



**Call for Expression of Interest No JAS-BE/2010/05 for the selection of
JASMINE Technical Assistance beneficiaries
(Non-bank microfinance institutions)**

Reference number: Call for EoI No. JAS-BE/2010/05

Introduction

On 13th November 2007, the European Commission adopted a Communication (COM (2007) 708) on a “European Initiative for development of microcredit in support of growth and employment”¹ (hereafter, “the Initiative”) whose objective is to promote the development of microcredit in the European Union. The Initiative comprises four different strands:

1. Improving the legal and institutional environment in the Member States;
2. Further changing the climate in favour of entrepreneurship;
3. Promoting the spread of best practices;
4. Providing additional capital for microcredit institutions.

The Initiative strives to reinforce the role played by microfinance institutions (MFIs) / microcredit providers in improving the provision of microcredit in Europe, an essential instrument for financial inclusion and employment. The Commission’s Communication also stresses that adequate technical support is necessary in helping these operators release their potential. In this context, in 2008 the European Commission and the European Investment Bank Group agreed to launch JASMINE (“*Joint action to support microfinance institutions in Europe*”), a joint initiative aimed at helping MFIs/ microcredit providers to improve the quality of their operations, to expand and to become self-sustainable through the provision of both financial and non-financial services to MFIs/microcredit providers. Applicants to the following Call for Expression of Interest, irrespective of their selection, remain eligible to request financing under the various programs managed by EIF.

¹ Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: a European Initiative for the development of microcredit in support of growth and employment - COM (2007)708 final.

The selection for technical assistance as detailed in Section 3 below under JASMINE does not give any right to access to funding, but technical assistance has been designed to facilitate future access to funding from existing and forthcoming EU programs.

The initiative consists of a pilot phase covering the years 2009, 2010 and 2011. The purpose of the following Call for Expression of Interest is to select up to 20 European non-bank microcredit providers which will benefit from technical assistance throughout the year 2011, in the form presented in section 3 of the present Call for Expression of Interest.

Interested non-bank microfinance institutions should express their interest by completing and submitting an Expression of Interest, a template of which is attached hereto as Annex 1. The list of documents to be provided for the selection process is given in Annex 1, Appendix 4.

1. Definitions and Interpretation

Applicant	means a non-bank microfinance institution applying to this Call for Expression of Interest;
Award Criteria	means the criteria applied by EIF to select the eligible beneficiaries;
Deadline	means 19 November 2010;
Eligibility Criteria	means the minimum criteria with which the Expression of Interest and the Applicants must comply and which are listed in Annex 2 hereof;
Exclusion Criteria	means the exclusion list as detailed in Annex 1, appendix 3 hereof;
Expression of Interest	means a proposal sent by an Applicant in response to this Call for Expression of Interest, within the deadline, to be drafted in accordance with the template attached hereto as Annex 1;
JASMINE	means "Joint Action to Support Microfinance Institutions in Europe" launched by the European Commission and managed by the European Investment Bank Group to provide both financial and non-financial support to

	non-bank microcredit providers in the EU. When referring to JASMINE in the document thereafter, it will only concern JASMINE Technical Assistance;
MFIs; Microcredit provider, or; MFI/Microcredit provider	means any non-bank microfinance institution/microcredit provider meeting the Eligibility Criteria as set out in Annex 2 hereof;
Selection Criteria	means the Eligibility Criteria and the Award Criteria;
Technical Assistance; TA	means Technical Assistance provided in the framework of the JASMINE Initiative. Technical Assistance support will take the form described in section 3 below.

2. Underlying principle for the provision of Technical Assistance to selected MFIs active in the EU

The provision of Technical Assistance in the framework of the JASMINE pilot Initiative is an important component of the development of the microfinance sector in the European Union. The JASMINE pilot Initiative intends to develop the European microfinance market in order to prepare future initiatives and programs in this specific field, both through financial and non-financial support to European microcredit providers.

The non-bank microfinance institutions/microcredit providers selected in the framework of this Call for Expression for Interest JAS-BE/2010/05, are entitled to receive Technical Assistance through the JASMINE pilot Initiative.

3. Description of the JASMINE Technical Assistance

The selected MFIs are entitled to receive Technical Assistance free of charge. The Technical Assistance is designed to help European MFIs become aligned with international standards and facilitate enhanced access to funding in the mid term.

