

Request for Expressions of Interest (EoI)
for Evaluators
of the applications for the
Call for Awarding Grants for Innovative Projects

1. Background

The Government of Montenegro adopted the **Programme for Awarding Grants for Innovative projects 2018-2020** (hereinafter: Programme) at the beginning of July, 2018, which defines the general and specific goals of the Programme, the procedure for awarding grants and the process of grant implementation.

Based on this Programme, the Ministry of Science of Montenegro (hereinafter: the Ministry) published the **Call for Awarding Grants for Innovative Projects** (hereinafter: Call) on July 17th, 2018, with total amount of EUR 1,000,000 for the period 2018-2020. The Ministry shall award a grant in the amount up to EUR 100,000 per project approved.

Objectives of the Call are the following:

- Strengthening the competitiveness of Montenegrin companies by co-financing the development of innovative market-oriented products, services and technologies that have large potential for commercialization and market application;
- Supporting the transfer of innovative ideas from scientific research institutions to the market, through cooperation with partners from the economy or through opening new companies / spin-off companies in Montenegro; and
- Strengthening human resources and creating new jobs.

Specific objectives are the following:

- Strengthening the innovative potential of SMEs and their recognisability in the innovation system;
- Stimulating technological innovations and encouraging commercialization, i.e. the application of innovative ideas and technologies on the market;
- Encouraging the employment of highly qualified personnel in the research and innovation sector;
- Increasing the investment of private sector into Research and Development;
- Raising the level of commercial readiness through the funding of additional development of inventions / innovations;
- Addressing the gap in funding between research and commercialization;
- Increasing the number of patents that have the potential to be applied in practice;
- Stimulating cooperation with the Montenegrin scientific and economic Diaspora in order to create the conditions for their return, i.e. strengthening their connection and reintegration into the local community; and

- Encouraging the transfer of knowledge and technology in cooperation with domestic and international partners from the scientific-research and economic sector.

The text of the Call and the Programme are available on the following website: <http://www.mna.gov.me/en/news/189074/The-Ministry-of-Science-publishes-a-Call-for-awarding-grants-for-innovative-projects.html>

2. Conditions for the Request for EoI

As stated in the Programme, all applications shall undergo a clearly stipulated evaluation process.

The evaluation process begins with **administrative check of the project applications**. After the administrative verification, all project applications that meet the set requirements shall be submitted for **evaluation, carried out by international experts and consisting of two phases**.

First phase of the evaluation process is carried out by International Peer Reviewers, whose task is to carry out a distance evaluation of a particular application that is closely related to their field of expertise and to submit an individual evaluation report, using a form prepared and submitted by the Ministry.

The individual evaluator, International Peer Reviewer, is expected to provide technical assistance to the Ministry by individual remote scientific review and evaluation of the grant application submitted for financing that meets eligibility and administrative compliance criteria in accordance with the Programme evaluation criteria.

The individual evaluator should evaluate projects according to 4 categories:

1. Quality and originality of innovative idea / innovation (30 points maximum);
2. Quality of the proposed activity plan and the quality of the project budget (30 points maximum);
3. Capacity of the Applicant, partners and members of the project team (30 points maximum); and
4. Potential for commercialization (10 points maximum).

Required qualification and criteria for selection of the evaluator will be:

- ✓ Advanced degree in science or engineering;
- ✓ At least 10 years of work experience in the field of applied and development research/innovation;
- ✓ Relevant peer review references;
- ✓ Fluency in English;
- ✓ Proven experience in R&D/innovation project management, implementation and evaluation in the following fields: Energy; Information and Communication Technologies; Medicine and Health; Sustainable Development and Tourism; Agriculture and Food; and New Materials, Products and Services; and
- ✓ Excellence in academic and/or applied and developmental R&D and innovation.

Applications that pass the threshold of 70/100 or more points on average shall qualify for the second phase of the evaluation.

The **second phase of the evaluation process** is carried out by the Final Evaluation Commission (FEC) consisting of three unbiased International Project Implementation Experts, appointed by the

Ministry, of which at least one member shall be in charge of the innovative and commercial aspect of the project.

The individual evaluator, International Project Implementation Expert, is expected to provide technical assistance to the Ministry by participating at the Final Evaluation Committee (FEC), i.e. second evaluation stage.

The general functions and responsibilities of the evaluator will be:

- Review the original proposals, relying also on the first phase evaluation reports;
- Prepare summaries of the first and second stage evaluation reports;
- Conduct a direct interview with the applicants (obligatory);
- Propose a final report with scores; and
- Negotiate within the panel about the final decision on the proposal.

The evaluator will evaluate projects according to 3 categories:

1. Innovation and competitiveness (30 points maximum);
2. Quality of the project plan: technical characteristics, project management as well as the financial structure of the proposed budget (30 points maximum); and
3. Commercialization of results, potential for market application and sustainability (40 points maximum).

Required qualification and criteria for selection of the evaluator will be:

- ✓ Advanced degree in science, preferably economy;
- ✓ At least 10 years of work experience in the field of applied and development research/innovation or active experience as investor in innovative projects;
- ✓ Relevant peer review references;
- ✓ Proven experience in R&D/innovation project management, implementation and evaluation from the innovation, competitiveness, market trends and sustainability point of view; and
- ✓ Fluency in English.

The FEC meeting will be organized in Montenegro in the presence of at least one representative of the Ministry.

FEC should reach a consensus for the final ranking of the projects and make recommendations to the Ministry for the selection of the proposals for innovative projects for financing. Consequently, FEC will provide the Ministry with the Final rank list, using a form prepared and submitted by the Ministry.

Note: Evaluator can be of any nationality. Names of the evaluators for both evaluation phases are confidential.

3. Engagement of the evaluators

The Ministry appoints evaluators offering them a contract that defines the rights, obligations, terms and conditions, and they are remunerated for their services.

Terms of obligation of impartiality (i.e. no conflict of interest) are part of the contract of the evaluator with the Ministry.

Part of the evaluator's contract with the Ministry is also the obligation of confidentiality.

4. Submission of the EoI

Interested candidates must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the evaluation services (CV, list of references of similar assignments performed, experience in similar conditions, investment portfolio etc.).

Interested candidates must indicate evaluation phase they are interested in. Also, for the candidates interested for the first evaluation phase, it is important to indicate the field of expertise according to the thematic priorities stated in the Call.

Individual evaluators may be offered by companies or other organizations, but the qualifications of the evaluator will be the basis of selection.

Expressions of Interest must be delivered **until September 24th, 2018** on the following e-mail address: ivan.tomovic@mna.gov.me

Interested candidates may obtain further information at the same e-mail address.

Evaluations are expected to be carried out during October/November 2018, when the availability of evaluators is required.