

## **CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR THE SELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE EXPERT GROUP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU SOIL STRATEGY**

The Commission's Directorate-General Environment extends the call for applications and welcomes further applications until 15 May 2022 included.

The applicants who already sent their applications between 30/03 and 04/04 do not need to re-apply under this extended call.

### **1. Background**

In 2015, the Commission established in line with the 7th Environment Action Plan<sup>1</sup>, an EU expert group on soil protection with representatives appointed by the Member States to reflect on how soil quality issues could be addressed using a targeted and proportionate risk-based approach within a binding legal framework.<sup>2</sup>

The EU Soil Strategy for 2030<sup>3</sup> adopted on 17 November 2021 announced that the Commission would enlarge and complement the EU expert group on soil protection with additional stakeholders from businesses, professional organizations, academia and civil society to improve the representativeness and balance of views. The mandate of the new enlarged expert group is to provide advice and expertise to the Commission for the implementation of the EU Soil Strategy for 2030, including for the development of the proposal for the Soil Health Law.

The Commission's Directorate-General for Environment (DG ENV) is in charge of establishing and managing the enlarged soil expert group, which will be set up for an unlimited duration. The enlarged expert group on the implementation of the EU Soil Strategy will replace the EU expert group for soil protection.

The group's overall mission shall be to support the European Commission in realising the medium- and long-term objectives of the EU Soil Strategy, the vision to get all soil ecosystems in healthy condition by 2050, and to make protection, sustainable use and restoration of soil the norm by then.

The group will advise the Commission and provide expertise on the implementation of the actions of the Soil Strategy, including the development of the proposal for the Soil Health Law. As specified in the Soil Strategy, the expert group will also help to develop the indicators for soil health and their range of values that should be achieved by 2050 to ensure a level playing field and a high level of environmental and health protection.

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<sup>1</sup> Cfr. paragraph 25 of Decision No 1386/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 on a General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020 'Living well, within the limits of our planet'

<sup>2</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=3336>

<sup>3</sup> COM(2021)699

The expert group shall assist the Commission by providing its views on the issues identified in the Soil Strategy and sharing good practises, methodologies, tools and policies that are relevant to implement the actions. Coordination of soil policy with other domains like biodiversity, water, circular economy, climate, health, agriculture, research and other environmental policies will be necessary.

Discussions in the expert group are complementary and not intended to replace formal consultations on the specific actions or initiatives announced in the Soil Strategy, including the upcoming legal proposals. Implementation of existing relevant legislation in the different policy areas with a link to soil shall continue to take place in the dedicated fora put in place for this purpose.

Being at the core of the new governance framework for the implementation of the Strategy, the expert group shall seek synergies with partner initiatives such as the EU Soil Observatory (EUSO)<sup>4</sup>, the EIONET National Reference Centre on Soil<sup>5</sup>, EU agencies (EEA, EFSA, ECHA), the soil research networks and the Horizon Europe Mission 'A Soil Deal for Europe'<sup>6</sup>. The expert group should also exchange and coordinate with networks such as the Global Soil Partnership of the FAO and its European Soil Partnership. Close collaboration will be promoted with other relevant initiatives and Commission expert groups<sup>7</sup>.

The group's specific tasks shall be:

- 1) to assist the Commission in the preparation of the proposal of the Soil Health Law and its impact assessment, including inter alia:
  - indicators for soil health and their range of values;
  - requirements for the sustainable use of soil so that its capacity to deliver ecosystem services is not hampered;
  - monitoring and reporting on the condition of soil;
  - improving the legal basis for the Land Use/Cover Area frame Survey (LUCAS);
  - options to identify, register and remediate contaminated sites, and to apply the polluter pays principle;
  - reporting on the progress in managing soil contamination;
  - measures that can contribute to reducing nutrient losses by at least 50% without deterioration in soil fertility (resulting in the reduction of fertiliser use by at least 20%);
  - definition of net land take;
  - monitoring and reporting on progress towards national land take targets and for implementing the land take hierarchy;
  - options for a soil health certificate for land transactions to provide land buyers with information on the key characteristics and health of the soils in the site they intend to purchase;
  - options for a passport for excavated soil;

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<sup>4</sup> [https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/eu-soil-observatory-euso\\_en](https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/eu-soil-observatory-euso_en)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.eionet.europa.eu/countries/national-reference-centres/nrc-on-soil>

<sup>6</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/missions-horizon-europe/soil-health-and-food\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/missions-horizon-europe/soil-health-and-food_en)

<sup>7</sup> For example, the expert groups established to implement the water, zero pollution, biodiversity, climate, circular economy, nitrates and industrial emission objectives, as well as other relevant legislation.