The Technical Assistance provided to the selected MFIs, in the framework of JASMINE consists of the following:

3.1. Assessment or Rating of MFIs by Planet Rating or Microfinanza Rating (each of them, "Rating Agency") and provision of an Assessment or Rating report

Applicants have to be aware that the success of this evaluation phase depends on the capacity and the willingness of the MFI to disclose (in a timely fashion) all necessary data to Planet Rating or Microfinanza Rating.

- a. Three days to one week due diligence visit from the respective Rating Agency;
- b. Preparation, discussion and provision of an Assessment or Rating report and presentation of the main findings to the MFI.

JASMINE Beneficiaries can opt either for a Rating or for an Assessment. The two different services respond to different needs of the MFI and depend as well on its development stage. The recommendations of both the Assessment and the Rating exercise are synthesised into a report drafted by the Rating Agency's analysts, transmitted to the JASMINE Beneficiary for comments and then made available to the staff and management of the JASMINE Beneficiaries (as well as EIF and the European Commission). The main features of the two different services provided by Microfinanza Rating and Planet Rating are the following:

- The Rating exercise is a detailed and complete assessment of the financial and operational performance and of the most relevant risk areas of the MFI, according to recognized international standards. A final rating grade and an appraisal of the institution's ability to absorb new funds are included in the rating report. A microfinance rating is an effective tool for the MFI to access new sources of funds and to improve its operational and risk management performances. Ratings are targeted to mature MFIs that wish to obtain new financing, to have a comprehensive assessment of their risk profile and to enhance their international visibility.
- The Assessment exercise is a detailed analysis of the institution, paying particular attention to organizational and qualitative aspects. The specific aim is to assess the level of development of the MFI and to identify the main internal weaknesses and external threats jointly with the existing opportunities for the institution. The output of this analysis serves as an operational tool which could help the executive management and the governance organs of the institution to strengthen its operational capacity and to improve its policies and procedures. Assessments target younger and emerging institutions that wish to identify their strengths and weaknesses in order to improve their institutional strength or to attract donor funding.

3.2. Tailor-made training of MFI staff and management to be provided by technical assistance experts of the Microfinance Centre in line with the main findings of the Assessment or Rating report

- a. Up to twelve (12) days of training to the staff and the management of the selected MFI;
- b. Special attention will be paid to the following fields: governance, management information systems, strategic planning and risk management, including risks linked with external sources of funding.

In any case, the training proposal is drafted in close collaboration between the Microfinance Centre and the JASMINE Beneficiary.

4. Expression of Interest

A template for the Expression of Interest is attached hereto as Annex 1.

The Expression of interest includes the Applicant's identification (based on the form under Appendix 1 to the Expression of Interest), the project description, the supporting documents (listed under Appendix 4 to the Expression of Interest), the declaration of absence of conflict of interest (based on the form under Appendix 2 to the Expression of Interest) and the statement regarding situations of exclusion (based on the form under Appendix 3 to the Expression of Interest).

No later than 15 calendar days before the Deadline, the Applicants may request clarifications regarding the Call for Expression of Interest or the nature of the Technical Assistance. Such requests must indicate the Call for Expression of Interest reference number and the name of the Applicant and shall be submitted in English via e-mail to:

Attention: JASMINE Coordinator
European Investment Fund
JASMINE@eif.org

Answers to all questions will be published at least 10 calendar days before the Deadline, on EIF website and on all other interfaces where the Call is published.

EIF will not contact any Applicant prior to the selection, unless it considers it necessary to clarify issues of a mere technical nature. However, should EIF come across any errors, inaccuracies, omissions or any type of clerical defect in the text of the Call for Expression of Interest before the Deadline, EIF will correct the text and inform the Applicant accordingly.

5. Language

The Expressions of Interest, including the submitted documents, shall be in English.

6. Submission of Expression of Interest

The Expression of Interest shall be submitted on or before the Deadline both by (i) e-mail and (ii) by registered mail or professional courier service. The Expressions of Interest sent by registered mail or professional courier service shall consist of a single closed package and shall contain the Expression of Interest, together with its attachments, in paper form.

The Deadline for the submission of Expressions of Interest is 19 November 2010.

