

INTERREG IPA CBC GREECE – ALBANIA PROGRAMME 2021 – 2027

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Call for the selection of 1 (one) First Level Control Officer, located in Tirana

Introduction

The Interreg IPA CBC Greece-Albania Programme 2021-2027 is co-funded by the European Union through the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA III). The programme objective is to support cooperation between the two countries by joining forces and leveraging the advantages of the cross-border region in order to achieve mutual benefits for both countries.

The Managing Authority (MA) of the Programme is responsible for managing and implementing the Programme on behalf of the participating partner countries. The Managing Authority is the Ministry of Development & Investments. The Joint Secretariat (JS) provides information to potential beneficiaries, guides project applications, and supports partners in the implementation of their projects. Both the Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat are located in Thessaloniki.

In Albania, the National Authority responsible for the coordination of the Programme is the State Agency for Strategic Programming and Aid Coordination (SASPAC). The National Authority is responsible for ensuring the proper functioning of the management and control system in Albania, in particular for ensuring compliance with applicable EU and national rules for all expenditures incurred by Albanian beneficiaries.

First Level Control Office is in charge of the verifications of expenditures made by Albanian beneficiaries. A centralized first level control system is in place. The staff of the FLC Office consists of four (4) members: one (1) Head and three (3) First Level Controllers.

Duties and Responsibilities

The first level controller carries out administrative verifications on expenditure submitted by beneficiaries and on-the-spot verifications of operations. He/she carries out this regulatory and mandatory verification, which covers the expenditure of partners declared during the implementation of the project.

The First Level Control Officer reports to the Head of the First Level Control Office, to the Contracting Authority and the Albanian National Authority, if necessary.

The administrative verifications are carried out to the submitted expenditure by each beneficiary. They should normally include:

- The correctness of the declared expenditure according to the application form.
- The correspondence of the expenditure to the approved operation.
- The correspondence of the expenditure to the eligible period.
- The Compliance with programmes manuals and conditions.
- The Compliance with National and Community legislation and eligibility rules:
 - The adequacy of supporting documents
 - The existence of an adequate audit trail

This post is based in Tirana and is directly supervised by SASPAC. All interested candidates are requested to submit their application for this position. The successful applicant will be employed by the State Agency for Strategic Programming and Aid Coordination.

The first level controller shall perform the following main tasks:

- Verifies the legality, regularity and reality of the activities and the expenditure declared by each of the Albanian beneficiaries/partners implementing the operations, by verifying that the co-financed products and services have been delivered and that expenditure declared by the beneficiaries/partners has been paid and that it complies with applicable law, the Cooperation Programmes and the conditions for support of the operation;
- Verifies the documents of all the operations for which the beneficiaries/partners have prepared their progress report, in order to verify the eligibility of expenditure in accordance with the following principles:
 - *Principle of reality of expenditure*, according to which it is necessary to verify that the expenditure has actually incurred and is linked to the co-financed operation; verification of the reporting of activities during the implementation of the project by the Albanian beneficiary/partner, based on the Subsidy Contract, Partnership Agreement and the Application Form.
 - *Principle of legality and regularity*¹, according to which it is necessary to verify that the expenditure complies with Community, programmes and National rules; verification of financial reports in terms of the compliance of expenditure for which reimbursement is requested with the approved budget; verification of financial documents (legality and regularity of expenditures declared and payments made); verification of the reported activities to ensure compliance with the Subsidy

¹ Namely, the extent to which transactions have been conducted in accordance with the relevant laws and contracts

- Contract and approved Application Form; verification of the applicable procurement rules and provisions for expenditure on works, supplies and services; and, verification of the fulfillment of the programmes requirements for visibility and communication.
- *Principle of localisation of the co-financed operation*, according to which it is necessary to verify that the expenditure incurred is related to the operation and made in the eligible programmes area; on-the-spot verifications made at the head office/branch of the Albanian beneficiary/partner, as established by the programmes rules.
 - *Principle of documented evidence* according to which expenditure is documented as paid with receipts, receipted invoices or accounting records of equal legal validity.
- Prepares and issue the Certificate of Validity of Expenditures - CVE, after verifying the full compliance with all applicable conditions of the progress report/s and supporting documentation sent by every Albanian beneficiary partner of the programmes.
 - Follows and implements every official document prepared by the Managing Authority and the National Authority in the framework of the programmes, on the basis of the assigned Tasks and the applicable legal framework, manuals and regulations, orders, guidelines, etc.
 - Cooperates with the Joint Secretariat in all activities related to the First Level Control (FLC) of expenditure of the beneficiaries/partners during the whole duration of implementation of the awarded projects.
 - Attends training and information sessions and FLC workshops organized by the programmes bodies or INTERACT, on the invitation of the Managing Authority and duly authorised by SASPAC.
 - Cooperates with the Audit Authority and any other entitled national and/or EU Control and Audit entities or bodies for the purpose of audits, including the provision of relevant documents.
 - Assists the programmes Bodies such as: The Managing Authority (MA), the Joint Secretariat (JS), the Monitoring Committee (MC), the Accounting Authority (AcA), the Audit Authority (AA) or other relevant structures with respect to the functioning of programmes implementation, in compliance with the provisions of the programmes manual.
 - Assists the National Authority to prepare reports, statistics and information regarding the certification of expenditure when requested.
 - Provides advisory assistance for all Albanian beneficiaries during the whole duration of the project implementation.