- adequate integration and coordination of soil and water management.
- 2) to exchange views, experiences, best practices, methodologies, policies, tools and measures in view of the implementation of the actions of the Soil Strategy.
  - 3) to assist the Commission by identifying and addressing social, economic and cultural barriers to the transition towards healthy soils, and by acting as a core group of stakeholders to facilitate discussions and promote this transition in the economy and society.
  - 4) to review and give feedback on ideas and draft actions such as e.g. the benchmarking of the streams of excavated soils, the revised soil sealing guidelines, the list of sustainable soil management practices, the “test your soil for free” initiative, creation and operation of the network of practitioners and soil ambassadors, the exchange of information and knowledge on risk assessment, improvement of financing of projects that promote sustainable soil management, the guidance on EU funding opportunities, etc.
  - 5) to provide expertise and advice on establishing common methodologies and definitions with regards to assessing desertification and land degradation, soil health, soil contamination, land take, etc.

The group will meet in principle twice per year.

**The Commission is calling for applications with a view to selecting members of the group other than Member States' authorities.**

## **2. Features of the Group**

### **2.1. COMPOSITION**

Members shall be organisations in the broadest sense, including companies, associations, non-governmental organizations, trade unions, universities, research institutes, law firms, consultancies (type C members) and Member States' authorities at national, regional or local level (type D members). The number of organisations which are members shall be maximum 50. Type C members shall include:

1. Up to 10 fora, networks or scientific organisations with coverage at transnational or European level, relevant to the topics and actions of the Soil Strategy.
2. Up to 20 organizations representing business and financial sectors with coverage at transnational or European level, including SMEs, e.g. in areas like producing industry, waste management and recycling, food and beverage, water management, nutrient management, energy, mining and raw materials, chemicals, construction and land use planning, agriculture and forestry, health, finance, soil remediation, environmental services, etc.
3. Up to 20 civil society organisations with coverage at transnational or European level with an interest in sustainable soil management, e.g. in areas like health protection, environmental protection, sustainable agriculture, land tenure, citizen and consumer rights, soil and biodiversity protection, waste reduction, etc.

Member States' authorities and organisations shall nominate their representatives and shall be responsible for ensuring that their representatives provide a high level of

expertise. The Commission's Directorate-General for Environment may refuse the nomination by an organisation of a representative by an organisation if it considers this nomination inappropriate in light of the requirements specified in chapter 4 of this call. In such case, the organisation concerned shall be asked to appoint another representative.

## **2.2. APPOINTMENT**

Members shall be appointed by the Director-General of DG ENV from applicants complying with the requirements referred to in chapter 4 of this call.

Members shall be appointed for 5 years. They shall remain in office until replaced/until the end of their term of office. Their term of office may be renewed once for 5 years.

Registration in the Transparency Register<sup>8</sup> is required in order for organisations to be appointed.

In order to ensure continuity and the smooth functioning of the group, DG ENV shall establish a reserve list of suitable candidates that may be used to appoint replacements. DG ENV shall ask applicants for their consent before including their names on the reserve list.

Members who are no longer capable of contributing effectively to the group's deliberations, who in the opinion of DG ENV do not comply with the conditions set out in Article 339 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union or who resign, shall no longer be invited to participate in any meetings of the group and may be replaced for the remainder of their term of office.

## **2.3 RULES OF ENGAGEMENT AND OPERATION OF THE GROUP**

The group shall be chaired by a representative of DG ENV.

The group shall act at the request of DG ENV, in compliance with the Commission's horizontal rules on expert groups ('the horizontal rules')<sup>9</sup>.

In principle, the group shall meet 2 times per year in Commission premises in Brussels. DG ENV shall provide secretarial services.

Members and members' representatives should be prepared to attend meetings systematically, to contribute actively to discussions in the group, to be involved in preparatory work ahead of meetings, to examine and provide comments on documents under discussion, and to act, as appropriate, as 'rapporteurs' on *ad hoc* basis.

As a general rule, working documents will be drafted in English and meetings will be also conducted in English.

the group shall adopt its opinions, recommendations or reports by consensus.

In agreement with the DG ENV, the group may, by simple majority of its members, decide that deliberations shall be public.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/homePage.do?locale=en#en>. This is only relevant for individuals appointed to represent a common interest (Type B members) and member organisations (Type C members).

<sup>9</sup> C(2016) 3301.

