PROGRAMME MANUAL

# INTERREG MED PROGRAMME STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

# 1.     Background and programme objective

## 1.1.1. Overview of Interreg MED Programme

OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF THE PROGRAMME

> The overall objective of the MED programme is to promote sustainable growth in the Mediterranean area by fostering innovative concepts and practices (technologies, governance, innovative services…), reasonable use of resources (energy, water, maritime resources…) and supporting social integration through integrated and territorially based cooperation approach.

A PROGRAMME LEARNING FROM ITS HISTORY

The new Interreg MED Programme builds on the experience and lessons learnt from the previous 2007-2013 period, during which more than 4000 outputs have been delivered.
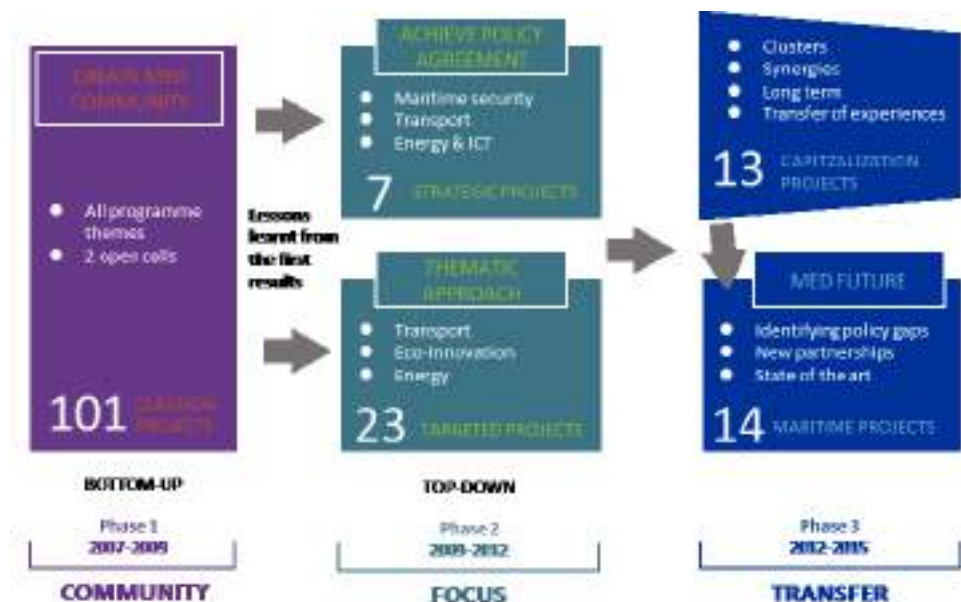


**FIGURE 1: MED 2007-2013 ARCHITECTURE**

THE NOVELTIES THAT THE NEW PROGRAMME BRINGS

The Interreg MED 2014-2020 is:

- **Wider** – Inclusion of 3 new regions – Lisbon and Tejo Valley, Midi-Pyrenees and Valle d'Aosta
- **Bigger** – EUR 224 million ERDF and EUR 9 million IPA funding, co-financing rate 85%[1]
- **More focused** – three thematic axes, one governance axis
- **Closer** to the territory – special attention to the private sector (SME) and civil society
- **More mature** – capitalising from previous experiences
- **More connected** – synergies with other European programmes/instruments/strategies (Interreg Europe, ENI MED, SUDOE, Atlantic, H2020, EUSAIR …)

## 1.1.2. Programme Area

- Eligible geographic area extends over some 860 000 km² (around 20% of the EU area).
- More than 15 000 kilometres of a maritime coastline
- Home for more than 122 million people (24.3% of the EU27 population)
- 142 people per km2 in the MED space compared with 116.3 in Europe as a whole. This average however masks significant disparities: population densities vary considerably from 1 318 people/km2 in Malta to 23.9 people/km2 in Portugal's Alentejo region
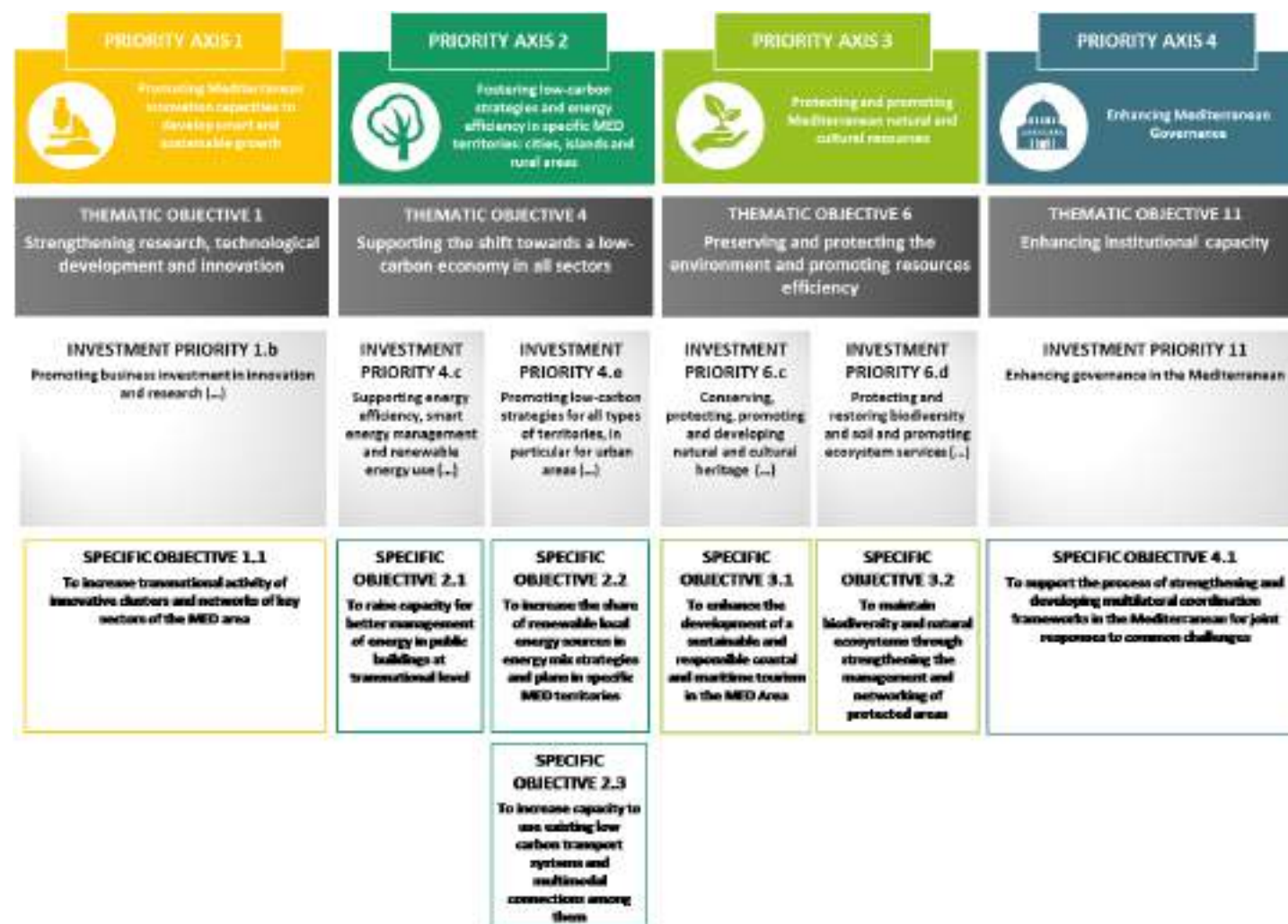- Extremely diverse natural, physical and geographic characteristics

**FIGURE 2: PROGRAMME AREA**
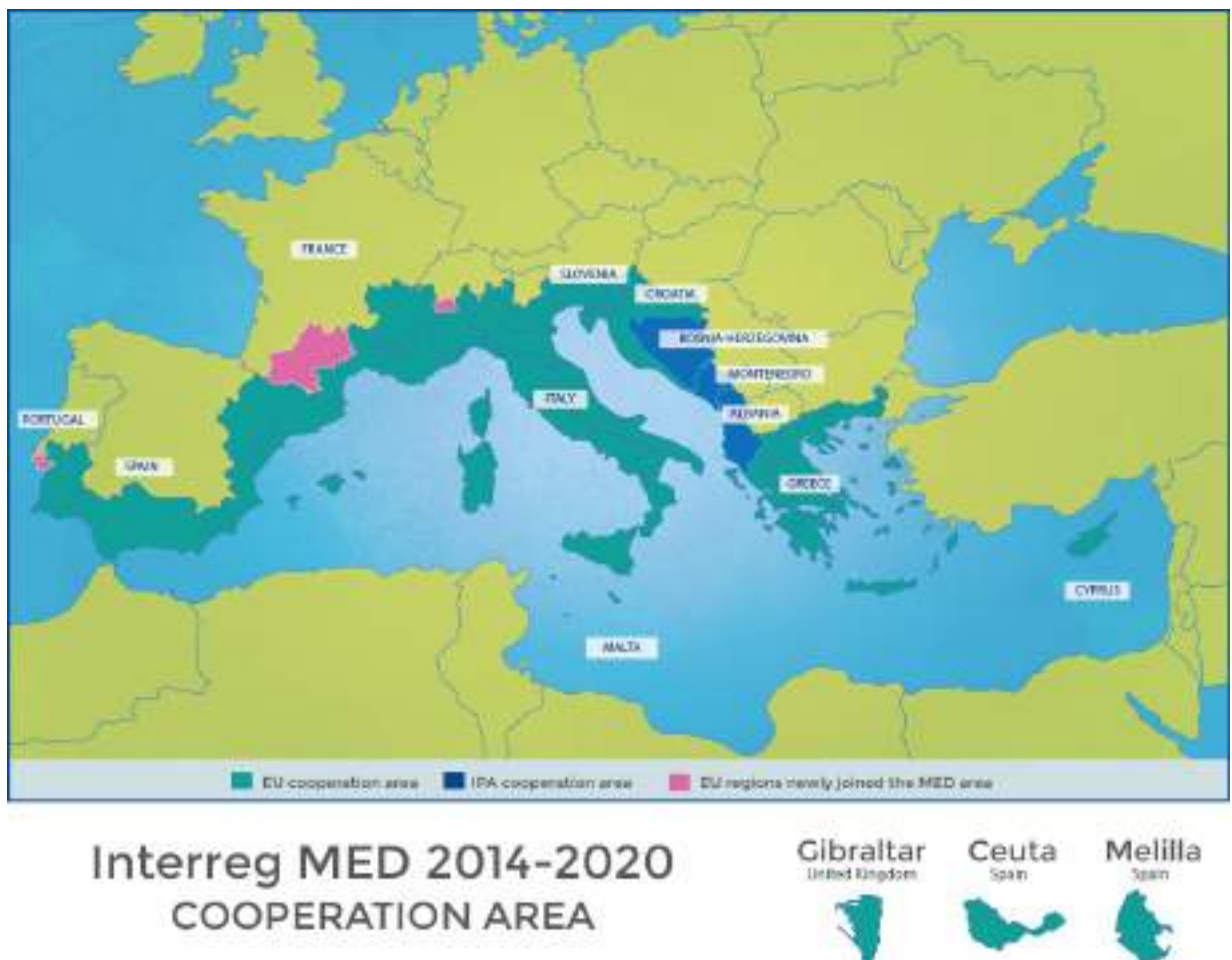


[1] Co-financing rate of 50% for the SME partner under GBER.

## 1.1.3. Priority axes and specific objectives

FIGURE 3: PRIORITY AXES AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

# 1.1.4. Programme budget

The Interreg MED Programme is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and by the Instrument for Pre-Accession assistance funds (IPA). Both are supplemented by match funding from projects (national counterpart).

The ERDF contribution to the programme amounts to around EUR 224.3 million ERDF.

The IPA contribution to the programme amounts to around EUR 9.3 million IPA.

The overall programme budget, including also the national counterpart, amounts to around EUR 275.9 million.

The budget allocation according to priority axes is provided in the table below.

**FIGURE 4: BUDGET ALLOCATION BY PRIORITY AXIS**

| PRIORITY AXIS | FUND | UNION SUPPORT (EUR) | NATIONAL (PUBLIC AND PRIVATE) COUNTERPART (EUR) | TOTAL BUDGET (EUR) | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Priority Axis 1: Promoting Mediterranean innovation capacities to develop smart and sustainable growth | ERDF | 71.783.208 | 12.667.625 | 84.450.833 | 32% |
| | IPA | 2.993.851 | 528.327 | 3.522.178 | |
| Priority Axis 2: Fostering low-carbon strategies and energy efficiency in specific MED territories: cities, islands and rural areas | ERDF | 44.864.505 | 7.917.266 | 52.781.771 | 20% |
| | IPA | 1.871.158 | 330.205 | 2.201.363 | |
| Priority Axis 3: Protecting and promoting Mediterranean natural and cultural resources | ERDF | 76.269.660 | 13.459.352 | 89.729.012 | 34% |
| | IPA | 3.180.966 | 561.347 | 3.742.313 | |
| Priority Axis 4: Enhancing Mediterranean Governance | ERDF | 17.945.801 | 3.166.907 | 21.112.708 | 8% |
| | IPA | 748.462 | 132.082 | 880.544 | |
| Priority axis 5: Technical Assistance | ERDF | 13.459.351 | 3.364.839 | 16.824.190 | 6% |
| | IPA | 561.346 | 99.062 | 660.408 | |
| Total | ERDF | 224.322.525 | 40.575.989 | 264.898.514 | 100% |
| | IPA | 9.355.783 | 1.651.023 | 11.006.806 | |
| | ERDF+IPA | 233.678.308 | 42.227.012 | 275.905.320 | |

The co-financing rate for the **ERDF partners** will be of 85%.

The co-financing rate for the SMEs participating under Article 20 of the General Block Exemption Regulation (Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014) will be of 50% (only ERDF)[2].

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[2] IPA entities under private law not identified as non profit entities are not eligible to the Interreg MED Programme. For this reason, IPA funds cannot co-finance SMEs under the MED Programme.

The co-financing rate for the **IPA partners** will be of 85%.

# 1.1.5. Legal framework and Programme related documents

The relevant documents listed below (non-exhaustive list) are provided on the Interreg MED website http://www.interreg-med.eu

## Programme documents

- Interreg MED Cooperation Programme document (adopted by the European Commission on June 3rd, 2015)
- Interreg MED Programme Strategic Environmental Assessment
- SWOT analysis of the MED territorial cooperation programme
- Thematic Terms of references for each Call for proposals

## European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020: Key regulations

- Common provisions regulation (CPR)

Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and re-pealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.

- ERDF Regulation

Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Regional Development Fund and on specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006.

- ETC Regulation

Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal.

- EGTC Regulation

Regulation (EU) No 1302/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 amending Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC) as regards the clarification, simplification and improvement of the establishment and functioning of such groupings.

- *De Minimis* Regulation

Commission Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to *de minimis* aid.

- General Block Exemption Regulation

Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty.

- IPA Regulations

Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II).

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 447/2014 of 2 May 2014 on the specific rules for implementing Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession assistance (IPA II).

## Strategic framework

EUROPE 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, Communication from the Commission, COM(2010)2020 final.

Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020: Towards an Inclusive, Smart and Sustainable Europe of Diverse Regions, Gödöllö, May 2011.

Sixth Report on Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion: Investment for jobs and growth. Promoting development and good governance in EU regions and cities, European Commission, July 2014.

## Macro-regional strategies

European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, COM(2014) 357 final

European Council conclusions to elaborate an EU Strategy for the Alpine Region, EU-CO 217/13

Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions concerning the governance of macro-regional strategies, COM(2014) 284 final

# 1.1.6. Management structures

**Monitoring Committee**
The Monitoring Committee (MC) is set up by Member States. These integrate the committee together with the Managing Authority, Certifying Authority, Audit Authority as well as social and economic partners.

The Monitoring Committee is responsible for the efficient and qualitative implementation of the Cooperation Programme and progress made towards achieving its objectives and the selection of operations, according to article 12 of the ETC Regulation. For the selection and modification of operations, the Monitoring Committee sets up a Steering Committee, acting under its responsibility. The **Steering Committee**, whose rules of procedures are approved by the Monitoring Committee, is responsible, with the assistance of the Joint Secretariat, for the selection, in each single step of the assessment procedure, and the approval or rejection of changes of all types of projects (uni-module, multi-module, horizontal etc.) under axis 1, 2, 3.

The **Monitoring Committee** is responsible for the final validation of the list of the projects selected by the Steering Committee and the selection and modification of the projects of axis 4 and 5.
Decisions are taken on a consensus basis expressed by each national delegation with one vote allocated per participating country. If necessary, decisions can be made following a written procedure (also on a consensus basis) within the participating States.

**Managing Authority**
The Med Programme's Member States have designated as Managing Authority (MA) the Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur Region (France). The MA is responsible for managing and implementing the cooperation programme in accordance with the principle of sound financial management. It is the entity that signs the Subsidy Contracts with the Lead Partners.

The MA supports the work of the Monitoring Committee and the transmission of information it requires to carry out its tasks, in particular data relating to the progress of the cooperation programme in achieving its objectives; financial data, and data relating to indicators and milestones.

**Joint Secretariat**
The Joint Secretariat (JS) is a transnational team assisting the Managing Authority, the Monitoring Committee, the Steering Committee and the Audit Authority in implementing the programme. It deals with project applications, provides information to potential beneficiaries about funding opportunities under the Interreg MED Programme and assists beneficiaries in the implementtation of operations.

It sets up and maintains contacts with Lead Partners and their partnerships. Ensures at transnational level coordination, follow-up and promotion activities and provides technical support for the preparation of meetings and events at the programme and project level (Monitoring Committees, Transnational Conferences and transnational working groups, Lead Partners seminar, other specific thematic meetings).

**Certifying Authority**
This Authority certifies statements of expenditure and applications for payment before they are sent to the Commission; it receives payments made by the Commission and ensures the reimbursement.

It is also responsible for drawing up the annual accounts and ensuring that audits are carried out on the management and control systems, on an appropriate sample of operations and on the annual accounts.

During the programming period 2014-2020, the Spanish Ministry of Finance and Public Administration has been designated as the Certifying Authority.

**Audit Authority**

Functionally independent from the Managing Authority and the Certifying Authority, the Audit Authority (AA) is responsible for verifying the effective functioning of the management and control system.

The AA is an inter-ministerial commission (CICC) reporting to the Prime Minister, who appoints its members, and is assisted by a group of independent auditors composed of a representative from each State participating in the programme.

The representatives of the participating states to the Group of Auditors, that assist the AA, shall not be involved in any other management or certification activity under the MED programme.

**Participating States**

Within each participating state, the MED Programme is taken in charge through two specific functions:

- A regulatory function related to the responsibility of each participating state as regards monitoring and control of activities, procedures and expenses of project partners in the respective participating countries
- A function of coordination of the implementation of the programme on national territory and a contribution to the general animation of the programme in relation with the MA and the JS to which they entrusted management

Each participating State can freely organise its national body and has the possibility to set up support bodies such as National Committees as consultative bodies.

**National Contact Points**

Set up by each Member State in coherence with their administrative system, the National Contact Points (NCPs) can be individuals or administrative bodies.

Their role is to ensure the transnationality of the programme and help mainstreaming of projects.

They are in direct contact with national stakeholders and provide information on the programme, on the calls for projects and on administrative requirements for the submission of applications. NCPs are coordinated by their National Authorities. Decentralised structures of the programme might also be set up to support the programme implementation.

