

Request for Quotation (RFQ)

Expenditure and Revenue Verification for the

Energy-Sharing Solutions and Communities for Enhanced

Renewable Energy in The Mediterranean Historic Centres Project

and

Integrating Seasonal Thermal Energy Storage in the

Mediterranean Region Project

SHAREN (A_T_2.1_0513) &

STORM (A_T_2.1_0553)

Financed in the framework of the Interreg NEXT MED

Programme 2021-2027

The enclosed document is prepared by the Lebanese Center for Energy Conservation
(LCEC).

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I. Background

A. About Interreg NEXT MED

1. Interreg NEXT 'Mediterranean Sea Basin' (NEXT MED) transnational cooperation programme is the third generation of one of the largest cooperation initiatives implemented by the European Union across borders in the Mediterranean area.
2. The Programme aims to contribute to smart, sustainable, fair development for all across the Mediterranean basin by supporting balanced, long-lasting, far-reaching cooperation and multilevel governance. The programme's mission is to finance cooperation projects that address joint socio-economic, environmental, and governance challenges at the Mediterranean level, such as the uptake of advanced technologies, competitiveness of SMEs and job creation, energy efficiency, sustainable water management, climate change adaptation, transition to a circular and resource efficient economy, education and training, health care, etc.

B. About SHAREN

3. SHAREN, "Energy-SHAring solutions and communities for enhanced Renewable ENergy in the MEDiterranean historic centres". While most of historic city centres' buildings are highly energy inefficient, the installation of renewable energy is struggling due to their architectural and historical significance requiring a balance between modern energy transition and preservation.
4. The Energy-Sharing Solutions and Communities for Enhanced Renewable Energy in the Mediterranean Historic Centres Project (SHAREN), is part of the Interreg NEXT MED Programme and addresses, through transnational cooperation, the Mediterranean challenge of the Energy Transition in Heritage urban contexts.
5. SHAREN is being implemented in five Mediterranean countries and involving six organizations: Instituto Valenciano de la Edificación, Fundación de la Comunidad Valenciana (IVE) being the Lead Beneficiary, the Lebanese Center for Energy Conservation (LCEC) being the Project Partner in Lebanon, the T.R. Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change / General Directorate of

Construction Affairs in Türkiye, Alternative Energies in Spain, National Research Council of Italy - Institute of Heritage Science in Italy, Royal Scientific in Jordan

6. SHAREN will be implemented over a duration of three years starting September 2025.
7. LCEC's budget within SHAREN project is € 743,361.6.
8. For more information about SHAREN, please visit the following website:
<https://www.interregnextmed.eu/project-page/sharen/about/>

C. About STORM

9. Integrating Seasonal Thermal Energy Storage in the Mediterranean Region (STORM) Project aims to push the integration of Seasonal Thermal Energy Storage (STES) technologies in the Mediterranean countries, particularly for applications involving space heating and domestic water heating.
10. STORM will unlock the potential of seasonal thermal storage in the Mediterranean region and advocate for a transformative shift from conventional energy practices to a sustainable, decentralized model that has the capacity to lead to significant efficiency gains with solar fractions approaching 100%. Such gains will have direct social, economic, and environmental impacts on stakeholders.
11. Through dedicated pilots that will be jointly implemented in different Mediterranean countries, the project will generate concrete localized data on efficiency gains that would help speed up the uptake of this proven technology in decentralized applications.
12. STORM is being implemented in five Mediterranean countries and involving seven organizations: American University of Beirut (AUB) being the Lead Beneficiary, the Lebanese Center for Energy Conservation (LCEC) being the Project Partner in Lebanon, Royal Scientific Society in Jordan, American University of Beirut – Mediterraneo in Cyprus, University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli in Italy, University of Palermo in Italy, and Knowledge Innovation Market Foundation BCN in Spain.

13. STORM will be implemented over a duration of three years starting August 2025.

14. LCEC's budget within STORM project is € 78,651.69.

15. For more information about STORM, please refer to the following website:
<https://www.interregnxtmed.eu/project-page/storm/about/>

D. About LCEC

16. The Lebanese Center for Energy Conservation (LCEC) is an independent organization at the Ministry of Energy and Water in Lebanon. It is a technical point of reference specialized in renewable energy and energy efficiency.

