:

- i. Energy and energy efficiency
- ii. Life Science
- iii. ICT
- iv. Food Science and Agriculture
- v. New materials and nanotechnologies
- vi. Civil engineering and construction materials
- vii. Machines and mechanical engineering
- viii. Electrical engineering
- ix. Environmental science

8. Place of delivery

As a general rule, the services by the external experts will be rendered online through the IF portal. In an exceptional case the external experts could be invited at the meeting in the IF premises.

9. 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 judgment of a competent authority 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 authority 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 authority 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 judgment 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 authority 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.

Before signing a contract experts shall provide a declaration on their honour stating 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.

10. Selection criteria

Minimum required qualifications of the external expert - Peer Reviewer:

- Education: University degree - Bachelor
- Work experience: At least 5 years of relevant working experience in business development (entrepreneurship, VC/ Private Equity/ angel or other similar types of investing, industry consulting) or R&D (faculties, research organizations, labs or company research branch) or project management (leadership role in conducting development R&D projects within industry or research organizations,) in one or more of the following technical fields: energy and energy efficiency, life sciences, civil engineering and construction materials, machines and mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, information and communication technologies, food science and agriculture, environmental science and new materials and nanotechnologies
- Peer Review Experience: Minimum 5 peer reviews conducted in last three years.

The application process and documentation for the Mini and Matching Grants Programs is conducted in English language, due to international evaluation process. Therefore, the Applications submitted are in English language and the Peer Reviewers are conducting their work in English.

11. Criteria for ranking experts

The candidates will be ranked based on the following criteria

EDUCATION Max. score 15 points:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| - Bachelor's degree | 5 points |
| - Master's degree (MSc) | 10 points |
| - PhD degree | 15 points |

WORK EXPERIENCE Max. score 55 points

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| - 5 years | 30 points |
| - From 6 to 10 years | 40 points |
| - From 11 to 15 years | 50 points |
| - More than 15 years | 55 points |

PEER REVIEW EXPERIENCE in the past three years Max. score 30 points

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| - From 5 to 10 reviews | 20 points |
| - From 11 to 20 reviews | 25 points |
| - More than 20 reviews | 30 points |

12. Conditions of remuneration and reimbursement of experts

The payments for services will be made based on the number of working days spent for the evaluation of Applications allocated. Peer Reviewers shall be remunerated at a fixed price of 200 euros/day worked. One working day equals to two peer reviews completed. Indicative work load per Peer Reviewer is 5 working days in the period of 2 months. The travel and subsistence expenses shall not be reimbursed under the conditions set out in the contract, since the Peer Reviewer is providing its services online.



TERMS OF REFERENCE

for

Peer Reviewer(s) of Mini Grants Program and Matching Grants Programs

Under IPA 2014 Direct Grant No. 48-00-33/2016-28

1. Background

The Republic of Serbia is a candidate for EU membership which currently strives towards developing its economy in line with the goals set forth by the European Union within the priorities of its Europe 2020 strategy. Serbia's Action Document aligns with Europe 2020 strategy priorities for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth by investing in research and innovation. Official document defining national priorities of Serbia for international assistance (NAD) 2014-2017 is in line with Serbia's needs to be fully up to date in its strategic planning and put in place an active pipeline of potential projects for funding which correspond to this agenda.

According to the Global Competitiveness Report (2018) Serbia has limited capacities in almost all aspects of innovation. Serbia overall global competitiveness index rank is 65 out of 140, while the global competitiveness index for innovation ranks Serbia 56 out of 140. Serbia needs to stimulate further creation and growth of innovative enterprises based on knowledge through private sector start-ups or spin-offs by providing financing for market-oriented innovative technologies, products and services with high commercialization potential. Innovative companies have to be supported to gather the knowledge in areas of relevance for their early technology development, identify and quantify their market opportunities, conceptualize commercialization strategies and plan their company's development.

Current situation in the sector

In March 2016, the Government adopted the Strategy for Science and Technology Development: Research for Innovation 2016–2020 (Strategy), specifically calling for reforms in the public RDI sector and reinforcing the importance of enterprise innovation and technology transfer for the economy, including support for the activities carried out by the Innovation Fund. The essential novelty of this Strategy is that it focuses around the “research for innovation”, in the function of economic and overall social development of the country. One of the key objectives of the Strategy is strengthening the link between science, economy and society to encourage innovation.

In the past few years Serbia has made progress in this area by developing and implementing different support programs for innovative companies and researchers. However, in spite of positive developments in the field of entrepreneurial competitiveness, commercially applicable R&D activity and promoting collaboration between the academic research institutions and the private sector, repositioning Serbia's economy towards a knowledge-based profile still requires substantial efforts.

The intention of the Innovation Fund is to contribute to the overall development of innovations through various financial aid instruments, particularly by fostering the establishment of new and strengthening the existing companies, by positioning them to access venture capital markets, and by attracting potential partners for high-tech research and development.

