

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR REGIONAL AND URBAN POLICY

Call for Expression of Interest

The European Commission is creating an advisory tool to **provide on-demand tailored advisory services to outermost regions' authorities, organisations and economic operators** (including in particular SMEs).

As envisaged in the Commission 2022 Communication "Putting people first, securing sustainable and inclusive growth, unlocking the potential of the EU's Outermost regions" ⁽¹⁾, this advisory tool will help individual outermost regions (OR) to shape regional development plans; reform and investment agendas; enable synergies between opportunities under EU funds and programmes; and improve their administrative capacity.

The outermost regions – whose stakeholders can benefit from these services - are Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Réunion, Martinique, Mayotte and Saint-Martin from France, the Azores and Madeira from Portugal and the Canary Islands from Spain.

The European Commission (Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy) is inviting **outermost regions' stakeholders** to express interest in these advisory services, to receive support tailored to their specific needs on how to seek to benefit from EU tools, funds and programmes, as well as national and international ones.

You can express interest in receiving advisory services in any of the categories listed in the catalogue of services. These services offered by the Commission – at no cost – will be provided by consultants, managed by the company Ecorys. The consultants will provide the necessary tailor-made support adapted to the needs and identified objectives of each beneficiary. Please note that the services (to be) provided will be in the form of dedicated expertise and will not entail any financial support. The European Commission is responsible for selecting the actions that will receive advisory service. Applications can be submitted on a rolling basis until 12 January 2024. The services provided by the experts will be delivered from September 2023 until September 2024.

You may ask for advisory services related to any **policy or topic related to the most important priorities for your region**. These services will **not** include the preparation, drafting, nor submission of proposals for funding under competitive calls of EU programmes. Moreover, the proposed services will not be rendered in case they are already covered by other existing EU assistance or advisory tools.

Eligibility Criteria

Who can apply?

Any stakeholder that complies with the following criteria is eligible to demand the services of the advisory tool:

- Applications are submitted by **public and/or private organisations**, not individuals. Organisations can submit an individual application (one organisation) or apply as a group of organisations in the same outermost region or a group of outermost regions. A wide range of stakeholders can be eligible, which can include – but are not limited to:
 - Regional public authorities;
 - Organisations that are either responsible for or involved in the funding and/or implementation of a policy or programme/fund of a region;

⁽¹⁾ Add footnote

- Regional business organisations, universities, research centres, etc.;
- Economic operators, such as SMEs and/or groups of SMEs.
- In case of joint application (of two or more organisations), there should be a **clear** indication of a **coordinator**.
- The entity is **legally based** and **located in one of the European Union Outermost Regions**.

What are the requirements for applying?

The following requirements must be met when applying:

- The services requested are **within the scope of** the ones provided by **the advisory tool and are not covered by other existing EU assistance/advisory tools**.
- The request **responds to** one or more of the region’s **identified needs or priorities, as defined by the regional development strategies/plans**.
- There is proof of commitment with a letter on **Declaration of Honour, Letter of no conflict of interest and Statement of Transparency**.

Selection Criteria

If an application is eligible, it will be assessed according to the following selection criteria:

- **Relevance of the action objectives** with regard to the Call for expression of interest, the catalogue of services, and the specific problems or needs from the entity/ies
- **Alignment** with OR’s priorities, regional development strategies or action plans
- **Description** of the **advisory service** requested in a clear and structured manner
- Expected **impact of the action**

Table 1: Selection criteria, weight, and scoring

Criteria	Weight	Scoring
Relevance with regard to the Call for expression of interest, to the catalogue of services and the specific needs on the entity/ies.	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The request for service does not match the Call for expression of interest, is not included in the catalogue of services, and is not related to the specific needs on the entity/ies: 0 % ● The service matches the Call for expression of interest, is included in the catalogue of services service, but not to the specific needs on the entity/ies: 50 % ● The service is included in the catalogue of services, match the Call for expression of interest, and it is well related to the needs of the entity: 100%

ADVISORY TOOL FOR THE EU OUTERMOST REGIONS

Alignment with OR's priorities, regional development strategies or action plans	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No alignment: 0%• Slightly aligned with one OR priority, strategy, and action plan: 0% – 50%• Clearly aligned with OR's priorities, strategies, and action plans: 50% – 100%
Description of the advisory service requested in a clear and structured manner	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The problem/need is not well described: 0% - 25%• The problem/need is clearly defined (50% overall score): 25% – 100% and/or well structured (50% overall score): 25% – 100%
Expected impact	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is a clear target identified: 33%• There is a clear expected impact on the target: 33%• The action related to the submission for advice is expected to have a positive impact on the local/regional communities by fostering its development: 33%

Time frame of the evaluation and approval

All applications shall be submitted **until 12 January 2024 23.59 CET**. The screening, evaluation and selection of requests will take place on a rolling basis. Therefore, we highly encourage you to submit your application at early stage. The services provided by the experts will be delivered from September 2023 until September 2024, with a total duration of experts' days between 15 and 45 days for the duration of the service, distributed along the implementation period of the services.

With the support of the consultants, combined with the expertise of designated contact points in the regional authorities, the Commission services take the final decision on which requests will receive advisory services.

Conditions of submission

Entities expressing their interest to receive any of the services in the catalogue should submit the **application form** for this call of expression in French, Portuguese, Spanish or English via email to advisory-tool-eu-outermost-regions@ecorys.com.

Contact

In case of any questions, please contact advisory-tool-eu-outermost-regions@ecorys.com