VIRKON
Innovation & Business Excellence

Code of Conduct

< 23-COC-001>

VIRKON Advisors & Consultants

All VIRKON advisors are obliged to comply with the following code of conduct for all assignments.

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Introduction:

This Code of Conduct aims to establish a set of minimum rules, which individual advisors, consultants* or affiliate consultancies, offering services to support VIRKON clients, are obliged to comply with.

Notwithstanding the fact that Consultants must comply with the letter and the spirit of the law, they must also follow a set of business ethics principles such as quality of service, transparency, social and environmental responsibility, fairness of competition.

VIRKON therefore comply with the EIC* Board designed Code of Conduct with these principles in mind.

*1 The term 'consultant' includes all types of consultants (individuals) or consultancies (companies) providing consultancy services to their Clients on European Innovation Council calls, projects, and initiatives (e.g., EIC Accelerator) in exchange for any type of remuneration or success fee.

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Guiding Principles.

Knowhow, experience, and competencies

The Consultant shall always use their expertise, network, skills, and work capacity to the best of their ability. The Consultant shall solely accept assignments for which they have evidenced knowhow and competencies to execute them.

The Consultant shall clearly indicate to the potential Client at the offer stage their know-how, experience, and track record regarding the specific Project Call/Tender (or similar), clearly indicating which parts of the assignment may be subcontracted.

To be constantly up to date with the official requirements, Adhered Consultants commit to regularly consult official documents provided by any relevant bodies, as well as attend information calls/workshops related to Calls/Tenders provided by the client and for which they provide consultancy for.

Ethics

The Consultant shall not accept assignments for which they have reason to believe they cannot assist the Client effectively or timely.

The Consultant shall always maintain the highest ethical standards in the professional work undertaken and act solely in the interests of the Client, avoiding conflicts of interest.
The Consultant shall not use confidential information made available by one Client, to benefit another Client.

The Consultant shall not at any time or for any purpose misrepresent themself using any title, symbol, logo (e.g., EIC) in order either to lend false authority to its representatives or to mislead the Client.

Except when the Consultant is hired to develop only a fraction of an application, the Consultant shall not accept assignments if the assignments are not financially viable (e.g., consulting costs exceeding the net monetary benefit) for the Client, unless the Client is fully aware and is willing to proceed with the assignment.

The Consultant shall not accept assignments if the Consultant is not financially viable or there is a high risk that the Consultant will cease activity during the assignment period.

The Consultant shall inform the potential Client, before accepting the assignment, of all required documents and data needed to conduct the assignment. In case the Consultant is aware that the Client will not be able to provide all the mandatory documents, or the Client will not have enough time or staff to assist with the preparation of the assignment, the Consultant shall not accept the assignment.

None of the staff members of VIRKON and independent contractors supporting an application development should act as an evaluator and/or jury member for assignment involving funding calls.

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Transparency

Where the Consultant has economic or other interests in a competitor or other entity that can affect Client's interests, all such relationships shall be declared to the Client at the offer stage before receiving relevant information from the Client. If this is not possible for confidentiality reasons, the Consultant should protect confidential information by allocating different teams to the projects (i.e., Chinese walls).

For assignment related to funding/capital search. The Consultant shall inform the Client of related Call/Tender information, so the Client is aware they are able to apply directly if they wish and can also confirm information provided by the Consultant.

The Consultant should also inform the Client about existence of possible National Contact Points (NCPs, Innovations foundation, SKI – or similar in the respective country and their role.

In case of subcontracting activities, the Consultant shall inform the potential Client of what activities will be subcontracted and what information and documents belonging to the Client will be shared with the subcontracting party. In case of subcontracting activities or tasks in the proposal development process, the Client shall approve subcontracted tasks and subcontractors prior to engaging subcontractors.

The fee structure must be transparent and clearly state what activities performed by any external party may represent an additional cost for the Client.

Confidentiality

The Consultant shall not disclose, or permit to be disclosed, confidential information concerning the Client's business and staff, project, innovation activities, technology, products and services, or any other sensitive information without Client's consent.

Quality

The Consultant, prior to undertaking an assignment, shall define in writing the scope, extent, and the way they will undertake the project, taking into consideration the Client's inputs and wishes when developing the proposal.

The Consultant will not accept an assignment with a scope so limited of which the Consultant is aware of, that the Client will receive either ineffective advice or advice so insufficient, that they need to seek additional advice to achieve the outcome expected by the Client. Where a Consultant wishes to engage the assistance of a third party not linked with the Consultant to assist in undertaking the Client's project, they shall inform the Client which parts will be subcontracted and obtain their acceptance in writing or by formal agreement. The Consultant is required to ensure that third parties involved in the application development act in line to this code of conduct.

The Consultant will ensure that their quality control procedures are always adhered to during the assignment. The Consultant shall pay particular attention to keeping record of activities performed during the assignment and, if requested by the Client, perform an evaluation analysis together with the Client on key milestones.

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Fees

The Consultant and the Client shall agree upon the terms of the contract and in particular the methods of calculation of the fees payable in case they are not fixed.

Price must be clear and in case it depends on the success of the application or on other circumstances, the criteria to calculate the final price must be simple and transparent to implement.

The Consultant will not propose to the Client, as the only option for reimbursement, to own, partially or totally, or request long-term rights to, some of the Client's assets, including intellectual property and company shares.

If the fees proposed by the Consultant do not include the project management activity in case a proposal is approved, the Consultant's proposal will state that project management is not included.

Ideally, the Consultant should provide clear guidance in terms of expected fees for the management of the project in advance.

All Terms & conditions as well as fee related topics is included in the assignment agreement.

Final provisions

All Consultants that adhere to this Code of Conduct accept and have in place suitable measures which are designed to monitor the adherence to this Code of Conduct.

EU Funding applicants are advised to use consultancies that adhere to this code and ensure that the terms of support offered by consultants conform with the code before engaging consultancy services.

VIRKON also adhere to the Code of conducts published by EU-EIC.