



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
REGIONAL AND URBAN POLICY

**CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR PUBLIC AUTHORITIES
TO PILOT INTEGRITY PACTS
IN PROJECTS CO-FUNDED BY THE EU STRUCTURAL AND COHESION FUNDS**

~~Deadline: 25 June 2015~~

Deadline: 9 July 2015, 23:00h Brussels time

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1.1 During the period 2014-2020, the EU will invest €325 billion in Europe's regions through the European Structural and Investment Funds, which aim to promote economic growth, job creation, competitiveness and reduce development disparities. It is crucial to make sure this money is spent properly in order to reap the full benefits of cohesion policy. It is against this background that the new programming period has witnessed a stronger focus on results and increased emphasis on zero tolerance to fraud.
- 1.2 The Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy of the European Commission (hereinafter DG REGIO) is committed to look for and test new ways of safeguarding EU funds from the risks of mismanagement, fraud and corruption and increasing transparency in how the funds are used. As one of the initiatives in this field, DG REGIO has launched a **pilot project "Integrity Pacts - Civil Control Mechanism for Safeguarding EU Funds"**. In this project, DG REGIO seeks to pilot Integrity Pacts in a number of projects co-financed by the EU Structural and Cohesion Funds in the Member States.
- 1.3 **An Integrity Pact** is a tool developed by Transparency International to help governments, businesses and civil society fighting corruption in public contracting. It is based on an agreement between a contracting authority and economic operators bidding for public contracts that they will abstain from corrupt practices and will conduct a transparent procurement process. To ensure accountability and legitimacy, an Integrity Pact includes a monitoring system led by a civil society organisation which monitors that all parties comply with their commitments.

An Integrity Pact has multiple objectives:

- ✓ To increase transparency, accountability and good governance in public contracting,
- ✓ To enhance trust in public authorities and contribute to their better reputation,
- ✓ To improve competition, promote cost efficiency and savings through better procurement.¹

- 1.4 Integrity Pacts have already been applied in many countries and contexts around the world, however their use in the Structural and Cohesion Funds so far has been limited. The **objective** of the DG REGIO pilot project is to explore the applicability of Integrity Pacts and the advantages this tool can bring in the framework of Structural and Cohesion Funds. The experience from piloting Integrity Pacts will be shared and disseminated at the EU level.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE CALL

- 2.1. This Call for Expression of Interest (hereinafter – the Call) is part of a two-stage process aiming at selecting public authorities to pilot Integrity Pacts in the framework of the Structural and Cohesion Funds.

¹ More information on Integrity Pacts and their implementation in practice can be accessed at: https://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/publication/integrity_pacts_in_public_procurement_an_implementation_guide

- 2.2. Under this Call (the first stage of the process referred to in paragraph 2.1), DG REGIO seeks **expressions of interest from public authorities** willing to participate in piloting Integrity Pacts in projects co-financed by the Structural and Cohesion Funds and ready to share lessons learned from the piloting. When expressing interest under this Call, the authorities are requested to propose a project which could benefit from an Integrity Pact (see application form in Annex 1 of this Call).
- 2.3. The expected result of this Call is a **shortlist** of expressions of interest to pilot Integrity Pacts.
- 2.4. In parallel, DG REGIO is also launching a Call for Expression of Interest addressed to civil society organisations. More detailed information about this is available on the InfoRegio website².
- 2.5. Pilot Integrity Pacts can only be implemented in countries where both a public authority and a civil society organisation are shortlisted.
- 2.6. In the second stage, the shortlisted authorities, in consultation with the shortlisted civil society organisation in their country, will be requested to submit more detailed information about the project which could benefit from an Integrity Pact and the set-up of this Integrity Pact.
- 2.7. DG REGIO has allocated budget for financing the costs of Integrity Pact monitoring done by a civil society organisation in a project co-funded by the Structural or Cohesion Fund. Eligible monitoring costs can be financed for up to 100%, up to 3 years.

3. WHO CAN APPLY UNDER THIS CALL? ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 3.1. Expression of Interest can be submitted by:
- ✓ the Structural and Cohesion Fund managing authorities/intermediate bodies;
 - ✓ public beneficiaries who are/will be implementing a project co-financed by the EU Structural and Cohesion Funds.
- 3.2. To be considered eligible, the expression of interest will have to meet **all** the following **eligibility criteria**:

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA		REFERENCE IN THE APPLICATION FORM
(1)	The project proposed for piloting an Integrity Pact has received/will receive the funding from the Structural and Cohesion Funds in the programming period 2014-2020	Section 4.3-4.4.
(2)	The financing for the project proposed for piloting an Integrity Pact is ensured	Section 4.9.
(3)	The project beneficiary is a public body	Section 4.5.
(4)	<i>[In cases where a project is proposed by a managing authority]:</i> The project beneficiary has confirmed its intent to pilot an Integrity Pact	Section 4.11.
(5)	Tender documentation concerning main project activities has	Section 4.10.

