



European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA)

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA) is launching a Call for Expression of Interest for the establishment of a Reserve List for the position of:

I3 Project Adviser (Ref.: EISMEA/IV/2021/010)¹

Type of contract	Contract Agent ²
Function group and grade	FGIV
Duration of contract	1 year (with the possibility of extension)
Estimated number of candidates to be placed on the Reserve List	10
Unit	EISMEA I.01
Place of employment	Brussels, Belgium
Deadline for application	22/06/2021, 12:00 (CET) Brussels time

1. ABOUT US

The European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA) was established on 1 April 2021 by the Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/173 of 12 February 2021.

In compliance with Commission Decision C(2021) 949 final of 12 February 2021, EISMEA should ensure a clear focus on innovation and the single market. It should create strong synergies to support the recovery of the European economy, by grouping in one agency all the activities of the European Innovation Council (EIC) and the programmes related to small and medium-sized enterprises. The EIC, the EU Innovation Ecosystems programme (EIE) and Interregional Innovation Investments (I3) programme will ensure visibility for

¹ This Call for Expression of Interest is published in parallel with the Call for Expression of Interest for the position of Place-Based Innovation Ecosystems Project Adviser FGIV ref. EISMEA/IV/2021/011. Candidates may only apply for one profile.

² According to Article 3a of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union (CEOS).

innovation, key to supporting the modernisation and sustainability of the EU economy.

EISMEA should provide high quality support to beneficiaries, turning EU policy into action; ensure that actions funded by these programmes deliver results; and provide the Commission with valuable input for its policy tasks.

EISMEA is committed to the public service principles for European Union civil servants: commitment to the European Union and its citizens, integrity, objectivity, respect for others and transparency. EISMEA will operate according to the following principles: clear Union-added value, autonomy, ability to take risks, efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability.

EISMEA reports to five parent Directorates-General of the European Commission: the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (R&I) (lead parent-DG), the Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (CNECT), the Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (GROW), the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (JUST), the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (REGIO).

2. PROGRAMMES MANAGED BY EISMEA

In compliance with Commission Decision C(2021) 949 final of 12 February 2021, EISMEA is:

- Entrusted with the implementation of the following (parts of) Union programmes:
 - Horizon Europe, pillar III: the European Innovation Council (EIC) and European Innovation Ecosystems (EIE), representing around 85% of the delegated budget;
 - Structural Funds: Interregional Innovation Investments , representing around 5% of the delegated budget;
 - Single Market Programme (SMP): COSME; Internal market; support to standardisation; and Consumers, representing around 10% of the delegated budget.
 - Interregional Innovation Investments.
- Contributing to the Commission representation for a number of tasks and activities;
- Entrusted with the implementation of the following (parts of) Union programmes in terms of legacy:
 - Horizon 2020: Part I: Future and emerging technologies FET-Open and FET-Pro-Active (including when labelled as EIC pilot), which under the 2014-2020 MFF was implemented by the Research Executive Agency (REA) and by the Commission;
 - Horizon 2020: Part II: Access to Risk Finance (including EIC inducement Prizes) and Innovation in SME's, which under the 2014-2020 MFF was implemented by the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and by the Commission;
 - Horizon 2020: Part II and III: Fast Track to Innovation (FTI), which under the 2014-2020 MFF was implemented by the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and by the Commission;

- Horizon 2020: Part II and III: SME instrument, which under the 2014-2020 MFF was implemented by the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and by the Commission;
- other EIC related prizes, such as iCapital (H2020 SC 6 WP) and Women Innovators' Prize (H2020 SWAFs WP), which under the 2014-2020 MFF were implemented by the Commission;
- any other activities covered since 2018 under the EIC pilot part of Horizon 2020 WP on Innovative SMEs, which under the 2014-2020 MFF were implemented by the Research Executive Agency and the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and by the Commission;
- COSME and the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP), which under the 2014-2020 MFF was implemented by the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises;
- Internal Market and support to Standardisation activities, which under the 2014-2020 MFF were implemented by the Commission;
- Consumer Programme, which under the 2014-2020 MFF was implemented by the Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency.