**FIGURE 5: MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES OF THE INTERREG MED PROGRAMME**
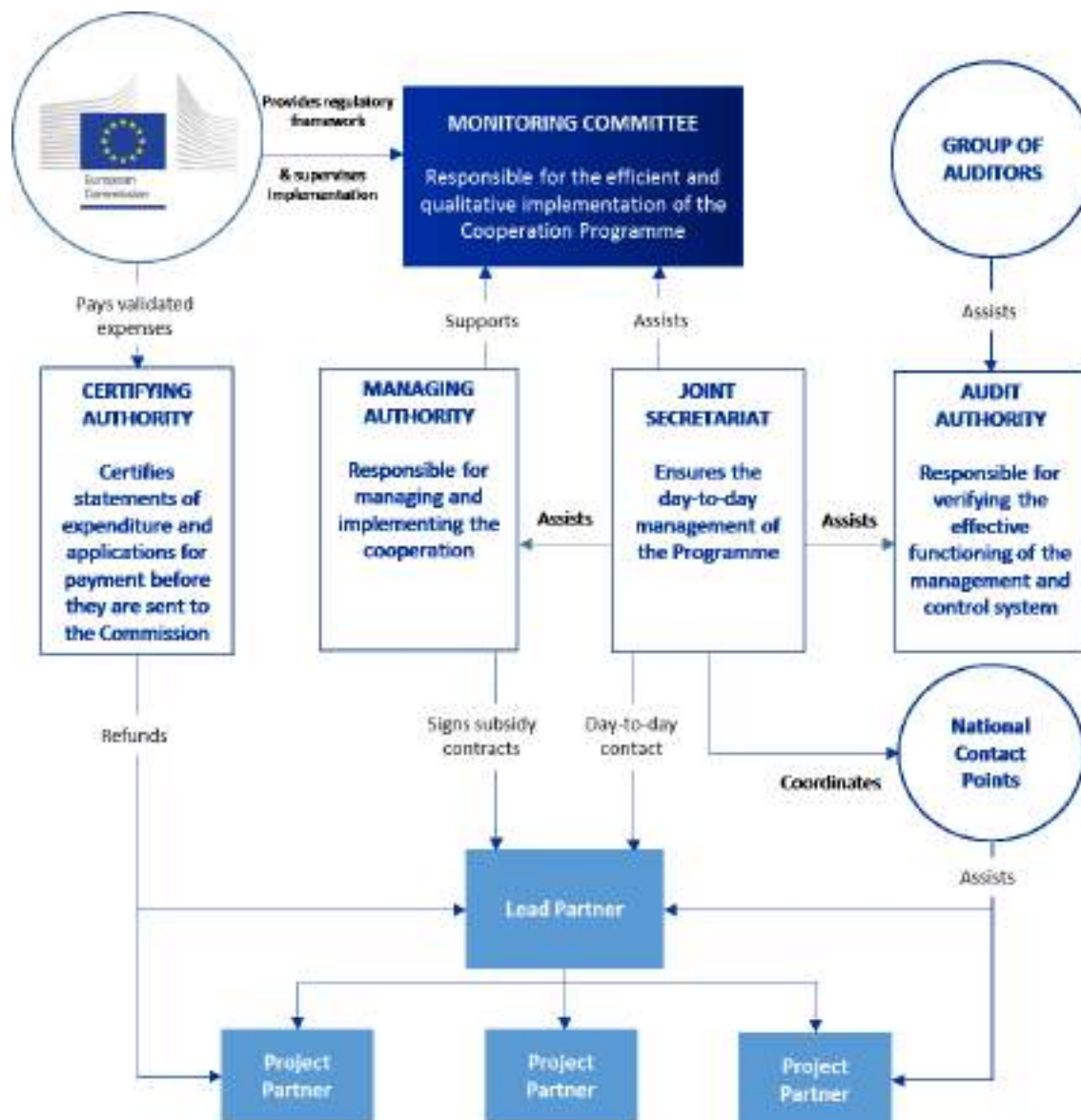
# 2.    Key principles

In the period 2014-2020, Interreg MED Programme will promote cooperation between a varied typology of actors of thirteen Mediterranean countries. Our aim lies in optimizing existing results achieved in the previous period as well as facilitating new cooperation frameworks for all partners situated in the programme cooperation area. Accordingly, Interreg MED Programme establishes the following key cooperation principles aiming at consolidating the character of future projects and their related activities.

These fundamental principles represent the identity of the Interreg MED Programme and are coherent with the promotion of development, of good governance and supported by the European Union Cohesion Policy.

**FIGURE 6: FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF INTERREG MED PROGRAMME**



## 1.2.1. Thematic concentration

Thematic concentration is one of the leading principles of all Interreg Programmes for the period 2014-2020, as Programmes have been asked to concentrate on a limited number of themes. In this respect, the Interreg MED Programme authorities have chosen 4 thematic objectives amongst the 11 defined by the European Union, with 6 investment priorities. This choice was made on the basis of a SWOT analysis which has led to a definition of common needs, challenges and opportunities for the Programme area. The situation analysis equally took into account development priorities defined at national, regional and local level which have been laid out by the respective Member States in their different strategies and policy documents.

The thematic objectives and investment priorities have been translated into four Programme Priority Axis, which in turn are broken down into seven specific objectives. Both elements are Programme-specific but are consistent with the chosen thematic objectives and investment priorities as defined in the EU Regulations. This constitutes the basis of the Programme strategy.

Project interventions and associated activities should ensure effective influence on, at least, one of the four thematic objectives of reference: *Innovation, Low-carbon Economy, Environment and Governance*[3] (for further information, please refer to section 1.3 of this factsheet related to the Programme intervention logic).

A project expecting to be co-financed by the Interreg MED programme should be widely aligned with one of its thematic objectives. However, it could be possible that related activities, results and outcomes of this project can also contribute to the achievement of other programme objectives under an integrated approach. In contrast, projects addressing thematic aspects different from the four objectives of reference will not take part in the Interreg MED Programme community.

## 1.2.2. Result-orientation

The principle of result-orientation characterises the commitment of Interreg MED Programme to the long-term development of the Mediterranean area. Besides the thematic concentration, the European Union required programmes of the 2014-2020 programming period to set in place a result-oriented intervention logic demonstrating their clear contribution to the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy and to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion. Programmes are to fund projects which demonstrate the translation of outputs arising from "soft" actions (not infrastructures) into concrete, visible and sustainable results. Those have to lead to a change of the initial situation and should bring a concrete response to persistent problems identified on the cooperation space of the programme. In order to maximise the impact, Interreg MED Programme results should ensure effectiveness and be achieved in a measurable and relevant way[4].

To this end, for each specific objective, the programme has defined expected **results** which reflect the changes the programme seeks to achieve for the entire programme area through the implementation of projects. Results and related changes are measured through **results indicators** linked to each programme specific objective. Selecting clear result indicators facilitates understanding of the problem and the policy need and will facilitate a later judgement about whether or not objectives have been met. In this context, baselines, milestones and cumulative targets have been set for result indicators, to allow measuring the change achieved in the whole MED area during the Programming period.

Accordingly, projects and partners should integrate clear strategies which allow to define and obtain results with ambitious but realistic nature, scope and impact. It is worth mentioning that the Programme strategy can only be successful if projects contribute to realising the change the Programme envisages when achieving their own results. This implies a shift in the approach of projects from focusing on project activities to focusing on the results to which these activities

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[3] See: Article 9 of Regulation (EU) No 1303 /2013 and Interreg MED Cooperation Programme 2014-2020, section thematic objectives

[4] See  Article 16 of Regulation (EU) No 1299 /2013 and Interreg MED Cooperation Programme 2014-2020, section indicators

lead, whereas project results are expected to be coherent with the Interreg MED Programme objectives and directly contributing to Programme result indicators.

## 1.2.3. Transnationality

Transnationality is the leading principle of all Interreg MED Programme interventions. This principle promotes the constitution of partnerships composed by structures of at least four different programme countries.

Projects implementation should create not only individual impacts on specific territories but also a collective effect addressing a Mediterranean vision. Interventions facilitated by Interreg MED Programme should ensure joint approach, common analysis, correlations and synergies between obtained results[5].

Therefore, projects are expected not only to strive towards changes in targeted territories but also to react collectively towards common Mediterranean challenges. Projects belonging to the Interreg MED Programme should guarantee that achieved results are obtained in transnational dynamics, common learning, sharing of knowledge, adaptation process and improvement of existing results under a cooperative attitude. In contrast, Interreg MED Programme will NOT support projects aiming to develop individual actions in represented territories with no relation to synergies and Mediterranean added value.

## 1.2.4. Territorial relevance

This principle represents the concretisation of Interreg MED Programme actions on the development of its different territories. Projects and activities should be territorially relevant by addressing solutions and motivating development of Islands, urban, coastal and rural areas with a potential mainstreaming to the whole Mediterranean area[6].

Under this context, projects territorially relevant are those who engage a significant representation of civil society pursuing the development of their common space of interaction. This territorial relevance should be also present in the project capacity to facilitate the transmission of results to a wider territory under a Mediterranean approach.

On the other hand, territorial relevance should not be demonstrated "exclusively" by the status of the partners (e.g. national, regional and/or local structures) or by the automatic addition of these representations. Individual and collective representation of partners within a specific project can mean a potential territorial coverage but the "relevance" should be demonstrated in the quality of working plans, nature of activities and measures proposed to deal with challenges of targeted territories.

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[5] Article 12 EU regulation 1299/2013 and also Interreg MED Cooperation Programme 2014-2020, section: "Organisation of the assessment and selection of operations".
[6] Interreg MED Cooperation Programme 2014-2020, section: "Integrated approach to territorial development".

## 1.2.5. Sustainability

The principle of sustainability is adopted by the Interreg MED Programme according to the promotion of sustainable growth established by the European Union 2020 Strategy. Under this context, projects taking part in the Interreg MED Programme should integrate the ability to carry out their activities without significant deterioration of the environment and depletion of natural resources on which human well-being depends.

In order to achieve sustainability, projects should adopt methods that allow identifying the most suitable environmental-friendly practices over the project operation and related activities[7]. Interreg MED Programme also reflects this principle in all its thematic choices, namely: innovation, low carbon economy, sustainable tourism and environment. Projects not integrating this principle of sustainability are those who do not show any sensibility towards implementing actions respectful with the environment.

## 1.2.6. Transferability

This principle represents the Interreg MED Programme commitment to ensure continuation and longer term impact of the activities it supports. Transferability refers to the degree to which the project main outputs can be generalised or transferred to other contexts or settings. Accordingly, partners, projects and associated activities should guarantee the capacity to generate added value even after the end of their project. In practice, Interreg MED Programme will favour projects and activities able to address specific challenges not only during projects duration but also throughout ambitious handover strategies able to guarantee the continuation, share and replication of activities and associated results.

The nature, quality and scope of projects and associated activities should be evaluated not only in function of quality criteria but also according to the capacity of the project to ensure the extensive use and transferability of related products. Also, projects should clearly identify the target groups to whom the actions will be targeted.

Transferability should not be considered as fully accomplished just by the fact of integrating dissemination actions all over the project operation. Communication and capitalisation aspects represent a fundamental support but they cannot guarantee by themselves that project results are transferable and transferred.

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[7] European Union Strategy Official website: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-a-nutshell/priorities/index_en.htm and also see: Interreg MED Cooperation Programme 2014-2020, section: SWOT analysis and Framework and guidelines for the implementation of the 2014-2020 Interreg MED Programme.

# 1.2.7. Capitalisation

*In nature nothing is created, nothing is lost, everything changes*.
Antoine Lavoisier (1743 – 1794)

THE MEANING OF CAPITALISATION

The underlying principle of European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) programmes is that cooperation serves either to improve what exists or to create new and innovative solutions, based on acquired experiences. A simple description of "capitalisation" is tightly connected to this idea of **taking farther existing assets**. In that sense, it is a key issue for gaining the full value of experiences of individual or thematic communities of projects.

For the Interreg MED Programme, **capitalisation is a continuous process** and shapes in a direct or indirect manner all the dimensions of the projects' lifecycle.

WHAT FOR?

For a long time capitalisation has hardly been considered in a structured way by the programmes or the projects (with specific activities or focus). The assumption is that after several generations of ETC programmes, a lot of energy could have been applied in a more efficient way and with stronger results, just by taking a serious look on what previous initiatives had delivered.

Considering capitalisation as an inherent element of the programme dynamic responds, on one hand, to the need for a **more efficient implementation of the projects** and, on the other, to aim for **more solid results**.

HOW?

This concept of capitalisation requires the establishment of certain procedures and tools favouring the stated objectives. At programme level, the approach concentrates on:

- **Creation of project communities**, or grouping of projects and experiences according to common issues, in order to gain a broader view of results and overcome fragmentation of messages to the relevant stakeholders;
- **Systematisation of knowledge**, or the development of the accessibility to the project outcomes facilitating access to results over time;
- **Mainstreaming**, or efforts to promote institutional uptake of results, primarily through incorporation into regional / national policies.

In concrete terms, the programme will promote this approach through:

- Organisation of Joint Secretariat (JS) in thematic poles;
- A close follow-up of projects by the JS with a qualitative approach;
- Redesign of project Application Forms with clear and shared definitions (of activities, outputs, etc.), well identified starting point (outputs and experiences to be capitalised) and foreseen deliverables;

- Launching of specific modules for capitalisation projects (M3), dedicated to improve the geographical and/or technical potential of a set of outputs from previous initiatives;
- Launching of horizontal projects, in charge of providing a common platform of diffusion, treatment and access to the results of the different communities of projects;
- Launching of a "mainstreaming platform" through Axis 4 for governance;
- Encouraging national and regional contact points to have an active role as communicating vessels between projects and decision making levels;
- Closer contact between the Programme structures and other Interreg and thematic programmes.

In this context, projects are expected to:

- Dilute their boundaries to facilitate the integration at the thematic group level (modular projects working together with a horizontal project, please refer to the factsheet "MED horizontal projects" for further information);
- Integrate the work in groups in the essence of the project, nourishing the flux of information between the different types of projects – modular, horizontal, axis 4 platform;
- Conceive and deliver outputs adapted to further appropriation by their end users or future initiatives (regarding format, content and dissemination strategy);
- Involve stakeholders (end-users and decision makers, in particular) from the beginning;
- Contribute to the formative evaluation of the forthcoming programmes and projects.

## 1.2.8. Horizontal principles

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development and environment protection are integrated as horizontal principles in the cooperation programme. Therefore all projects supported by the programme will have to respect the relevant policies and rules.

Project applicants have to describe the contribution to sustainable development, explaining how the sustainability principle is anchored within the project design and planned activities.

Further, applicants have to specify which possible environmental effects (positive, neutral or negative) the project will likely have considering the following aspects: water, soil, air and climate, population and human health, fauna, flora and biodiversity, cultural heritage and landscape. This is of particular relevance in case of pilot investments.

Projects submitted under any priority axis are strongly encouraged to incorporate activities for tackling environmental concerns and reducing their environmental and carbon footprint, for example by:

- Including environmental criteria in procurement procedures;
- Giving preference to environmentally-friendly mobility options (in particular for short travel distances);
- Considering online meetings instead of face-to-face meetings where possible;

- Organising conferences and events in a sustainable way (e.g. by combining different meetings in one place, reducing printing and using recyclable materials, using video conference facilities, etc.);
- Considering resource efficiency and the use of renewable energy at all levels;
- Making use of regional supply chains (reducing supply chain length and $CO_2$ emissions).

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Projects have to ensure that the activities implemented are in line with the principle of equal opportunities and do not generate discrimination of any kind (sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation). Applicants have to describe the contribution to equal opportunities and non-discrimination, explaining how the equal opportunity principle is anchored within the project design and planned activities.

Besides actions of projects which explicitly address the reduction of disparities, all projects submitted under any priority axis are encouraged to incorporate measures for promoting equal opportunities and preventing any discrimination, for example by actively tackling concerns of demographic change and inequality.

EQUALITY BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

Projects have to ensure that the activities implemented are in line with the principle of equality between men and women and do not generate discrimination of any kind. Applicants have to describe the contribution to this principle, explaining how the equality principle is anchored in the project design and planned activities. Projects submitted under any priority axis are encouraged to incorporate measures for integrating the gender perspective, for example by integrating equal participation of women and men and/or actively promoting gender mainstreaming.

# 3.    Programme Intervention Logic

## 1.3.1. Reminder of the overall strategic framework for 2014-2020 programming

➔ **Europe 2020 strategy**
    ➔ Territorial Agenda 2020
        ➔ **EU cohesion policy 2014-2020**
            ➔ European Territorial Cooperation
                ➔ Transnational Cooperation (Interreg V-B)
                    ➔ **Interreg MED Programme 2014-2020**

The Interreg MED Programme is a European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) Programme / Trans-national cooperation strand (Interreg V-B) and as such is an integral part of the European Union's Cohesion Policy, which is the principle tool to implement the EU 2020 Strategy. The EU 2020 Strategy is the EU's growth and jobs strategy and the overall framework to which all adopted EU policies should contribute.

Several overarching principles guided the programming process for the 2014-2020 period. These principles have been inherited in the programme design and supported the strategic orientation of the programming process. Those principles are[8]:

- **Supporting the delivery of Europe 2020 strategy goals**: The link to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth is ensured through the definition of 11 thematic objectives (TOs) (Article 9, CPR) and the requirement for thematic concentration (Article 5, ETC): Programmes were asked to choose up to 4 thematic objectives for the definition of Programme priority axes, further broken down into investment priorities (chosen to define the Programme Specific Objectives).
- **A common understanding of the ETC objective**: Ex post evaluation of the Interreg III (2000-2006) and ETC 2007-2013 programmes revealed that it was difficult to capture the added value and achievements of ETC programmes. Several reasons were identified for this, and one of them was the lack of clarity of programme objectives at both EU and programme level. For 2014-2020 period, transnational cooperation should aim to strengthen cooperation by means of actions conducive to integrated territorial development linked to the Union's cohesion policy priorities.
- **Contributing to the overall – economic, social / societal and territorial – cohesion of the EU** by supporting cohesion of transnational programme area and by working together with common assets and/or challenges. Through these, programmes create: common identity, integrated physical space, services and communities, balanced development, solutions for

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[8] Inspired from INTERACT "Programming Process 2014-2020: Practical Paper -Final-" (10th February, 2013) http://admin.interact-eu.net/downloads/7723/INTERACT_HARMONISED_IMPLEMENTATION_TOOLS_Practical_paper_for_programme_prepa ration_final_.pdf and "Monitoring and Evaluation of European Cohesion Policy– European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund - Concepts and Recommendations", Guidance document, European Commission Directorate – General Regional Policy: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/2014/working/wd_2014_en.pdf

common challenges, experimentation, grounds for investments, improved policies and governance etc.

- **Being driven by jointly identified needs of the programme area**: "The starting point in designing any public intervention is to identify a problem to be addressed." Priorities for cooperation should be based on the specific needs and characteristics of the programme area. They should be identified and agreed through a deliberative process between programme stakeholders. As part of this process, the pathway/ direction towards a desired change would also be identified.

- **Being result driven and performance oriented**. The result driven approach implies that for each programme area the desired change in the situation is identified which will represent a specific aspect of people's well-being in the programme area. The intended result will also provide justification of policy intervention. The desired result will be supported by a limited number of result indicators which indicate what the target of programme intervention is. This will represent the basis of the intervention logic of the programme as it will set apart the specific planned intervention from other factors that will have an effect on the desired change

Europe 2020 strategy and the Cohesion Report highlight that, in the 2014-2020 programming period, programme design should set focus on performance rather than financial means.

Taking into account the above, and as mentioned in section 1.2., thematic concentration and result-oriented approach are the two key leading principles for drafting the Interreg MED Programme Intervention Logic.

## 1.3.2. Interreg MED Intervention logic

In previous periods, the traditional framework was unclear on the distinction between inputs, outputs, results and outcomes. In the period 2014-2020, it has been substituted by a logical framework that underpins the intervention logic of each chosen priority of the Cooperation Programme. The aforementioned thematic concentration and result orientation are both reflected in the Programme intervention logic.

**The Programme intervention logic can be defined as the theoretical framework that structures and visualises the entire logical and sequential process from defining the thematic objectives, investment priorities, priority axis and specific objectives until the results that should ultimately be achieved.**

Priority axes are the building blocks of the Programme. Each priority axis includes one or more investment priorities. The specific objective is the expression of what each investment priority aims to achieve. The change sought by the specific objective is expressed in one result indicator. More specifically, for each priority, the following logic should be assumed[9]:

- To start with, a problem (need) to be addressed by joint action is identified -> Selection of thematic objectives, investment priorities and corresponding specific objectives;

- This informs the definition of the intended result (policy objective reflecting the change in the socio-economic situation) to be modified by interventions. For this, result indicators

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[9] "Monitoring and Evaluation of European Cohesion Policy– European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund - Concepts and Recommendations", Guidance document, European Commission Directorate –General Regional Policy: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/2014/working/wd_2014_en.pdf

(appropriate variables that represent the intended result) are selected and defined by baseline and target;

- Different factors can drive the change – the Programme selects factors to be direct products of interventions (outputs) and explain how these contribute to results.