The Deadline applies (i) in case of e-mails to the date of receipt by EIF and (ii) in case of registered mail or professional courier service to the date of dispatch indicated on the post office stamp or a dispatch receipt.

The Expression of Interest shall indicate the reference number of the Call (No. JAS-BE/2010/05) and the name of the Applicant, and shall be sent to the following address:

Postal Address:

European Investment Fund
Attention: JASMINE Coordinator
96, Boulevard Konrad Adenauer
L-2968 Luxembourg
LUXEMBOURG

The outer envelope (package) shall indicate the following:

"Expression of Interest - Call No. JAS-BE/2010/05 - Not to be opened by the Reception - To be passed without opening to the JASMINE Coordinator"

E-mail Address

Attention: JASMINE Coordinator
JASMINE@eif.org

Prior to the Deadline and in the same manner as specified above, the Applicants may change or amend their Expression of Interest by clearly indicating the parts to be changed or amended.

Prior or after the Deadline and in the same manner as specified above, the Applicants may withdraw their Expression of Interest.

After the Deadline, an acknowledgement of receipt will be sent to the relevant Applicants by EIF via e-mail. The acknowledgement of receipt is not to be considered confirmation of completeness of the Expression of Interest and the documents submitted therewith, nor any kind of assessment to this effect.

7. Selection process

The Expressions of Interest will be examined by the EIF using professional analysis and judgment, taking into account the Selection Criteria.

The EIF will reject incomplete or unsigned Expressions of Interest, as well as those Expressions of Interest not complying with the Eligibility Criteria. MFIs whose

application is rejected because of non-compliance with any of the elements reflected in the statement regarding situations of exclusion (Annex 1, Appendix 3) may not present themselves for consideration in subsequent Calls for Expression of Interest unless it is specifically evidenced that the reason for exclusion no longer exists.

Applicants complying with the Eligibility Criteria will go through the EIF selection process based on the Award Criteria, which follows the standard procedures and guidelines applied by EIF to its business.

Technical Assistance will be awarded at the sole discretion of the EIF. Applicants should by no means consider that simple submission of a complete application will give rise to any claims, or other rights, or legitimate expectations to be ultimately selected for Technical Assistance under this Call for Expression of Interest. EIF can cancel the Call for Expression of Interest at any stage of the procedure.

The selection shall be deemed complete upon written confirmation by the EIF to the Applicant.

MFIs not selected for Technical Assistance in the framework of JASMINE shall be informed accordingly. Upon request, rejected Applicants may ask for further information to EIF on the reasons for their non-selection.

ANNEXES

- Annex 1. Expression of Interest
- Annex 2. JASMINE Technical Assistance: Selection Criteria

ANNEX 1 to the Call for Expression of Interest No JAS-BE/2010/05

To:

European Investment Fund

Attention: JASMINE Team

96 Boulevard Konrad Adenauer

L-2968 Luxembourg

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Call for Expression of Interest No.:

JAS-BE/2010/05

Deadline for the submission of the Expression of interest: 19 November 2010

Expression of Interest for:

JASMINE Technical
Assistance

Applicant submitting the Expression of Interest:

_____, _____
(company name,
registration number)

Dear Sir or Madam,

Herewith we are submitting our Expression of Interest on behalf of *[Applicant's name]* in response to the Call for Expression of Interest No JAS-BE/2010/05 in the framework of JASMINE pilot Initiative implemented through EIF and financed by the European Commission, Directorate General for Regional Policy. Capitalised expressions utilised herein shall have the meaning attributed to them in the above mentioned Call for Expression of Interest.

The undersigned duly authorised to represent the *[Applicant's name]*, by signing this form certifies/certify and declare(s) that the information contained in this Expression of Interest and its Appendices is complete and correct in all its elements.

The undersigned certifies/certify that the *[Applicant's name]* is not in one of the situations which would exclude it from taking part in this Call for Expression of Interest listed out in Appendix 3 to this Expression of Interest. The undersigned shall, upon request, provide all evidence to that extent.

