

Terms of Reference

Job Title:	Project Expert
Type of contract:	Collaborazione Coordinata e Continuativa (“CO.CO.CO.”) under Italian law, short term contract
Starting Date:	2 November 2026
Duration:	6 months

The Central European Initiative

The Central European Initiative (CEI) was established in Budapest on 11 November 1989 as the first intergovernmental forum for regional cooperation in post-Cold War Europe. Its current membership includes 17 countries: Albania, Belarus¹, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Serbia and Ukraine. Since its establishment, the CEI has promoted multilateral diplomacy and regional projects aimed at fostering social, economic and territorial cohesion in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, while contributing to the overarching goals of European integration and sustainable development. The Executive Secretariat of the Central European Initiative (CEI-ES) – seated in Trieste, Italy – provides administrative and conceptual support to all CEI structures; moreover, it manages CEI funds and instruments, while taking appropriate initiatives towards the realisation of the Organisation's mission.

The Project Management Office

The incumbent will join the Project Management Office of the CEI-Executive Secretariat (CEI-ES PMO), which is the structure responsible for the implementation of projects and activities funded by external sources, namely the European Union and the Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia.

Main Tasks

The incumbent will be responsible for assisting CEI-ES Senior Staff/Project Managers in the implementation of the following EU-funded projects:

- ***ASAP – Adriatic Sensitive Areas Protection – Mechanism***

Co-funded by the Interreg IPA ADRION Programme, the project aims to strengthen the protection of the Adriatic Sea against pollution incidents by transferring knowledge and good practices already tested in the Northern Adriatic. The activities include the establishment of common mechanisms for the prevention of and response to maritime pollution incidents. The CEI-Executive Secretariat is the Lead Partner and coordinates all project activities and the partnership.

Duration: 01/09/2024 – 28/02/2027. Total budget: €1,413,387; CEI share: €231,209

- ***BIOSTARS – Bioeconomy Startup Villages for a Sustainable Mediterranean Future***

¹ Suspended of its rights of representation in the CEI “as a consequence of the country's actions in support of the aggression against Ukraine” (Statement by the Bulgarian CEI Presidency and the CEI-Executive Secretariat on the suspension of the Republic of Belarus from the Central European Initiative, 25 March 2022).

Co-funded by the Interreg Euro-MED Programme, the project promotes the development of rural villages dedicated to sustainable bioeconomy in the Mediterranean region through circular solutions and social innovation. It involves six territories in Greece, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Spain and Bosnia and Herzegovina and develops a toolbox to support local communities.

Duration: 01/07/2025 – 30/06/2027. Total budget: €1,500,000; CEI share: €165,000

- ***LINK-AGE – Linking Regions for Innovative and Integrated Senior Care in Central Europe***

Co-funded by the Interreg Central Europe Programme, the project promotes a coordinated and innovative approach to elderly care in Central Europe, addressing challenges related to population ageing, fragmented services and staff shortages. The initiative involves public authorities, service providers, businesses and SMEs, support organisations, universities, research centres and older citizens, strengthening transnational cooperation and the quality and accessibility of care services.

Duration: 01/09/2026 – 31/08/2028. Total budget: €1,241,030; CEI share: €131,560

- ***RIBES – Regional Inclusive Biobased Entrepreneurship Solutions***

Co-funded by Horizon Europe, the project promotes the uptake of bio-based innovations across nine European regions by introducing new governance and business models to support the circular economy and rural development. It fosters resilient and inclusive local ecosystems. The CEI-Executive Secretariat is the Lead Partner and coordinates all project activities and the partnership.

Duration: 01/03/2024 – 28/02/2027. Total budget: €4,999,455; CEI share: €548,750

- ***SUNFLOWER4CE – Redesigning Sustainable Mobility Flows and Functional Linkages Beyond Borders Across Central Europe***

Co-funded by the Interreg Central Europe Programme, SUNFLOWER4CE promotes innovative and collaborative mobility planning in cross-border functional areas, with the aim of ensuring equal opportunities for accessibility and sustainable mobility across neighbouring territories. The initiative involves local and regional authorities, mobility planners and public transport operators, strengthening their governance, planning and implementation capacities while promoting shared and replicable approaches across Central European borders.

Duration: 01/10/2026 – 30/09/2028. Total budget: €1,201,995; CEI share: €60,200

Under the supervision and coordination of the respective Project Managers, the incumbent will contribute to the implementation of the above-mentioned projects by implementing the following tasks:

- Coordination and implementation of project communication and dissemination activities, including digital communication, social media and website management, preparation of communication materials, and basic graphic design and visual content creation.
- Support to project monitoring, reporting and administrative procedures, including data collection, financial and narrative reporting, procurement and audit-related activities.
- Organisation and support of project meetings, events, workshops and transnational activities, including logistics, participant coordination and reporting.

- Preparation, editing and translation of project documents, reports, presentations and official communications in Italian and English, ensuring consistency and quality.
- Administrative support to project implementation, including coordination with partners and suppliers, management of documentation and project records, and compliance with project procedures and deadlines.

Requirements

- University degree (preferably in political science, international relations, communication, public relations, foreign languages/interpretation or any other relevant field).
- Excellent knowledge of English and Italian.
- Good IT and digital skills, including advanced knowledge of the Microsoft Office package, WordPress for web design and content management, social media platforms, and graphic design tools such as Adobe Creative Cloud (Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign) and Canva.
- At least 3 years of professional experience in the field of EU-project management consistent with the tasks listed above.

Type of contract and terms of employment

Gross total contract value: EUR 27,566.00 (6 months), “Collaborazione Coordinata e Continuativa” (CO.CO.CO.) under Italian Law.

The incumbent shall be personally responsible for the payment of taxes, charges or other levies, if any, of the Italian or other State or subdivision thereof with respect to compensation or other payments received from CEI-ES. It is understood that the Headquarters Agreement between the CEI and the Republic of Italy does not exempt Italian nationals or permanent residents from their fiscal responsibilities to the Italian State.

Procedure

Please send your application package (an updated CV and a motivation letter in English) to the following email address: euprojects@cei.int by the deadline set on 30 September 2026 (5 PM CET), with the indication “Project Expert” in the subject. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interviews, tentatively during the timeframe 12-16 October 2026. All steps of this recruitment process will be in line with the provisions of the “Gender Equality Plan 2024 – 2026 of the Central European Initiative – Executive Secretariat”, which is available for download [here](#).