Participants in the activities of the group and sub-groups shall not be remunerated for the services they offer. Travel and accommodation expenses incurred by participants in the activities of the group and sub-groups shall be reimbursed by the Commission. Reimbursement shall be made in accordance with the provisions in force within the Commission and within the limits of the available appropriations allocated to the Commission departments under the annual procedure for the allocation of resources.

The members of the group and their representatives, as well as invited experts and observers, are subject to the obligation of professional secrecy, which by virtue of the Treaties and the rules implementing them applies to all members of the institutions and their staff, as well as to the Commission's rules on security regarding the protection of Union classified information, laid down in Commission Decisions (EU, Euratom) 2015/443<sup>10</sup> and 2015/444<sup>11</sup>. Should they fail to respect these obligations, the Commission may take all appropriate measures.

On a proposal by and in agreement with DG ENV the group shall adopt its rules of procedure on the basis of the standard rules of procedure for expert groups.

DG ENV may invite experts with specific expertise with respect to a subject matter on the agenda to take part in the work of the group or sub-groups on an ad hoc basis.

Organisations may be granted an observer status, in compliance with the horizontal rules, by direct invitation. Organisations appointed as observers shall nominate their representatives. Observers and their representatives may be permitted by the Chair to take part in the discussions of the group and provide expertise. However, they shall not participate in the formulation of recommendations or advice of the group and sub-groups.

DG ENV may set up sub-groups for the purpose of examining specific questions on the basis of terms of reference defined by DG ENV. Sub-groups shall operate in compliance with the horizontal rules and shall report to the group. They shall be dissolved as soon as their mandate is fulfilled. The members of sub-groups that are not members of the group shall be selected via a public call for applications.

## **2.4. TRANSPARENCY**

### **THE GROUP SHALL BE REGISTERED IN THE REGISTER OF COMMISSION EXPERT GROUPS AND OTHER SIMILAR ENTITIES ('THE REGISTER OF EXPERT GROUPS')<sup>12</sup>.**

As concerns the group and sub-groups composition, DG ENV shall publish the following data on the Register of expert groups:

- the name of Member States' authorities;
- the name of member organisations; the interest represented shall be disclosed;
- the name of observers.

DG ENV shall make available all relevant documents, including the agendas, the minutes and the participants' submissions, either on the Register of expert groups or via a

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<sup>10</sup> Commission Decision (EU, Euratom) 2015/443 of 13 March 2015 on Security in the Commission (OJ L 72, 17.3.2015, p. 41).

<sup>11</sup> Commission Decision (EU, Euratom) 2015/444 of 13 March 2015 on the security rules for protecting EU classified information (OJ L 72, 17.3.2015, p. 53).

<sup>12</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm>

link from the Register to a dedicated website, where this information can be found. Access to dedicated websites shall not be submitted to user registration or any other restriction. In particular, DG ENV shall ensure publication of the agenda and other relevant background documents in due time ahead of the meeting, followed by timely publication of minutes. Exceptions to publication shall only be foreseen where it is deemed that disclosure of a document would undermine the protection of a public or private interest as defined in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) N° 1049/2001<sup>13</sup>.

Personal data shall be collected, processed and published in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 2018/1725.

### **3. Application procedure**

Interested organisations are invited to submit their application to the European Commission, DG ENV.

Applications must be completed in one of the official languages of the European Union. However, applications in English would facilitate the evaluation procedure. If another language is used, it would be helpful to include a summary of the application in English.

Organisations shall indicate the name of their representative(s) in the group.

An application will be deemed admissible only if it is sent by the deadline and includes the documents referred to below. All documents submitted by applicants should be duly filled in, legible, signed and numbered sequentially.

#### Supporting documents

Each application shall include the following documents:

- a cover letter explaining the applicant's motivation for answering this call and stating what contribution the applicant could make to the group;
- a classification form duly filled in specifying the member category for which the application is made (Annex I);
- a selection criteria form duly filled in documenting how the applicant fulfills the selection criteria listed in chapter 4 of this call (Annex II).

Additional supporting documents (e.g. publications) may be requested at a later stage.

For individuals indicated by organisations as their representatives, a *curriculum vitae* (CV) shall also be provided, preferably not exceeding three pages. All CVs shall be submitted in the European format (<https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/curriculum-vitae/templates-instructions>).

#### Deadline for application

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<sup>13</sup> These exceptions are intended to protect public security, military affairs, international relations, financial, monetary or economic policy, privacy and integrity of the individual, commercial interests, court proceedings and legal advice, inspections/investigations/audits and the institution's decision-making process.