Yours sincerely,

Signature(s):

Stamp of the Applicant (if applicable):

Name and position in capital letters:

Applicant's name:

Place:

Date (day/month/year):

Appendices

Appendix 1 Applicant Identification

Appendix 2 Declaration of Absence of Conflicts of Interest

Appendix 3 Statement regarding Situations of Exclusion

Appendix 4 List of documents to be attached for evaluation

Appendix 1 to the Expression of Interest

APPLICANT IDENTIFICATION

1.1 Applicant identification

INFORMATION REQUIRED ²	
CONTACT DETAILS	Address: Telephone: Fax: E-mail:
LEGAL FORM	
COMMERCIAL REGISTER, ETC. - REGISTRATION DETAILS	Denomination of register: Date of registration: Country of registration: Registration number:
VAT	Registration number

1.2 Contact person

INFORMATION REQUIRED ³	
TITLE	Mr/Ms/Dr/other (delete or complete as appropriate)
NAME	Surname: Forename:
FUNCTION	
CONTACT DETAILS	

² If not applicable, please indicate the reasons why.

³ If not applicable, please indicate the reasons why.

Appendix 2 to the Expression of Interest

DECLARATION OF ABSENCE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The undersigned declares that neither (i) the Applicant nor (ii) he/she/they personally as authorised representative(s) of the Applicant have a direct or indirect interest of such a nature and scale that may affect the technical assistance received by the Applicant. The undersigned commits to declare any potential conflict of interest that may arise during the provision of the technical assistance as referred to in the call for expression No JAS-BE/2010/05.

The undersigned is/are aware that a conflict of interest could arise in particular as a result of economic interests, political or national affinities, family or emotional ties, or any other relevant connection or shared interest.

The Applicant will inform EIF, without delay, of any situation constituting a conflict of interest or which could give rise to a conflict of interest.

Furthermore, the Applicant and the undersigned in his/her/their capacity as duly authorised representative(s) of the Applicant confirm to have read the EIF Anti-Fraud Policy and declare not to have made nor to make any offer of any type whatsoever from which an advantage can be derived under the Operational Agreement and not to have granted nor to grant, not to have sought nor to seek, not to have attempted nor to attempt to obtain, and not to have accepted nor to accept, any advantage, financial or in kind, to or from any party whatsoever, constituting an illegal practice or involving corruption, either directly or indirectly, as an incentive or reward relating to signing of the Operational Agreement.

Yours sincerely,

Signature:

Stamp of the Applicant (if applicable):

Name and position in capital letters:

Applicant's name:

Place:

Date (day/month/year):

Appendix 3 to Expression of Interest

STATEMENT REGARDING SITUATIONS OF EXCLUSION

The undersigned certifies/certify that the (Applicant) is not in any of the situations which would exclude it from taking part in this Call for Expression of Interest and accordingly declare(s) that the (Applicant):

- i) has never been the subject of a conviction by final judgment for one or more reasons listed below:
 - participation in a criminal organisation, as defined in Article 2 (1) of the Council Joint Action of 21 December 1998 adopted by the Council on the basis of Article K.3 of the Treaty on European Union, on making it a criminal offence to participate in a criminal organisation in the Member States of the European Union (98/733/JHA);
 - corruption, as defined in Article 3 of the Council Act of 26 May 1997 and in Article 3 (1) of the Council Joint Action 98/742/JHA;
 - fraud within the meaning of Article 1 of the Convention drawn up on the basis of Article K.3 of the Treaty on European Union, on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests;
 - money laundering as defined in the Directives 2005/60/EC⁴ of 26 October 2005 and 2006/70/EC⁵ of 1 August 2006, and Directive 2001/97/EC of 4 December 2001⁶;
- ii) has not performed any act which may be qualified as prohibited practices in the meaning of the terms of the ELF Anti-Fraud Policy;
- iii) is not bankrupt or being wound up, where its affairs are not being administered by the court, where it has not entered into an arrangement with creditors, where it has not suspended business activities or is not in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure under national laws and regulations;
- iv) is not the subject of proceedings for a declaration for bankruptcy, for an order for compulsory winding up or administration by the court or of an arrangement with creditors or of any other similar proceedings under national laws and regulations;

⁴ Directive 2005/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 October 2005 on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purpose of money laundering and terrorist financing

⁵ Commission Directive 2006/70/EC of 1 August 2006 laying down implementing measures for Directive 2005/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the definition of 'politically exposed person' and the technical criteria for simplified customer due diligence procedures and for exemption on grounds of a financial activity conducted on an occasional or very limited basis

