

EMEA is looking for an Expenditure Verifier for the CREAT4MED project

Programme: EuropeAid – External Actions of the European Union

Project title: Creative Entrepreneurs ACTing FOR the future MEDiterranean

Project Acronym: CREAT4MED

Project contract number: ENI/2019/412-505

Beneficiary: Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association (EMEA)

Estimated budget: 10.000 EUR (+ VAT)

Project contract duration: 01.03.2020 – 29.02.2024

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

CREACT4MED is a four-year project co-funded by the European Union and implemented by a Consortium of five organisations led by EMEA. CREAT4MED aims at supporting micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and start-ups led by young people and/or women, active in the fields of cultural and creative industries (CCI) in countries of the Southern Neighborhood of the European Union. In doing so, CREAT4MED will launch a wide range of support actions including training, coaching, mentoring and sub-granting to foster youth and women entrepreneurship in the region.

For the implementation of the project, EMEA is receiving financial support (grant) from the European Union. As such, EMEA is required to submit, on behalf of the whole Consortium, financial reports on the project expenses incurred in relation to the implementation of the project which need to comply with the conditions stipulated in that contract and which can be reconciled with its accounting system. EMEA, as a beneficiary and coordinator of the project, must provide adequate and sufficient financial and non-financial information in support of the financial report.

As a beneficiary and coordinator of the project, EMEA accepts to give full access to its personnel, accounting system, underlying documentation and accounts to the Expenditure Verifier in order to carry out the procedures contemplated in this commitment. Moreover, EMEA commits to collect and review supporting evidence from the Consortium members in order to ensure compliance and check eligibility of the expenditure claimed by Consortium members.

DUTIES OF THE EXPENDITURE VERIFIER:

The Expenditure Verifier must perform formal checks on partner expenditures declared during the project implementation each time before submitting a Payment claim to the European Commission. The Expenditure Verifier ensures to EMEA and, most importantly, to the project itself, that costs claimed for reimbursement by the European Union are justified and that their payment is requested by Consortium members in accordance with the legal and financial provisions of the Grant Contract, practical guide on contract procedures for European Union external action (PRAG) and relevant EU and national provisions. The Audit also gives to the



"beneficiaries" (a term that refers to both the Coordinator and Consortium members), the guarantee that project accounts comply with the above-mentioned obligations and with legal and financial obligations of each structure contributing to the co-financing of the operation, in accordance with its legal situation and the valid legislation in the concerned State.

The Expenditure Verifier is responsible for verifying that all activities and expenditures have been incurred in compliance with Programme, national and EU rules on eligibility of expenditure.

The Expenditure Verifier must verify that:

- a) Expenditure is in line with EU and national eligibility rules and complies with conditions for support of the project and payment as outlined in the Grant Contract;
- b) Expenditure was actually paid with the exception of costs related to depreciations and « simplified cost options »;
- c) Expenditure was incurred and paid (with the exceptions above under point b) within the eligible time period of the project and was not previously reported;
- d) Payment of staff costs is proven on the basis of payslips or documents of equivalent probative value;
- e) Expenditure based on « simplified cost options » (if any) is correctly calculated and the calculation method used is appropriate;
- f) Expenditure reimbursed on the basis of eligible costs actually incurred is either properly recorded in a separate accounting system or has an adequate accounting code allocated. The expenditures reported under SCO are recorded in the programme monitoring tool. The necessary audit trail exists and is available for inspection;
- g) Expenditure in currency other than Euro was converted using the correct exchange rate;
- h) Relevant EU and national public procurement rules were observed;
- i) EU publicity rules were observed;
- j) Co-financed products, services and works were actually delivered;
- k) Expenditure is related to activities in line with the consolidated application form and the Grant Contract.
- l) The beneficiaries received external national public counterparts corresponding to validated expenditures.

Competences required:

The Expenditure Verifier should have prior experience of control of projects co-financed by the EU.

The Expenditure Verifier is required to be independent from the controlled structure and qualified to carry out the control of project's expenditure.



The Expenditure Verifier needs to have a proven experience and track record showing that he/she is capable of performing the task of controlling project expenditure co-financed under EU programmes which goes beyond classical checks on accounts: it also involves a judgment on the compliance with EU and national legislation and financial rules. The Expenditure Verifier is therefore expected to have a profound knowledge of controlling project expenditure under EU regulations as well as a good knowledge of English or French (considering that all Programme documents and reports are in one of the two Programme languages). Arabic language is desirable.

TIMEFRAME FOR THE FLC VERIFICATIONS:

The Audit should be performed at the end of each reporting period before the submission of the financial report to the European Commission by the Coordinator (EMEA). A calendar to be respected for the submission of the audit reports is included at the end of the call.

In practice:

1. EMEA will compile the financial report in collaboration with the Consortium members by the end of February every year (i.e. 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024) using the official reporting template, and collecting evidence (supporting documents) from the Consortium as a first step.
2. The Expenditure Verifier must be available at the end of each reporting period in order to perform the control without delay.
3. The Expenditure Verifier must have the availability to ensure smooth exchanges with EMEA in order to speed up the control.
4. At the beginning of the reporting period, EMEA will ask the Expenditure Verifier to execute as soon as possible the control on project expenditures also including a timeframe for exchanges and clarifications.
5. The First Level Control declaration is issued and signed by the controller and sent to EMEA without delay.

Calendar to be respected by the Expenditure Verifier:

1. Submission of the first Expenditure Verification report within two months after the end date of the verified period on 28.02.2021.
2. Submission of the second Expenditure Verification report within two months after the end date of the controlled period on 28.02.2022.
3. Submission of the third Expenditure Verification report within two months after the end date of the controlled period on 28.02.2023
4. Submission of the fourth and final Expenditure Verification report within three months after the end date of the controlled period on 29.02.2024.

AWARD CRITERIA:

Weighting: 30% - Criterion: Financial aspects – best value for money.



Weighting: 70% - Criterion: Proven experience with auditing tasks in EU-funded projects. Proven experience with performing Expenditure Verification for EU External Actions is an asset.

OTHER CONDITIONS:

The selected Expenditure Verifier shall meet at least one of the following conditions:

- The Expenditure Verifier is a member of a national accounting or auditing body or institution which in turn is a member of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC).
- The Expenditure Verifier is a member of a national accounting or auditing body or institution. Although this organisation is not member of the IFAC, the Expenditure Verifier commits to undertake this expenditure verification in accordance with the IFAC standards and ethics set out in the Terms of Reference (ToR).
- The Expenditure Verifier is registered as a statutory auditor in the public register of a public oversight body in an EU member state in accordance with the principles of public oversight set out in Directive 2006/43/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (this applies to auditors and audit firms based in an EU member state) .
- The Expenditure Verifier is registered as a statutory auditor in the public register of a public oversight body in a third country and this register is subject to principles of public oversight as set out in the legislation of the country concerned (this applies to auditors and audit firms based in a third country).

The estimated value of the contract for carrying out the Expenditure Verification for the above-specified four reporting periods is 10.000 EUR (excl. VAT). For the selection of the Expenditure Verifier, the best value for money principle will prevail even if the offer requests a different amount from the indicative budget specified in the present call.

SELECTION PROCEDURE:

Audit firms are requested to submit an offer following the above specifications and the attached conditions by email to info@euromed-economists.org by **28 January 2021 at 17:00 CET** at the latest.

The successful applicant will be notified in writing within one week after the above-specified deadline.

[Download the terms of reference – in English only](#)

