



TA Consultants United

TA CONSULTANTS UNITED LAUNCHED

Dear Colleagues,

Only seven months ago we started to organise activities on behalf of independent experts against the Statement of Exclusivity and Availability as used in European Commission contracts. In these seven months we have:

- Gained almost 700 signatories for this single issue against this single donor;
- Established contacts with EuropeAid and gained 'a voice': we now have influence on future developments;
- Set up contacts with other stakeholders in our industry, such as the two leading international organisations of contractors.

The past months also led to a growing awareness among consultants about their rights, the need for essential changes and the need for an organised voice in this industry. Many consultants have argued for a broader concept to advocate on behalf of all their interests – from contract award procedures to facilities such as insurance. Various contributions by consultants also proposed that the services of an association should cover all donors/funding agencies.

Based on all these encouraging reactions we plan to establish 'Consultants United', a professional association for all individual consultants in Technical Assistance in the broad area of development cooperation. The association will provide collective and individual services for consultants related to:

- Contract award and contractual conditions and facilities, maintained by donors and/or funding agencies;
- Contractual conditions between contractors and individual consultants;
- Individual disputes in which individual consultants are a party.

In developing collective bargaining services TA Consultants United will continue the development of negotiations with the European Commission and will start preparing collective bargaining policies for other donors/funding agencies.

Members will also be covered for individual expert advice in their individual contractual issues and disputes.

For a more extensive and detailed description of key issues and services, which includes the most frequently mentioned concerns raised by experts in various forums, please go to our [NEW WEBSITE](#) and read all [about it](#).

In order to be able to provide all these services professionally on a sustainable and business-like manner Consultants United needs around 2,500 members with an annual membership subscription of €180 per year. That seems an 'awful lot' of members, but with good services and results, lots of promotion and patience it can be done. Of course we can't expect to get this number straight from the start: it takes time to spread the message over the world, as our community is very scattered.

In order to get started we need firm pledges of membership (i.e. including the promise to pay €180) from a minimum of 300 people. We think that 30 April 2011 is a reasonable deadline to see whether this can be done or not. Once we have these first 300 commitments we will legally establish Consultants United and request the membership fees.

If you wish to make this pledge, please [send us an email](#). If you have already made a donation to the "Ban the SoE&A" Campaign Fund, your contribution will count towards the membership subscription (up to €180). If you can't remember how much you donated (or can't remember if you did donate!) please write to [Stephen for this information](#).

If we do not reach the target of 300 we will have to review the situation. We have spent nearly all of our time over the last seven months working on this issue pro bono (apart from direct out-of-pocket expenses) and have been happy to do so. However, an association requires resources to pay for the necessary staff (albeit very small) and the membership services we want to provide (e.g. legal, IT, travel, publications, translation).

Setting up a professional association to represent our collective interests would be a huge step forward for all of us. We will be happy to serve you!

Henry Leerentveld and Stephen Dewar