



## **GREEN ASSIST Additional FAQs**

(Updated on 28 September 2023)

### **Roster of Experts**

#### **1.1 I am an Expert working with research projects in Horizon. Can I apply to the Roster?**

Yes, you may apply. However, Green Assist will require expertise that is not specific to innovative technologies, so skills will be tilting more toward elements beyond innovation that enable investment, e.g., business models and on-the-ground advisory experience, as opposed to expertise typically required for research projects.

#### **1.2 Do you still accept candidatures from other experts?**

Yes, candidates can still apply to become a Green Assist expert. New applications will be reviewed more specifically to match fields of expertise where gaps persist, i.e. applying criteria more customised to the needs. For instance, we still are looking for experts in areas such as biodiversity (forestry), voluntary carbon credit, and natural capital (water treatment).

#### **1.3 Will the Green Assist Roster of Experts become public?**

No, we will not publish the Roster of Experts for privacy and data protection reasons. However, validated experts are welcome to indicate on their social media profiles or CVs that they are Green Assist Experts. Moreover, experts can promote their role in Green Assist, for example by publishing social media posts on completed projects in compliance with any non-disclosure agreements for such projects.

#### **1.4 Can a consultancy or local advisory group apply to the Roster as a company?**

No, the Green Assist Expert Roster is only for individual experts and each expert selected in the Roster will be selected based on their individual profile and merits. If selected for an assignment, this does not mean that a Green Assist expert cannot then be contracted through their employer, but it is always the individual that is the person responsible, and we will also select based on those individual criteria. There are also safeguards that only the individual expert who is contracted through the company has access to the confidential information and that there is no interference by the company. The reason is that we value a direct relationship between the expert and the Beneficiary and that it is ensured that the expert that was selected is the one implementing the project.

#### **1.5 What do you consider a solid experience on selection as a senior expert?**

A senior expert has over 4 years of experience in one of the sectors and competencies included in the Green Assist Expert application form. Other factors, such as experience in hands-on advisory services and ease of interfacing with customers, will be considered an asset.

#### **1.6 How can validated experts update their CV?**

It is currently not possible to update your profile to include new professional experience. However, if your profile is shortlisted to perform an advisory service, we will contact you to perform an interview to verify and update your professional experience and to discuss the advisory request at hand. You can also share an updated CV with the assessor at this stage.



## **Matchmaking for Advisory Assignments**

### **2.1 On what basis will the Contractor match Experts' profiles with a request for advisory services?**

The expert does not have access to the pipeline of Advisory Assignments, which is received by the European Commission and assessed by the Contractor. The Contractor will carry out the matching after a thorough analysis of the needs of advisory services expressed by the Beneficiary. Based on this analysis and discussion, the Contractor will prepare a draft assignment fiche documenting the expected profiles, competencies, and roles of one or more experts that would be needed to support the advisory request. The Contractor will then compare the expertise required with the expertise available in the Roster, taking into account the availability and proximity, as well as criteria such as sectorial expertise, competencies, language and familiarity with the specific context. Experts identified for a given assignment will be presented to the Beneficiary in the context of tripartite interviews, based on which the final scope of work (workdays, milestones, deliverables, etc.) will be fine-tuned. The expert and the Contractor will then sign a contract and the assignment will start.

### **2.2 Can eligible projects express a preference for a specific expert in the Roster?**

Beneficiaries can make a recommendation for an expert in their request. However, out of fairness to all experts in the Green Assist Expert Roster, we will go through the whole matchmaking process. During this process, we will check the recommended expert's suitability, but also check if we have better or similar suited alternatives in the Expert Roster and then review all options.

### **2.3 If I am retained as an expert for an assignment, can the expert contract be entered with the one-person company that I control?**

The expert contract will be signed by the expert in their capacity as a natural person. Upon due justification (e.g., such as statutes, or articles of incorporation), the contract may alternatively be signed with the one-person company controlled by the expert. In exceptional cases, the contract can also be signed with the employer of the expert as long as the expert is ultimately responsible for the assignment (see 1.4). In any event, the advisory services must be delivered directly by the expert registered in the Roster.

### **2.4 How long does the process of matchmaking of an expert with the project take?**

On our end, the matchmaking of experts with projects is streamlined to not take longer than 2 weeks starting from the day of completion of the eligibility check of the project. However, a lot depends on the response rate and availability of all involved parties (applicant, experts), which means that the process can take sometimes a bit longer.

## **Working as experts**

### **3.1 What is the typical duration of an assignment? Can you give an estimated average man-day effort expected from the expert?**

We expect the typical duration of an assignment to last a few months. However, there is no hard line for the duration of an assignment, which will be determined by the Contractor depending on the needs expressed by the Beneficiary, if the request is eligible. The duration will be discussed with the expert selected for their agreement prior to the signature of the assignment contract. Regarding expert efforts, we differentiate between three types of projects: 1) Low intensity (20-40 days); 2) Medium intensity (40-60 days); High intensity (60-100 days).

