

# Invitation to expression of interest: IPA 2018 support in the sector of agriculture and rural development

• 20.11.2018.

## **INVITATION TO EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR CANDIDATE ENTITIES (PILLAR ASSESSED ONLY<sup>1</sup>) TO BE ENTRUSTED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF IPA 2018 SUPPORT IN THE SECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT: EU SUPPORT TO AGRICULTURE COMPETITIVENESS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (EU4AGRICULTURE)**

The European Union (EU) will support the sector of agriculture and rural development in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) through a programme with the overall objective of strengthening BiH's capacity for modernising the agri-food sector and foster rural economy in the country. In specific, it is to increase competitiveness of agriculture production and rural jobs and services in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In that respect, the Delegation of the European Union to BiH, building on the suggestions of BiH's authorities, is looking into possibilities for indirect management with eligible entities to implement parts of the 2014-2020 Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) foreseen for the country, in view of potentially entering into formal negotiation leading to the signature of an Indirect Management Contribution Agreement in the course of 2019.

### **Legal bases and considerations:**

The financial rules applicable to the Union budget, specifically Articles 62 (1) (c) and 154 of Financial Regulation (EU Euratom) No 2018/1046 from 18 July 2018, Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 from 11/03/2014, establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II), Articles 1 (4) and 5 (4) of the Regulation No 236/2014 from 11/03/2014 laying down common rules and procedures for the implementation of the Union's instruments financing external action, allow for a possibility for the Union's financial assistance to be implemented indirectly by entrusting budget implementing tasks to among others, international organisations as well as their agencies and Member States agencies.

This invitation to expression of interest aims at identifying entities which could be later on, invited to exploratory talks on a potential subsequent entrustment of the Union's budget implementation tasks (BIT) in respect to specific actions of the IPA 2018 Action Document (AD) for EU Support to Agriculture competitiveness and rural development. The organisation in expressing an interest to this consultation does not commit itself. At the same time, the European Commission reserves the right to take its final decision on the delegated actions upon its discretion.

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<sup>1</sup> The entities like, amongst others, international and EU Member States' organisations and bodies that are assessed in a number of areas, like internal control system, accounting system, independent external audit procurement and financial instruments etc., and if with the requirements met i.e. positively assessed, the Commission may decide to entrust budget implementation tasks to the entity and conclude specific agreements under so-called indirect management of EU funds for implementation of an Action.

*A budget implementation tasks (BIT) means that the entrusted entity is responsible for:*

- *Implementation of grant award and of procurement procedures*
- *Award decisions for grants and procurement – complementary decisions to reject the other applicants and tenderers;*
- *Implementation of contracts: signature of legal commitments, authorisation of payments and recoveries, audits and follow-up*
- *Implementation of financial instruments (if any)*
- *Implementation of Technical assistance*
- *Treasury and accounting.*

The invitation includes the following annexes:

1. Annex I: Brief description of the Action "EU Support to agriculture competitiveness and rural development in Bosnia and Herzegovina";
2. I. Eligibility criteria;
3. Annex II – Standard template for assessing potential applicants responding to a consultation process for expression of interest – to be filled in by the applicant;
4. Evaluation Grid;
5. Annex IV: Responsibilities of the entrusted bodies under Indirect Management according to Articles 62, 154, 156 and 157 of Financial Regulation (EU Euratom) no 2018/1046 from 18 July 2018;
6. Communication and Visibility in EU – financed external actions – Requirements for Implementing partners.

The selection of the entities under indirect management should not to be compared with, and does not constitute a competitive procedure. However, the present Invitation to Expression of Interest with all potentially eligible/interested entities ensures a transparent selection process on objective grounds.

The signature of a Contribution Agreement is expected before the end 2019, following a negotiation between the selected entity and the EU Delegation to BiH.