This is then completed by the definition of actions to be supported that will deliver the outputs and lead to the attainment of the specific objectives and results. Corresponding categories of intervention have been listed and output indicators chosen.

An outline of the priority axes and the specific objectives is provided in section 1.1 on strategic priorities and specific objectives.

A visualisation of the full programme intervention logic is provided hereafter.

**FIGURE 7: PROGRAMME INTERVENTION LOGIC**

**PRIORITY AXIS 2**

**Fostering low-carbon strategies and energy efficiency in specific MED territories: cities, islands and rural areas**

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**INVESTMENT PRIORITY 4.c**

Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector

**INVESTMENT PRIORITY 4.e**

Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multi-modal mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures

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**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2.1**

To raise capacity for better management of energy in public buildings at transnational level

**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2.2**

To increase the share of renewable local energy sources in energy mix strategies and plans in specific MED territories

**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2.3**

To increase capacity to use existing low carbon transport systems and multimodal connections among them

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| Expected result | Types of projects | Expected result | Types of projects | Expected result | Types of projects |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Increased capacity of building owners and managers to develop and implement energy efficiency practices in public buildings in the MED area | M1<br>M2<br>M3<br>M2 + M3 | Increased inclusion of local renewable energy sources in MED territories | M1<br>M2<br>M3<br>M2 + M3 | Enlarged capacity to use low carbon transport systems in MED regions | M1<br>M2<br>M3<br>M2 + M3 |

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**Result indicator**

Share of regional, sub-regional and local energy efficiency plans including adapted measures for public building stock

**Output indicators**

2.1.a  Number of available planning tools to monitor and manage energy consumption in public buildings

2.1.b  Number of strategies supporting plans on energy consumption management for public buildings

2.1.c  Number of target groups participating in capacity raising activities on energy efficiency for public buildings

2.1.d  Number of regions and sub-regions engaged (through charters, protocols, MoU) in developing energy efficiency plans/strategies

**Result indicator**

Share of renewable energy from local sources in energy mix of MED islands and rural areas

**Output indicators**

2.2.a  Number of planning tools to develop energy plans including local RES

2.2.b  Population of islands covered by plans

2.2.c  Population of rural areas covered by plans

2.2.d  Number of models to develop action plans including local RES in energy mix

2.2.e  Number of regions and sub-regions engaged (through charters, protocols, MoU) in increasing share of local RES in energy mix
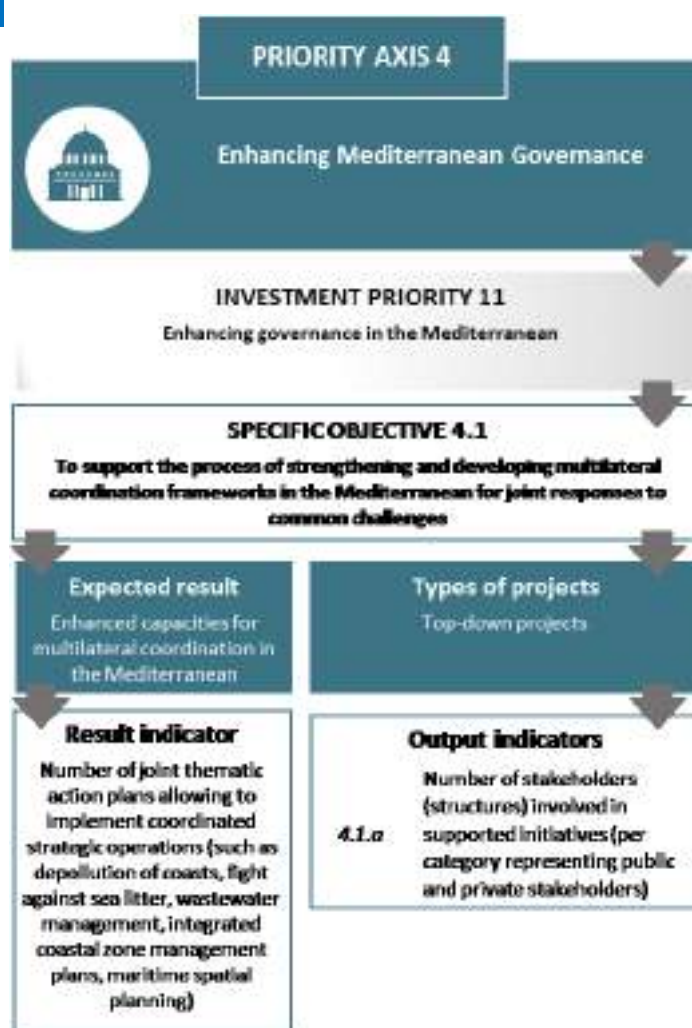
**Result indicator**

Share of urban plans which include low carbon transport and multimodal connection soft actions

**Output indicators**

2.3.a  Number of instruments available to foster the use of LC transport solutions, including multimodal ones

2.3.b  Number of models to develop urban plans including low carbon transport and multimodal connections soft actions

2.3.c  Population involved in awareness raising activities

2.3.d  Number of urban areas engaged (through charters, protocols, MoU) in developing urban plans/strategies including low carbon transport and multimodal connection soft actions

PRIORITY AXIS 3

Protecting and promoting Mediterranean natural and cultural resources

| INVESTMENT PRIORITY 6.c | INVESTMENT PRIORITY 6.d |
|---|---|
| Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage (...) | Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services (...) |

| SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3.1 | SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3.2 |
|---|---|
| To enhance the development of a sustainable and responsible coastal and maritime tourism in the MED Area | To maintain biodiversity and natural ecosystems through strengthening the management and networking of protected areas |

| Expected result | Types of projects | Expected result | Types of projects |
|---|---|---|---|
| Improved cooperation and joint planning for the development of a sustainable and responsible coastal and maritime tourism | M1<br>M2<br>M3<br>M1 + M2<br>M2 + M3 | Maintained biodiversity of ecosystems via better integration of protected areas in territorial development strategies | M1<br>M2<br>M3<br>M1 + M2<br>M2 + M1 |

| Result indicator | Output indicators | Result indicator | Output indicators |
|---|---|---|---|
| Level of sustainability of tourism in MED coastal regions | **3.1.a** Number of instruments available to enhance the development of sustainable and responsible tourism | Share of protected areas meeting their conservation goals and objectives (thanks to their improved management) | **3.2.a** Number of joint governance plans |
| | **3.1.b** Number of tourist destinations covered by a sustainable tourism evaluation tool | | **3.2.b** Surface of habitats supported to attain a better conservation status |
| | **3.1.c** Number of strategies applying sustainable tourism management criteria | | **3.2.c** Number of protected areas engaged (through charters, protocols, MoU) in implementing management strategies |
| | **3.1.d** Number of regions and sub-regions engaged (through charters, protocols, MoU) in implementing sustainable tourism plans | | |

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## PRIORITY AXIS 4

### Enhancing Mediterranean Governance

### INVESTMENT PRIORITY 11

Enhancing governance in the Mediterranean

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 4.1

To support the process of strengthening and developing multilateral coordination frameworks in the Mediterranean for joint responses to common challenges

### Expected result

Enhanced capacities for multilateral coordination in the Mediterranean

### Types of projects

Top-down projects

### Result indicator

Number of joint thematic action plans allowing to implement coordinated strategic operations (such as depollution of coasts, fight against sea litter, wastewater management, integrated coastal zone management plans, maritime spatial planning)

### Output indicators

4.1.a  Number of stakeholders (structures) involved in supported initiatives (per category representing public and private stakeholders)

### 1.3.3. Programme result indicators

Result indicators are an expression of the objective of an investment priority. In other words, result indicators express the change sought by a specific objective on the whole Interreg MED area. Thus, they are programme-specific and meet certain quality criteria, as expressed in the CPR regulation (annex IV):

a) Responsive to policy: closely linked to the policy interventions supported;

b) Normative: having a clear and accepted normative interpretation;

c) Robust: reliable, statistically validated;

d) Timely collection of data: available when needed, with room built in for debate and for revision when needed and justified.

Each result indicator requires a baseline value[10] and a target value for 2022 (art. 6, ERDF Regulation, art. 4, CF Regulation; art. 15, ETC regulation).

Interreg MED result indicators are all expressed in quantitative terms. Specific methodologies were developed to define the baseline for each one of the result indicators, using the latest available data. Regarding target values, the following factors have been taken into account:

- Evaluation of the trend (how the situation will change if no MED actions);
- Estimation of MED impact on the indicator, with targets proportionate to the amount of funding available for each priority axis:
  - o direct impact, based on MED projects output indicators and MED future partners;
  - o indirect impact, based on the influence of MED projects results on the target population not directly partner of the projects.

Result indicators can inform the decision on project selection criteria because projects should be able to demonstrate how they will contribute to the achievement of the objectives of a priority.

For each Specific Objective result indicator, a summary of the methodology applied to define the baseline values is provided hereafter, reminding the baseline and target values fixed in the Interreg MED Cooperation Programme.

**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1.1.**: TO INCREASE TRANSNATIONAL ACTIVITY OF INNOVATIVE CLUSTERS AND NETWORKS OF KEY SECTORS OF THE MED AREA

**RESULT INDICATOR:** Share of innovative clusters (i.e. including R&D activities) offering to their members a consolidated mix of transnational activities in key sectors of the MED area.
**BASELINE VALUE:** Current % of innovative clusters that offered to their members a consolidated mix of activities, transnational services and tools.
**MEASUREMENT UNIT:** Innovative clusters (%).

Given the population and the innovative clusters in the key sectors (Blue and Green growth, social innovation and creative industries) of the MED area, it can be expected that almost all of them have established relationships beyond their boundaries. However, a cluster can be considered as implementing international operations only if it offers a consolidated mix of activities, tools and cross-border services to its members, as the "consolidated mix" allows distinguishing the clusters

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[10] A baseline is the value of a result indicator at the beginning of the programming period

by means of an expanded offer that makes possible a real internationalisation of their businesses as well as of the businesses that are still at a first stage of a cross-border cooperation.

The baseline value has been calculated through a survey launched towards innovative clusters. 5 types of services, tools and activities aiming at the internationalisation of cluster members were identified (based on TACTICS studies, the European Cluster Observatory and the EU cluster portal) for assessing the transnational activity of the clusters: Knowledge and Market Access, Capacity Building, International Trade and partnering, Financial Opportunities, International Cooperation and Networking.

It came out from the survey that 50% of innovative clusters of the MED area offer to their members a consolidated mix of transnational activities, services and tools. The target set for 2022 has been fixed to 66%.

**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2.1:** TO RAISE CAPACITY FOR BETTER MANAGEMENT OF ENERGY IN PUBLIC BUILDINGS AT TRANSNATIONAL LEVEL

**RESULT INDICATOR:** Share of regional, sub-regional and local (RSL) energy efficiency plans including adapted measures for public building stock.
**BASELINE VALUE:** current % of plans on energy efficiency including adapted initiatives on the public buildings stock.
**MEASUREMENT UNIT:** regional and local sustainable energy action plans including measures that reach a minimum threshold of quality (%).

Taking into consideration that the specific objective is to *reinforce the capacities of public* administrations *to optimise energy planning measures leading to a reduction of energy consumption and a better management of energy in public buildings*, and the main change sought is an increase of the capacity of owners and managers of public buildings to elaborate and implement energy efficiency practices, the indicator aims to check the growth / quality of management capacities. Having as measurement unit regional and local action plans allows to reflect the enhanced capacities, through the measurement of the evolution of plans with appropriate measures.

In other words, the baseline value is based on the % of plans in which the measures relating to public building stock got a minimum score. All regional sustainable energy plans of the MED area were analysed, and a sample of local Sustainable Energy Action Plans (SEAPs), following a dedicated questionnaire.

Baseline values: 16% for Regional plans, 29% for local plans
Target values: 34% for Regional plans, 39% for local plans

**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2.2.:** TO INCREASE LOCAL RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES IN THE ENERGY MIX PLANS AND STRATEGIES OF SPECIFIC MED TERRITORIES

**RESULT INDICATOR**: Share of renewable energy from local sources in the MED area energy mix of islands and rural areas.
**BASELINE VALUE:** % of local RES in energy mix strategies in islands and in rural areas.
**MEASUREMENT UNIT:** local RES in energy mix strategies (%).

As data at regional and local level was hard to retrieve, a sample of local Sustainable Energy Action Plans were studied to identify both baseline and target values for islands on the one hand, and for rural areas on the other hand. An average has been calculated to determine each value.

Baseline values: 7,28% for rural areas, 7,24% for islands.
Target values: 8,78% for rural areas, 19,77% for islands.


**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2.3.:** TO INCREASE CAPACITY TO USE EXISTING LOW CARBON TRANSPORT SYSTEMS AND MULTIMODAL CONNECTIONS AMONG THEM


**RESULT INDICATOR:** Share of urban plans which include low carbon transport and multimodal connections soft actions.
**BASELINE VALUE:** % of current plans including soft actions oriented towards low carbon transport system.
**MEASUREMENT UNIT:** Plans providing soft actions oriented towards low carbon transport (%).

The choice of focusing on plans relates to the fact that low carbon transport, mobility and multi-modal connections are topics generally tackled through planning: the Commission is supporting the sustainable Urban Mobility Plan concept and the Covenant of Mayors initiative with Sustainable Energy Action Plans covering transport issues.

A sample of SEAPs have been analysed, following a dedicated questionnaire, to assess the share of plans with actions regarding low carbon transport and multimodal connections.
Baseline value: 23% of plans regarding urban areas.
Target value: 47% of plans regarding urban areas.


**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3.1.**: TO ENHANCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SUSTAINABLE AND RESPONSIBLE COASTAL AND MARITIME TOURISM IN THE MED AREA


**RESULT INDICATOR:** Level of sustainability of tourism in MED coastal regions.
**BASELINE VALUE:** current level of sustainability of tourism in MED coastal regions.
**MEASUREMENT UNIT:** percentage.

This indicator allows measuring the evolution of the sustainability of tourism in MED coastal areas, thus reflecting the enhancement of the development of sustainable coastal and maritime tourism in the MED area. In order to assess the level of sustainability of tourism, the impact of tourism, and mainly tourism pressures, on the 3 dimensions of sustainability – economic, social and environmental – has been taken into account. To calculate the baseline, a set of **10 indicators** based on the ETIS (European Tourism indicator System for sustainable management at Destination level) and the Global Tourism Council indicators (GSTC) were identified, corresponding to 10 criteria: sustainable Tourism Public Policy, Sustainable Tourism Management (labels), Tourism Enterprise(s) Performance, Quantity of Employee, Community/Social Impact, Protecting and Enhancing Cultural Heritage, Climate Change, Solid Waste Management, Landscape and Biodiversity Management, Bathing Water Quality.

The sources used to collect the data required for the calculation of the 10 MED indicators are mainly EUROSTAT, UNESCO, Natura 2000, MedPAN and EEA databases and tables and in some cases national or regional website sources.

Each criteria has been selected according to the available data on the internet sources listed above.
Baseline value: 26,7%.
Target value: 35,8%.

**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3.2:** TO MAINTAIN BIODIVERSITY AND NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS THROUGH STRENGTHENING THE MANAGEMENT AND NETWORKING OF PROTECTED AREAS

**RESULT INDICATOR:** Share of protected areas meeting their conservation goals and objectives (thanks to their improved management).
**BASELINE VALUE:** current % of protected areas matching their conservation goals via improved management.
**MEASUREMENT UNIT:** Marine protected areas and land-based NATURA 2000 sites (%)
MEDPAN MAPAMED database and Natura 2000 database have been used to collect data regarding 4 criteria used to assess the share of protected areas matching their conservation goals: pressures and risks, cooperation, management plan, staffing.
Baseline values: 65% for maritime protected areas, 73,5% for land-based NATURA 2000 sites.
Target values: 80% for maritime protected areas, 85% for land-based NATURA 2000 sites.

**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 4.1.:** TO SUPPORT THE PROCESS OF STRENGTHENING AND DEVELOPING MULTILATERAL COORDINATION FRAMEWORKS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN FOR JOINT RESPONSES TO COMMON CHALLENGES

**RESULT INDICATOR:** Number of joint thematic action plans allowing to implement coordinated strategic operations.
**BASELINE VALUE:** Number of joint action plans in the Mediterranean basin.
**MEASUREMENT UNIT:** Joint action plans (number).

Existing joint action plans covering the MED area have been mapped out.
Baseline value: 7 action plans.
Target value: Target value for 2022 has to be computed according to priority topics addressed by CP MED's calls for projects on one hand, forecast of potential development of new specific and thematic strategic approaches on the MED area on the other hand. The target is set out at 10.

# 1.3.4. Programme output indicators

Outputs indicators are used to measure the direct products (outputs) of supported projects, which in turn contribute to results.

COMMON OUTPUT INDICATORS AND PROGRAMME SPECIFIC OUTPUT INDICATORS

When applicable, the Programme used output indicators from the list of Common output indicators, as set out in Annex of ETC Regulation (No 1203/2013). Where common output indicators could not be applied, programme-specific output indicators have been identified.

Baselines for output indicators have been set at zero and targets for 2023.

PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

The performance framework is the basis which the European Commission will use to assess the performance of the Programme[11]. It includes one content output indicator per Specific Objective

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[11] Article 20, Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund,

and one financial output indicator per Priority axis. Interim targets were fixed for 2018, and cumulative targets for 2023 for the output indicators included in the Performance Framework of the Programme.

OUTPUT INDICATORS PER SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

To define the output indicators, the following criteria were systematically applied to ensure that output indicators would correspond to what the projects would produce: 1. Relevance, 2. Directness, 3. Inclusion, 4. Systematisation per type of indicator (means, models, targets and political commitment), 5. Systematisation per type of module.

To define the target values for output indicators, the following standards were applied:

- Definition of values as **realistic** as possible,
- Ensuring the **feasibility** of the computation,
- Taking into account the **transnational** feature of the programme, keeping in mind that the outputs would reflect most of the Programme production

Cumulative target values have been fixed for all output indicators.

When defining their outputs, projects should ensure their contribution to the Programme output indicators (for further information, please refer to the Programme Manual regarding Project Intervention Logic).