⁶ Directive 2001/97/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 December 2001 amending Council Directive 91/308/EEC on prevention of the use of the financial system for the purpose of money laundering

- v) no member of its senior management has been convicted as a consequence of a judgment which has the force of *res iudicata*, in accordance with the legal provisions of the country of any offence concerning its professional conduct;
- vi) no member of its senior management has been guilty of grave professional misconduct;
- vii) has fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which it is established;
- viii) has fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which it is established and in the countries where it operates, as applicable;
- ix) will respect the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination;
- x) will respect the framework of sustainable development and the Community promotion of the goal of protecting and improving the environment as set out in Article 6 of the Treaty;
- xi) is not found to have provided serious misrepresentation in supplying the information required in accordance with the Call for Expression of Interest or has supplied such information.

The Applicant and the undersigned in his/her/their capacity as duly authorised representative of the Applicant commit to provide all evidence to the above, upon request by the JHF or EIF.

Signature:

Stamp of the Applicant (if applicable):

Name and position in capital letters:

Applicant's name:

Place:

Date (day/month/year):

Appendix 4 to the Expression of Interest

LIST OF DOCUMENTS TO BE ATTACHED FOR EVALUATION

- a) Applicant Identification (as per template provided in Appendix 1) and short description of the Applicant
- b) Statutes of the Applicant evidencing its non-bank status
- c) Details of the overall loan portfolio of the Applicant over the last three calendar years including all data requested for evaluation of the eligibility and award criteria
- d) Internal note on the development stage of the risk assessment methodology, portfolio management and governance structures
- e) Expression of Interest duly signed
- f) Declaration of absence of conflicts of interest as per template provided in Appendix 2, duly signed
- g) Statement regarding situations of exclusion as per template provided in Appendix 3, duly signed

ANNEX 2 to the Call for Expression of Interest
No JAS-BE/2010/05

JASMINE Technical Assistance: Selection Criteria

IMPORTANT: EIF reserves its right to verify the accuracy of the information provided by the Applicant by means of due diligence, if required by the evaluation panel within EIF.

1.	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	System of appraisal (for EIF use only)
		Yes / No
1.1	The Applicant is a non-bank microfinance institution / microcredit provider.	
1.2	The Applicant is based in the European Union (EU) and active in an EU member state.	
1.3	The Applicant dedicates more than 50% of its loan portfolio to micro loans as defined by the European Commission (i.e. EUR 25,000).	
1.4	The Applicant and its senior management are not in any situation of exclusion (as per template provided in Appendix 3 to the Expression of Interest).	
1.5	The Applicant has declared any potential situation of conflicts of interest (as per template provided in Appendix 2 to the Expression of Interest).	
1.6	The Expression of Interest is prepared in accordance with Annex 1 to the Call for Expression of Interest. All necessary supporting documents are provided.	
1.7	The Expression of Interest and the relevant appendices (Appendix 2 and 3) are duly signed.	
1.8	The Expression of Interest is complete and submitted in English.	
1.9	The Expression of Interest is submitted both by registered mail and e-mail.	
1.10	The Expression of Interest is submitted within the Deadline.	

2.	AWARD CRITERIA	Evaluation (weighting) For EIF use only
2.1	The Applicant is a non-bank microfinance institution / microcredit provider with at least 2 years of existence.	30%
2.2	The Applicant has had more than 150 active clients over the last calendar year.	30%
2.3	Strategic planning shows the Applicant's willingness to reach sustainability.	30%
2.4	Social outreach: the Applicant has had an average loan balance per active client / GNI per capita ratio below 150% over the last three calendar years.	10%
2.5	The Applicant has had more than 200 active clients per staff member over the past three calendar years.	Qualitative
2.6	Self-assessment of the state of development of the Applicant's internal investment, risk management and portfolio monitoring infrastructure, as well as governance structures.	Qualitative

The information provided by the candidates must be precise, complete and sorted so that EIF is able to clearly and appropriately verify the AWARD CRITERIA from 2.1 to 2.7 above

UNCLEAR INFORMATION COULD LEAD TO REJECTION OF THE CANDIDATE.