3. JOB DESCRIPTION

Overall purpose

Under the direct supervision of the Head of Unit, the jobholder is responsible for the project management, organisation and implementation of the project applications under the Interregional Innovation Investments (I3) programme. This includes reception of applications selected for funding, grant procedures and activities linked to general project management, like grant agreement and payment preparations, reporting and support to audits and checks, including contribution to policy feedback to parent DGs, all in relation to the I3 programme and its specific management. (S)he will participate in the on-site interviews of applicants under the programme and contribute to the drafting of interview reports and the facilitation of decisions among experts. (S)he will also contribute to the management of the thematic smart specialisation platforms.

Functions and duties

Programme/Process/Project management – operational and administrative support and resources:

- Manage Calls for Proposals and Projects-launching, promote, monitor and manage calls for proposals, calls for tenders, ad hoc grants, etc. related to the main strands of the I3 Programme, including to capacity building for less developed regions;
- Prepare the submission tools, forms and documents and participate in the selection of external evaluators, if applicable;
- In collaboration with relevant services (within parent DGs), contribute to the organisation of evaluations (remote) in direct contact with the expert-evaluators; contribute to

selection of evaluators and assignment of applications to them, monitor the evaluation process, ensure the quality of the process and provide input for evaluation reports;

- Provide feedback on the use and the quality of the expert/evaluators pool available, the use and functioning of the relevant IT tools and databases in support of evaluation and selection of proposals; inform of any problems encountered during the process and/or with evaluators;
- Manage projects selected for funding from the selection procedure, grant preparation up to payment preparations, reporting and support to audits and checks;
- Provide input in order to establish award and rejection decisions in a timely manner and in high quality;
- Provide support to beneficiaries to ensure the smooth finalisation of the grant preparation, including follow-up in the relevant IT tools;
- Ensure complementarity between activities undertaken by EISMEA, in particular in the area of European Innovation Eco-systems and activities undertaken by DG REGIO to support smart specialisation partnerships;
- In cooperation with DG REGIO and the respective lead DGs (currently GROW, AGRI and ENER), contribute to the management of the thematic smart specialisation platforms (TSSP), the monitoring of progress of interregional partnerships active on the platforms and to the assessment of the maturity of the partnerships, when applicable;
- Contribute to the organisation of regular TSSP meetings;
- Ensure proper information flow and timely and comprehensive reporting;
- Contribute to training activities of the unit, and where appropriate to other services of the Agency.

Coordination and communication activities

- Write reports/briefings and provide statistics on project results and assessments of partnerships active on the thematic smart specialisation platforms upon request.
- Ensure the dissemination and promotion of project results and present the programmes and projects at workshops, seminars, conferences and other public events; regularly update the project's database; contribute to the preparation of communication materials;
- Provide advice, support, and feedback within the EISMEA and policy feedback to DG REGIO and other parent DGs if relevant and develop links between the I3 Programme's action and other programmes/networks to facilitate synergies, including with specific programmes under Horizon Europe, Technical Assistance Facility, Digital Innovation Hubs, etc.
- Contribute to efficient collaboration with the other sectors of the unit and the relevant horizontal teams in EISMEA, as well as DG REGIO and other parent DGs if relevant and facilitate the exchange of experiences and good practices;

- Act as operational initiating agent, if applicable.
- Contribute to the training activities of the unit on interregional innovation and smart specialisation, and where appropriate to other services of the Agency.

4. PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

A. Eligibility criteria³

Candidates will be considered eligible for selection on the basis of the following formal criteria to be fulfilled by the deadline for applications:

1. Have successfully passed in the function group of the present call for expression of interest the selection tests organised by EPSO {Computer-based multiple choice question (MCQ) tests composed of verbal, numerical, abstract reasoning and competency tests} as indicated in the Call for Expression of Interest⁴ for contract staff launched by EPSO on 5 January 2017 in view to create a pool of candidates from which the Executive Agencies can recruit⁵.