17. LCEC works on setting national strategies and action plans to be adopted by the Lebanese Government and on the implementation and quality control of national projects and initiatives in the country. LCEC is also involved in the update and development of the legal and administrative framework needed for the greening of the energy sector.

18. LCEC provides both the public and private sector with expert advice, finance and accreditation, develops energy efficiency standards and labels, and provides national energy database indicators.

19. For more information about LCEC, please refer to the following website:
<http://lcec.org.lb/en/LCEC>

II. Statement of Work

A. Important Notes

20. The objective of this Request for Quotation (RFQ) is for LCEC to select one Financial Auditor for both SHAREN and STORM activities in Lebanon, following the National Procedures of Interreg NEXT MED.

21. Once selected and before signing the contract, the Financial Auditor has to be endorsed by the Control Contact Point (CCP) of Interreg NEXT MED in Lebanon.
22. CCPs are appointed in each participating country to support the Managing Authority (MA) in the control tasks related to project expenditure verification.
23. CCPs endorse the Auditors selected by Lead Beneficiary and Partners and check the Expenditure Verification Reports (EVR) if needed.
24. The proposers are invited to carefully read this document along with the Annex, which will be provided at a later stage. Annexes will include: EVR template, control checklist template, individual report, list of findings, list of contracts, and any other needed template or report.
25. All information included in all the pages of this document and its Annex is an integral part of this RFQ.
26. Throughout the document, SHAREN and STORM will be referred to as "the Project" or the "the Projects".
27. The Grant Contracts foresee two types of reports: Interim and Final. Each report has a specific goal with a narrative and a financial section.
28. Each of the two Projects submits an "Interim" report each semester (a total of 5 Interim reports), and a "Final" report by the end of the Project implementation period (a total of 1 report). All reports provide narrative and financial information.
29. All reports (a total of 6 reports for each Project) are supported by the auditor's reports (Expenditure Verification Reports – EVR).
30. The reports are addressed to the MA and the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) via the proper channels.

31. The Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) is composed of international staff recruited through a public procedure. It operates by the Autonomous Region of Sardinia (Cagliari). The JTS performs a supporting function to assist the MA and other Programme bodies, and a direct function in coordination with the MA. The JTS is the initial reference for the beneficiaries on Project implementation.

B. Responsibilities

32. The tasks of the Auditor appointed by LCEC would include the following:

- a) Verify that goods and services have been delivered and the works have been performed;
- b) Verify that the expenditure declared by LCEC relates to the eligible period or previous ones and it has been paid;
- c) Verify the compliance with applicable rules (including eligibility rules), also including procurement and visibility requirements;
- d) Verify the compliance of the expenditures with the approved Project and the signed Grant Contract;
- e) Check the related documents and accounting on avoidance of possible double funding;
- f) Verify the adequacy of supporting documents;
- g) Check the registration of the expenditure in the accounting records of LCEC and that the expenditure is determined according to the accounting standards and the usual cost accounting practices applicable to LCEC;
- h) Check the record-keeping and archiving rules for the documentary evidence related to the implementation of the Project; and
- i) Notify irregularities and suspicion of fraud or corruption, as the case may be.

33. The selected Financial Auditor will verify the expenses declared in each payment claim under SHAREN and STORM activities independently, according to the Programme's rules and procedures and the requirements of the Grant Contracts for each Project, to be issued as an Expenditure Verification Report (EVR) for each Project.
34. EVR is the document issued by the Auditor appointed by LCEC for the verification of expenses.
35. The financial Auditor must ensure to carry out an on-site verification as needed and at least once during the verification of each EVR, in order to verify the original supporting documents, the procurement procedures, the outputs of the Project, the evidence of services, works, equipment, goods co-financed through the Projects, the adequacy of the accounting systems. A list of Project outputs will be produced and signed by the auditors as an attachment to the EVR.
36. The expenditure verifications shall be carried out according to formats and checklists agreed with the MA, and their outcome will be the EVR that will be attached to each payment request following the initial pre-financing. The Financial Auditor will have to verify the analytical report expenditure by expense, indicating for each expense whether it is compliant, the amount of ineligible expenses, and the reasons for non-eligibility.
37. The Financial Auditor will have to verify compliance with the auditing rules and complete all the needed documentation.
38. The Financial Auditor may need to process the model forms online through the JEMS System, if requested, as a final result of the verification.
39. The Financial Auditor is responsible for performing the agreed-upon procedures described in the Annexes with due care and full respect of the Code of Ethics therein indicated, as well as submitting the reports to LCEC with its annexes, according to the templates and procedures established in the Annex.