The duly signed applications must be sent by 15 May 2022 at the latest. The date of sending will be established as follows:

- Where applications are sent by e-mail to the following e-mail address: [ENV-SOIL@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ENV-SOIL@ec.europa.eu), the date of the e-mail will be the date of sending.
- Where applications are sent by post to the following address: European Commission, DG ENV, Unit D1 secretariat – 19 avenue d’Auderghem, 1040 Brussels, B-1049 Brussels, the postmark will be considered the date of sending.

#### 4. Selection criteria

DG ENV will take the following criteria into account when assessing applications:

- proven and relevant competence and experience, including at European and / or international level, in areas relevant to soil health;
  - i. Soil and the ecosystem services it provides
  - ii. Soil for climate change mitigation and adaptation
  - iii. Soil and the circular economy (re-use of excavated soils, land re-use, soil biological cycle)
  - iv. Soil biodiversity for human, animal and plant health, including the risk from invasive alien species
  - v. Soil for healthy water resources
  - vi. Sustainable soil management
  - vii. Preventing desertification
  - viii. Preventing soil pollution and restoring degraded soils and remediating contaminated sites
  - ix. Soil data and monitoring as well as soil research and innovation
  - x. Enabling transition to healthy soil through private finance and EU funding, as well as improving soil literacy and societal engagement
  - xi. Soil governance
- proven and relevant competence of the organisation to assist the Commission in the preparation of policy initiatives, legislative proposals, guidance documents, reports or other policy documents in the field of biodiversity;
- representativeness and significance of the organisation at European level in relation to an integrated approach to biodiversity;
- competence, experience and hierarchical level of the proposed representatives that ensure their capacity to provide effective contribution to the group’s work;
- good knowledge of the English language by the proposed representatives allowing their active participation in the discussions.

## 5. Selection procedure

The selection procedure shall consist of an assessment of the applications performed by DG ENV against the selection criteria listed in chapter 4 of this call, followed by the establishment of a list of the most suitable applicants, and concluded by the appointment of the members of the group.

When defining the composition of the group, DG ENV shall aim at ensuring, as far as possible, a high level of expertise, as well as a balanced representation of relevant know-how and areas of interest, while taking into account the specific tasks of the group, the type of expertise required, as well as the relevance of the applications received.

For any further information please contact:

- e-mail: [ENV-SOIL@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ENV-SOIL@ec.europa.eu)
- telephone : +32 (0)2 2911111

### ANNEXES:

- Annex I: Classification form
- Annex II: Selection criteria form
- Annex III: Privacy statement



## Annex I - Classification form<sup>14</sup>

### To be filled in by all applicants

This application is made as: **An organisation (Type C member)**.

Transparency Register identification number: [...]

***Nota Bene concerning Type C members:*** although registration in the Transparency Register (TR) is required in order to be appointed as a Type B or C member of an expert group, it is not mandatory for the application procedure. Thus, interested individuals and organisations that at the time of the application are not featured yet on TR and, as a consequence, do not have a TR identification number, may still apply. However, should the applicant be selected as a result of the call for applications, it shall register in the TR as a condition to be appointed as a Type B or C member.

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### To be filled in by organisations applying to be appointed as Type C members

This application is made as the following **type of organisation**: (*please select only one option, taking into account the definitions indicated below*).

- a) Academia, Research Institutes and Think Tanks
- b) Banks/Financial institutions
- c) Companies/groups
- d) Law firms
- e) NGOs
- f) Professionals' associations
- g) Professional consultancies
- h) Trade and business associations
- i) Trade unions
- j) Other (please specify):

### Definitions for organisation types

#### **Academia, Research Institutes and Think Tanks**

Universities, schools, research centers, think tanks and other similar bodies performing academic and/or educational activities.

#### **Banks/Financial institutions**

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<sup>14</sup> This form must be filled in, signed and returned with the application.

Banks and other similar bodies providing financial services, including financial intermediation. All sorts of banks should be classified within this category, including national central banks.

### **Companies/groups**

Individual companies or groups of companies operating in the business sector, whether they are national companies or multinational ones.

### **Law firms**

Business entities formed by one or more lawyers to engage in the practice of law. The primary service rendered by a law firm is to advise clients (individuals or corporations) about their legal rights and responsibilities, and to represent clients in civil or criminal cases, business transactions, and other matters in which legal advice and other assistance are sought.

### **NGOs**

Non-profit organisations which are independent from public authorities and commercial organisations. Some NGOs are organised around specific issues, such as environment, consumer affairs, health and human rights.

### **Professionals' associations**

Non-profit organisations seeking to further the interests of individuals engaged in a particular profession, such as physicians, nurses, architects, engineers and lawyers. Professionals' associations are different from business associations, as they promote and defend the interests of individuals carrying on a specific profession, not the interests of companies operating in the business sector.

