GREENSMES Call for Roster of Experts

1. Introduction

The GREENSMES project is funded by Interreg IPA ADRION Programme 2021-2027 and tackles the common territorial challenge of strengthening innovation capacities and boosting green innovation in business within the IPA ADRION area. More information are available on official website: https://greensmes.interreg-ipa-adrion.eu/

Project partners of GREENSMES are: TECNOPOLIS Science and Technology Park (Italy); Business and Cultural Development Centre (Greece); RDA GREEN KARST Ltd. (Slovenia); Zadar County Rural Development Agency (Croatia); City Development Agency Banja Luka (Bosnia and Herzegovina); Fund for European Affairs and the development of Autonomous Province of Vojvodina (Serbia); ALBANIAN DEVELOPMENT FUND (AL); National Centre for Development of Innovation and Entrepreneurial Learning (North Macedonia); Municipality of Herceg Novi (Montenegro); TEAM Center (Albania)

The GREENSMES Network Initiative is seeking qualified experts to drive green innovation and support sustainable development across the IPA ADRION region. We are establishing a Roster of Experts to connect these experts with private and public project beneficiaries requiring assistance, and to engage them in relevant project and network activities. In this call, we are particularly interested in experts with a strong focus on innovation management for SMEs. The GREENSMES Consortium has launched a rolling recruitment campaign to maintain a high level of expertise within the Roster.

Experts should possess experience in providing advisory services and supporting private and public entities, especially SMEs, in developing their projects and investments, and in addressing the economic, financial, and technical obstacles associated with fostering a green economy, technology, and SME innovation within the ADRION region.

Why should you join us?

Joining the GREENSMES Roster of Experts offers a unique opportunity to contribute to the implementation and development of the GREENSMES transnational network, enhance professional visibility and recognition through participation in a significant advisory initiative, engage in challenging assignments, assisting project partners and beneficiaries (especially SMEs) in translating ideas into tangible projects, and expand knowledge and participate in knowledge-sharing, training, and networking opportunities with peers and representatives from the business and public sectors in the region.

We are seeking individuals with a range of backgrounds; while there is no single "ideal" profile, selected experts will possess the competencies necessary to effectively support GREENSMES Network activities, with a strong emphasis on SME innovation.

2. General Eligibility Criteria (Applicable to All Experts)

2.1. Education and Professional Qualifications

A university degree (Bachelor's level) in relevant fields: Business Administration (with a focus on innovation management, or SME development), Economics (with a focus on innovation economics), Engineering (Industrial, or relevant to specific sectors like Agrifood, etc.), and other relevant fields.

An advanced degree (Master's or PhD) in one of the fields listed above is desirable, as are Certifications in related areas.

2.2. Professional Experience

- A minimum of three (3) years of professional experience in providing advisory, consulting, or technical assistance services with a focus on innovation management, preferably with SMEs and/or BSOs, is required.
- Demonstrated experience in developing and implementing management systems within SMEs/ BSOs, facilitating processes within SMEs/BSOs, conducting audits or assessments, providing training and capacity building and developing and implementing change management and innovation projects with SMEs/BSOs is required.
- Extensive experience working directly with SMEs and/or Business Support Organizations is highly desirable. This includes providing consulting services delivering training programs, facilitating workshops and mentoring or coaching for organizational capacity building.

2.3. Language Proficiency

Fluency in English (written and spoken) is required, as is proficiency in at least one of the languages covered by the project: Italian, Slovenian, Bosnian / Serbian / Croatian / Montenegrin, Macedonian, Greek, or Albanian (written and spoken) is required.

2.4. Other Skills and Competencies

- A strong understanding of the IPA ADRION region's SME landscape, innovation challenges, and opportunities related to green transition is required.

- Experience working on projects or initiatives related to SME innovation in the IPA ADRION region is highly desirable.
- The ability to work effectively with diverse stakeholders, including peers, SME owners, managers, and employees, is required.
- Strong communication, presentation and facilitation skills are required.
- Excellent analytical and problem-solving abilities are required.