Candidates without a valid CAST at the time of submitting their application can still apply for this Call for Expression of Interest if they have completed and validated⁶ the online application form of the Call for Expressions of Interest in function group IV.

These candidates, if pre-selected, will be invited by EPSO to sit a series of computer-based multiple choice question (MCQ) tests in one of its accredited centres.

2. Have a level of education which corresponds to completed university studies of at least three years attested by a diploma;
3. Produce evidence of thorough knowledge of one of the languages of the European Union and of a satisfactory knowledge of another EU language to the extent necessary for the performance of the duties;
4. Be a national of a member state of the European Union;
5. Be entitled to his or her full rights as a citizen;
6. Have fulfilled any obligations imposed by the applicable laws concerning military service;
7. Meet the character requirements for the duties involved;

³ Articles 82 to 84 of the CEOS and Decision of EASME Steering Committee of 14 December 2017 on the application by analogy of Commission Decision C(2017)6760 final of 16 October 2017 on the engagement of contract staff. EISMEA being the legal successor of EASME, general implementing provisions remain applicable until a new Decision may be taken by EISMEA Steering Committee.

⁴ <https://europa.eu/epso/doc/call-cast-agencies/en-tra-cast-p-1-4-2015.pdf>

⁵ Candidates on COM/3/2013/FGIV contract agents pool are not considered eligible for this post.

⁶ Candidates are fully responsible for the creation, validation and update of the EPSO profile in the function group of the present call (please refer to [the Call for Expression of Interest](#)). Otherwise candidates' details are not or no more visible to the recruiting services and they cannot be invited to sit a series of computer-based multiple choice question (MCQ) tests.

8. Be physically fit to perform the duties linked to the post⁷.

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B. Selection criteria

Essential

1. After obtaining the qualifications mentioned in point A.2 here above, candidates must have acquired minimum 4 years of relevant professional experience⁸ in the field of R&I project management, of which 1 year of professional experience with interregional innovation investment projects under Cohesion Policy at any management level (EU, regional, local).
2. Very good oral and written command of English⁹. Spoken and written skills equivalent to level C1 or higher level for working purposes¹⁰.

Advantageous

1. Professional experience and/or proven knowledge of the concept of smart specialisation strategies.
2. Professional experience in the field of management and design of R&I or SME support schemes and/or programmes.
3. Professional experience in an international and multicultural environment.
4. Proven knowledge of the EU Cohesion Policy.

Candidates need to describe explicitly to what extent they meet the above-mentioned selection criteria (both essential and advantageous). In particular, they need to (i) explain in their applications how their professional experience and knowledge relates to interregional innovation investments and to the concept of smart specialisations and (ii) specify how long and where the professional experience and knowledge were acquired during their career.

⁷ Before the appointment, a successful candidate shall be medically examined by one of the institutions' medical officers in order that EISMEA may be satisfied that (s)he fulfils the requirement of Article 82(d) of the CEOS.

⁸ The minimum professional experience is required bearing in mind the level of responsibility that the jobholder will have to exercise. Professional experience is counted only from the time the candidate obtained the diploma and qualifications for being eligible (see section 4.A above).

⁹ The language options for this selection procedure have been defined in line with the interests of the service, which require newly recruited Contract Agents to be immediately operational and capable of communicating effectively in their daily work. Accordingly, given that newly recruited staff need to be able to assume their duties immediately without receiving additional language training, the newly recruited Contract Agents must be able to communicate with the already operating staff in EISMEA and services in the Commission in at least one of the limited number of vehicular languages most commonly used within the services where they will be recruited, otherwise this selection procedure would lose its purpose and, ultimately potentially severely impair the efficient functioning of the institutions. It has long been standard practice to use mainly these languages for internal communication purposes in the EU institutions and these are also the languages most often used when communicating inside the institutions and with the outside world. Consequently, considering the nature of the duties performed by Contract Agents, in light of the principle of proportionality, in balancing the interests and needs of the service and the abilities of candidates, and given the particular fields covered by this selection procedure, it is legitimate to make this choice of languages so as to ensure that all candidates are able to work in them, whatever their first official language. Indeed, since the execution of professional duties is linked to the specific linguistic context of the institutions, professional vocabulary is required in at least one of the most common vehicular languages. Assessing specific competencies in this way allows the institutions to evaluate candidates' ability to be immediately operational in an environment that closely matches the reality they would face on the job.