**FIGURE 8: INTERREG MED PROGRAMME OUTPUT INDICATORS**

| SO | ID | Indicators | Measurement unit | Type of indicator | Target 2018 | Target 2023 | Included in the Performance framework |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.1 | 1.1.a | Number of operational instruments to favour innovation of SMEs | Instruments | Means | 8 | 44 | X |
| | 1.1.b | Number of enterprises receiving grants | Enterprises | Target | | 35 | |
| | 1.1.c | Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support | Enterprises | Target | | 4.000 | |
| | 1.1.d | Number of transnational innovation clusters supported | Clusters | Target | | 10 | |
| 2.1 | 2.1.a | Number of available planning tools to manage and monitor energy consumption in public buildings | Tools | Means | 3 | 5 | X |
| | 2.1.b | Number of strategies to develop energy consumption management plans for public buildings | Models | Models | | 5 | |

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the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and re-pealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006

| SO | ID | Indicators | Measurement unit | Type of indicator | Target 2018 | Target 2023 | Included in the Performance framework |
|----|-----|-----------|------------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| | 2.1.c | Number of targets participating in capacity raising activities on energy efficiency | Participants | Target | | 570 | |
| | 2.1.d | Number of regions and sub-regions engaged (through charters, protocols, MoU) in developing energy efficiency plans/strategies | Territories (NUTS 2 and 3 level) | Political commitment | | 176 | |
| 2.2 | 2.2.a | Number of planning tools to develop energy plans including local RES | Tools | Means | 3 | 5 | X |
| | 2.2.b | Population of islands covered by plans | Population | Target | | 1.600.000 | |
| | 2.2.c | Population of rural areas covered by plans | Population | Target | | 1.200.000 | |
| | 2.3.d | Number of models to develop action plans including local RES in energy mix | Models | Models | | 5 | |
| | 2.4.e | Number of regions and sub-regions engaged (through charters, protocols, MoU) in increasing share of local RES in energy mix | Territories (NUTS 2 and 3 level) | Target | | 192 | |
| 2.3 | 2.3.a | Number of instruments available to foster the use of LC transport solutions, including multimodal ones | Instruments | Means | 3 | 5 | X |
| | 2.3.b | Number of models to develop urban plans including low carbon transport and multimodal connections soft actions | Models | Models | | 10 | |
| | 2.3.c | Population involved in awareness raising activities | Population | Target | | 300.000 | |
| | 2.3.d | Number of urban areas engaged (through charters, protocols, MoU) in developing urban plans/strategies including low carbon transport and multimodal connections soft actions | Territories (NUTS 3) | Political commitment | | 80 | |
| 3.1 | 3.1.a | Number of instruments available to enhance the development of sustainable and responsible tourism | Instruments | Means | 10 | 17 | X |
| | 3.1.b | Number of tourist destinations covered by a sustainable tourism evaluation tool | Territories (NUTS 2 and 3) | Target | | 108 | |
| | 3.1.c | Number of strategies applying sustainable tourism management criteria | Models | Models | | 11 | |
| | 3.1.d | Number of regions and sub-regions engaged (through charters, protocols, MoU) in implementing sustainable tourism plans | Territories (NUTS 2 and 3) | Political commitment | | 144 | |

| SO | ID | Indicators | Measurement unit | Type of indicator | Target 2018 | Target 2023 | Included in the Performance framework |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.2 | 3.2.a | Number of joint governance plans | Plans | Means | 18 | 36 | X |
| | 3.2.b | Surface of habitats supported to attain a better conservation status | Hectares | Target | | 1.250.000 | |
| | 3.2.c | Number of protected areas engaged (through charters, protocols, MoU) in implementing management strategies | Protected areas | Political commitment | | 50 | |
| 4.1 | 4.1.a | Number of stakeholders (structures) involved in supported initiatives (per category representing public and private stakeholders) | Organisations | Political commitment | 200 | 1200 | X |

PROGRAMME MANUAL

# INTERREG MED MODULAR PROJECTS

# Interreg MED Projects architecture

The Interreg MED architecture is composed of three typologies of projects:

- Modular projects

- Horizontal projects

> In Axis 1, 2 and 3

- Platform projects → In Axis 4

The Interreg MED architecture, with the links between the different types of projects, can be materialised with the following scheme:

**FIGURE 9: INTERREG MED ARCHITECTURE OF PROJECTS**

# Modular projects

WHAT IS A MODULE-BASED APPROACH AND WHY ADOPT IT?

Based on the MED Programme 2007-2013 experience, the development of a new and innovative public intervention needs three successive phases:

- a phase of study and development of strategies and policies;
- a phase of testing, to validate the hypothesis developed;
- a phase of transferability and capitalisation of results at the transnational level.

The majority of the projects co-financed during the last programming period followed this scheme, combining all three phases in one single project. Nevertheless, the experience has shown that, in some cases, gathering these three phases in one same project does not allow each phase to be developed optimally.

A **module** is a complete cycle of a project, with a partnership, a budget, concrete objectives, outputs and expected results to be implemented in a defined period

With the aim of transforming ideas into concrete and innovative solutions with a transnational impact, the Interreg MED Programme 2014-2020 has decided a new orientation in order to give to each one of these phases a real space to grow in projects under thematic Priority Axis 1, 2 and 3. This approach is materialised by different "**modules**", which applicants must refer to in the elaboration of their project.

The module-based approach responds to the need to exploit in an optimal way the diversity of competences, characteristics and proposals of each partner structure, offering them a variety of operational combinations instead of a uniform operational model, similar to the 2007-2013 programme period.

Choosing the appropriate module, the partnership can focus on well identified types of activities bringing a concrete contribution to the delivery of the tackled specific objective. It can target and adapt the project to the focus and quality requirements of the European Commission and the MED area States. Each applicant can optimise its role and activities according to its expertise and skills, defining its role on the basis of its technical or institutional profile.

Three different modules have been defined by the Interreg MED Programme:

- ➔ Module 1: Studying
- ➔ Module 2: Testing
- ➔ Module 3: Capitalising

A modular **project** can be composed by one or several modules depending on its strategy and main objectives, expected results, competences and experience of the partnership. Each one of the possible configurations (**single-module** or **multi-module**) is called a **type of project.**

WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF MODULAR PROJECTS TO CHOOSE FROM?

**Two** categories of modular projects are available: **single-module** and **multi-module**

The Terms of Reference of each Specific Objective, in each Call for Proposals, will indicate the types of projects to which candidates can apply

Each type of project has its own objectives and will contribute to the Interreg MED Programme indicators in a specific way. Each type of project requires an adapted partnership and different levels of management, monitoring and communication.

Regardless the criteria to be observed to ensure the eligibility of an application (for further infor-mation, please refer to factsheet "Appraisal of project proposals"), for each type of project, specific guidance has been established for their duration, budget and partnership size, in order to correspond to the objectives established for each one of them.

**FIGURE 10: TYPES OF PROJECTS ACCORDING TO THE MODULE-BASED APPROACH**

| | |
|---|---|
| | **Studying** <br> *Etude* |
| | **Testing** <br> *Expérimentation* |
| | **Capitalising** <br> *Capitalisation* |
| | **Studying and Testing** <br> *Etude et Expérimentation* |
| | **Testing and Capitalising** <br> *Expérimentation et Capitalisation* |
| | **Integrated Projects** <br> *Projets intégrés* |

Project Module 1 (M1): "Studying"

This type of project has the objective to explore **innovative subjects** from a thematic and/or geographical perspective (new challenges, policies or trends) or to **create knowledge** in the MED area on issues, relevant for the participating regions, where the Interreg MED Programme expe-rience is **insufficient**. This means that, as there is in general already vast knowledge available, only a limited number of projects of this type will be funded within the Programme, where a lack of knowledge is clearly identified and the need for a module 1 duly justified.

Projects focused on this module can:

- Analyse and state the art of an intervention field, produce complementary data and references;
- Design common approaches and elaborate common strategies;
- Reinforce or establish (new) networks in order to enhance the presence of the MED area at European and transnational level.

The main **outputs** to be developed by the projects can be: SWOT analysis, state of the art, benchmarking analysis, models, action plans, strategies and instruments.

The **duration** for this type of projects is up to **18 months**.

Project total eligible **budget** is recommended not to exceed **EUR 600.000** (for information regarding co-financing rates, please refer to factsheet "Partners cofinancing and location of project activities" of the Programme Manual). In any case, partners should ensure that the financial size of the project truly reflects the activities foreseen in the work plan and that it is based on the principles of sound financial management.

Regarding the **partnership**, it is highly recommended to include institutional and scientific partners mixed according to the project objectives. It is also recommended not to exceed 8 project partners.

**Communication** activities (other than the coordination with the horizontal projects strategy and the Interreg MED Programme communication strategy) for single module 1 projects are notably:

- To ensure that the results are 100% transparent and transferred to projects target groups and horizontal projects and the Programme in most adapted ways;
- To set up at least one promotion activity to promote the final output(s);
- To ensure appropriate actions to steer up the networks where the projects participate at European and transnational level. The programme will provide them a web platform and some coordination tools, but projects might need specific or dedicated tools for networking participation.

Under communication activities, other recommendations need to be taken into consideration, please refer to factsheet "Communication" of the Programme manual.

### Project Module 2 (M2) "Testing"

This type of project has the objective to **test** instruments, policies, strategies, joint plans already identified by previous projects (not necessarily arisen by the MED experience) through pilot activities, in the perspective of setting up solutions applicable to a wider set of users and territories.

Pilot activities can be set up when the context, data and actors are already well identified and when technical and institutional conditions are favourable. They may include, where necessary, the development of **preliminary studies** in the starting phase (feasibility or updating of the available data). They will necessarily include an evaluation of the pilot actions and a final phase for the **transferability of the results** in the territories concerned by the project (transfer of results in local policies and application of results in the territories and to the targets).

The main **outputs** to be developed by these projects can be: preliminary and feasibility studies (if needed: succinct and complementing existing data), pilot activities (including methodology for implementation, testing and evaluation phases), plans of transferability of results.

The **duration** for this type of projects is up to **30 months**.

Project total eligible **budget** is recommended to be in a range from **EUR 1.2 to 2.5 million** (for information regarding co-financing rates, please refer to factsheet "Partners cofinancing and location of project activities" of the Programme Manual). In any case, partners should ensure that the financial size of the project truly reflects the activities foreseen in the work plan and that it is based on the principles of sound financial management.

Regarding the **partnership**, it is highly recommended to include institutional and operational partners mixed according to the project objectives. It is recommended not to exceed 10 project partners.

C**ommunication** activities (other than the coordination with the horizontal projects strategy and the Interreg MED Programme communication strategy) for single module 2 projects are notably: To use more intensive Public Relations techniques and/or outreach strategy;

- To provide stories, interviews, end user testimonies, images that will nourish communication on several levels;
- To be active on social media to get in contact and raise awareness of local/regional citizens should be foreseen.

Under communication activities, other recommendations need to be taken into consideration, please refer to factsheet "Communication" of the Programme Manual.

### Project Module 3 (M3) "Capitalising"

This type of project has the objective to **capitalise on** (please refer to factsheet "MED Programme strategic framework" about capitalisation) existing projects results, not only achieved in the framework of the Interreg MED Programme but also coming from other corresponding initiatives developed at local, regional, national and transnational level in the Interreg MED programme cooperation area and adjacent zones. These complementary initiatives are for instance, other Interreg programmes (interregional, transnational and cross-border dimensions), Neighbourhood programmes (ENI MED), EU thematic Programmes (e.g. Horizon2020, LIFE+, European Investment Bank), International Organisations Programmes (World Bank, United nations, Union for the Mediterranean), Regional Programmes including those financed with European Structural Funds.

Projects focused on this module should be based on methodologies, practices, intervention tools already tested and implemented by stakeholders at local or regional level that represent a strong interest for wider targeted dissemination in the MED area. The objective of Module 3 projects should not consist in "disseminating information" but in working on existing results, on a specific theme chosen by the partnership, to go one step further. M3 projects are therefore expected to clearly identify a concrete and limited set of outputs/experiences delivered by previous initiatives (or eventually, on the verge of being delivered) in one very specific theme and capitalise them (by merging them, completing or extrapolating to other areas). For example, a Module 3 project can create a new tool or service combining different existing tools, or issue recommendations based on tested methodologies, or apply to a different field or to a different territory an existing output.

It will be also necessary to ensure that instruments, practices and methodologies are effectively taken on board by all actors concerned, and applied at local, regional, national or European level

as broadly as possible and free of charge, in the territories targeted by the project. Module 3 projects can be compared to MED 2007-2013 projects from the Capitalisation Call for proposals.

The main **outputs** to be developed by these projects can be policy recommendations, Memorandum of Understanding, agreements, procedures and regulatory proposals, charters, protocols. The formal engagement of the relevant decision makers should be envisaged when structuring the project.

The **duration** for this type of projects is up to **18 months**.

Project total eligible **budget** is recommended to be in a range from **EUR 600.000 to 1.2 million** (for information regarding co-financing rates, please refer to factsheet "Partners cofinancing and location of project activities" of the Programme Manual). In any case, partners should ensure that the financial size of the project truly reflects the activities foreseen in the work plan and that it is based on the principles of sound financial management.

Regarding the **partnership**, it is highly recommended to include institutional partners and networks. It is recommended not to exceed 8 project partners.

C**ommunication** activities (other than the coordination with the horizontal projects strategy and the Interreg MED Programme communication strategy) for single module 3 projects are notably:

- To draw an initial stakeholder mapping defining roles and targets
- To develop a targeted public relations strategy and activities
- To build up a set of networks at regional and local level in order to raise awareness of the targeted stakeholders through social media and outreach communication strategies

Under communication activities, other recommendations need to be taken into consideration, please refer to factsheet "Communication» of the Programme Manual.

### Project Modules 1 and 2 (M1+M2) "Studying and Testing"

This type of project has the objective, because of a lack of prior literature, data or experiences, to create new knowledge in a specific field and to develop common solutions that can be directly tested in specific territories.

Therefore, this type of project should focus on **conducting** studies and **developing** common plans or instruments (M1), which then will be **tested** in order to **transfer** them to the public policies of the territories concerned (M2). They will necessarily include an evaluation of the pilot actions and a final phase for the **transferability of the results** in the territories concerned by the project (transfer of results in local policies and application of results in the territories and to the targets).

The main **outputs** to be developed by these projects can be a combination of those already foreseen for single modules 1 and 2, namely: SWOT analysis, state of the art, benchmarking analysis, models, action plans, strategies, instruments and pilot activities (including methodology for implementation, testing and evaluation phases) and plans of transferability of results.

The **duration** for this type of projects is up to **36 months**. It is recommended to foresee a ratio of 15 months for M1 activities and 21 for M2 activities.

Project total eligible **budget** is recommended within a range between **EUR 1.8 and 3 million** (for information regarding co-financing rates, please refer to factsheet "Partners cofinancing and location of project activities" of the Programme Manual). In any case, partners should ensure

that the financial size of the project truly reflects the activities foreseen in the work plan and that it is based on the principles of sound financial management.

Regarding the **partnership**, it is highly recommended to include institutional, operational and scientific partners mixed according to the project objectives in order to ensure the maximum impact of project activities at all levels. Some partners might actively participate only in one of the modules according to their skills and experience. It is recommended not to exceed 12 project partners.

C**ommunication activities** (other than the coordination with the horizontal projects strategy and the Interreg MED Programme communication strategy) for multi-module projects M1+M2 are notably:

- To ensure that the results are 100% transparent and transferred to projects target groups in most adapted ways;
- To set up at least one promotion activity to promote the final output(s);
- To ensure appropriate actions to steer up the networks where the projects participate at European and transnational level;
- To provide stories, interviews, end user testimonies, images that will nourish communication on several levels;
- To be active on social media to get in contact and raise awareness of local/regional citizens should be foreseen.

Under communication activities, other recommendations need to be taken into consideration, please refer to factsheet "Communication" of the Programme Manual.


### Project Modules 2 and 3 (M2+M3) "Testing and Capitalising"

This type of project has the objective to **test,** at a wider level, instruments, policies, strategies, joint plans that have been already identified by previous initiatives (not necessarily arisen in the framework of the Interreg MED Programme) through pilot activities, ensuring the **transferability** of applied solutions in the territories concerned by the project (M2) and to **capitalise** results obtained during the first phase of the project (Module 2) with other projects results and experiences directly contributing to the project objectives (M3). These projects should work for the adoption of transnational models and their application in the regional and national policies for the MED, and even European area. They may include, where necessary, the development of **preliminary studies** in the starting phase (feasibility or updating of the available data). They will necessarily include an evaluation of the pilot actions and a phase for the **transferability of the results** in the territories concerned by the project (transfer of results in local policies and application of results in the territories and to the targets), while the formal engagement of the appropriate decision makers should be envisaged when structuring the project.

The main **outputs** to be developed by these projects can be a combination of those already foreseen for modules 2 and 3, namely: preliminary and feasibility studies (if needed), pilot activities (including methodology for implementation, testing and evaluation phases), plan of result transferability and policy recommendations, Memorandum of Understanding, agreements, procedures and regulatory proposals, charters and protocols. The formal engagement of the relevant decision makers should be envisaged when structuring the project.

The **duration** for this type of projects is up to **36 months**. It is recommended to foresee a ratio of 21 months for M2 activities and 15 for M3 activities.

Project total eligible **budget** is recommended within a range between **EUR 2.5 and 3.6 million** (for information regarding co-financing rates, please refer to factsheet "Partners cofinancing and location of project activities" of the Programme Manual). In any case, partners should ensure that the financial size of the project truly reflects the activities foreseen in the work plan and that it is based on the principles of sound financial management.

Regarding the **partnership**, it is highly recommended to include institutional, operational partners and networks mixed according to the project objectives in order to ensure the maximum impact of project activities at all levels. Some partners might actively participate in only one of the modules proposed according to their skills and experience. It is recommended not to exceed 12 project partners.

C**ommunication activities**, (other than the coordination with the horizontal projects strategy and the Interreg MED Programme communication strategy) for multi-module projects M2+M3 are notably:

- To ensure that results are 100% transparent and transferred to projects target groups in most adapted ways;
- To set up of at least one promotion activity to promote the final output(s);
- To ensure appropriate actions to steer up the networks where the projects participate at European and transnational level;
- To make a more intensive use of Public Relations techniques and/or outreach strategy;
- To provide stories, interviews, end user testimonies, images that will nourish communication on several levels;
- To foresee social media activities to get in contact and raise awareness of local/regional citizens.

Under communication activities, other recommendations need to be taken into consideration, please refer to factsheet "Communication" of the Programme Manual.

### Project Modules 1, 2 and 3 (M1 + M2 + M3) "Integrated Projects"

A specific call for proposals regarding this type of projects will be launched after the 1st call for proposals in order to develop integrated projects that will take into account the first results of the new 2014-2020 programming period, thus to focus on hot topics and topics already tackled at local level as well as on the topics identified as priorities by the horizontal projects.

Projects from this type have the ambition to create a direct impact on regional and national policies of the MED and European space and may integrate all types of activities foreseen in the single-module projects.

Their structure and actions should be fully oriented towards looking forward transnational solutions linked with the MED area in a global manner and not with specific territories. The problems faced and the solutions proposed will cut across the Mediterranean.

They should be elaborated in connection with other MED projects as well as with other projects or initiatives in the MED space (other Interreg and/or thematic programmes). Integrated projects should focus on issues of high relevance for the area, taking into account works realised at local level, of which results could be brought on a transnational scale. They could also be based on topics identified as priorities by the horizontal projects. Thus the integrated projects will ensure the consolidation and transnationality of the proposed solutions on issues of high relevance for the area.

The main **outputs** to be developed by these projects can be those already foreseen for modules 1, 2 and 3, namely: SWOT analysis, state of the art, benchmarking analysis, models, action plans, strategies, instruments and pilot activities (including methodology for implementation, testing

and evaluation phases), plan of results transferability and policy recommendations, Memorandum of Understanding, agreements, procedures and regulatory proposals, charters, protocols. The formal engagement of the relevant decision makers should be envisaged when structuring the project.

The **duration** for this type of projects is up to **48 months**. It is recommended to foresee 15 months for M1 activities, 21 months for M2 activities and the final 12 months for M3 activities.

Project total eligible **budget** is recommended within a range between **EUR 3.6 and 6 million** (for information regarding co-financing rates, please refer to factsheet "Partners cofinancing and location of project activities" of the Programme Manual). In any case, partners should ensure that the financial size of the project truly reflects the activities foreseen in the work plan and that it is based on the principles of sound financial management.

Regarding the **partnership**, it is highly recommended to include institutional, operational and scientific partners and networks mixed according to the project objectives in order to ensure the maximum impact of project activities at all levels. Besides, it would be necessary to establish a group of partners that will compose the core partnership, which will be involved all along the project implementation, and other partners that may be involved especially in each one of the modules to be implemented. In addition, the Lead Partner and the responsible for operational work packages should be regional or state bodies (regional authorities NUTS II, regional or national agencies, government bodies). It is recommended not to exceed 15 project partners.

C**ommunication** activities of the Integrated projects (other than the coordination with the horizontal projects strategy and the Interreg MED Programme communication strategy) are similar to the activities of modular projects and should be oriented towards the objectives of each specific integrated project, in order to:

- Develop a more intensive use of international media relations;
- Provide stories, interviews, end user testimonies, images that will nourish communication on several levels;
- Ensure that results are 100% transparent and transferred to projects target groups in most adapted ways;
- set up a programme of promotion activities to promote results;
- Make a more intensive use of Public Relations techniques and/or outreach strategy;
- When necessary, ensure appropriate actions to steer up the networks where the projects participate at European and transnational level;
- Foreseen social media activities to get in contact and raise awareness of local/regional citizens.

Under communication activities, other recommendations need to be taken into consideration, please refer to factsheet "Communication" of the Programme Manual.

HOW TO IDENTIFY THE RIGHT TYPE OF PROJECT?

Each type of project has its place in the architecture of the Interreg MED Programme, they are all useful and all must contribute to the programme success, there is no hierarchy or value difference.