3. Sectors of expertise

- Energy and Sustainable Environment;
- ICT;
- Agri Food Manufacturing;
- Home Systems Manufacturing;
- Advanced Mechanics, Electronics, Robotics and Automation;
- Business/Innovation support sector.

4. Fields of expertise

4.1. Innovation Management Capacity Building for SMEs

In depth knowledge of Innovation management methodologies, tools and processes specifically tailored for SMEs, different innovation models (e.g. open innovation, lean innovation) and frameworks, developing and implementing green innovation strategies in SMEs, managing green innovation projects in SMEs, financing innovation, protecting intellectual property, measuring and evaluating innovation performance in SMEs, fostering innovation culture and handling change management in SMEs.

Experience in developing and delivering training programs on green innovation management methodologies, tools, and processes for SMEs in the ADRION region, facilitating workshops and providing one-on-one coaching and mentoring to SMEs. Providing advisory and consulting services on innovation management to SMEs, assisting SMEs in developing and implementing innovation strategies and evaluating the effectiveness of innovation initiatives

4.2. Green Innovation Products and Services development in SMEs

Knowledge on idea evaluation (assessing the feasibility, viability, and potential impact of new ideas for green products or services), IPR strategy (advising SMEs on securing and managing intellectual property rights), product development services (providing technical assistance to transform green innovation ideas into marketable products or services), and business development services (supporting SMEs in bringing green products or services to market),

as well as a strong understanding of market trends and opportunities for SMEs in green innovation within the ADRION region.

Experts should have experience supporting SMEs in the ADRION region in developing and commercializing new green products, services, or business models, including providing guidance on market analysis, product development, marketing, and sales strategies. Assessing the feasibility, viability, and potential impact of new ideas for green products or services. Advising SMEs on securing and managing intellectual property rights. Providing technical assistance to transform green innovation ideas into marketable products or services. Supporting SMEs in bringing green products or services to market, including providing guidance on market analysis and sales strategies.

4.3. Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) for SMEs

Knowledge of ISO 14040 series standards for LCA studies; understanding of LCA stages: goal and scope definition, inventory analysis, impact assessment, and interpretation; familiarity with LCA methodologies and impact assessment methods; knowledge of challenges and considerations for SMEs; understanding of how results inform SME decision-making; knowledge of software tools.

Experience: Proven experience in conducting LCA studies according to the ISO 14040 series, with a focus on applications relevant to SMEs. Experience in interpreting LCA results and communicating them effectively to different stakeholders, and providing recommendations to SMEs to improve their environmental performance.

4.4. Development of Energy Efficiency Projects in SMEs

Expertise: In-depth knowledge of energy audit methodologies and standards (e.g., ISO 50002). Familiarity with energy-efficient technologies for SMEs, including: LED lighting, improved insulation, efficient HVAC, waste heat recovery, and smart energy management. Understanding of EnPIs and benchmarking. Knowledge of ADRION region energy regulations, policies, and incentives. Ability to assess project economic feasibility via cost-benefit analysis.

Experience in conducting energy audits for SMEs. Ability to identify energy-saving opportunities. Experience in developing and implementing energy efficiency projects for SMEs, including preparing proposals and securing funding, managing implementation, and verifying savings. Experience in providing technical advice and training on energy efficiency.

4.5. Adoption of Sustainability Practices in SMEs

Knowledge of core sustainability principles and frameworks, including ISO 14001, EMAS, and GRI, and how they apply to SMEs in the ADRION region. They should be familiar with concepts

like circular economy, sustainable supply chain management, and CSR, and possess knowledge of the region's specific environmental challenges, regulations, and relevant programs.

Experience in providing practical support to SMEs in adopting sustainability practices. This includes implementing environmental management systems, developing and reporting on sustainability performance, engaging stakeholders, obtaining certifications, and integrating sustainability into overall business strategy.

4.6. Developing Innovation Challenge Programs for SMEs

Knowledge of methodologies for fostering innovation and problem-solving; understanding of innovation methodologies, particularly those suited to the SME context, such as design thinking, lean startup, and agile innovation, and steps involved in designing and facilitating a challenge, including problem definition, participant recruitment, idea generation, evaluation, and prototype development.