¹⁰ Please refer to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

5. SELECTION PROCEDURE

A. Admission to the selection procedure

First, the submitted applications will be checked against the eligibility criteria (section 4.A). Only eligible applications will be assessed further.

B. Assessment of eligible applications

The Selection Committee will analyse the motivation letters and CVs of eligible applicants with reference to:

- The selection criteria ("Professional qualifications and other requirements" - section 4.B, under points "Essential" and "Advantageous"),
- The overall assessment of the quality and suitability of the application based on the requirements of the post.

Applications which do not meet one or more of the essential selection criteria (see section 4.B) will not be evaluated further.

Upon completion of the assessment, the Selection Committee will establish a shortlist of candidates matching best the needs of the Agency for the functions and duties mentioned in this Call.

C. Invitation to computer-based tests

Shortlisted candidates having applied to the Call for Expressions of Interest in Function Group IV (EPSO/CAST/P1-17/2017) will be invited by EPSO to sit a series of computer-based multiple choice question (MCQ) tests in one of its accredited centres. Only candidates who have successfully passed these tests¹¹ will be invited to the interview.

The EPSO tests are planned during weeks 26-27 (between 30 June and 6 July 2021).

Shortlisted candidates who have a valid CAST FG IV already, will not have to sit the EPSO tests again and will be directly invited to the interview.

D. Interview

Shortlisted candidates who have successfully passed the CAST selection valid for Executive Agencies will be invited for an interview (duration: 45 minutes, language of the interview: English¹²).

The interview will assess following skills and competences of the applicants:

- Knowledge and skills relevant to the duties described in the job description above;
- Knowledge of the organisation, structure, working procedures and policies of the Agency and the European Commission services;
- High motivation, strong aptitude for team work and the capacity to work

¹¹ See the [Call for Expression of Interest](#) (EPSO/CAST/P1-17/2017) for the minimum pass marks.

¹² See footnote 9.

- autonomously;
- Ability to work under pressure and manage his/her responsibilities within tight deadlines.

The interviews are approximately planned after 17 July.

Candidates are invited to indicate in their online application any special arrangements that may be required if invited to attend an interview.

E. Reserve list

It is estimated that 10 candidates with the highest marks achieved in the interview will be proposed to the Director of the Agency for inclusion on the reserve list.

The reserve list will be valid until 31 December 2022 and may be used for other positions with similar duties in the same function group. The validity of the reserve list may be extended by decision of the Director.

Candidates should note that their inclusion on the reserve list does not imply any entitlement to employment in the Agency.

A second round of interviews may be organised before the offer of an employment.

6. SELECTION COMMITTEE

A Selection Committee will be appointed for this selection procedure and will be composed of at least four members, including a member designated by the Staff Committee of the Agency.

The names of the Selection Committee members will be communicated to the candidates upon notification of the outcome of the assessment of eligible applications (see section 5. Selection Procedure, B - Assessment of eligible applications).

Under no circumstances should candidates approach the Selection Committee, either directly or indirectly, concerning this recruitment. The Agency's Director reserves the right to disqualify any candidate who disregards these instructions.

7. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

To apply for this position, candidates must submit an online application via the [EU CV online database](#) (candidates must first create an account or sign in to their active account).

After a correct submission of an application, candidates will receive an automated acknowledgement of receipt to the email account indicated in their application.

There is no obligation to submit applications in English, however documents sent in English will greatly facilitate the work of the Selection Committee.

The Agency strongly advises not to wait until the last few days before the deadline for applying, since heavy internet traffic or connection difficulties could lead to problems.