### **Professional consultancies**

Firms carrying on, on behalf of clients, activities involving advocacy, lobbying, promotion, public affairs and relations with public authorities.

### **Trade and business associations**

Private bodies representing the interests of its members operating in the business sector.

### **Trade unions**

Organisations of workers. The most common activities performed by trade unions include the negotiation of wages, work rules, rules governing hiring, firing and promotion of workers.

### **Other organisations**

Organisations which are not possible to classify in any other category.

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To be filled in by organisations applying to be appointed as Type C members

The applicant shall represent the following **interest**: (*please select one or more options, taking into account the definitions indicated below*):

- a) Academia/Research
- b) Civil society
- c) Employees/Workers
- d) Finance
- e) Industry
- f) Professionals
- g) SMEs
- h) Other (please specify):

#### Definitions for interests represented

##### **Academia/Research**

Universities, schools, research centers, think tanks and other similar bodies performing academic and/or educational activities.

##### **Civil society**

Civil society can be defined as the aggregate of non-governmental organisations and institutions that manifest interests and will of citizens or as individuals and organisations in a society which are independent of the government.

##### **Employees/workers**

Individuals working part-time or full-time under a contract of employment whether oral or written, express or implied, and having recognised rights and duties.

##### **Finance**

The management of revenues or the conduct or transaction of money matters, as in the fields of banking, insurance and investment.

##### **Industry**

Companies and groups of companies whose number of employees and turnover or balance sheet total are higher than the ones of SMEs (see below).

##### **Professionals**

Individuals operating in a particular profession, such as physicians, nurses, architects, engineers and lawyers.

##### **SMEs**

"SME" stands for small and medium-sized enterprises – as defined in EU law: [EU recommendation 2003/361](#).

The main factors determining whether a company is an SME are:

1. **number of employees** and
2. either **turnover** or **balance sheet total**.

Company category Employees Turnover or Balance sheet total

Medium-sized      < 250      ≤ € 50 m    ≤ € 43 m

Small              < 50        ≤ € 10 m    ≤ € 10 m

Micro              < 10        ≤ € 2 m     ≤ € 2 m

These ceilings apply to the figures for individual firms only. A firm which is part of larger grouping may need to include employee/turnover/balance sheet data from that grouping too.

#### **Other interest**

Interest which is not possible to classify in any other category.

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To be filled in by individuals applying to be appointed as Type A or B members and organisations applying to be appointed as Type C members

Please select one **or more policy areas** in which your organisation operates:

- Agriculture
- Archaeology
- Architecture
- Audiovisual and media
- Audit
- Banking
- Biodiversity
- Civil protection
- Civil service
- Climate
- Competition
- Conservation
- Consumer affairs
- Culture
- Cultural heritage
- Cultural landscape
- Customs
- Development
- Disaster risk reduction
- Economy
- Education
- Employment and social affairs
- Energy
- Engineering (chemical)
- Engineering (civil)
- Engineering (infrastructure)
- Engineering (IT)
- Engineering (maritime)
- Engineering (space policy)
- Engineering (space research)
- Enlargement
- Environment
- Equal opportunities
- External relations
- External trade
- Finance
- Fisheries and aquaculture
- Food safety
- Forestry
- Fundamental rights
- Humanitarian aid
- Industry
- Information society
- Innovation
- Insurance
- Labour
- Land management
- Law (civil)

- Law (corporate)
- Law (criminal)
- Law (taxation)
- Linguistics and terminology
- Livestock
- Medical profession
- Migration
- Natural resources
- Plant production
- Public affairs
- Public health
- Public relations
- Raw materials
- Research
- Science
- Science diplomacy
- Security
- Smart specialisation
- Social service
- Space and satellites (policy)
- Space and satellites (research)
- Sport
- Statistics
- Sustainable development
- Systemic eco-innovation
- Tax
- Trade
- Training
- Transport
- Urban development
- Water
- Youth
- Other

For organisations applying to be appointed as Type C members

Name of the organisation<sup>15</sup>: .....

Surname of the representative proposed: .....

First name of the representative proposed: .....

Surname of the person applying on behalf of the organisation: .....

First name of the person applying on behalf of the organisation: .....

Date: .....

Signature .....

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<sup>15</sup> Idem.

## Annex II: Selection criteria form<sup>16</sup>

Applicants are requested to describe how they fulfil the selection criteria listed in this call.