Experience in designing and facilitating innovation challenge programs, hackathons, or similar initiatives within the ADRION region and tailoring challenge programs to the specific needs and constraints of SMEs, fostering collaboration, knowledge sharing; providing mentorship to help SMEs translate ideas into solutions; evaluating program outcomes and impact, including developing metrics and methodologies for assessing program effectiveness.

4.7. Business Support Organizations (BSOs) Capacity Building

In-depth knowledge of the role and functions of BSOs in the ADRION region in supporting SMEs in green innovation and transition (e.g., chambers of commerce, innovation centers), BSO operating models, services, and program delivery for promoting green innovation and transition among SMEs, capacity building and organizational development for BSOs to better serve SME needs in supporting green innovation and transition, needs assessment and action planning for organizational improvement in BSOs, with a focus on supporting green innovation and transition in SMEs, and integrating green innovation and transition support into BSO operations for SMEs.

Experience in designing and delivering capacity-building programs for BSOs to enhance their support for green innovation and transition in SMEs, conducting organizational needs assessments of BSOs in relation to supporting green innovation and transition for SMEs, developing strategic action plans for BSOs to improve their services to SMEs in adopting green practices and technologies, advising BSOs on integrating green measures into their services for SMEs, and guiding BSOs in the selection and implementation of digital tools to support SME adoption of green innovation.

This project is co-funded by the European Union through the Interreg IPA ADRION programme.

4. Application and Evaluation

To ensure a clear and efficient application and evaluation process, the following steps and guidelines will be adhered to:

4.1 How should Experts apply?

If you have a relevant profile and are interested and available, please proceed with the following steps:

1. Open the application form via the provided link.
2. Provide your consent for data processing after carefully reviewing the GREENSMES Data Protection Notice.
3. Complete the application questionnaire.
4. Upload your CV in the questionnaire. CVs must be submitted in English, preferably in Europass format, with your name and surname clearly indicated in the file name.

The Roster of Experts will be continuously updated based on the advisory service requests received, with ongoing efforts to address any gaps in sectoral, geographical, or thematic expertise.

We encourage you to submit your application as soon as possible, preferably by June 30th, 2025, to maximize your opportunities for involvement in current project activities.

Roster of experts' application process is under coordination of project partner City Development Agency Banja Luka (Bosnia and Herzegovina).

4.2 Evaluation Process

A Selection Committee will evaluate applications on a rolling basis, reviewing them as received to expedite the roster development process. Each application will be assessed against the criteria detailed in Sections 2, 3, and 4.

Applications will be scored out of a total of 100 points, using the following predefined scoring system:

1. education and qualifications (max. 10 points, min. 3 required),
2. professional experience (max. 20 points, min. 5 required),
3. industry sector expertise (max. 30 points, min. 3 per selected sector), and
4. field of expertise (max. 30 points, min. 3 per selected field).

5. section 7, "Interest in Participation in Promotional Activities" (max. 10 points)

Those meeting the minimum required scores will be included in the roster.

The Committee may request additional information or clarifications from applicants. Applications will be scored using a predefined scoring system, and those meeting the minimum required score will be included in the roster. The Selection Committee will ensure that the roster represents a balance of expertise and geographical representation from the ADRION region.

4.3 What should Experts expect after validation?

Upon validation, you will become part of the GREENSMES expert community, which offers opportunities to participate in community and knowledge-sharing activities. A GREENSMES partner from your country of residence will contact you to discuss specific activities for your involvement in the GREENSMES project and network.

While inclusion in the Roster of Experts does not guarantee assignment to specific advisory services, you may be contacted to provide such services if an incoming support request matches your profile.

Also, you may be contacted to specifically express your consent to share your professional profile with relevant stakeholders in the project implementation area or via project media channels (official website, social media accounts, etc.).

In the event that your profile aligns with the needs of a particular assignment, you will receive a request for proposal from any of GREENSMES project partners listed in the Introductions sessions; at that stage of the process you may be also required to send additional administrative information. If your proposal is accepted, you will be contracted to provide the specified service to the beneficiary.