Any project, either single-module or multi-module, should candidate on the basis of a diagnosis of outcomes of previous projects or initiatives. For example, a project Module 1 "Studying" will start from an identified diagnosis, while a project Module 2 "Testing" should and will use preliminary studies to build its methodology of tests and experiments. A project Module 3 "Capitalising" will build, transfer and implement, where appropriate, procedures, methodologies, recommendations from other projects already completed.

**Applicants are invited to look at all the possible types of projects in order to choose the one that adapts the best to their objectives, experience, skills and ambition. The evaluation of the proposals will be based on the characteristics of each type of project and in consequence there is no "best" or "worst" choice but a "most adapted" solution.**

Two key questions should be answered before selecting the type of project that best fits a project idea:

1.  Where do I start from? This means that the applicant should establish a diagnosis of the situation: what is the state of the art of the issue tackled?

    ➔ This will help identify from which Module you need to start

2.  How far should/can I go? This means that ambition and feasibility should be assessed.

    ➔ This will help identify how many modules you will combine

In order to define which modules, and eventually how many, should be implemented for reaching the objectives, the following criteria should be assessed:

- **State of the art of the issue tackled**: what has been done already, what can be reused, what is needed to be developed?
- **Main objectives** of the project idea: what are the identified needs? What does the project want to change for the area? What does the project want to realise?
- **Expected outputs and results** of the project idea: What does the project want to produce? For whom?
- **Competences, skills and experience of the partnership**: what the partnership does best?
- **Timeframe and financial capacities**: how much can the partnership dedicate to this work? What are the financial capacities of the partners involved?

The selection of the type of project based on the above criteria allow partnerships to determine the direction of their project proposal in regards to the objectives set and the expected results, taking into account the specific competences of each partner.

**Not all partners have necessarily to be involved with the same intensity in all the modules of a multi-module type of project.**

**Partners need to be associated to those activities that are in line with their competences. However, a core team of partners should ensure the coordination of all the activities regardless the modules, as a good information flow and a clear decision making procedure have to be ensured by the management system of the project.**

There is no possibility for a single-module project to continue directly with the implementation of a following module

The **single-module types of projects** are basically aimed at partnerships having immediate requirements and seeking quick answers, wanting to work on a specific issue with more agility, not requiring large financing efforts nor a complex implementation. Single-module projects will have the possibility to continue their work by applying for another type of project in forthcoming calls for proposals, following the requirements of the relevant Terms of References.

The **multi-module types of projects** are justified by a medium-term vision, with a project proposal combining different objectives and results and the need for a multiple skills partnership.

Important innovations in management and monitoring are required for multi-module projects.

In this regard, and in order to have an effective and relevant implementation, all multi-module projects will be required to have an external and independent evaluation process, that should

follow the framework methodology developed by the Interreg MED Programme (for further information, please refer to factsheet "Support for project implementation" of the Programme Manual). All costs needed for this activity will be included in the project budget breakdown and supported by the project itself.

The evaluation approach can also be relevant for single-module projects, but it is not compulsory.

Moreover, all projects (single or multi-module) should take into account a specific budget (staff, travel…) in order to contribute to transnational activities when requested by the Programme: coordination with the information and the communication of the horizontal projects and coope-ration with the communication strategy of the Programme, including the observation of EU regu-lations and programme guidelines, organisation of events, participation in programme events, among other activities (for further information, please refer to factsheet "Communication" of the Programme Manual).

## HOW TO GO FROM A MODULE TO ANOTHER IN A MULTI-MODULE TYPE OF PROJECT?

A verification performed by the MA/JS will determine if a project continue to the next module, in a multi-module project

Multi-module projects will be governed by a Subsidy Contract that will differentiate the different modules, each module having its own objectives, outputs, calendar and budget.

At the end of each module, the MA/JS will perform a verification of the activities carried out and the deliverables produced by the project in order to check their compliance with the require-ments established and to pass to the next module.

The aim of this verification will be to confirm that the identified expected results for the concer-ned module have been reached according to the Subsidy Contract and the approved Application Form, and that the partnership is ready to start the new phase of the project.

In particular, the MA/JS verification will focus on following aspects:

- Analysis of content-related progress and production of key pre-identified deliverables in due form as scheduled;
- Financial progress of the project;
- Management and administrative performance;
- Partners' engagement;
- Realistic forecast and recommendations for the remaining modules;
- If applicable, identification of deviations and delays in regard to the Application Form, as well as necessary project modifications (partnership, finance and activities).

A verification checklist will be provided to the projects after their approval (and annexed to the Subsidy Contract) in order to make them aware about the key elements that will be checked by the MA/JS. More information is provided in factsheet "Multi-modular projects" of the Programme Manual.

This verification will take place in a short period of time between the end of a module and the start of the following one on the basis of a specific report. The MA/JS will ensure that this verification does not hinder the progress of activities and the transition between modules.

Based on this verification, the MA/JS may decide:

- to agree on the **continuity** of the project as foreseen in the Application Form;
- to propose a **modification** of the project in order to adapt it to the new "reality", taking into account the results of the verification;

- to propose to the Interreg MED Programme Steering Committee a **deprogrammation** of the forthcoming modules.

Upon transition from one module to another, the partnership may propose a modification of the project regarding the partnership, major budget changes and activities in order to better adjust to the needs of the following module. For further information regarding modifications please refer to factsheet "Changes» of the Programme Manual.

| Abbreviation | Name | Module type | Expected outputs (not exhaustive list) | Duration (Maximum – eligibility criteria) | Budget (recommended) (EUR) | Partnership (recommended) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| M1 | Studying | Single-module | SWOT analysis, state of the art, benchmarking analysis, models, action plans, strategies, instruments | 18 months | Max 600.000 | Max 8 PP, institutional and scientific partners. |
| M2 | Testing | Single-module | Preliminary and feasibility studies (if needed), pilot activities (including methodology for implementation, testing and evaluation phases), plan of results transferability. | 30 months | 1.2 – 2.5 million | Max 10 operational and institutional partners. |
| M3 | Capitalising | Single-module | Policy recommendations, Memorandum of Understanding, agreements, procedures and regulatory proposals, charters, protocols. | 18 months | 0.6 – 1.2 million | Max 8 PP mainly institutional or networks partners. |
| M1+M2 | Studying and testing | Multi-module | SWOT analysis, state of the art, benchmarking analysis, models, action plans, strategies, instruments and pilot activities (including methodology for implementation, testing and evaluation phases), plan of results transferability. | 36 months (M1: 15 m / M2: 21 m) | 1.8 – 3 million | Max 12 PP, institutional, operational and scientific partners. |
| M2+M3 | Testing and capitalising | Multi-module | Preliminary and feasibility studies (if needed), pilot activities (including methodology for implementation, testing and evaluation phases), plan of results transferability and policy recommendations, Memorandum of Understanding, agreements, procedures and regulatory proposals, charters, protocols. | 36 months (M2: 21 m / M3: 15 m) | 2.5 – 3.6 million | Max 12 PP, institutional, operational partners and networks. |
| M1+M2+M3 | Integrated Projects | Multi-module | SWOT analysis, state of the art, benchmarking analysis, models, action plans, strategies, instruments and pilot activities (including methodology for implementation, testing and evaluation phases), plan of results transferability and policy recommendations, Memorandum of Understanding, agreements, procedures and regulatory proposals, charters, protocols. | 48 months (M1: 15-m / M2: 21 m / M3: 12 m) | 3.6 – 6 million | Max 15 PP, institutional, operational and scientific partners and networks |
| Horizontal Projects | Communication and capitalisation of the programme in the long term | | Community building / communication / capitalisation strategies and action plans, internal communication products, policy papers and recommendations, Technical Papers, Deliverables and Target groups Databases | 36 months | Max 1.4 million | Max 6 PP, institutional partners and networks |

FIGURE 11: SUMMARY OF TYPES OF PROJECTS SPECIFICITIES IN THEMATIC AXIS 1, 2, 3
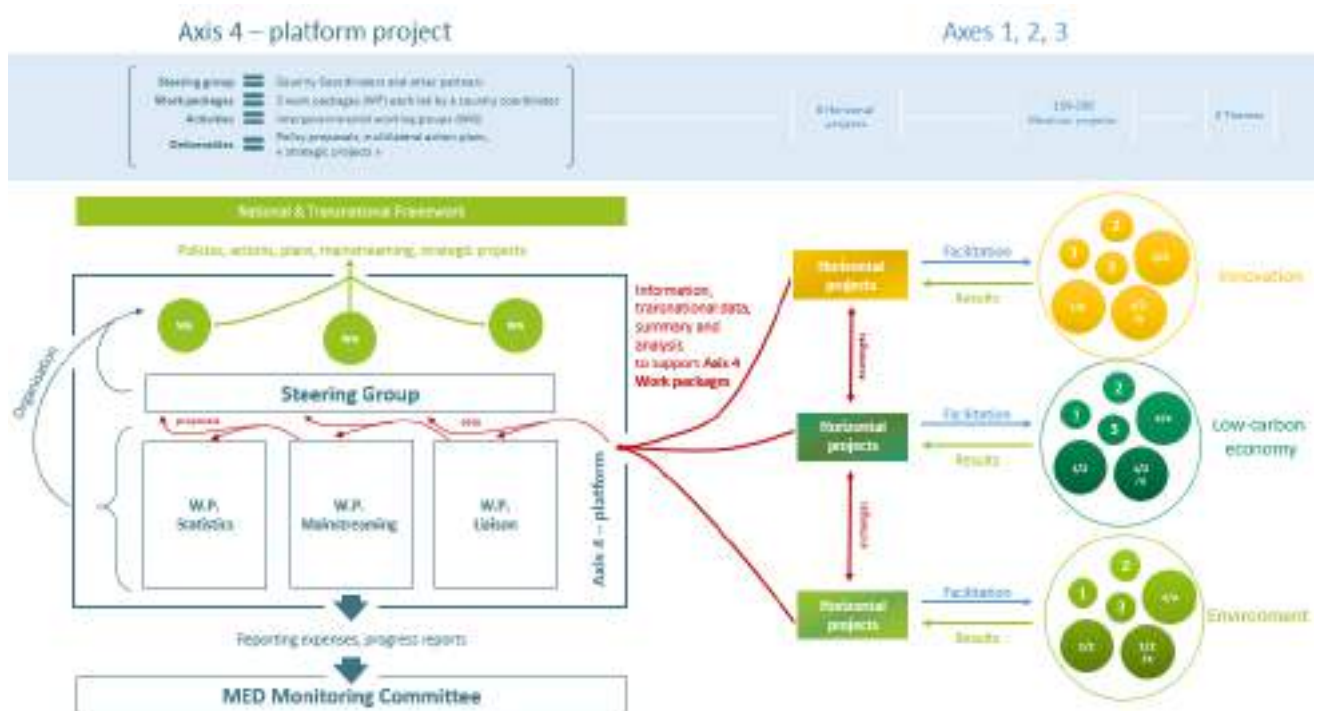
PROGRAMME MANUAL

# INTERREG MED HORIZONTAL PROJECTS

# MED Projects architecture

The Interreg MED architecture is composed of three typologies of projects:

- Modular projects

- Horizontal projects

In Axis 1, 2 and 3

- Platform projects ⟹ In Axis 4

The Interreg MED architecture, with the links between the different types of projects, can be materialised with the following scheme:

**FIGURE 9: INTERREG MED ARCHITECTURE OF PROJECTS**

# Horizontal projects

Horizontal projects can be summed up as:

1) a single interface for all modular projects involved in the same axis and/or objective synthesizing and homogenising answers to the same topics;
2) a single interface for the programme Authorities like a centre for the principal thematic information;
3) a single interface between the modular projects of the Interreg MED Programme resulting from a bottom-up process and the "governance" platform of the Axis 4 (a top-down process to orient the future Interreg MED strategy) in order to assist and supply the Axis 4 "platform project" initiative.

**The horizontal project will be the unifying element of the main outputs / results of each modular project on a particular and shared subject. This will allow real synergies between projects in the same axis / objective of the Interreg MED Programme and provide a better visibility in order to reach policy making level.**

Horizontal projects will support the module application procedure cooperating with both the programme and individual projects, concentrating and developing information and deliverables per each priority axis from an external point of view. Horizontal projects will not have to implement and achieve their own territorial objectives like all modular projects but to gather results in progress and facilitate transfer from modular projects to other communities (institutional, scientific and thematic European networks/stakeholders): under the monitoring of the programme Authorities they will have the task to promote the modular projects (concept referring to all thematic module-based projects from the Axis 1, 2 and 3, please refer to the factsheet "MED Modular projects" of the Programme Manual) communication and capitalisation actions within a joint framework, in order to better highlight the interests of the programme as well as of the transnational projects themselves.

<u>**Horizontal projects**</u>:

- Capture elements of the modular projects within each thematic Specific Objective and for the MED area as a whole; analyse them, summarise and ensure their transnational dissemination and transferability, in cooperation with the programme Authorities.
- Provide the frame to develop synergies, produce summaries and qualitative analysis as well as coordinate and manage (under supervision of the JS) communication of a cluster of projects.
- Structure and disseminate a message for the entire MED community and work on thematic inter-axes links (1, 2 and 3) and with the Axis 4 "platform" project (governance).
- Help and support the communication and capitalisation of selected modular projects for each call and for each specific objective. Each modular project will be linked to a horizontal project and should contribute to its communication and capitalisation activities.
- Propose a method for coordinating the joint communication and capitalisation, for working on thematic results with the 'community' of modular projects and propose relevant tools for these **tasks.**

The main **outputs** to be developed by these projects can be community building / communication / capitalisation strategies and action plans, internal communication products, policy papers and recommendations, technical papers and deliverables and target groups databases.

The **duration** for this type of projects is up to **36 months** (extensions would be possible)

Project total eligible **budget** is recommended not to exceed **EUR 1.4 million** (please refer to the Terms of Reference for specific budget recommendations depending on the Priority Axis chosen) (for information regarding co-financing rates, please refer to the factsheet "Partners cofinancing and location of project activities" of the Programme Manual). In any case, partners should ensure that the financial size of the project truly reflects the activities foreseen in the work plan and that it is based on the principles of sound financial management.

The **partnership** should combine skills in community building, communication, coordination of works, capitalisation of results, thematic lobbying and networking at European level and know-ledge related to the theme of the Priority Axis/Specific objective chosen. The partnership should be composed of maximum 6 project partners.

Concerning **communication activities**, horizontal projects have a more specific role and tasks than the previous types of modular projects. The main activities to be considered for horizontal projects are:

- Develop the communication strategy of the thematic community of projects;
- Strategy building with the modular projects associated with the thematic priority ;
- Coordination with the modular projects, the Programme and other horizontal projects for a coherent approach;
- Provision of information to the Programme to nourish its information means, events and other initiatives;
- Active participation in the Interreg MED Programme activities.

Under communication activities, other recommendations need to be taken into consideration, please refer to the factsheet "Communication" of the Programme Manual.

**FIGURE 1: SUMMARY OF TYPES OF PROJECTS SPECIFICITIES IN THEMATIC AXIS 1, 2, 3**

| Abbreviation | Name | Module type | Expected outputs (not exhaustive list) | Duration (Maximum – eligibility criteria) | Budget (recommended) (EUR) | Partnership (recommended) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| M1 | Studying | Single-module | SWOT analysis, state of the art, benchmarking analysis, models, action plans, strategies, instruments | 18 months | Max 600.000 | Max 8 PP, institutional and scientific partners. |
| M2 | Testing | Single-module | Preliminary and feasibility studies (if needed), pilot activities (including methodology for implementation, testing and evaluation phases), plan of results transferability. | 30 months | 1.2 – 2.5 million | Max 10 operational and institutional partners. |
| M3 | Capitalising | Single-module | Policy recommendations, Memorandum of Understanding, agreements, procedures and regulatory proposals, charters, protocols. | 18 months | 0.6 – 1.2 million | Max 8 PP mainly institutional or networks partners. |
| M1+M2 | Studying and testing | Multi-module | SWOT analysis, state of the art, benchmarking analysis, models, action plans, strategies, instruments and pilot activities (including methodology for implementation, testing and evaluation phases), plan of results transferability. | 36 months (M1: 15 m / M2: 21 m) | 1.8 – 3 million | Max 12 PP, institutional, operational and scientific partners. |
| M2+M3 | Testing and capitalising | Multi-module | Preliminary and feasibility studies (if needed), pilot activities (including methodology for implementation, testing and evaluation phases), plan of results transferability and policy recommendations, Memorandum of Understanding, agreements, procedures and regulatory proposals, charters, protocols. | 36 months (M2: 21 m / M3: 15 m) | 2.5 – 3.6 million | Max 12 PP, institutional, operational partners and networks. |
| M1+M2+M3 | Integrated Projects | Multi-module | SWOT analysis, state of the art, benchmarking analysis, models, action plans, strategies, instruments and pilot activities (including methodology for implementation, testing and evaluation phases), plan of results transferability and policy recommendations, Memorandum of Understanding, agreements, procedures and regulatory proposals, charters, protocols. | 48 months (M1: 15-m / M2: 21 m / M3: 12 m) | 3.6 – 6 million | Max 15 PP, institutional, operational and scientific partners and networks |
| Horizontal Projects | Communication and capitalisation of the programme in the long term | | Community building / communication / capitalisation strategies and action plans, internal communication products, policy papers and recommendations, Technical Papers, Deliverables and Target groups Databases | 36 months | Max 1.4 million | Max 6 PP, institutional partners and networks |

PROGRAMME MANUAL

# AXIS 4 PLATFORM PROJECT

# MED Projects architecture

The Interreg MED architecture is composed of **three typologies** of projects:

- Modular projects

- Horizontal projects

In Axis 1, 2 and 3

- Platform project

In Axis 4

The Interreg MED Programme architecture, with its links between the different types of projects, can be represented with the following scheme:

# Axis 4 Platform Project

In complement to the three thematic priorities – **innovation, energy and environment** - the 13 MED programme participating States have decided to integrate the programme architecture with a 4th cross-sector axis specifically supporting the **capacity of programme national and regional authorities to concretely contribute to the governance processes in the Mediterranean Region:** the Axis 4 – Enhancing Mediterranean Governance.

This will be achieved thought a **specific platform project of national and regional authorities** that adopts and **evidence based approach** to support informed policy and decision making processes. The platform project will analyse the results produced by MED projects and by other Mediterranean programmes/initiatives/organisations, to provide a **scientific base to a sounder contribution to strategic policies and initiatives in the area on identified sectors and cross cutting issues.**

During an initial phase the results produced by the MED projects and by other Mediterranean programmes/initiatives, will be thematically clustered and analysed by tra**nsnational thematic working groups**. The objective of this work is to identify relevant **policy, legislative, technical gaps and potential opportunities to be exploited.**

This kind of analysis will be used as evidence to support the definition of draft **policy approaches, strategic initiatives, multilateral agreements** that will be discussed in the framework of **thematic/cross-sectorial transnational high level events** that will be organized.

These events will involve Mediterranean authorities, principal stakeholders and other relevant actors. The main aim of these high level events is to **share and compare the outcomes of the thematic working groups to contribute to a better coordination on strategic initiatives for the Mediterranean area.**

The transnational thematic working groups will integrate in their work also the **liaising, mainstreaming and migration** as cross cutting tasks of the identified platform project themes.
**Systematically liaising** with other programmes/projects and initiatives/networks active in the Mediterranean Region will allow larger collection of data evidence while supporting a permanent dialogue, sounder cooperation and an easier identification of **synergies and complementarities with the other ETC Programmes in the area.**
The **mainstreaming** exercise will support the transfer at national and regional level of innovative approaches on issues that necessarily go beyond national borders. In parallel it will **integrate the results produced by MED projects in the national/regional process** of efficient use of public funds. The cross cutting task **migration** will allow the national and regional authorities to identify elements to be included, potentially, in new MED programme calls.

In addition to the described aspects, the added value of such a pioneer operation lies in the possibility of the Programme States and Regions to **actively participate and contribute, with a long time and strategic perspective, to the dynamics in the Mediterranean basin beyond the Programme MED.**
For instance, the **EU macro regional strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian** (EUSAIR), the process initiated by DG MARE for the **WEST MED Maritime initiative** for the Western Mediterranean, the **Mediterranean strategy on sustainable development of the UNEP/MAP**, the **Blue economy forum** of the Union for the Mediterranean, the **BLUEMED initiative**, and others.