40. LCEC is responsible for providing the Financial Report, as well as giving access to its accounting, supporting documents, and Project documentation and physical investments to the Auditor, so that the procedures can take place in due time and without restrictions.
41. In case of identification of suspected and/or established fraud, the Financial Auditor shall submit the Report on suspected and/or established fraud without delay directly to MA. This report shall not be submitted to LCEC.
42. Should the MA, JTS, or the CCP have any doubt concerning the findings indicated in the EVR, the Auditor will receive a request for clarification via LCEC, which will be answered in a maximum of 7 calendar days.
43. The MA, the JTS or the CCP may carry out quality control of the work carried out by the Auditor, including the examination of the working papers, at any moment during the execution period of the Grant Contracts.
44. As a result of the quality control, the MA may request the early termination of this contract. Such termination shall be free of charge for LCEC.
45. As a result of the quality control, the CCP may remove the Auditor from the long (or short) list of authorized auditors or, in case of no list, the MA and the respective Lead Beneficiary of the Project may exclude the Auditor from any work in the framework of the Programme. The MA will immediately inform the CCP of the concerned country in order to take the appropriate actions.
46. The Auditor will attend the specific trainings and meetings for auditors organized by the competent Programme bodies. The MA may request the termination of the contract of the Auditor not attending these events.
47. EVR shall be revised by the MA and JTS after submission by LCEC. The CCP may assist the MA / JTS in the revision of these reports.

C. Implementation of Tasks and Audit Duration

48. The start date for implementation shall be the date of signature of the contract by both parties.
49. The EVR shall be delivered to LCEC within 15 calendar days from submission of the financial report by the LCEC.
50. All reports are supported by the auditor's EVR.

III. Requirements for Quotation

A. Qualification of the Audit Firm

51. The expenditure verification required by Interreg NEXT MED Implementing Rules shall be carried out by private external audit firms only.
52. The Financial Auditor/Auditing Firm must be registered at the Lebanese Association of Certified Public Accountants according to the requirements set by Interreg Implementing Rules and in compliance with the national requirements.
53. The Financial Auditor should have experience in at least one Project under ENI CBC Med and/or ENPI CBC Med.

B. Documents to be submitted with the Quotation

54. Company profile (short info up to 1 page).
55. Copy of Company's Registration Certificate.
56. Form A, Form B and Form C filled.
57. The documents shall be signed and stamped by a person duly authorized to bind the Auditor to the contract.

C. Submission Details

58. Deadline for the submission of quotation is **28 January 2026 at 12:00 p.m.**

59. A separate quotation must be submitted to each Project, one for SHAREN and another one for STORM.
60. A quotation combining both auditing services will be rejected.
61. Any quotation received after the mentioned date and time will be rejected.
62. Submittals must be delivered by email to: energy@lcec.org.lb with a subject line "Request for Quotation - SHAREN & STORM projects - External Financial Auditor Selection-LCEC".
63. LCEC may, at its discretion, extend the deadline for the submission of proposals, in which case all rights and obligations of LCEC and the applicants subject to the previous deadline shall thereafter be subject to the deadline as extended.

D. Quotation Details

64. The quotation must be submitted in Euro and exclusive of VAT.
65. The period of validity of quotation is 90 days and it starts on the submission deadline date.
66. In exceptional circumstances, LCEC may request the Proposer to extend the validity of the quotation beyond what has been initially indicated in this RFQ. The Proposer shall then confirm the extension in writing, without any modification whatsoever on the quotation.
67. At any time during the validity of the quotation, no price variation due to escalation, inflation, fluctuation in exchange rates, or any other market factors shall be accepted by LCEC after it has received the quotation.

IV. Evaluation Criteria and Selection of Auditor

68. Offers will be reviewed based on the following:

- a) Completeness and compliance of the quotation with the minimum specifications described above.
- b) Full compliance to this RFQ requirements and conditions and highest score.
- c) Full acceptance to the Contract terms and conditions.

a) Technical Scoring (S_T).