Proven and relevant competence and experience, including at European and/or international level, in areas relevant to soil health	
Proven and relevant competence of the organisation to assist the Commission in the preparation of policy initiatives, legislative proposals, guidance documents, reports or other policy documents in the field of biodiversity	
Representativeness and significance of the organisation at European level in relation to an integrated approach to biodiversity	
Competence, experience and hierarchical level of the proposed representatives that ensure their capacity to provide effective contribution to the group's work	
Good knowledge of the English language by the proposed representatives allowing their active participation in the discussions.	

For organisations applying to be appointed as Type C members

Name of the organisation<sup>17</sup>: .....

Surname of the representative proposed: .....

First name of the representative proposed: .....

Surname of the person applying on behalf of the organisation: .....

First name of the person applying on behalf of the organisation: .....

Date: .....

Signature .....

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<sup>16</sup> This form must be filled in, signed and returned with the application.

<sup>17</sup> Idem.

## Annex III Privacy Statement



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

### PROTECTION OF YOUR PERSONAL DATA

**This privacy statement provides information about the processing and the protection of your personal data.**

**Processing operation:** *Selection of members of Commission expert groups and other similar entities<sup>18</sup> and publication of personal data on the Register of Commission expert groups and other similar entities ("the Register of expert groups").*

**Data Controller:**

- *Secretariat-General, Unit F4 (for the processing operation "Providing a public register of Commission expert groups and other similar entities", DPR-EC-00656), and*
- *DG ENVIRONMENT/ Directorate D / Unit D.1 Land Use and Management (for the processing operation "Selection of members of Commission expert groups and other similar entities", DPR-EC-01066).*

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<sup>18</sup> Provisions included in this privacy statement referring to expert groups equally apply to their sub-groups.



## **1. Introduction**

The European Commission (hereafter ‘the Commission’) is committed to protect your personal data and to respect your privacy. The Commission collects and further processes personal data pursuant to [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.

This privacy statement explains the reasons for the processing of your personal data, the way we collect, handle and ensure protection of all personal data provided, how that information is used and what rights you have in relation to your personal data. It also specifies the contact details of the responsible Data Controller with whom you may exercise your rights, of the Data Protection Officer and of the European Data Protection Supervisor.

This privacy statement concerns the following processing operations:

(1) “**selection of members of Commission expert groups and other similar entities**” undertaken by the Commission department which runs the selection process for your expert group and which is the Data Controller for the selection process [*DG ENV, Unit D1, Land Use and Management*], and

(2) “**publication of personal data on the Register of expert groups and other similar entities**” undertaken by the Commission, Secretariat-General, Unit G.4 which is the Data Controller together with the Commission department managing your expert group.

As a rule, the selection of expert group members is carried out via public calls for applications, except for Member States’ authorities and other public entities and for certain representative bodies established by Union legislation for advice in specific areas.

The Register of expert groups and other similar entities is a public database containing a list of Commission expert groups and other similar entities and their sub-groups. For each expert group, the Register provides valuable information including personal data on the members of the expert groups, and their alternate, if any, members’ representatives, as well as of the groups’ observers and their representatives. The Register also includes documents that are produced and discussed by expert groups and which can contain personal data.

For the purpose of this privacy statement and the corresponding records, the term “expert groups” describes Commission expert groups in the sense of Article 2(1) of Commission Decision C(2016)3301<sup>19</sup> and their sub-groups, as well as other similar entities in the sense of Article 2(2) of Commission Decision C(2016)3301 and their sub-groups.

## **2. Why and how do we process your personal data?**

Purpose of the processing operations:

The Data Controllers collect and use your personal data to manage Commission expert groups, in particular by selecting their members and observers, and to ensure transparency on expert groups’ membership and activities. In that context, in order to select among the applicants who best fulfil the selection criteria mentioned in the call for applications, Commission services

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<sup>19</sup> Commission Decision C(2016)3301 of 30 May 2016 establishing horizontal rules on the creation and operation of Commission expert groups.

collect and assess personal information of candidate members and observers of the expert groups, of representatives of candidate members and observers, and of immediate family members of candidate members and observers appointed in personal capacity.

Furthermore, Commission services collect and assess personal information of observers and members' and observers' representatives of the expert groups which are not selected through a public call for applications.

For candidates, personal data is stored by the Commission service managing the expert group. Some types of personal data of individuals appointed as members (either appointed in personal capacity to act independently and in the public interest or to represent a common interest shared by stakeholders in a particular policy area) are made publicly available on the Register of expert groups (as described under Headings 4 and 5 of this privacy statement). The names of the representatives of organisations, Member States and other public entities, as well as the name of specific national departments or other public authority which they represent may also be made publicly available on the Register of expert groups.