- Attends meetings with beneficiaries/partners as planned or when required by the National Authority, as well as activities organized in the framework of the programmes (where relevant).
- Informs periodically the Head of the First Level Control, the Irregularity Officer and/or the National Authority in relation to any issues or irregularities detected during the implementation of operations by Albanian beneficiaries.
- Assists the National Authority to offer training sessions for potential beneficiaries/leading partners in the Albanian territory, in compliance with the preliminary plan approved by SASPAC.
- Carries out any other tasks established by the National Authority in agreement with the Management Authority related to the activity of the First Level Control Office and certification of expenditure.
- Ensures timely and quality performance of the assigned tasks which shall be carried out with due diligence at all times.

Required Qualifications:

1. University Degree (at least 4 years of studies in finance, accounting, economics, law or other relevant fields);
2. At least 5 years of working experience in financial management and/or control and audit of projects/programmes, preferably financed by EU Funds;
3. Knowledge of relevant EU regulations, Programme rules and national laws and regulations in place;
4. Good knowledge of public procurement procedures (national and PRAG rules);
5. Familiar with Programme and project level monitoring procedures and systems.
6. Advanced level of English language, both spoken and written (at least C1); able to prepare documents in standard English and communicate effectively with relevant authorities, when needed;
7. A clean criminal record, as well as no disciplinary record, connected to failures in fulfilling accountancy or financial management tasks.
8. Very good computer literacy including excel, word processing, and use of data bases.

Additional elements/qualifications to be considered as an asset:

1. Post graduate studies in any field of relevance to the mentioned tasks, such as a Master's degree or post-graduate qualification in either accounting, finance or auditing;
2. Professional certified accountant or accomplished professional training programme in either audit (Certified Public Accountant or Statutory Auditor) or accounting (Certified Accountant);
3. Experience in management or technical support of Interreg Programmes;
4. Experience in management of public procurement procedures (national and PRAG);

5. Organizational skills and effectiveness;
6. Knowledge of public finance rules and practices;
7. Proven ability to work in a multicultural environment.

Application procedure

Interested applicants should submit in hard copy

- A motivation letter in English;
- A CV in English (suggested europass format);
- Degrees/Diploma for the relevant education, Certificates, trainings, or any other relevant document related to the education;
- A copy of the documentation proving the working experience as described in this ToRs;
- Copy of a valid Identification Document, signed with the original signature of the applicant on it;
- To avoid the rejection of the application, all the supporting documents should be included in the application as requested.

All documentation should be submitted in English; if not in English, accompanied by English translation (unofficial translation).

The CV and supporting documents submitted shall be examined in order to assess the compliance with the selection criteria. The Selection Committee will evaluate the education and length of professional experience of candidates, as stated under the required qualifications rubric, based on the documentation submitted. All candidates meeting the required qualifications will be invited to an interview, where their qualitative professional experience and respective qualifications and competencies (and the Written Test) will be assessed.

The Selection Committee will select the appropriate applicant per position, taking into account the sum of the applicant's scores in the CV evaluation and the interview (and the Written Test). The Selection Committee will draw up a ranking list of the interviewed applicants. In each stage of the selection procedure all candidates will be notified by e-mail, sent to the addresses indicated in the CVs.

For successful applicant that will be employed by SASPAC before the signing of his/her employment contract, an official document should be submitted verifying that there is no criminal record.

Administrative Elements

1. *Contesters/participants should have:*
 - a) Good Knowledge of the Interreg IPA CBC Greece-Albania Programme:
<https://greece-albania.eu/>
 - b) Good Knowledge of PRAG Rules:

<https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/spaces/ExactExternalWiki/pages/152798604/ePRAG>

- c) Good knowledge of the Albanian Labor Code:
https://qbz.gov.al/share/Ldpfd2e9SoihoV7O9_yQIQ
- d) Knowledge of the Financial Agreement for the Interreg IPA CBC Greece-Albania Programme:
[Marrëveshja Financiare është ratifikuar me Ligjin nr. 75, datë 25.07.2024](#)

2. *Evaluation.*

- a. Their qualification will be done based upon the above **qualification requirements**.
- b. Contesters/participants qualified to enter the test will be evaluated based on the following norms:
 - b1. Dossier: up to 15 points.
 - b2. Written testing: up to 60 points.
 - b3. Oral testing: up to 25 points.

The final selection will be for the best of those who reach more than 70 points in total.