**This result oriented approach**, that enhances also coordination and complementarity between ETC objectives and Investment for Growth and Jobs goals, is in line with EU Regulations and it is **backed by the European Commission.**

Through a **rich top down process** started in late 2014 the Programme participating States have identified the initial **strategic themes** of the Axis 4 platform project - being **coastal and maritime tourism and maritime surveillance**, the partnership – composed on ministerial and regional authorities, as well as the main elements of the project work plan.

Additional strategic themes might be identified in the course of project implementation.

The project will kick off its activities in the first semester 2017 and it will develop its actions during the 5 years of project duration.

The following figure summarizes the Axis 4 platform project architecture
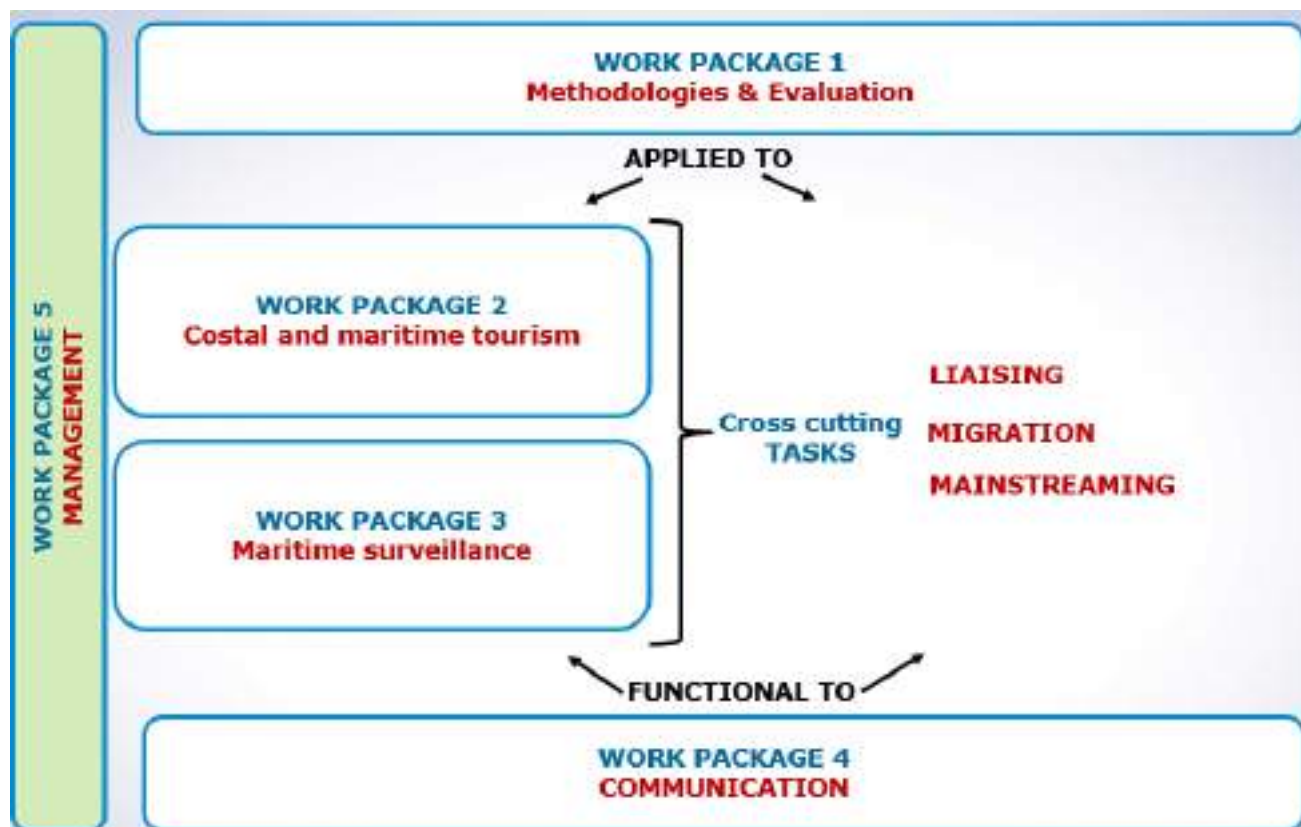


This section will be developed further after final validation of the Axis 4 platform project by the MED Programme Monitoring Committee.

PROGRAMME MANUAL

ONE-PHASE APPLICATION
PROCEDURE

# Introduction

**How to get prepared for applying?**

Preparing an application for a transnational project has many different aspects to consider before submitting the application: collecting information to find or develop an idea, searching partners in other Mediterranean states, getting familiar with the Programme strategic framework and contents as well as with all technical procedures, assessing the administrative capability, building the project application.

STEP 1 – COLLECTING INFORMATION

The Interreg MED Programme and the National Contact Points of the participating states are the first organisms to request information for the project.

One of the possible first steps to take is to look into the information tools provided by the Programme website and make some desk research. A good way to start is to find ideas for projects, and for that purpose the Interreg MED Programme website provides the Project Library, with a database related to the results and ideas of previous projects.

Another possible first step is to contact your own country National Contact Point for the Interreg MED Programme. The National Contact Points can provide all sort of local information regarding the applications, the ongoing or future calls, the types of projects, the partners in your country and sometimes the NCP organise events, where there is a personal exchange of information.

The Interreg MED programme website displays the contacts of the National Contact Points per Member State of the Programme.

Furthermore, the National Contact Points display information in their own "National information" page of the Interreg MED Programme website.

STEP 2 – GET FAMILIAR WITH TECHNICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE PROGRAMME

It is also advisable that potential beneficiaries go through a review of previous calls for projects in order to get familiar with call procedures, themes or types of projects and partners involved.

Nevertheless, this information should be carefully confronted with the new 2014-2020 Programming Period information material, namely by reading the present manual, the EU regulations, and Application Form guides, available at the Interreg MED website.

STEP 3 – SEARCHING FOR PARTNERS

In the Interreg MED Programme the nature of projects is of cooperation. This means that the project objectives and outcomes must necessarily come from a transnational partnership between institutions from different countries in the Mediterranean cooperation area.

Note that, in searching for partners, only applications of entities and partners based on the cooperation geographical area of the Interreg MED Programme can be accepted for funding. In the Factsheet on "Partnership architecture, requirements and relevance" potential beneficiaries can find all the information concerning partner's necessary qualifications.

In the search for partners, potential beneficiaries should consider to address entities from among the following groups, which are usually the Interreg MED Programme partners:

- Local public authority
- Regional public authority
- National public authority
- Sectoral agency
- Infrastructure and (public) service provider
- Interest groups including NGOs
- Higher education and research
- Education/training centre and school
- Enterprise, except SME
- SME
- Business support organisation
- EGTC (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation)
- International organisation, EEIG (European Economic Interest Grouping)

STEP 4 – ASSESSING YOUR ELIGIBILITY AND CAPABILITY

The Interreg Programme MED for 2014-2020 has a new approach for project management: a flexible choice through the modular system for modular or horizontal projects, each type described in the respective factsheets of the Programme's Manual. Therefore, the potential beneficiaries have to conceive and plan the project based on a specific type of project

- Modular projects: single module or multi-module projects;
- Horizontal projects.

In this context, it is necessary to retain that management and communication skills and experience required vary from module to module and from a type of project to another. For example, being the Lead Partner of a single module project or an integrated project does not require the same management needs. The same applies regarding communication, as in modular projects potential partners won't have to produce basic communication materials, whereas in a horizontal project they will have to produce a communication strategy for a community of projects. Finally, EU and Programme rules regarding partnership and financial requirements are of utmost importance when preparing a project proposal.

Therefore, potential partners should assess if the organisations involved have the capacities, experience, skills and ambition necessary to apply for a more demanding in terms of management, financial capacity and communication requirements multi-module type of project or horizontal project, or if it has better chances of success applying for a single module project type, where management and communication responsibilities are simpler and financial capacities required are less important. In that sense, the reading of the following Factsheets of the Programme's Manual is highly recommended:

- Factsheet on "The MED Programme strategic framework"
- Factsheet on "Partnership architecture, requirements and relevance"
- Factsheet on "Type of activities and deliverables"
- Factsheet on "Quality expectations and criteria"

- Factsheet on "Standards for activities and productions"
- Factsheets on "Sound project budget"
- Factsheet on "Communication"

# Application procedure

The programming period 2014-2020 brings some changes to the application procedures, among which:

- **100% paperless** application process through the on-line monitoring tool SYNERGIE CTE;
- The proposal itself consists of **two main parts**: an Application Form and several compulsory annexes (including Partners' additional documents);
- A different deadline is established for the submission of each part;
- Partners' additional documents (declarations) will be produced using the templates provided by the Interreg MED Programme;
- The Lead Partner must keep all original compulsory annexes in its premises.

Please note that two different application procedures have been established, one in a single phase (for the modular projects) and another in two phases (for horizontal and integrated projects).

## Application Procedure Phase 1

DOCUMENTS TO BE PROVIDED

Proposals must be submitted electronically using only the on-line monitoring tool of the Interreg MED Programme, SYNERGIE CTE. **Proposals arriving by any other means are not eligible.**

In order to submit a full proposal, the **Application Form** has to be accompanied by some compulsory annexes. Those annexes are to be uploaded (in a scanned signed version, if required) only to SYNERGIE CTE and no paper version is required. The originals must be kept by the Lead Partner.

More specifically, the following **compulsory annexes** are required:

- A scan of the signed  Application Form confirmation page;
- A scan of the signed  Partner declaration from all participating partners, including the Lead Partner, using the template provided by the Programme;
- A scan of the signed  "*De minimis*" declaration only from the partners whose activities within the project are State Aid relevant and that are willing to apply the *de minimis* Regulation, using the template provided by the Programme if applicable);
- A scan of the signed Associated partner declaration, using the template provided by the Programme, one for each associated partner (if applicable).

DEADLINES

The submission procedure consists of **two main parts**: an Application Form, to be filled in and validated, and several annexes (including Partners' additional documents) being compulsory, which shall be uploaded: thus please note that there are **two different deadlines** to be respected.

➔ The **Application Form** has to be validated on SYNERGIE CTE by the 1st deadline set out in the concerned Announcement of the Call

➔ The uploading of the **compulsory annexes** to SYNERGIE CTE must be completed by the 2nd deadline set out in the concerned Announcement of the Call

In order to organise the reception and the treatment of the proposal, the JS needs to anticipate as much as possible the number of proposals that will be received. Lead Partners are invited to create a login for the fulfilment and submission of proposals by the date indicated in the concerned Announcement of the Call. Nevertheless, the creation of logins after that date will be possible.

HOW TO APPLY

The submission of the proposal must imperatively be made through the on-line monitoring tool of the Interreg MED Programme SYNERGIE CTE.

In order to submit the proposal the Lead Partner must:

## 1/ Create a Lead partner account on SYNERGIE CTE

First, applicants wishing to submit a proposal have to create a login for the on-line monitoring tool of the Interreg MED Programme SYNERGIE CTE by providing some basic contact information including name and e-mail address. SYNERGIE CTE will provide an activation link by e-mail. The account will be activated by clicking on the link.

## 2/ Fill in the application form on SYNERGIE CTE, according to the type of project selected

The application must be completed on SYNERGIE CTE. Guidance on how to fill in the form and what is expected in each question is provided in the SYNERGIE CTE Guides. All documents needed for the development of the proposal, including the Programme Manual, the Terms or Reference and a courtesy Application Form in word format (not to be used for the submission), are available on the Interreg MED Programme website.

Before starting to work on the application on SYNERGIE CTE, the Lead Partner must choose the specific objective and the type of project to be submitted, according to the Terms of Reference of the call and Programme guidelines. In case of mistake, kindly contact the Joint Secretariat (JS) (programme_med@regionpaca.fr) as soon as possible in order to correct the situation. In some cases, the only solution would be to start the fill in of the Application Form again.

The Application Form has to be drafted in one of the two programme languages (English or French). There are some sections of the Application Form where information is requested in the two programme languages. Kindly bear in mind that the short description of the project in both languages is compulsory.

Lead Partners are invited to establish a starting date for their project following the indications provided by the Programme in the Terms of References of the Call for Proposals

**Coherence checks shall be made during the whole period of the drafting; it is not recommended to wait until the final stages unless Lead Partner disposes of enough time for all corrections. Lead Partners are invited to use the coherence check after saving each section of the Application Form. Be careful not to let any results of coherence checks in red or orange on SYNERGIE CTE. They must be green even when they are not preventing the submission.**

3/ Request the additional documents to partners signed

All partners must fill in a Partner declaration using the template provided by the Programme. These forms are then to be **dated** and **signed** by the Partner legal representative, scanned and thereafter sent to the Lead Partner. Before filling in the Partner declaration, partners are requested to read the section on co-financing in the Factsheet "Partnership architecture, requirements and relevance", the Factsheet on "State Aid" and the Factsheet on "Eligibility of expenditures" very carefully. The form provided by the Programme cannot be altered or amended in any way.

Besides, only partners whose activities within the project are State Aid relevant and that are willing to apply the *de minimis* Regulation, must provide a *"de minimis"* declaration indicating any contribution received during the previous three fiscal years falling under the *de minimis* Regulation. Before filling in the *de minimis* declaration, partners concerned are requested to please read the Factsheet on "State Aid" very carefully. The form provided by the Programme may not be altered or amended in any way.

Associated partners should sign an Associated partner declaration provided by the Programme. The information regarding associated partners in the Application Form will not be considered if the relevant associated partner declarations are not provided.

**No other type of document and no modification to the standard documents provided by the Interreg MED Programme will be accepted. All documents must be dated and signe**d.

Lead Partners are invited to check that the information included in the partner declarations is coherent with the information entered on the Application Form on SYNERGIE CTE. If any information, especially the co-financing amount, is not coherent, the Lead Partner must correct it.

4/ **VALIDATE** the content of the application form on SYNERGIE CTE **by the 1st deadline**

Once the application is entirely filled in, the Lead Partner must validate the Application Form on the on-line monitoring tool by the 1st deadline set by the Programme when launching the Call for Proposals. Please bear in mind that **the validation will only be effective after having pressed the VALIDATION button** (a single confirmation e-mail is automatically sent by the tool when the validation has been performed correctly). Should Lead Partner encounter any problem in filling or validating the Application Form on SYNERGIE CTE, it is imperative to contact the JS (programme_med@regionpaca.fr) before the closure of this phase.

**Once Application Form is validated, it cannot be modified it anymore.** Lead Partners are invited to keep the e-mail sent by the system attesting the time of validation (GMT+1). Please bear in

mind that the e-mail will be sent to the contact person address entered previously in the system: kindly check that this information is correct in order to receive the confirmation e-mail.

### 5/ UPLOAD compulsory annexes through SYNERGIE CTE by the 2nd deadline

All the compulsory annexes must be uploaded to the system by the 2nd deadline set by the Programme when launching the Call for Proposals. In the framework of this call, the following documents must be uploaded:

- **A scan of the signed** <u>Application Form confirmation page</u>. Only the page of the PDF including the date, the signature of the Lead Partner has to be uploaded. This page (point 2 of the summary, signatures) must have the mention "SUBMITTED".
- A scan of the signed <u>Partner declaration</u> from all participating partners using the template provided by the programme, including the Lead Partner. The national co financing amount included in this declaration must correspond to the information stated in the Application Form validated.
- A scan of the signed <u>*"De minimis"* declaration</u>, only from the partners whose activities within the project are State Aid relevant and that are willing to apply the *de minimis* Regulation, using the template provided by the Programme.
- A scan of the signed <u>Associated partner declaration (if applicable),</u> for each associated partner using the template provided by the Programme (if applicable).

Each document shall be scanned and uploaded individually and shall not exceed the size of 8 MB. Should Lead Partner face any problem uploading the additional documents on SYNERGIE CTE, it is imperative to contact the JS (programme_med@regionpaca.fr) before the closure of this phase.

**Once the deadline for uploading the document has passed, no more documents can be uploaded.** Lead Partners are invited to keep a screen shot of the list of uploaded documents

### 6/ Gather and keep the paper version of the signed documents

Original paper version of the signed - and stamped documents uploaded to SYNERGIE CTE must be gathered and kept by the Lead Partner.

### GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE APPLICATION

Kindly be reminded that it is essential to consult all the reference documents of the Programme (Cooperation Programme, Programme Manual and Terms of Reference of the call) when preparing the proposal. In addition, it is advisable to pay attention to the following:

- For the application, all accessible sections provided in SYNERGIE CTE must be filled in.
- Please refer to the Factsheet "Appraisal of project proposals (eligibility and assessment criteria)" of the Programme Manual in order to find the administrative and eligibility criteria to be respected as well as the quality assessment criteria that will be used for the selection of the proposals.

Any proposal not submitted completely through SYNERGIE CTE will not be eligible.

- Remember that the submission of the proposal is performed in two steps. First, the Application Form has to be validated, after that, all compulsory annexes have to be uploaded. Please bear in mind that the two deadlines must be observed in order to consider the proposal eligible. Once Application Form is validated, it cannot be modified anymore.
- The preparation costs will amount to the lump sum of **EUR 30 000** of **total eligible expenditure** per project

Lead Partners are invited to fill in the Application Form in SYNERGIE CTE as early as possible. Some sections can be filled in during the preparation of the Application Form and be modified after if needed (until the final validation). Coherence checks should be launched throughout the drafting and before the final validation to correct eventual inconsistencies.

Moreover, please bear in mind that the signature of the partners' additional documents and their uploading can take some time. For this reason, after the validation of the Application Form, a second deadline exists to upload them (respecting the size limit established of 8 Mega for each document) for the submission of the full proposal. **Kindly note that the last day for the submission of the proposals may be very busy for the system and that it could slow down.** Any problem in submitting the proposal or uploading the documents not caused directly by SYNERGIE CTE will not be considered. Should Lead Partner encounter problems, it is imperative to contact the JS before the closure of the call.

Finally, please do not hesitate to contact the MED JS for any further information.

PROGRAMME MANUAL

TWO-PHASE APPLICATION PROCEDURE

# Introduction

**How to get prepared for applying?**

Preparing an application for a transnational project has many different aspects to consider before its submission: collecting information to find or develop an idea, searching partners in other Mediterranean states, getting familiar with the Programme strategic framework and contents as well as with all technical procedures, assessing the administrative capability, building the project application.

STEP 1 – COLLECTING INFORMATION

The Interreg MED Programme and the National Contact Points of the participating states are the first organisms to whom you can request information for the project.

You can look into the information tools provided by the Programme website and make some desk research. A good way to start is to find ideas for projects, and for that purpose the Interreg MED Programme website provides the Project Library, with a database related to the results and ideas of previous projects.

Another possible first step is to contact your own country National Contact Point for the Interreg MED Programme. The National Contact Points can provide all sort of local information regarding the applications, the ongoing or future calls, the types of projects, the partners in your country. The NCP also organise events, where there it is possible the personal exchange of information.

The Interreg MED programme website displays the contacts and other information provided by the National Contact Points per Member State of the Programme.

STEP 2 – GET FAMILIAR WITH TECHNICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE PROGRAMME

It is also advisable that potential beneficiaries go through a review of previous calls for projects in order to get familiar with call procedures, themes or types of projects and partners involved.

Nevertheless, this information should be carefully confronted with the new 2014-2020 Programming Period information material, namely by reading the present manual, the EU regulations, and Application Form guides, available at the Interreg MED website.

STEP 3 – SEARCHING FOR PARTNERS

In the Interreg MED Programme the nature of projects is of cooperation. This means that the project objectives and outcomes must necessarily come from a transnational partnership between institutions from different countries in the Mediterranean cooperation area.

Note that, in searching for partners, only applications of entities and partners based on the cooperation geographical area of the Interreg MED Programme can be accepted for funding. For the eligible regions you can find information again in the Interreg MED website page. In the Factsheet on "Partnership architecture, requirements and relevance ments", potential beneficiaries can find all the information concerning partner's necessary qualifications.