**3.2 Does an assignment require my full-time presence?**

Not necessarily, it is possible that the workload (and number of paid work days) will not spread out evenly throughout the assignment, depending on the needs and activities foreseen. However, the number of work days agreed with the Contractor and the Beneficiary shall be deemed necessary to complete all tasks foreseen, within the expected duration of the assignment, as defined in the Assignment fiche.

**3.3 Are you planning to make a model contract available for validated experts?**

The model contract is shared with experts for their review once they have been selected during the matchmaking process. Additionally, experts who are members of the Green Assist Roster can also contact the Expert Helpdesk to request the model contract.

**3.4 In the context of an assignment, am I allowed to interface with stakeholders other than the Beneficiary and the Contractor concerning the Advisory Assignment and the project? Is it allowed for an expert to subcontract its tasks?**

It is not allowed for an expert to sub-contract its assignment. However, in case the expert needs some advice on a specific component of its assignment, the expert may obtain such validation from a third party, for the exclusive benefit of the Beneficiary. This third party will need to be approved by the Beneficiary (for reason of confidentiality) and disclosed to the Contractor. The expert will continue to be the sole counterpart of the Contractor and the Beneficiary and shall bear the cost and risk (e.g. in case of delay) related to the third-party advice.

**3.5 In the context of my assignment, how can I contribute to the implementation of the project?**

When designing the Advisory Assignment Fiche, the Contractor and the Beneficiary will seek that the assignment and its deliverables are as “exploitable” as possible by the Beneficiary, allowing, when possible, the expert to help the Beneficiary and be associated with key tasks (such as interfacing with stakeholders) required for the implementation of the project.

**3.6 In cases where there is going to be collaboration among two experts on one assignment, is there going to be a moment where the experts need to deliver a consensus report or consensus opinion?**

Generally, for projects that have more than one expert assigned, we aim that they would have clearly defined separate deliverables. Each expert would then have their own responsibilities for the project and there is no need for consensus reports. In cases where joint deliverables between experts are required, the Contractor will ensure coordination and sharing of information between the experts.

**3.7 Will you be providing guidelines, formats or templates for mainstream tasks to be provided by the experts?**

It is up to the expert and the Beneficiary to agree on what is the best way to deliver the task. While there is no technical guidance on how to do so, our coordinators are there to provide ideas and suggestions, where needed. In addition, there is a standard form for the Advisory Assignment Fiche which includes a work plan template and there are general reporting templates for the interim and final reports of each assignment.

**3.8 Will the Commission endorse the position expressed by an expert?**



No, except if specifically required by the Beneficiary and subject to prior approval by CINEA and the Commission. The reason is that Green Assist is not meant to influence experts to convey the official position (if any) of the Commission. Moreover, the expert takes the commitment to deliver its advisory services to the Beneficiary in full independence, without being bound (by contract or otherwise) by other professional contracts or duty toward other parties. Likewise, the expert remains independent of the Beneficiary and shall refuse to endorse any position imposed by the Beneficiary, unless this position also reflects their own belief.

### **Working with Beneficiaries**

#### **4.1 What can I do if there is evidence that the Beneficiary will or cannot implement the project or my recommendations? How much are beneficiaries obliged to implement the expert's advice?**

There is no mandatory requirement for Beneficiaries to take on the experts' advice. However, there is a Beneficiary Charter that they are obliged to sign where they need to commit to collaborating with the experts during the support period. Beyond that, neither the expert nor the Contractor can oblige the Beneficiary to implement the project afterwards. Nevertheless, Green Assist has a robust eligibility and screening process in place to avoid potential greenwashing requests and to support only requests with legitimate needs.

#### **4.2 What should be the position of the expert, if there is suspicion that the Beneficiary is aiming to use the advisory services for greenwashing purposes?**

Under Green Assist, the expert expresses their own view independently to address the primary need of the Beneficiary as outlined in the advisory fiche. Adoption of such best practices and implementation of such actions is beyond the control of the expert and remains within the Beneficiary's discretion. However, should the expert suspect that the Beneficiary's intent is not to implement the expert's advice, the expert should notify the Contractor and CINEA. In general, within the scope of its assignment, the expert should prompt the Beneficiary to adopt the most environmentally friendly practices and to recommend all actions that - in the expert's opinion and within the Beneficiary's interest and financial capacity - would help the project achieving a substantial contribution to one or more of the environmental objectives set out in the EU Taxonomy.

#### **4.3 Are the milestones established by the project or are these agreed with the Beneficiary? Will we have intermediate milestones to assess the progress on the recommendations that we have provided? Or in case there are changes in the Beneficiary's project, can there be any update?**

In the work programme, part of the Advisory Assignment Fiche, there will be several milestones set up that the expert, Beneficiary and Contractor agree on at the start of the project. The Contractor will also be monitoring the implementation of those milestones against the deadlines set up in the work programme. For longer projects, there will be an interim report allowing us to assess the completion of intermediate milestones and where necessary make adjustments with the approval of the Contractor.

