

Information Sheet – Regional Consulting Services

1 Fundamentals of the Regional Consulting Services Instrument

The focus of activities in this ecoplus company division is on the support of infrastructure development.¹ For this reason emphasis is placed not on traditional management consulting, but instead on the process-oriented and specialized consulting for the preparation of regional (tourism) topics, project development and the laying of groundwork for major projects.

Within the framework of Regional Consulting Services, ecoplus organizes project-specific, external specialized consulting services for the professional development of topics and/or projects which may fall under the support competencies of ecoplus. Tendering materials and commissioning decisions are always fine-tuned with the project backers.

The framework below has been compiled on the basis of recommendations made by the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber's Professional Association of Management Consultants and IT², relevant expert literature, and own extensive experience in the area of regional development. The framework constitutes the basis of collaboration between ecoplus and consultancies.

2 Tasks & Areas of Activity

Typical tasks and areas of activity for (tourism-related) services which are assigned to ecoplus include, but are not limited to:

- Provision of facts and other information (branch experience, expert know-how, trends etc.) in order to contribute a more comprehensive and profound base of experience to project development
- Balancing out of possible competence deficiencies in project developer environment (e.g. business administration and/or tourism expertise, etc.) to reduce planning risks
- Creation of well-founded recommendations in problematic situations
- Professional project evaluations (expertise)
- Professional topical preparations (policy studies etc.)
- Creation of business concepts and feasibility studies for major projects
- Regional (tourism-related) tendering and product development projects
- Initiation and supervision of change processes.

The following tasks (list is by no way complete) are on the other hand NOT suited for external services for a variety of reasons:

- Project management (inasmuch as it is counted among the core responsibilities of existing tourism organizations)
- Typical administrative services (event organization, prize ceremonies, secretarial duties etc.) for which no specific service know-how is required
- On-site operative activities which may be better and more efficiently provided by local, regionally-anchored organizations active in these areas
- Chairing of normal meetings
- Creation of marketing materials.

3 Requirements of Consultants

A "management consultant" trade license must be submitted once.

Furthermore, a signed voluntary agreement to act in accordance with the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber's "Occupational Guidelines and Rules of Conduct for Management Consultants"³ (duty to exercise due diligence; expertise; autonomy; personal responsibility; credibility; integrity; fair competition and cooperation; fee guidelines; and advertising) must be submitted once to ecoplus.

In accordance with the collaboration modalities described here, the following types of management consultant contracts with ecoplus are barred in which (list of examples below is a selection and not comprehensive):

- persons from the project backer system are also members of the management consulting team;
- consultants are engaged in lobbying for project implementation as project proponents;
- persons and/or companies possessing a different trade license offer services typical of tourism organizations;⁴
- consultants otherwise employed in organizations whose area/s of activity may lead to potential conflicts of interest.

4 Preconditions for Successful Consulting

- Clearly-defined brief/tasks
- Measurability and perceptibility of intended changes
- Separation of roles (client – consultant – regional situation – governmental offices)
- Anchoring of project supervision and subsequent implementation with existing (tourism) organization/s
- Agreement

- Clear framework: schedule (begin, milestones, finish); social aspects (who should be integrated in which way, and when?); and at a business level (differentiating non-consultant tasks)
- Final report or findings reports and/or presentation materials to document performance (in most cases).

5 Typical Minimum Requirements of Tenders and Invitations to Tender

- Description of point of departure and issue/problem
- Concrete objectives of consulting services
- Maximum budgetary limits⁵
- Information on relevant participants and their involvement
- Framework of the tender
- Time table including where applicable milestones
- Payment modalities

6 Typical Minimum Requirements of Bids

- Details on services offered (incl. separate project stages) and activities (process, order) as well as type of service method used for each project stage
- Detailed description of project stages (service package and/or contents)
- Time and fees required for each project stage, incl. terms of payment
- References relevant to project (including client, project title, task and year)
- Project team (including assignment and scope of tasks among members) and list of all sub-contractors (including their tasks and scope of activities in the project, number of persons and references)
- Attachment: trade license "Management Consultant"

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Footnotes:

¹ In contrast to the Business Promotion and Tourism departments which are responsible for companies

² In accordance with www.ubit.at/standesregeln (UBIT is an acronym for the German "Fachverband Unternehmensberatung und IT")

³ see also www.ubit.at/standesregeln

⁴ unless it has explicitly to do with tasks such as PR consulting, coaching, mediation, change management, market research etc. for which the "UBIT" (Professional Association of Management Consultants and IT) trade license is not essential

⁵ In the interest of competition, only recommended in the case of easily calculated bids