It is the sole responsibility of each applicant to complete ALL relevant fields of his/her online application and to send it before the deadline for submission. Any information or documentation provided after the deadline will not be taken into account.

The candidate will be disqualified if:

- (s)he does not complete online registration by the deadline;
- at any stage in the procedure it is established that information a candidate provided is incorrect or false;
- (s)he failed to inform the HR service of the Agency of a possible conflict of interest with a Selection Committee member;
- (s)he attempted to contact a member of the Selection Committee either directly or indirectly concerning this recruitment procedure.

Candidates are invited to indicate in their online application any special arrangements that may be required if invited to attend the interview.

8. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The European Union institutions apply a policy of equal opportunities and accept applications without discrimination on the ground of sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation.

9. APPOINTMENT AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

The selected candidate(s) will need to have a valid CAST function group IV in order to be recruited (see section 4.A).

Any offer of employment shall be made by the Director on the basis of the reserve list. A contract offer will be made for the position of a contract staff member, in function group IV in accordance with the Agency's Implementing Provisions on the employment of contract staff under Article 3a of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union¹³, for an initial duration of one year, with the possibility of renewal (a second renewal of the contract will lead to a contract of indefinite duration).

The classification in grade will be done in accordance with EISMEA general implementing provisions on conditions of employment of contract staff¹⁴ and will depend on the assessment of the qualification and professional experience of the selected candidate. At the request of EISMEA, the selected candidates will have to evidence with supporting documents the information contained in their application.

¹³ Decision of EASME Steering Committee of 14 December 2017 on the application by analogy of Commission Decision C(2017)6760 final of 16 October 2017 on the engagement of contract staff. EISMEA being the legal successor of EASME, general implementing provisions remain applicable until a new Decision may be taken by EISMEA Steering Committee.

¹⁴ See footnote 13.

For reasons related to the Agency's operational requirements, the candidate will be required to be available at short notice.

For further information on working conditions of contract staff, see the Agency's website ([Working for EISMEA](#)) or the web site of the European Personnel Selection Office ([EPSO](#)). The place of employment will be Brussels, Belgium where the Agency has its premises.

10. REQUEST FOR REVIEW

If the candidate believes a mistake has been made, (s)he may request a review of the Agency's decision. This must be made within 10 calendar days of the date of the e-mail notifying the candidate of the outcome of the selection procedure. The request must quote the reference number of the selection procedure concerned and the candidate must substantiate the reasons for requesting a review. It must be for the attention of the Chairperson of the Selection Committee and sent to the following address: EISMEA-HR-Recruitment@ec.europa.eu. The Selection Committee will review the request and notify the candidate of its decision within 15 calendar days of receipt of the request.

11. APPEAL PROCEDURE

Pursuant to Article 90(2) of the Staff Regulations of Officials of the European Communities ("Staff Regulations"), any candidate may submit to the Agency a complaint against an act adversely affecting him/her. Any such complaint should be sent for the attention of the Director of EISMEA to the following address: EISMEA-HR-APPEALS@ec.europa.eu. The complaint should quote the reference number of the selection procedure concerned and it must be lodged within 3 months from the date on which the candidate is notified of the act adversely affecting him/her.

Should the complaint be rejected, the candidate may request judicial review of the act adversely affecting him/her pursuant to Article 270 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and Article 91 of the Staff Regulations. For details on how to submit a judicial appeal and how to determine the deadlines, please consult the website of the General Court at <http://curia.europa.eu/jcms/>.

The candidate can make a complaint to the European Ombudsman. Before submitting such complaint, the candidate must first make the appropriate administrative approaches to the institutions and bodies concerned (see above). Making a complaint to the Ombudsman does not extend the deadlines for lodging administrative complaints or judicial appeal.

Please consult the website of the European Ombudsman (<http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/>) for further information on the arrangements for complaints to the Ombudsman.

12. DATA PROTECTION

The purpose of processing the data submitted by candidates is to evaluate applications in view of possible recruitment at the Agency. The personal information requested by the Agency from candidates will be processed in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC. In this regard, please see the [Data Protection Notice](#).