In the search for partners, potential beneficiaries should consider to address entities from among the following groups, which are usually the Interreg MED Programme partners:

- Local public authority
- Regional public authority
- National public authority
- Sectoral agency
- Infrastructure and (public) service provider
- Interest groups including NGOs
- Higher education and research
- Education/training centre and school
- Enterprise, except SME
- SME
- Business support organisation
- EGTC (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation)
- International organisation, EEIG (European Economic Interest Grouping)

STEP 4 – ASSESSING YOUR ELIGIBILITY AND CAPABILITY

The Interreg Programme MED for 2014-2020 has a new approach for project management: a flexible choice through the modular system for modular or horizontal projects, each type described in the respective factsheets of the Programme's Manual. Therefore, the potential beneficiaries have to conceive and plan the project based on a specific type of project:

- Modular projects: single module or multi-module projects;
- Horizontal projects.

In this context, it is necessary to retain that the required management and communication skills and experience vary from module to module and from a type of project to another. For example, being the Lead Partner of a single module project or an integrated project does not require the same management needs. The same applies regarding communication, as in modular projects potential partners won't have to produce basic communication materials, whereas in a horizontal project they will have to produce a communication strategy for a community of projects. Finally, EU and Programme rules regarding partnership and financial requirements are of utmost importance when preparing a project proposal.

Therefore, potential partners should assess if the organisations involved have the capacities, experience, skills and ambition necessary to apply for a more demanding in terms of management, financial capacity and communication requirements multi-module type of project or horizontal project, or if it has better chances of success applying for a single module project type, where management and communication responsibilities are simpler and financial capacities required are less important. In that sense, the reading of the following Factsheets of the Programme's Manual is highly recommended:
- Factsheet on "The MED Programme strategic framework"
- Factsheet on "Partnership architecture, requirements and relevance"
- Factsheet on "Type of activities and deliverables"
- Factsheet on "Quality expectations and criteria"
- Factsheet on "Standards for activities and productions"
- Factsheet on "Sound project budget"
- Factsheet on "Communication"

# Application procedure

The programming period 2014-2020 brings some changes to the application procedures, among which:

- **100% paperless** application process through the on-line monitoring tool SYNERGIE CTE;
- The proposal itself consists of **two main parts**: an Application Form and several compulsory annexes (including Partners' additional documents);
- A different deadline is established for the submission of each part;
- Partners' additional documents (declarations) will be produced using the templates provided by the Interreg MED Programme;
- The Lead Partner must keep all original compulsory annexes in its premises.

Please note that two different application procedures have been established, one in a single phase (for the modular projects) and another in two phases (for horizontal and integrated projects).

## The two-phase application procedure

Horizontal and integrated projects have to submit their application through a two-phase procedure:

- A 1st phase consisting in a pre-application where only some sections of the Application Form have to be filled in and will be assessed (verify the courtesy "Pre-application Form template" available for each call):
  - o B. on partnership and general budget,
  - o C. (partially), on project relevance, focus and context (project approach, transnationality, cooperation criteria, modular approach, intervention logic, synergies and complementarities)
- A 2nd phase consisting in a full Application Form, where all sections of the Application Form have to be filled in and will be assessed.

The 1st phase of the submission will be followed by an eligibility check and a first assessment, according to the administrative and assessment procedures approved by the Interreg MED Monitoring Committee (see the related factsheet of the Programme manual).

Only the best scores will be admitted to the 2nd phase of the submission.

An intermediate parallel step of information exchange, bilateral meetings or seminars could be promoted (in order to integrate possible Steering committee conditions and/or requirements) between the partnerships (admitted to the 2nd phase) and the MED JS.

A second administrative check as well as a second final assessment will be performed after the 2nd phase of submission.

DOCUMENTS TO BE PROVIDED

Proposals, both in the first and second application stage, must be submitted electronically using only the on-line monitoring tool of the Interreg MED Programme, SYNERGIE CTE. **Proposals arriving by any other means are not eligible.**

**During the first stage of application**, the **Pre-application Form** has to be accompanied by the compulsory annexes listed below in a scanned version signed - and uploaded on Synergie CTE. No paper version is required. The originals must be kept by the Lead Partner.

More specifically, the following **compulsory annexes** are required:

- A scan of the signed Pre-application Form confirmation page;
- A scan of the signed Partners' expressions of interest from all participating partners, including the Lead Partner, using the template provided by the Programme.

The uploading has to be done before the final validation of the application form of the 1$^{st}$ stage. Kindly see the announcement of the concerned call.

**During the second application stage,** in order to submit a full proposal, the **Application Form** has to be accompanied by the compulsory annexes listed below. Those annexes are to be uploaded (in a scanned signed version, if required) only to SYNERGIE CTE and no paper version is required. The originals must be kept by the Lead Partner.

More specifically, the following **compulsory annexes** are required:

- A scan of the signed Application Form confirmation page;
- A scan of the signed Partner declaration from all participating partners, including the Lead Partner, using the template provided by the Programme;
- A scan of the signed "*De minimis*" declaration only from the partners whose activities within the project are State Aid relevant and that are willing to apply the *de minimis* Regulation, using the template provided by the Programme;
- A scan of the signed Associated partner declaration, using the template provided by the Programme, one for each associated partner (if applicable).

DEADLINES

For the **first phase of the application**, the submission procedure consists in **one part**: a simplified Pre-application Form accompanied by Expressions of Interest from all partners involved, to be filled in and validated on SYNERGIE CTE by the 1$^{st}$ deadline set out in the concerned Announcement of the Call.

For the **second phase of the application**, the submission procedure consists of **two main parts**: a full Application Form, to be filled in and validated, and several annexes (including Partners' additional documents) being compulsory, which shall be uploaded: thus please note that in this case there are **two different deadlines** to be respected.

➔ The <u>Application Form</u> has to be validated on SYNERGIE CTE by the 2<sup>nd</sup> deadline set out in the concerned Announcement of the Call.

➔ The uploading of the <u>compulsory annexes</u> to SYNERGIE CTE must be completed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> deadline set out in the concerned Announcement of the Call.

In order to organise the reception and the treatment of the proposal, the JS needs to anticipate as much as possible the number of proposals that will be received. Lead Partners are invited to create a login for the fulfilment and submission of proposals by the date indicated in the concerned Announcement of the Call. The creation of logins after that date depends on the call.

HOW TO APPLY

The submission of the proposal must imperatively be made through the on-line monitoring tool of the Interreg MED Programme: SYNERGIE CTE.

In order to submit the proposal the Lead Partner must, at the first phase of the application:

### 1. Create a Lead partner account on SYNERGIE CTE

First, applicants wishing to submit a proposal have to create a login for the on-line monitoring tool of the Interreg MED Programme SYNERGIE CTE by providing some basic contact information including name and e-mail address. SYNERGIE CTE will provide an activation link by e-mail. The account will be activated by clicking on the link. Depending on the call, this process might be executed directly by the partners in SYNERGIE CTE or, otherwise, by the JS after request by the Lead Partner.

### 2. Fill in the application form on SYNERGIE CTE

Both first and second phase applications must be completed on SYNERGIE CTE. Guidance on how to fill in the forms and what is expected in each question is provided in the SYNERGIE CTE guides. All documents needed for the development of the proposal, including the Programme Manual, the Terms or Reference and a courtesy Application Form in word format (not to be used for the submission), are available on the Interreg MED Programme website.

Before starting to work on the application on SYNERGIE CTE, the Lead Partner must choose the specific objective and the type of project to be submitted, according to the Terms of Reference of the call and Programme guidelines. In case of mistake, kindly contact the Joint Secretariat (JS) as soon as possible in order to correct the situation. In some cases, the only solution would be to start the fill in of the Application Form again.

The Application Form has to be drafted in one of the two programme languages (English or French). There are some sections of the full Application Form where information is requested in both programme languages. Kindly bear in mind that the short description of the project in both languages is compulsory.

Lead Partners are invited to establish a starting date for their project following the indications provided by the Programme in the Terms of References of the Call for Proposals.

**Coherence checks shall be made during the whole period of the drafting; it is recommended not to wait until the final stages to do it unless the Lead Partner disposes of enough time for all corrections. Lead Partners are invited to use the coherence check after saving each section**

Bear in mind that this coherence check will not replace the formal eligibility check. For further information, please refer to Factsheet "Appraisal of project proposals (eligibility and assessment criteria)" of the Programme Manual.

**of the Application Form. Be careful not to let any results of coherence checks in red or orange on SYNERGIE CTE. They must be green even when they are not preventing the submission.**

3. Request the additional documents (signed) to partners

For the first stage of the Application, all partners must fill in an **Expression of Interest** using the template provided by the Programme (please refer to the annexes of the Programme Manual). These forms are then to be **dated** and **signed** by the Partner legal representative, scanned and thereafter sent to the Lead Partner.

For the second stage of the Application, all partners must fill in a Partner declaration using the template provided by the Programme (please refer to the annexes of the Programme Manual). These forms are then to be **dated** and **signed** by the Partner legal representative, scanned and thereafter sent to the Lead Partner. Before filling in the Partner declaration, partners are requested to read the section on partnership requirements of the Programme Manual very carefully. **The form provided by the Programme may not be altered or amended in any way**.

Besides, only partners whose activities within the project are State Aid relevant and that are willing to apply the *de minimis* Regulation, must provide a "*de minimis*" declaration indicating any contribution received during the previous three fiscal years falling under the *de minimis* Regulation. Before filling in the *de minimis* declaration, partners concerned are requested to please read the factsheet on State Aid of the Programme Manual very carefully. **The form provided by the Programme may not be altered or amended in any way**.

Associated partners should sign an Associated partner declaration provided by the Programme. The information regarding associated partners in the Application Form will not be considered if the relevant associated partner declarations are not provided.

**No other type of document and no modification to the standard documents provided by the Interreg MED Programme will be accepted. All documents must be dated and signed**

Lead Partners are invited to check that the information included in the partner declarations is coherent with the information entered on the Application Form on SYNERGIE CTE. If any information, especially the co-financing amount, is not coherent, the Lead Partner must correct it.

4. Validate the content of the application form on SYNERGIE CTE

**Any Application Form not validated on SYNERGIE CTE will not be accepted.**

For the first phase of the application, once the form is entirely filled in and the Expressions of Interest uploaded, the Lead Partner must validate the Application Form on the on-line monitoring tool by the 1st deadline set by the Programme when launching the Call for Proposals. Please bear in mind that **the validation will only be effective after having pressed the VALIDATION button** (a single confirmation e-mail is automatically sent by the tool when the validation has been performed correctly). Should Lead Partner encounter any problem in filling or validating the Application Form on SYNERGIE CTE, it is imperative to contact the JS (programme_med@regionpaca.fr) before the closure of this phase.

For the second phase of the application, once the application is entirely filled in, the Lead Partner must validate the Application Form on the on-line monitoring tool by the 2nd deadline set by the Programme when launching the Call for Proposals. Please bear in mind that **the validation will only be effective after having pressed the VALIDATION button** (a single confirmation e-mail is automatically sent by the tool when the validation has been performed correctly). Should Lead Partner encounter any

problem in filling or validating the Application Form on SYNERGIE CTE, it is imperative to contact the JS (programme_med@regionpaca.fr) before the closure of this phase.

**Once the Application Form is validated, it cannot be modified anymore.** Lead Partners are invited to keep the e-mail sent by the system attesting the time of validation (GMT+1). Please bear in mind that the e-mail will be sent to the contact person address entered previously in the system: kindly check that this information is correct in order to receive the confirmation e-mail.

### 5. UPLOAD compulsory annexes through SYNERGIE CTE by the 3<sup>rd</sup> <u>deadline</u>

All the compulsory annexes must be uploaded to the system by the 3<sup>rd</sup> deadline set by the Programme when launching the concerned Call for Proposals. In the framework of this call, the following documents must be uploaded:

- **A scan of the signed Application Form confirmation page**. Only the page of the PDF including the date and the signature of the Lead Partner has to be uploaded. This page (point 2 of the summary, signatures) must have the mention "SUBMITTED".
- **A scan of the signed Partner declaration** from all participating partners using the template provided by the programme, including the Lead Partner. The national co-financing amount included in this declaration must correspond to the information stated in the Application Form validated.
- **A scan of the signed *"De minimis"* declaration**, only from the partners whose activities within the project are State Aid relevant and that are willing to apply the *de minimis* Regulation, using the template provided by the Programme.
- A scan of the signed <u>Associated partner declaration (if applicable)</u>, for each associated partner using the template provided by the Programme (if applicable).

Each document shall be scanned and uploaded individually and shall not exceed the size of 8 MB. Should Lead Partner face any problem uploading the additional documents on SYNERGIE CTE, it is imperative to contact the JS (programme_med@regionpaca.fr) before the closure of this phase.

**Once the deadline for uploading the document has passed, no more documents can be uploaded.** Lead Partners are invited to keep a screen shot of the list of uploaded documents.

### 6. Gather and keep the paper version of the signed documents

Original paper version of the signed documents uploaded to SYNERGIE CTE must be gathered and kept by the Lead Partner.

### GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE APPLICATION

Kindly be reminded that it is essential to consult all the reference documents of the Programme (Cooperation Programme, Programme Manual and Terms of Reference of the call) when preparing the proposal. In addition, it is advisable to pay attention to the following:

- For each application phase, all accessible sections provided in SYNERGIE CTE must be filled in;
- Please refer to the Factsheet "Appraisal of project proposals (eligibility and assessment criteria)"of the Programme Manual regarding administrative and eligibility criteria to be respected as well as the quality assessment criteria that will be used for the selection of the proposals;

**Any proposal not submitted completely through SYNERGIE CTE will not be eligible**.

- Remember that the submission of the proposal is performed in three steps, for applicants selected after the first phase. First, the pre-application has to be validated, then and after selection by the Steering Committee of the Programme, the full Application Form has to be validated, after that, all compulsory annexes have to be uploaded. Please bear in mind that all deadlines must be observed in order to consider the proposal eligible. Once Application Form is validated, it cannot be modified anymore;
- Preparation will amount to the lump sum of **EUR 30 000** of **total eligible expenditure per project**.

Lead Partners are invited to fill in the Application Form in SYNERGIE CTE as early as possible. Some sections can be filled in during the preparation of the Application Form and be modified after if needed (until the final validation). Coherence checks should be launched throughout the drafting and before the final validation to correct eventual inconsistencies.

Moreover, please bear in mind that the signature of the partners' additional documents and their uploading can take some time. For this reason, after the validation of the Application Form, a second deadline exists to upload them (respecting the size limit established of 8 Mb for each document) for the submission of the full proposal. **Kindly note that the last day for the submission of the proposals may be very busy for the system and that it could slow down.** Any problem in submitting the proposal or uploading the documents not caused directly by SYNERGIE CTE will not be considered. Should Lead Partner encounter problems, it is imperative to contact the JS before the closure of the call.

Finally, please do not hesitate to contact the MED JS for any further information.

PROGRAMME MANUAL

# PARTNERSHIP ARCHITECTURE, REQUIREMENTS AND RELEVANCE

# Definition of partners

ERDF PARTNERS LOCATED IN THE INTERREG MED PROGRAMME AREA

The project partners that are located in the territories of the European Union covered by the Interreg MED Programme, as specified in the Factsheet MED Programme strategic framework , are co-financed by the ERDF.

Partners participating in projects and receiving funding from the Interreg MED Programme shall be the following:

- National, regional and local public bodies (including EGTCs in the meaning of Article 2(16) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013);
- Private institutions, including private companies, having legal personality[1];
- International organisations acting under the national law of any EU MED Member State or, with restrictions, under international law (see below for details).

The terms of references provide a list of the most relevant partners[2] for each priority axis.

In the framework of the Interreg MED Programme, the so-called "public equivalent bodies", i.e. bodies governed by public law as defined in Article 2(1) of Directive 2014/24/EU on public procurement are eligible partners under category A "National, regional and local public bodies". Please note that such bodies have to fulfil all the following characteristics in order to be considered as eligible partners:

- They are established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character;
- They have legal personality; and
- They are financed, for the most part, by the State, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law; or are subject to management supervision by those authorities or bodies; or have an administrative, managerial or supervisory board, more than half of whose members are appointed by the State, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law.

**NOTICE:**
**Please note that bodies whose main scope of activities within their business profile, as well as their project role, consists of project coordination, management or other activities that are of a mere executive or supporting character (service providers) cannot be involved as project partners. Compliance with this requirement will be checked during the quality assessment of**

ERDF partners should bear in mind that the absence of advance payments and the time gap between incurring the expenditure and having it reimbursed may lead to cash-flow problems. This might be particularly relevant for private institutions.

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[1] Private institutions cannot act as Lead partners. Please also refer Factsheet on State aid. IPA partners should be non profit private entities fulfilling the conditions stated below in this factsheet.
[2] List of potential type of partners: please refer to the Interreg MED Glossary.

**project proposals which, on a case by case basis, could lead even to the exclusion of such partners.**

IPA PARTNERS

Organisations from Candidate and Potential Candidate Countries participating in the Interreg MED Programme are eligible as project partners co-financed by the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA fund).

Countries concerned by the IPA fund within the Interreg MED Programme are **Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania.**

IPA partners can apply as project partners provided that their legal status is coherent with the Programme rules and the national laws applicable in the relevant IPA countries.

The following issues will have to be considered:

- IPA structures cannot act as Lead Partners;
- IPA structures shall be a national, regional, local public body, public equivalent body[3] or non profit private entity
- IPA structures shall be non-profit making;
- private but non-profit organizations founded according to the applicable legal framework/law in the respective IPA country can be eligible under the following conditions:
  I. they do not have a commercial or industrial character or activities;
  II. they are non-profit and have a legal personality ;
- IPA partners shall be directly responsible for preparation and management of project's activities with the partnership, not acting as an intermediary;
- IPA structures shall have stable and sufficient sources of finance to ensure the continuity of the organisation throughout the lifespan of the project.
- IPA partners can be international organisations acting under the national law of any MED Participating State or, with restrictions, under international law (see below for details).

**International organisations acting under international law** are only eligible as partners and they cannot act as Lead Partners.

They can participate in projects only upon their explicit acceptance of all requirements deriving from the Treaty for the Functioning of the European Union and the regulations applicable in the framework of the Interreg MED Programme, including – but not limited to – the following:

- Adherence to applicable community policies, including the respect of rules on public procurement;
- Acceptance of the national control requirements set in the framework of the Interreg MED Programme by the State in which the organisation acting as partner is located;

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[3] "public equivalent bodies", i.e. bodies governed by public law as defined in Article 2(1) of Directive 2014/24/EU on public procurement

- Acceptance of controls and audits by all those bodies entitled to carry out such controls in the framework of the Interreg MED Programme, including the Managing Authority and Joint Secretariat, the Audit Authority and the European Court of Auditors as well as the relevant national authorities of the State in which the international organisation acting as project partner is located. Storage of all documents required for these controls must allow performing them in the geographical area covered by the Interreg MED Programme;
- Final financial liability for all sums wrongly paid out.

If a project proposal involving international organisations acting under international law in the partnership is approved, it must provide an *ad hoc* declaration signed by these institutions accepting the mentioned requirements. Besides, for reasons of legal security, additional legal information may be requested to these institutions prior to granting the fund.

The non-compliance with these requirements could lead to the exclusion of such partners.

ERDF PARTNERS OUTSIDE THE INTERREG MED PROGRAMME AREA (20 % GEOGRAPHICAL FLEXIBILITY RULE)

Organisations located in regions outside the Interreg MED Programme area, but inside the European Union, can become project partners (co-financed by the ERDF) only in exceptional and duly justified cases. This means that their participation needs to bring clear added value and expertise to the implementation of a project and has to be of benefit for the Interreg MED Programme area.

The ERDF allocated to a single project for such partners together with the ERDF spent outside the Programme area **cannot exceed 20 % of the total ERDF** contribution to the project.

Institutions located in EU regions outside the Programme area cannot act as Lead Partners.

Participation of EU-partners in project proposals is open to all EU regions, under all priority axes and irrespective of the legal status of the partners.

Nevertheless, should the activities to be carried out by partners located in countries outside the Programme area be considered as State aid relevant, the participation of these partners will finally not be allowed due to the impossibility for the Programme Monitoring Committee to validate the result of the State aid assessment on behalf of a Member State not participating in the Programme.