The Innovation Fund is further stimulating public and private investment and unlocking innovative potential in Serbia by enabling well-educated innovators from the academic circles to bring their ideas to the market, create jobs and expand economic activity.



Related programmes and other donor activities

The EU's support for the Innovation Fund has been instrumental in advancing Serbia's innovation financing and promoting better integration between the research and private sectors. The Innovation Fund is thus an important step towards closer links between Serbia's and EU's research communities and innovation ecosystems. It enables the positioning of Serbia as a leader in the region and the establishment of links with the EU and global markets. So far, the EU has allocated around EUR 13 million from the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) funds to the Innovation Fund.

The Innovation Fund was established by the Law on Innovation Activity to provide funding for innovation in enterprises and supporting the implementation of innovation policy. The Law on Innovation Activity explicitly states that securing funds for supporting innovation is the exclusive activity of the IF, something other types of institutions in the ecosystem do not have explicitly defined as their core activity.

Between 2011 and 2016, the Innovation Fund implemented the Innovation Serbia Project with the primary goal of piloting financial programs (Mini Grants Program and Matching Grants Program) supporting early-stage innovation activities and stimulating research and development (R&D) with commercial potential in private enterprises in Serbia. This Project, with a total value of EUR 8.4 million, was funded by the 2011 EU Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), and administered by the World Bank.

In March and June, 2016, respectively, the Innovation Fund launched two new programs: the pilot activity for the promotion of technology transfer from academic to commercial sector – the TTF Program, and a novel financial program for financing innovative projects with potential for commercialization, resulting from cooperation between public R&D organizations and private SMEs – the Collaborative Grant Scheme for R&D Organizations and Private Sector Enterprises (CGS Program). In December 2016, total of EUR 3 million were allocated for 14 projects under the CGS Program.

In 2017, the Innovation Fund continued to implement the Mini Grants Program and Matching Grants Program through the state budget, by implementing the World Bank Competitiveness and Jobs Project.

2. Objective of the assignment

Overall objective

Innovation Fund is currently implementing the Direct Grant financed from IPA 2014 – New products and services developed by SMEs through research commercialization (Action). The specific objective and outcome of this Action is to increase innovation in the Serbian SMEs.

The primary aim of the Action is to provide financial support to third parties. The financial support to third parties will be provided through two grant programs – Mini Grants Program and Matching Grants Program which are designed to provide financial support for boosting commercially oriented R&D in Serbian SMEs.

The Mini Grants program is aimed at private micro and small enterprises newly established in Serbia which are engaged in the development of technological innovations with a clear market need. This Program is designed to support the survival of companies during the critical phase of research and development and to allow the Serbian entrepreneurs to grow effective business capacities through which they will launch their innovations on the market. Projects under this Program are in duration of up to 12 months with financing of up to EUR 80,000, or up to 85% of the total approved project budget with a minimum of 15% of the total approved project budget provided by the enterprise, and can be used for post proof of concept, prototyping stage, IP protection, business plan preparation for mobilization of initial capital activities.



The Matching Grants program is designed for micro, small and medium enterprises established in Serbia looking for more significant financial resources for the commercialization of research and development. The Program has the goal to stimulate further knowledge-based development of innovative enterprises, encourage establishment of partnerships with international partners and to increase the number of technology-based companies. Projects under this Program are in duration of up to 24 months with financing of up to EUR 300,000, or up to 70% of the total approved project budget with a minimum of 30% of the total approved project budget provided by the enterprise (60%/40% for medium enterprises), and can be used for R&D (technology development), new or significantly improved technologies, products and processes.

The Call for Proposals for the Mini and Matching Grants Program has been published on March 28, 2019. The deadline for submission of Applications is July 1, 2019. Total funds allocated for this Call for Proposals is 4,1 million EUR.

Specific objective

The Applications submitted for financing from the Serbian enterprises under the Mini and Matching Grants Programs are evaluated in a transparent and efficient international evaluation system. The decision-making process is headed by a professional and independent Investment Committee (Evaluation Committee) comprised of international experts.

In general, the evaluation of eligible Applications submitted is conducted in 2 phases: Pre-selection of Applications (including the technical review by Peer-Reviewers and the pre-selection decision by the independent Investment Committee), and financing decision which is made by the independent Investment Committee after the live pitch event of the preselected Applicants.

The first phase of review within the pre-selection of Applications includes a technical peer review carried out by international Peer Reviewers.

Peer Reviewers need to provide technical expert evaluation of the Applications submitted for financing in accordance with the Mini and Matching Grants Programs evaluation criteria, depending under which program the Application is being submitted. The Peer Reviewers will leverage their expertise to produce high quality evaluations for each Application they are assigned and which they accept to evaluate, as to ensure valuable insight to be subsequently utilized by the IF's independent Investment Committee in the overall evaluation process.

