

Confederation of European Senior Expert Services

Basics: Based on their long-term world-wide experience and successful cooperation in the framework of the European Union's ESSN programmes, EU-based Senior Service Organisations have joined forces and will speak with one voice in order to increase their contribution to international development support programmes operated by European as well as international institutions. To this end, a Confederation of European Senior Expert Services, CESES, has been formed.

As in ESSN, activities of the member organisations are oriented towards quick and pragmatic assistance to small and medium size enterprises, predominantly in technical, commercial, and training sectors. Assignments are of short to medium term duration, implemented by senior professionals who have agreed to apply their skills and life time experience as a contribution to improving living standards in the countries in question. These highly motivated Senior Experts, although working on a voluntary basis, operate in a thoroughly professional manner throughout.

Structure: The Confederation exclusively comprises EU-based non-profit Senior Service organisations. All organisations presently co-operating in ESSN are considered born members.

The Confederation's activities are based on the decisions of a General Assembly, in which each member has one vote. Main responsibilities rest with the President and the General Secretary, supported by a Board of Directors. In this regard, special attention is paid to maintaining a fair balance between the Confederation's member organisations from all EU member states. The Confederation maintains an office facility in Belgium.

Resources: The combined resources of the Confederation members comprise approximately 24 000 Senior Experts (Volunteers) covering virtually all sectors of professional activities, technical as well as commercial and including administration, financial and legal aspects.

The Senior Experts are registered in the Confederation members' expert rosters, classified according to their professional, management, and related experience, enhanced by information on educational background, languages spoken, international activities and training skills. The average age of the Senior Experts is currently 64 years.

Performance: The Confederation's member organisations annually run a worldwide volume in excess of 5 000 international assignments in more than 140 countries to which a substantial number of national assignments in some members' home countries have to be added. Within the EU's ESSN programme, Confederation members have so far implemented more than 1 800 assignments in all Phare and Tacis countries plus Mongolia.

Operations: While the Confederation itself will maintain an advisory rather than management function, assignments are implemented on the responsibility of the member organisations concerned, which largely also applies to project acquisition. For general project supervision a programme coordination unit is envisaged which also should secure contractor approvals and contractual financing. The Confederation considers such central coordination function an essential tool for smooth and efficient programme implementation.

In any case, all activities are complementary rather than competitive to the efforts of the consulting industry. This derives from the principle that the assistance rendered by CESES members aims at financially weak enterprises and institutions, that assignments are of short duration nature, frequently not of interest to commercial consultants, and that no liability for achieving project objectives is assumed. In addition, projects rejected by CESES members may be forwarded to the consulting industry who in turn may call on Senior Service assistance provided that the voluntary nature of the assignment in question is maintained and that both Senior Expert and client agree.

Assignment Conditions: Senior Experts work without pay; their working incentive is the desire to apply their life-time experience for the benefit of those in need and to foster international cooperation. However, assignment cost are to be reimbursed, as the Senior Service organisations participating in the programmes do not have funds of their own. Consequently, beneficiaries are supposed to contribute to cost coverage according to their own financial means.

Confederation Members: The Confederation at present comprises 25 Senior Service organizations from all EU member states. These organisations are: ASEP (A) * BSC,SENA (B) * ASB,SES (D) * DLS (DK) * SECOT (E) * NESTOR (FIN) * AGIR,ECTI,EGEE,OTECI (F) * BESO (GB) * HSSA (GR) * AISTP,ASI,ISES,VSP (I) * MENTOR,SSO (IRL) * LSC (L) * NMCP (NL) * APCS (P) * SSON,SMA (S)