² http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index.cfm/en/policy/how/improving-investment/integrity-pacts/

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA		REFERENCE IN THE APPLICATION FORM
	not yet been published	

4. CRITERIA FOR SHORTLISTING EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

4.1. The eligible expressions of interest will be assessed against the following **criteria**:

CRITERIA FOR SHORTLISTING EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST		REFERENCE IN THE APPLICATION FORM
(1)	<u>The rationale</u> – clear and well-supported explanation of why an Integrity Pact would be useful in the proposed project, what results are expected.	Section 2.
(2)	<u>Risk management</u> – substantiated analysis of risks for a successful implementation of an Integrity Pact as well as related mitigating measures.	Section 3.
(3)	<u>Project preparation status</u> . Higher priority will be given to expressions of interest proposing projects where the formal financing decision has been made and where the project is ready for implementation.	Section 4.9.
(4)	<u>Partnership with civil society organisation willing to pilot an Integrity Pact in the country</u> . Higher priority will be given to expressions of interest which will have a matching expression(s) of interest submitted by a civil society organisation(s).	Section 4.12. and results of the <i>Call for Expression of Interest from Civil Society Organisations</i>

4.2. In order to learn from the experience, DG REGIO seeks to pilot Integrity Pacts in different Member States/regions, sectors and types of projects. The shortlist is expected to be a diverse set of pilot projects.

5. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

5.1. Expressions of Interest will be assessed against the eligibility criteria and shortlisted based on the criteria listed in the paragraph 4.1. of this Call.

5.2. The assessment will be carried out by a selection panel consisting of representatives of the European Commission and the Transparency International Secretariat. The final decision on a shortlist will be taken by the European Commission.

5.3. Each applicant will be informed about the decision taken.

5.4. At this stage of the Call, the shortlisting of an expression of interest does not constitute a binding commitment – either implicit or explicit – on the part of the European Commission to finance an Integrity Pact.

5.5. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to develop more detailed proposals.

6. PROCEDURE FOR SUBMISSION OF EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

- 6.1. Public authorities willing to submit the expression of interest to pilot an Integrity Pact are requested to complete the application form provided in the Annex 1 of this Call.
- 6.2. The application form is to be filled-in in English.
- 6.3. Public authorities who wish to express interest in piloting more than one Integrity Pact are requested to fill in a separate application form for each request (maximum 3).
- 6.4. The expression of interest should be submitted electronically to the following email address: REGIO-INTEGRITY-PACTS@ec.europa.eu .

7. DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

- 7.1. The deadline for submitting an expression of interest is **9 July 2015, 23:00h Brussels time**.
- 7.2. Expressions of interest submitted after the date indicated in paragraph 7.1. of this Call will not be considered.

8. CONTACT

- 8.1. In case of any questions, please contact at REGIO-INTEGRITY-PACTS@ec.europa.eu
- 8.2. All information related to this Call will be published online at http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index.cfm/en/policy/how/improving-investment/integrity-pacts/ .

Annex 1.

Call for Expression of Interest for Public Authorities to Pilot Integrity Pacts in the Projects co-funded by the EU Structural and Cohesion Funds

Application Form

Please complete this form electronically and send it to the REGIO-INTEGRITY-PACTS@ec.europa.eu

1. Information about the Applicant (public body)

1.1.	Member State / Region		
1.2.	Name of the institution		
1.3.	Organisation's role in the Structural and Cohesion Funds framework	<input type="checkbox"/>	Managing Authority / Intermediate body
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Beneficiary
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:
1.4.	Contact Person for this application	Name, Surname	
		Job title	
		Phone (e.g. +32-00000000)	
		Email	

2. Motivation for submitting the expression of interest

Please provide the reasoning why:

(2.1) you are expressing interest for piloting an Integrity Pact;

(2.2) you are proposing this specific project for piloting an Integrity Pact and what objectives you would like to achieve.

3. Risk management

What are the risks for a successful implementation of an Integrity Pact for the proposed project and what could be the related mitigating measures?

4. Project proposed for piloting an Integrity Pact		
4.1.	Sector	<input type="checkbox"/> Transport <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Energy <input type="checkbox"/> Research and Development <input type="checkbox"/> Information and Communication Technologies <input type="checkbox"/> Capacity building in public administration <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
4.2.	Project title	
4.3.	Operational Programme 2014-2020	
4.4.	Priority Axis of the Operational Programme	
4.5.	Beneficiary (<i>Name</i>)	
	<i>Is beneficiary a public body?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Comments (<i>optional</i>)
4.6.	Project budget/estimate (EUR)	
4.7.	Project implementation period/estimate (number of months)	
4.8.	Short description of key activities	
4.9.	Current status of the project	<input type="checkbox"/> In preparation <input type="checkbox"/> Project application submitted for financial approval <input type="checkbox"/> Approved and in implementation
	<i>Please mention key remaining issues to be addressed before the implementation of the project can start</i>	
4.10.	Have any public procurement procedures been launched by the time of submission of this application?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes If yes, please give more details: <input type="checkbox"/> No
4.11.	Is there a (tentative) agreement from project Beneficiary to pilot an Integrity Pact?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Comments (<i>optional</i>)

4.12.	Have you been in contact with civil society organisation(s) which could play a role of a monitor for an Integrity Pact?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	If yes, please indicate the organisation(s):
		<input type="checkbox"/>	No	

5. Please use this space to provide any other relevant comments/ clarifications, if necessary.