#### **4.4 What happens if the Beneficiary drops out after the assignment has started?**

If a project ends prematurely due to the Beneficiary, the Contractor will assess the implementation status. The expert will get paid for the work that has already been implemented as demonstrated by (partially) finalised deliverables.

#### **4.5 When selected for a specific task, does Green Assist sign a contract with the expert and provide a Terms of Reference for the assignment? And who drafts the Terms of Reference?**



Yes, the Terms of Reference are described in the so-called Advisory Assignment Fiche. The Green Assist Contractor initiates the drafting of this, but then also involves both the Beneficiary and the expert to agree on the exact requirements of the project (e.g. in terms of deliverables, days required and the timeline). The definition of the Advisory Assignment Fiche should be consensual between the expert and Beneficiary, while the Contractor steers and moderates the process. The Advisory Assignment Fiche forms an integral part of the contract signed between the Contractor and the expert.

#### **4.6 After the end of an assignment contract, can I continue assisting the Beneficiary?**

Yes, there is no objection to such continuation pro-bono or paid by the Beneficiary. However, such continuation and its scope should be reported to the Contractor.

### **Green Assist projects**

#### **5.1 Are public bodies also eligible to benefit from Green Assist? What is the entry point?**

Yes, both public and private bodies are eligible. Requests are generally submitted via the InvestEU Central Entry Point.

#### **5.2 Is there a minimum or maximum funding amount for eligible projects?**

Green Assist focuses on supporting projects with a plausible investment programme of at least €2.500.000, being noted that a smaller amount would be considered in case such investment can be replicated.

#### **5.3 What kind of renewable energy project do you expect to see in the project pipeline?**

Energy-related projects are welcome to apply, as long, beyond their beneficial effect on climate change, they also enable a reduction of the environmental footprint of the investment.

#### **5.4 Considering that private sector engagement in Biodiversity and Natural Capital is limited, due to the limited knowledge of private sector actors to structure their viable investment projects to make them attractive to potential investors, do you plan to help address these barriers through Green Assist?**

Yes, we want to help these projects as well, especially to bring them as close as possible to financial viability. But for us, the financial viability is not a "must have" as long as the project attracts sufficient financial resources.

#### **5.5 Does Green Assist cooperate with the advisory under the Innovation Fund of the European Investment Bank?**

Green Assist works through the InvestEU Advisory Hub. Projects therein are getting allocated to the best-suited advisory service based on so-called 'best-fit checks'.

### **Engagement outside of projects**

#### **6.1 Will there be a way for the Green Assist expert community to engage in wider transversal interaction between participants?**





We are planning regular expert engagement activities, such as webinars, roundtable discussions and panels where an expert can share their experiences and engage with other experts to discuss advisory services in general as well as results from specific Green Assist projects.

### **6.2 Outside of projects and expert engagement activities, what else is expected from me as an expert?**

You are encouraged to communicate and promote Green Assist not only to contacts in your network that would have relevant expertise but also to private and public entities that might benefit from Green Assist advisory services. You may also communicate that you have been selected as a Green Assist Expert once you have been onboarded in the Roster of Experts. In the context of a Green Assist assignment, the Expert contract, as well as the Advisory Assignment Fiche will frame communication. At the request of the Beneficiary, the latter may contain specific confidentiality provisions (or reference to a side confidentiality agreement).

### **6.3 Do you have a budget to pay for the time you ask us to spend as experts to be actively engaged in the community, disseminate information about the program, and acquire companies to come with Green Assist requests?**

No, at the moment we do not have a budget to pay for experts to be actively engaged in the community. We see that the need for reducing the footprint of investment is overarching, so we hope that experts will take it so seriously that the very fact of bringing a new project or being actively engaged will provide sufficient remuneration. In the future, Green Assist is open to considering some sort of accreditation, whereby the engagement of a given expert to promote Green Assist, could be signalled to the general public.

### **6.4 Are there any materials available to experts for information and promotion?**

To support sharing information, you can find on the Green Assist website two info sheets (one for [experts](#); one for [project promoters](#)) and a short [video](#) (with highlights from a Green Assist Info Session) that you can distribute among likeminded experts, as well as private and public entities in charge of promising projects who may be interested to apply as potential Beneficiaries of the Green Assist advisory services. Furthermore, ad-hoc material coming from the experts' engagement activities will be shared with the participants.

### **6.5 How can we engage potential Beneficiaries with a prospective project? Will you provide some marketing material to experts helping to engage them?**

The best is to first inform them about the existence of Green Assist. There is already a lot of info material on the website that you can share (see 6.4). In addition, there is also the LinkedIn page and you can encourage them to read the guide for applicants and then simply apply. If they have questions about Green Assist, you are welcome to refer them to the Project Helpdesk ([Projects-GreenAssist@ecorys.com](mailto:Projects-GreenAssist@ecorys.com)) and we are happy to help them out.