Your personal data will not be used for an automated decision-making including profiling.

### **3. On what legal ground(s) do we process your personal data**

We process your personal data, because processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest (Article 5(1)(a) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725), since it allows for the selection of members of expert groups (individuals appointed as members in a personal capacity, individuals appointed to represent a common interest and organisations) and also increases the transparency on expert groups. Processing is also necessary to comply with a legal obligation to which the controller is subject (Article 5(1)(b) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725). The Union act for such necessary processing under Article 5(1)(a) and (b) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 is Commission Decision C(2016)3301 of 30 May 2016 establishing horizontal rules on the creation and operation of Commission expert groups and in particular Articles 10 and 22 thereof.

As regards, in particular, the declarations of interests filled in by candidate members to be appointed in a personal capacity in expert groups, the processing of personal data serves the public interest of enabling the Commission to verify in the process of selection the experts' independence in providing advice to the Commission. Furthermore, the public disclosure of declarations of interests of those experts once appointed allows for public scrutiny of the interests declared by these experts, which is necessary in order to ensure public confidence in the independence of these experts. The public disclosure of declarations of interests also ensures a high degree of transparency with respect to the membership of expert groups and aims at contributing to fostering the integrity of the experts in question.

Any publication of names of the representatives of organisations, Member States' authorities and other public entities in the Register of expert groups is based on consent (Article 5(1)(d) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725).

### **4. Which personal data do we collect and further process?**

In order to carry out these processing operations, the Data Controller may collect the following categories of personal data:

- *Name;*
- *Function;*

- *Contact details (for example, e-mail address, telephone number, mobile telephone number, fax number, postal address, company and department, country of residence, IP address);*
- *Information for the evaluation of selection criteria or eligibility criteria (for example, expertise, technical skills and languages, educational background, professional experience, including details on current and past employment);*
- *Nationality;*
- *Gender;*
- *Interest represented (only for individuals applying to be appointed as members of expert groups or sub-groups representing a common interest shared by stakeholders in a particular policy area and for organisations applying to be appointed as members of expert groups or sub-groups, as well as for their designated representatives);*
- *Information included in the declarations of interests, including personal data of immediate family members as required in the declaration of interests (only for individuals applying to be appointed as members of expert groups or sub-groups in a personal capacity).*

The provision to the Commission service of the personal data required is mandatory to meet a legal requirement of selecting members of expert groups as set in Commission Decision C(2016)3301. In principle, the types of personal data listed above (with the exception of contact details and information for the evaluation of selection criteria or eligibility criteria) are made publicly available on the Register of expert groups, in order to comply with the legal requirement to ensure transparency on the composition and functioning of Commission expert groups. If you do not provide the personal data required, possible consequences are that you will not be considered for selection as a member of an expert group or, if already selected, your membership will be suspended.

With the prior freely given, specific, informed and unambiguous consent of the representatives of organisations, Member States' authorities and other public entities, their names may also be published on the Register of expert groups.

##### **5. How long do we keep your personal data?**

The Data Controller only keeps your personal data for the time necessary to fulfil the purpose of collection or further processing. The following modalities apply:

- The competent Commission services keep personal data submitted to them as part of rejected applications for three years after the end of the selection process and do not process them for other purposes; these personal data are not published on the Register of expert groups.
- The expert group and some types of personal data of its members and observers, as described in Heading 4, are published on the Register of expert groups during the duration of existence of the expert group.
- When an individual is no longer member or observer or representative of a member or observer of an expert group listed in the Register of expert groups, all personal data related to this individual, including a declaration of interests, is removed from the Register and is therefore not public anymore.
- The competent Commission services keep personal data for the period during which the relevant individual is a member or an observer or a representative of a member or of an observer of the group and for five years after the date on which the individual is no longer member or observer or representative of a member or observer of the group.
- When a group is closed down, it remains published in the Register of expert groups for five years, with the indication 'Closed'. Those types of personal data other than the

declarations of interests of members appointed in personal capacity that were published while the group was active remain visible on the Register of expert groups during these five years. On the contrary, the said declarations of interests are removed from the Register after closure of a group and are therefore not public anymore; they are however kept by the competent Commission service for a period of five years after the closure of the group.

- An XML file is created daily with all the information regarding active groups. All versions of this file, showing the situation of the Register of expert groups as of the day it was created, are stored in a file server for 5 years and are not public.

## **6. How do we protect and safeguard your personal data?**

Personal data submitted in paper form is stored in the competent Commission service. All personal data in electronic format (e-mails, documents, databases, uploaded batches of data, etc.) are stored *[either]* on the servers of the Commission. All processing operations are carried out pursuant to the [Commission Decision \(EU, Euratom\) 2017/46](#) of 10 January 2017 on the security of communication and information systems in the European Commission.

