



EUROPEAN UNION

Delegation to Albania
Head of Cooperation

BASHKIMI EVROPIAN

Delegacioni në Shqipëri
Shefi për Bashkëpunimin Financiar

Tirana,
Ares (2024)

Subject: Call for expression of interest / Selection procedure in view of starting possible negotiation for a Contribution Agreement under Annual Action Programme for Albania for year 2024, Window 3 - Green Agenda and Sustainable Connectivity, Thematic Priority 1 - Environment and climate change; Action 'EU for Forests', outputs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7

Publication Reference: IPA III/2024/PC-37795

1. Legal Basis

Under the framework of Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) III, the European Commission Annual Action Programme for Albania 2024, Window 3 - Green Agenda and Sustainable Connectivity, Thematic Priority 1 focuses on Environment and climate change.

This Action Document is in line with the IPA III Specific Objective (e) *to reinforce environmental protection, to increase resilience to climate change, to accelerate the shift towards a low-carbon economy, to develop the digital economy and society and to strengthen sustainable connectivity in all its dimensions.*

2. Objective and mode of implementation

The Action aims at improving the forest sector in Albania by supporting the forest management and administration in Albania by improving the relevant legislation and the administrative capacity of the responsible institutions, implementing reforestation measures, thus improving climate adaptation and mitigation, improving biodiversity protection, and generating multiple socio-ecological benefits for the Country.

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is the improvement of the quality of the environmental protection and contribution to actions and policies against climate change to accelerate the shift towards a low-carbon economy. In pursue of this overall objective, the main expected specific objectives (outcomes) of the proposed Action are: (i) Improvement of the administrative capacities and alignment of the legal framework of the forestry sector in Albania with the EU *acquis*; and (ii) Increase the forest coverage and the carbon sink capacities for Albania.

Output 1 will significantly improve the forestry *acquis* and other legislation needed to ensure Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) in Albania. Furthermore, the improved regulatory framework shall be complemented with capacity building activities related to the assessment of existing capacities for forestry management, preparation of training plan with specific modules and training equipment that should contribute to improving the

administrative capacity and capabilities for sustainable forest management and data collection and reporting (**Output 2**).

Output 3 will support the preparation of the protocol for the monitoring and reporting of forest data, the accounting of emissions and removal in the forestry sector and to the reporting from municipalities and other institutions. These measures will improve the accounting of emissions and removals from the forests in line with the LULUCF and related *acquis*.

Output 4 will support the preparation of forestry management plans for 10 municipalities including the reforestation plans and the priority measures.

Output 5 will support the implementation of the specific priority measures, purchase equipment related to SFM, the establishment of at least one central nursing facility managed by the National Forestry Agency, and forestation/reforestation of priority forest areas, and improve management practices and technical capacity for SFM.

Output 6 will provide financial support to the municipalities through Call for Proposals for financing forestation related activities and fight against forest fires, and implement a set of sustainable forest management measures.

Output 7 will support activities related to public awareness.

The **Outputs 1,2,3,4,5,6, and 7**, are to be implemented under indirect management through a **Contribution Agreement** with an entrusted EU MS Agency or body (as identified by Article 62, lit (c) of the Financial Regulation), which has successfully passed a pillar assessment on the existence and effectiveness of the entity's systems, controls, rules and procedures.

The indicative maximum amount allocated for this component is **EUR 12 690 000**.

Output 1,2,3,4 and 7 EUR 2,590,000.00

Output 5 and 6 EUR 10,100,000.00

The project shall be referred to as "*EU for Forests*" No other name or brand will be used.

The purpose of this document is to launch a **call for expression of interest** to potential delegated implementing entities. This is an informal procedure aiming at the pre-selection of one or more adequate entities. The Contracting Authority will invite the shortlisted entity(ies) to official negotiations.

3. **Suspensive Clause**

Please note that the signing and starting of the contract for EU for Forests is subject to the condition of:

- the prior conclusion of a financing agreement between the European Commission and the Government of Albania implementing the financing decision.

If the precedent condition is not met, the EU Delegation to Albania as the contracting authority will either abandon the call or cancel the award procedure without the interested entities being entitled to claim any compensation.

4. Selection criteria and award procedure

As per Article 154 Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 from 18/07/2018, the selection of the entity for implementation of EU funds shall be transparent, justified by the nature of the action and shall not give rise to conflict of interests. In addition, except for partner/beneficiary countries, the selection shall also take due account of their operational and financial capacity.

The EU Delegation to Albania (the Contracting Authority) invites pillar assessed entities to **submit an expression of interest**.

Interested entities are allowed to form partnerships with other pillar-assessed entities.

The interested entities should demonstrate the following key elements, which are the selection criteria defined in the action document:

1. **Pillar assessment:** The entity has passed successfully the pillar assessment under the currently applicable EU Financial Regulations (providing the official document indicating for which pillars the entity passed the assessment). In particular, the entity or the partnership must have been pillar assessed for the grant pillar.

2. **Sector experience:** The entity has documented experience in the sector, with particular reference to the regulatory framework and in sustainable forestry management schemes

3. **Mandate** of the entrusted entity covering the nature of the action.

4. **Technical and operational capacity:** The entity and/or its proposed partners have documented their ability to implement similar projects in terms of technical, logistical and managerial capacity for the implementation of similar projects in the forestry field, including at country and/or local level, and/or it can ensure partnership with specialised bodies in its own country or from other EU MSs, in the above field.

5. **Cooperation with other entities/donors:** The entity should demonstrate the impact, results and leverage effect of cooperation with other entities or donors, also covering effectiveness of the delegation of tasks.

6. **Cost effectiveness:** The entity should indicate how it can ensure cost effectiveness in the implementation of the project.

7. The entity should indicate, if it is willing to provide **co-financing** (and specify percentage or amount) to direct eligible costs of the action with a contribution dedicated to grants. While not mandatory, co-financing is encouraged and will be considered as an advantage during the selection process.

8. The entity should demonstrate its experience in managing sub-grant schemes, preferably in programmes/projects relevant to the forestry sector

The entity must provide a **brief description of the approach it intends to apply**, if selected (maximum 20 000 characters including spaces in English), which will form a basis for the selection after satisfying the above criteria.

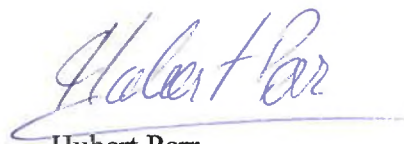
The expression of interest containing the relevant required information responding to the above selection criteria and the brief description of the approach, should be sent no later than **23/10/2024** by e-mail to DELEGATION-ALBANIA-TENDERS@ec.europa.eu, with

copy to Mr Edvin Pacara (Edvin.Pacara@eeas.europa.eu) and Mr Andrea Ferrero (Andrea.Ferrero@eeas.europa.eu).

Any questions may be directed by e-mail to Edvin.Pacara@eeas.europa.eu by 7/10/2024.

Thank you for your interest and support to this important project, and looking forward to receive your reply.

Yours sincerely,



Hubert Perr

Encl.: Annex IV - IPA 2024 Action Document – EU for Forests