Technical Scoring

Ref.	Item	Max. Score	Criteria	Score
1	Reference Projects (as per Form A)	25	> 1 and < 6	5
			≥ 6 and < 15	15
			≥ 15	25
2	Relevant ENPI CBC Med / ENI CBC MED / Interreg NEXT MED (as per Form B)	25	>1 and < 3	5
			≥ 3 and < 5	15
			≥ 5	25
3	Staff Involved in the Project (as per Form C)	25	>1 and < 3	5
			≥ 3 and < 5	15
			≥ 5	25
4	Overall Evaluation of the CV's of Team Members	25	Weak	5
			Good	15
			Excellent	25
Maximum Obtainable Score		100		

b) Financial Scoring (S_F)

The formula for determining the financial score is the following:

$$S_F = 100 \times F_m/F,$$

F_m is the lowest price

and F the price of the proposal under consideration.

c) The total score (Ts) for each proposal will be calculated independently by formula:

$$Ts = (0.7 \times S_T) + (0.3 \times S_F)$$

- d) The bidder with the highest score (Ts) will be selected to proceed to the signing of the contract.

69. Once selected and before signing the contract, the Financial Auditor has to be endorsed by the CCP of Interreg NEXT MED in Lebanon.

V. Contract and Payment

70. The contract may be canceled if the delivery/completion by the Auditor is delayed by 30 calendar days.

71. As a result of the quality control, the MA may request to LCEC the early termination of this contract. Such termination shall be free of charge for the Project partner.

72. The contract will be in Euro.

73. All payments under the contract will be made in Euro via a bank transfer from a Lebanese commercial bank to another Lebanese commercial bank or via fresh bankers' cheque (no cash payments will be made; no transfers outside Lebanon will be made).

74. The contract amount shall be disbursed upon achievement and approval of the corresponding milestones for each project separately and independently from the Interim in the other project, in accordance with the below table:

Milestone	Payment Percentage
Contract Signature	30%
Interim Report 1	10%
Interim Report 2	10%
Interim Report 3	10%

Interim Report 4	10%
Interim Report 5	10%
Final Report	20%

75. The table below shows the processing time needed for some of the Auditor's activities.

Activity	Maximum Allowed Processing Time
The contract may be canceled if the delivery/completion of any of the tasks by the Auditor is delayed by 30 calendar days	30 calendar days
The EVRs shall be delivered to LCEC within 15 calendar days	15 calendar days
The Auditor shall respond to any clarification request from LCEC within a maximum of 5 calendar days	5 calendar days

VI. General Terms and Conditions

A. Settlement of Disputes and Applicable Law

76. The Parties shall use their best efforts to settle amicably any dispute, controversy or claim arising out of, or relating to this Contract or the breach, termination or invalidity thereof. In case amicable efforts fail, the settlement of disputes will take place in the courts of Beirut according to Lebanese laws and regulations.

B. Data Protection

77. Any personal data included in the contract shall be processed with the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 (GDPR - General Data Protection Regulation) on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data. The data shall be processed solely for the purposes of the performance, management and monitoring of the contract by the Lead Beneficiary/Project partner without prejudice to possible transmission to the bodies charged with monitoring or inspection in application of EU law. The Auditor shall have the right to access his/her personal data and to rectify any such data.

78. The Auditor shall undertake to adopt technical and organizational measures to address the risks inherent in processing and in the nature of the concerned personal data and limit access to the data to staff strictly needed to perform, manage and monitor this contract.

Form A – Experience

[Name of Applicant]

- *Please list the most recent projects (starting from 2025, 2024, 2023, 2022, etc...)*
- *Please only list the projects that were completed*

1. Please list the relevant projects

Project Ref.	Project Name	Project Type	Client Contact Details
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
<i>[add rows as necessary]</i>			

Form B – Relevant Experience

[Name of Applicant]

- *Please list the most recent projects (starting from 2025, 2024, 2023, 2022, etc...)*
- *Please only list the projects under ENPI CBC Med / ENI CBC MED / Interreg NEXT MED*

2. Please list the relevant projects

Project Ref.	Project Name	Project Type
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
<i>[add rows as necessary]</i>		

Form C – Team Composition

[Name of Applicant]

Please attach the CV of each team member separately.

Team Member Name	Assigned Projects	Years of Experience
<i>[add rows as necessary]</i>		