Expertise needed for this assignment is required to cover areas of industry, science and technology: **energy and energy efficiency, life sciences, civil engineering and construction materials, machines and mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, information and communication technologies, food science and agriculture, environmental science and new materials and nanotechnologies.**

IF Program Managers are responsible for ensuring that each Application receives an objective and fair technical peer review, and that all applicable laws, regulations, and policies are followed. The type of peer review utilized is the blind review, with the name of the reviewer unknown to both the Applicant and the Evaluation Committee.

3. Scope of Work

The general functions and responsibilities of the Peer Reviewers are:

- Evaluating detailed Applications based on the evaluation criteria listed in the Mini Grant Program Manual and Matching Grant Program Manual in line with the Review Guidelines for the respective program;
- Submitting the comments and scores for the Application in the Peer Review Evaluation Form via IF's online Portal (except where and if requested otherwise)



Name of the Peer Reviewers is confidential, and he/she must declare any conflict of interest prior to undertaking the evaluation of a particular Application.

The Peer Reviewers will be provided with the credentials for using the IF Portal for the purpose of evaluation of Applications.

The role and responsibilities of the Peer Reviewers are as follows:

- Sign the Declaration of impartiality and confidentiality as provided by the IF;
- Receive access to the Applications for review through the IF Portal;
- Examine the Review Guidelines and instructions;
- Within two days of receiving access to the Applications to review, examine each assigned Application to verify that the Application match the reviewers' area of expertise and inform the IF Program Managers of any concerns;
- Review all Applications assigned to them for conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts of interest in accordance with the IF Confidentiality and Prevention of Conflict of Interest Policy and inform the IF Program Managers if any issues exist;
- Within 3 weeks of receiving access to Applications, prepare a written evaluation (using the online Peer Review Evaluation Form on the IF Portal) for each Application assigned, based on the defined evaluation criteria and judgment of merit. The peer review must give concise, pertinent and well justified comments for each criteria of the evaluation grid, in a wording that may be given directly to the Applicant, if requested. Strong and weak points must be reflected. In particular, comments should not include only the summary of the Application, but should provide short critical analysis in line with (but not limited to) the respective questions of the evaluation grid;
- Assign a numerical score (from 1 to 4, with 1 being the poorest and 4 being the best) to each evaluation criterion;
- Complete and submit the Peer Review Evaluation Form for each Application assigned to the IF online application portal.

4. Experience and Qualifications

Minimum required qualifications of the Peer Reviewer:

- Education: University degree - Bachelor
- Work experience: At least 5 years of relevant working experience in business development (entrepreneurship, VC/ Private Equity/ angel or other similar types of investing, industry consulting) or R&D (faculties, research organizations, labs or company research branch) or project management (leadership role in conducting development R&D projects within industry or research organizations,) in one or more of the following technical fields: energy and energy efficiency, life sciences, civil engineering and construction materials, machines and mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, information and communication technologies, food science and agriculture, environmental science and new materials and nanotechnologies
- Peer review experience: Minimum 5 peer reviews conducted in last three years

The application process and documentation for the Mini and Matching Grants Programs is conducted in English language, due to international evaluation process. Therefore, the Applications submitted are in English language and the Peer Reviewers are conducting their work in English.



5. Timing and Duration

It is estimated subject assignment is expected to start in July 2019, with indicative work load per Peer Reviewer is 5 working days in the period of 2 months. Generally, the Peer Reviewers are expected to provide their services upon the timely notification by the IF team.

The Peer Reviewers' work will be done remotely through the IF online portal.

Time effort per one working day is 2 reviews.

6. Reporting Obligations

The Peer Reviewer shall report directly to the IF Program Manager in the following manner:

- Peer Reviewer will provide the results of the evaluation of the Applications along with comprehensive comments and relevant scores, in written form via the IF online Portal, within 21 days from receiving Application for evaluation - Filled Peer Review Evaluation Form.
- Filled Peer Review Evaluation Form by each Peer Reviewer is saved on the IF online Portal.

7. Input by the Innovation Fund

The IF will provide necessary documentation and templates, as well as access to the Applications to be reviewed. The IF will also provide full technical support regarding the Innovation Fund's online Portal to the Peer Reviewer, in order to facilitate efficient and satisfactory conditions for accessing the review materials and producing quality reviews.

Review Guidelines will be provided to Peer Reviewers. The Review Guidelines will serve as guidance on how to conduct the review and how to provide adequate feedback for the Applications. The Mini and Matching Grant Program Grant Manual will be also provided to the Peer Reviewers.

8. Terms of Payment

The payments for services will be made based on the number of working days spent for the evaluation of Applications allocated. One working day equals to two peer reviews completed. The Peer Reviewer needs to submit the Invoice for services conducted. The IF will administer the Contract with the Peer Reviewer. The IF will provide the template of invoice to the Peer Reviewer.

9. Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

The Peer Reviewer undertakes to comply with the IF Confidentiality Policy and Prevention of Conflict of Interest Policy and to maintain confidentiality on all information that is not in the public domain and shall not be involved in another assignment that represents a conflict of interest to the prevailing assignment.