In order to protect your personal data, the Commission has put in place a number of technical and organisational measures. Technical measures include appropriate actions to address online security, risk of data loss, alteration of data or unauthorised access, taking into consideration the risk presented by the processing and the nature of the personal data being processed. Organisational measures include restricting access to the personal data solely to authorised persons with a legitimate need to know for the purposes of this processing operation.

## **7. Who has access to your personal data and to whom is it disclosed?**

Access to your personal data collected in the course of the process of selection of members of expert groups is provided to the Commission staff authorised for carrying out this processing operation and to other authorised Commission staff according to the “need to know” principle. Such staff abide by statutory, and when required, additional confidentiality agreements.

Certain personal data collected, as explained in Headings 4 and 5, is publicly available on the Register of expert groups.

The XML files referred to in Heading 5 are only accessible to a reduced number of users in the Secretariat-General (System Owner) and IT development team within the Commission (System Supplier).

Please note that pursuant to Article 3(13) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725, public authorities (e.g. Court of Auditors, EU Court of Justice) which may receive personal data in the framework of a particular inquiry in accordance with Union or Member State law shall not be regarded as recipients. The further processing of those data by those public authorities shall be in compliance with the applicable data protection rules according to the purposes of the processing.

The information we collect will not be given to any third party, except to the extent and for the purpose we may be required to do so by law.

## **8. What are your rights and how can you exercise them?**

You have specific rights as a ‘data subject’ under Chapter III (Articles 14-25) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725, in particular the right to access your personal data and to rectify them in case your personal data is inaccurate or incomplete. Under certain conditions, you have the right to erase

your personal data, to restrict the processing of your personal data, to object to the processing and the right to data portability.

You have the right to object to the processing of your personal data on grounds relating to your particular situation in accordance with Article 23(1) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725.

As indicated in Heading 4, if you are a representative of an organisation, Member State or another public entity, you may consent to have your name published on the Register of expert groups. You can withdraw your consent at any time by notifying the Data Controller. The withdrawal will not affect the lawfulness of the processing carried out before you have withdrawn the consent.

Finally, and only as regards the publication of your name on the Register of expert groups, you may submit a request to the competent Commission service for a derogation where justified on compelling legitimate grounds in relation to your specific situation (such as the case where the publication of your name on the Register of expert groups could endanger your security or integrity).

You can exercise your rights by contacting the Data Controller or, in case of conflict, the Data Protection Officer. If necessary, you can also address the European Data Protection Supervisor. Their contact information is given under Heading 9 below.

Where you wish to exercise your rights in the context of one or several specific processing operations, please provide their description (i.e. their Record reference(s) as specified under Heading 10 below) in your request.

Any request for access to personal data will be handled within one month. Any other request mentioned above will be addressed within 15 working days.

## **9. Contact information**

### **- The Data Controller**

Regarding the personal data collected in the course of the process of selection of the members of the expert groups, if you would like to exercise your rights under Regulation (EU) 2018/1725, or if you have comments, questions or concerns, or if you would like to submit a complaint, please contact [functional mailbox of the *[Directorate-General Environment / Directorate D / Unit D1, Land Use and Management* at [ENV-SOIL@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ENV-SOIL@ec.europa.eu).

Likewise, as regards the data published on the Register of expert groups, please contact the corresponding Data Controller Secretariat-General, Unit F4: [SG-EXPERT-GROUPS@ec.europa.eu](mailto:SG-EXPERT-GROUPS@ec.europa.eu).

### **- The Data Protection Officer (DPO) of the Commission**

You may contact the Data Protection Officer ([DATA-PROTECTION-OFFICER@ec.europa.eu](mailto:DATA-PROTECTION-OFFICER@ec.europa.eu)) with regard to issues related to the processing of your personal data under Regulation (EU) 2018/1725.

### **- The European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS)**

You have the right to have recourse (i.e. you can lodge a complaint) to the European Data Protection Supervisor ([edps@edps.europa.eu](mailto:edps@edps.europa.eu)) if you consider that your rights under Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 have been infringed as a result of the processing of your personal data by the Data Controller.

## **10. Where to find more detailed information?**

The Commission Data Protection Officer (DPO) publishes the register of all processing operations on personal data by the Commission, which have been documented and notified to him. You may access the register via the following link: <http://ec.europa.eu/dpo-register>.

These specific processing operations will be included in the DPO's public register with the following Record references: DPR-EC-01066 and DPR-EC-00656.