As for any other activities supported by the Programme, activities implemented by EU partners located outside the Programme area are subject to management verifications and audits.

During the evaluation, for the partners located outside the Programme area, a **confirmation of the eligibility** and of their legal status will be requested to the competent authorities. The responsible authority of the respective EU country will provide a confirmation. In case of failure, the partner will be excluded from the project.

**ATTENTION**
**In case of project approval, an agreement on management, control and audit responsibilities will have to be signed between the Managing Authority and the relevant EU country or region.**

**The time limit will be of maximum 12 months after the project approval (and in any case before the submission of the first payment claim). In case of failure, the partner might be excluded from the project.**

ASSOCIATED PARTNERS

Institutions willing to be involved in the project without financially contributing to it are to be considered as "associated partners". Such associated partners will not receive ERDF/IPA funding, will have to participate with their own funds, and do not account for the fulfilment of the minimum partnership requirements.

Third country partners will not receive any ERDF/IPA funding from the Interreg MED Programme and are only allowed to act as associated partners.

Expenditure incurred by the associated partners might be borne by any of the financing project partners in compliance with the applicable eligibility rules.

In any case, the involvement of associated institutions must not be in conflict with public procurement rules. Therefore, expenditure incurred by these bodies should in principle be limited to reimbursement of travel and accommodation costs related to their participation in the project meetings.

# Lead Partner requirements

The "Lead Partner principle" applies to the Interreg MED Programme, in compliance with Article 13 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013. This means that each partnership appoints one organisation to act as Lead Partner, which takes full responsibility for the implementation of the entire project.

The Lead Partner is a public body or a body governed by public law (according to the definition of the Directive 2014/24/EU). The Lead Partner must be physically based in the EU part of the Interreg MED Programme area.

Even if the MED Certifying Authority will directly transfer each partner's contribution, the Lead partner shall still ensure that partners receive the reimbursement in full and as quickly as possible.

Private institutions, international organisations acting under international law and IPA partners cannot act as Lead Partners.

The Lead Partner (institution) is responsible for coordinating and driving the partnership from the project idea until the finalisation of the project proposal. It formally submits the Application Form and is thus responsible for contents and commitments expressed in it.
After approval of a project by the Steering Committee, the Lead Partner will sign a Subsidy Contract with the Managing Authority (PACA Region, FRANCE) and kick-off the project implementation.

Following the Lead Partner principle, the Lead Partner is responsible for ensuring sound management and successful implementation of the entire project (for further information, please refer to the Factsheet on sound project management and to the Factsheet on sound project budget).

Accordingly, the Lead Partner should, at least, have the following profile (most skills are also applicable to project partners):

- Experienced in the management of projects supported by EU funds.

- Prepared to take a leading and driving role within the partnership
- Having sufficient capacity (institutional, financial and human resources) to prepare the project application and to manage the implementation of the project
- Having the thematic knowledge and expertise relevant for the project
- Being committed to the project throughout the entire project application and implementation phases

In addition, the Lead Partner should maintain a good communication flow among the partnership and ensure an efficient exchange of information that enables the successful delivery of the project outputs. The Lead Partner is also responsible for communication with the Programme bodies, especially the Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat.

The responsibilities of the Lead Partner are defined in the Subsidy Contract. The Lead Partner has to lay down the arrangements with all other partners in a written agreement (Partnership Agreement).

The models of the Subsidy Contract and the Partnership Agreement documents are available on the Interreg MED Programme website, and will have to be signed after the approval of the proposals (for further information, please refer to the Factsheet on contracting procedures).

## Size of the partnership

As a minimum requirement, the partnership must involve:

- at least **four financing partners**
- from at least **four different countries** from the Interreg MED Programme area and
- with at least **three of the partners located in the Union part** of the Interreg MED Programme area (three ERDF partners within the MED Programme area)

The size of the partnership should reflect the scope of the project and remain manageable. The Terms of References set specific requirements regarding the partnership.

## Partnership relevance

The quality of a project depends largely on an adequate composition of its partnership. The setting up of a relevant partnership is essential. A good partnership should pool all skills and competences of relevant institutions necessary to address the issues tackled by the project in order to achieve the set objectives and namely those set for the chosen module(s).
When building a partnership, the following general aspects should be taken into account:

- Focus your partnership on entities **relevant** for reaching the project results (e.g. thematically, geographically, level of governance).

- Involve as project partners only institutions whose **interests are closely linked** to the project objectives and planned interventions. They should also have the capacity to create strong links to target groups addressed by the project.
- Apply a **result-oriented approach** by involving institutions who are supposed to realise and subsequently implement the project outputs and results.
- Ensure that involved institutions have the **required competences** (e.g. involve environmental authorities if you work on the development of environmental policies).
- Ensure a **balanced partnership** in terms of number of institutions involved per country. Distribution of project activities and responsibilities as well as related budgets should be also adequately balanced.
- Ensure that **decision makers** (e.g. ministries, regional governments) are either directly **included** in the partnership or can be effectively reached by the project partners.
- Where necessary, involve **expert organisations** (e.g. universities, research institutions) as a source of knowledge.
- Keep the partnership **size manageable** (for further information regarding specific partnership requirements per type of project, please refer to Factsheets on modular and horizontal projects). Having a broad partnership should not be a goal in itself when preparing a project.
- Ensure the **commitment** of all partners from the very beginning. Once the project approved partner changes are to be regarded as exceptional cases, creating a strain to the entire project.
- Partner institutions should have **sufficient financial capacity** to pre-finance and implement the foreseen activities, keeping in mind that the time-lapse between the payment of project costs and the ERDF/IPA reimbursement usually corresponds at least to some months
- Institutions from outside the programme area should only be involved in exceptional and well justified cases. Their involvement should bring a clear benefit to the programme area and add value to the partnership

PROGRAMME MANUAL

# PARTNERS CO-FINANCING AND LOCATION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

version 2,
approved by the Monitoring Committee on 16 January 2018

| | Content of the modification | Approval date |
|---|---|---|
| **V1** | - | January 2017 |
| **V2** | More detailed information about the definition of the "MED area" as well as on how to make the difference between costs inside/outside the programme area. | 18 January 2018 |

# Co-financing

The Interreg MED Programme is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and by the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA).

The ERDF/IPA co-financing rate for all partners and Lead Partners is **85%.**

The only exception applies for SMEs acting as partners under Article 20 of the General Block Exemption Regulation (Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014) for which the ERDF co-financing rate is **50%** of the total eligible budget.

The **share of expenditure** not covered by ERDF/IPA shall be guaranteed by each project Lead Partner and partner by means of national co-financing, which can be provided as follows:

- Own public contribution: public funding at national, regional or local level, provided directly with own funds by the partners having a public status.
- Automatic public contribution: public funding at national, regional or local level, obtained via specific co-financing schemes set up by the Member States.
- Other public contribution: public funding at national, regional or local level, provided by institutions having a public status but not participating in the partnership.
- Own private contribution: private funding provided directly with own funds by the partners having a private status.
- Other private contribution: private funding provided by institutions having a private status but not participating in the partnership.

The contribution of each Lead Partner and project partner, be it a public or private institution, must be confirmed by the Lead Partner in the Application Form and by every single partner by filling-in the relevant partner declaration (the latter has to be compulsory annexed to the Application Form, please refer to the application procedure).

# Location of activities

In line with the requirements for the geographical location of partners, and as a basic principle, the Interreg MED Programme supports project activities taking place in the Programme area.

The **Programme cooperation area** of the Interreg MED Programme, hereafter "MED area", is composed by the EU and IPA regions covered by the Interreg MED Programme, according to the last version of the Cooperation Programme document approved by the EC. For more information, see http://interreg-med.eu/explore/the-cooperation-area/.

All the others EU regions not covered by the MED area are considered as « regions outside of the MED area ».

All activities implemented by ERDF partners in EU regions outside the MED area – including the organisation and participation in missions, study visits and events – can be accepted only in exceptional and duly justified cases.

The following requirements must be respected:
- They are for the benefit of the regions of the MED area;
- They are essential for the implementation of the project;
- They are explicitly foreseen in the Application Form or, if not, have been previously authorized by the MA/JS.

All projects are invited to foresee in the Application Form a specific budget for travels outside of the MED area in order to participate in external events (not organised by the project itself). **However, it is warmly recommended to limit as much as possible the organisation of the project's meetings, events and seminars outside the MED area as the focus is the cooperation in the transnational MED area.**

Activities financed by IPA funds should be implemented, as a basic principle, in the IPA territories. Activities outside the IPA territories benefiting the IPA countries will be analysed on a case by case basis by the MA/JS.

For more information on the eligibility of project activities expenditure, please refer also to factsheet « ELIGIBILITY OF EXPENDITURE ».

**According to article 20 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 and to the Interreg MED Cooperation Programme, the MA/JS must closely monitor all activities located outside the Union part of the MED area, both at the application and at the implementation phase.**

In that sense, in the framework of the reporting procedure in Synergie CTE, partners shall indicate for each expenditure if the activity to which it is related has been carried out inside or outside the MED area.

In the case of partners located in the MED area (ERDF and IPA partners), expenditure related to activities carried out outside the MED area are to be declared « Out of the EU zone of the Programme area or out of the Programme area » in Synergie CTE.
Please note travel and accommodation costs, regardless of the locations of the activity, are to be declared always « inside the MED area » in Synergie CTE.

In the case of ERDF partners located outside of the MED area, the full budget of those partners is to be declared « Out of the EU zone of the Programme area or out of the Programme area » in Synergie CTE.

For more information on the reporting of the expenditure through Synergie CTE, please refer to the Synergie guide « How to enter an expenditure in Synergie CTE ».

PROGRAMME MANUAL

# APPRAISAL OF PROJECT PROPOSALS (ELIGIBILITY AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA)

After submission, each Interreg MED proposal is subject to a three-step assessment procedure safeguarding the principles of transparency and equal treatment as described below.

- **Administrative and eligibility check** of the Application Form and the compulsory annexes
- **First quality assessment phase** of the Application Form
- **Second quality assessment** phase of the Application Form

Each of the three phases can lead to the permanent elimination of the proposal. The Steering Committee of the Interreg MED Programme is responsible for the decision on the evaluation of each single step.

# Administrative and eligibility criteria

The administrative and eligibility assessment is carried out to verify whether an application complies with the administrative and eligibility criteria established by the Interreg MED Programme for the projects of the call.

The following administrative and eligibility criteria are to be observed when submitting the proposal:

**FIGURE 32: ADMINISTRATIVE AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA LIST**

| Nº | Criteria | |
|----|----------|---|
| A | Administrative check | |
| A.1 | The Application Form has been submitted via the online monitoring tool of the Interreg MED Programme, SYNERGIE CTE, respecting the deadline | |
| A.2 | The compulsory annexes per each partner have been duly signed and uploaded to the online monitoring tool of the Interreg MED Programme, SYNERGIE ETC | |
| A.3 | The partnership has used the Interreg MED Programme templates, without making any alterations or amendments | |
| A.4 | The Application Form confirmation page has been duly signed | |

| Nº | Criteria | |
|----|----------|---|
| B | Eligibility check | |
| B.1 | The project fulfils minimum partnership requirements: 4 partners representing 4 different countries from the Interreg MED Programme area of which at least 3 from the Union part of the Interreg MED Programme area | |
| B.2 | The Lead Partner is a public body or a body governed by public law (according to the definition of the Directive 2014/24/UE) and it is physically based in the Union part of the Interreg MED Programme area | |
| B.3 | The amounts of national co-financing indicated in the "partner declarations" are:<br><br>a) equal<br><br>b) superior | |

| | | c) inferior, up to 0,99 € of negative difference with reference to the amounts of national co-financing corresponding to the ERDF/IPA requested in the application form | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | **The following eligibility criteria are to be checked by the on line monitoring tool SYNERGIE CTE** (if the criterion is not respected, the system prevents the submission of the proposal) | |
| | B.4 | Time limits are respected: start and end dates of the project respect the call and Interreg MED Programme requirements | |
| | B.5 | No partner concentrates more than 30% of the total eligible budget (ERDF+IPA+national co-financing) | |
| | B.6 | No country concentrates more than 40% of the total eligible budget (ERDF+IPA+national co-financing) | |
| | B.7 | Preparation costs do not exceed the lump sum of EUR 30 000 set by the Interreg MED Programme | |

**Proposals failing in any of the above requirements will be regarded as non-eligible and will not be further processed.** Lead Partners of non-eligible proposals will be informed.

Since all Application Forms and compulsory annexes are submitted via the online monitoring tool SYNERGIE CTE, some of the above requirements will be automatically checked by the system during the submission of the application in order to help applicants avoiding mistakes. However, the check of the compliance of each proposal with the above requirements, including the correctness of the submitted annexes, will be carried out during this step of the procedure of assessment of the proposal. For more information about the submission procedure and the use of the online monitoring tool SYNERGIE CTE please refer to the factsheets "Application procedures" and Synergie CTE guide.

On the other hand, during this phase Participating States will check the eligibility of partners from their territory and their capacity of involvement in the proposals submitted. This information will be considered in the assessment phase.

# Quality assessment criteria (2-step-evaluation)

The quality assessment is carried out based on a quality assessment grid, included below, that identifies strategic and operational criteria. For each one of the criterion, a main assessment question with several sub-questions has been identified. The score of each main question is the average of the score of the concerned sub-questions.

> The grid below is an example.
> It may be modified by the Programme Authorities depending on the nature of the open call.
> Any updated grid will be part of the specific documents to each call and published on the Interreg MED website.

This quality assessment will consist of two phases, **the first phase being eliminatory**.

The score per each assessment question will be calculated on a scale of 10 points. The maximum score will be of 100 points (8 main questions have been identified in the evaluation grid composed of strategic and operational issues) for the full assessment (with a weight of 1.5 for the operational questions in second phase equivalent to 60 points as maximum), and 40 points (4 main questions have been identified as "strategic" in the first phase evaluation grid) for the first assessment phase (no weight is applied).

The total final score is showed in percentage figures (100 points being the maximum total score reachable) with a minimum threshold of 75% in order to be proposed to the selection.

FIRST ASSESMENT PHASE:

The first assessment phase will only be carried out on part of the Application Form and more specifically on answers provided by each proposal to key issues previously identified in the form and in the evaluation grid. All questions needed for the first assessment are concentrated under the strategic assessment criteria. That is done in order to ensure the quality of the most important principles for an Interreg project: context, transnationality, logical framework and partnership.

The following sections of the Application Form are evaluated in the first phase:

- B. on partnership and general budget,
- C. 1.2, 1.3., 1.4. on project relevance (project approach, transnationality, cooperation criteria)
- C.2.1.. on project focus (intervention logic) and D. on overall budget per partner
- C. 3.1., 3.2, 3.3. on project context (synergies and complementarities)

Only the contents of the form corresponding to the sections above will be assessed at this stage. It is therefore essential to target the sections and contents in relation with the key issues without scattering the answers. Kindly remember that in each section a maximum number of character to be respected has been established.

The **minimum score required** in the first assessment phase **is 24** out of 40 points (representing 60% of the maximum score). **Each main question must reach an average score of 5 out of 10 points in order to go to the next phase**.

All applications that have reached the minimum score requested will be admitted to the second phase of assessment. Projects admitted to the second phase will keep their scores in the subsections already evaluated in the 1st evaluation phase (as identified hereinafter: subsections evaluated in the first phase won't be evaluated anymore). Each sub-section not evaluated in the 1st phase will be assessed in the 2nd stage. The average score of all sub-sections will compose the final score of the main question (only section 2 –cooperation character- will be fully assessed during the first phase).

Answers to key issues written elsewhere than expected (out of section) will not be assessed.

SECOND ASSESMENT PHASE:

The second assessment phase for the final proposal to the selection will cover all applications having obtained the minimum score requested in the first evaluation phase (24 points at least, at least 5 out of 10 points per question).
It will incorporate the questions of the first phase to the remaining questions of the evaluation grid and it will be mainly focused on "operational criteria"

The following sections of the Application Form are evaluated in the second phase:

- B. on partnership (regarding balance of the partnership, role and competencies of partners)
- C. 1.1
- C.4.1., C.4.2.
- C.5 Working plan
- C.6, 7, 8
- D. on detailed budget

**The threshold** for projects to be recommended for approval to the Steering Committee by the JS **is of 75** out of 100 points in the second assessment (representing 75% of the maximum score). **Each section must reach an average score of 5 out of 10 points in order to be proposed for the selection**.

A final decision on project approval or rejection is taken by the Monitoring Committee. Projects will be selected, taking into consideration their score (in descending order), positions of each national delegation, and budget availability by specific objective and type of project.

QUALITY ASSESSMENT GRID

As indicated in the table below, in the first column you can find the assessment main questions. Each main question is supported by specific sub questions (Guiding principles for the assessment).

Each main question score is the average of its sub questions scores: for instance, in the first question below (project's context), you have 4 sub questions.

Let us suppose that in the first sub question you have a score of 7, in the second a score of 9, in the third a score of 4 and in the fourth a score of 5, you will have a final average score of (7+9+4+5)/4=6.25 points for the first main question.

For the horizontal projects, the assessment grids, scores and conditions for both phases are the same as those applied to the modular projects. Nevertheless, for horizontal projects, the first assessment will be carried out on the information requested in the pre-application form, whilst the second phase will consider the full application form submitted in the second phase of the submission process (see the factsheet "Application procedure for Horizontal projects" of the Programme manual).

**FIGURE: STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

**Only sub-questions 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.1 and 4.3. will be scored for the first phase of the assessment.**

| Assessment questions (Main questions) | Sub-question number | Guiding principles for the assessment – To what extent does the project … (Sub questions) | Concerned sections in the Application Form |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Project's context (relevance and strategy)** *How well is a need for the project justified?* | 1.1 | ・The project addresses common territorial challenges of the programme or a joint asset of the programme area - there is a real demand for the project | C.1.1 |
| | 1.2 | ・ The project clearly contributes to a wider strategy on one or more policy levels (EU / national / regional) | C.3.1 |
| | 1.3 | ・ The project makes use of available knowledge and builds on existing results and practices | C.3.2 C.3.3 |
| | 1.4 | ・ The project makes a positive or a neutral contribution to the programme horizontal principles: equal opportunities and non-discrimination, equality between men and women, sustainable development | C.4.1 |
| **2. Cooperation character** *What added value does the transnational cooperation bring?* | 2.1 | ・ The importance of the transnational approach to the topic addressed is clearly demonstrated: <br> - the results cannot (or only to some extent) be achieved without cooperation and/or the cooperation has a significant added value for the partners <br> - there is a clear benefit from cooperating for the project partners / target groups / project area / programme area <br><br> (Please, take note that the evaluator will pay special attention to the fulfilment of at least 3 of the following cooperation criteria: joint development (mandatory), joint implementation (mandatory), and joint staffing or joint financing). | B.1 C.1.3 C.1.4 |
| | 2.2 | ・ The project demonstrates new solutions that go beyond the existing practice in the sector/programme area/participating countries or adapts and implements already developed solutions | C.1.2 |

| Assessment questions (Main questions) | Sub-question number | Guiding principles for the assessment – To what extent does the project ... (Sub questions) | Concerned sections in the Application Form |
|---|---|---|---|
| **3. Project's contribution to programme's objectives, expected results and outputs** *To what extent will the project contribute to the achievement of programme's objectives according to the MED CP and more particularly to the ToR of the specific objective?* | 3.1 | ▪ The project's results and main outputs clearly link to programme priority and its indicators<br><br>- The project overall objective clearly links to a programme priority specific objective<br>- The project results clearly link to a programme result indicator<br>- The project specific objectives clearly link to the project overall objective<br>- The project main outputs clearly link to the project specific objectives<br>- The project main outputs clearly link to programme output indicators | C.2.1 |
| | 3.2 | ▪ Results and main outputs:<br><br>- are in accordance with the selected target groups needs | C.2.1 |
| | 3.3 | - are specific | C.2.1 |
| | 3.4 | - are realistic (is it possible to achieve them with given resources – i.e. time, partners, budget- and they are realistic based on the quantification provided) | C.2.1, D |
| | 3.5 | ▪ Project main outputs are durable (the proposal is expected to provide a significant and durable contribution to solving the challenges targeted) – if not, it is justified | C.5 |
| | 3.6 | ▪ Project main outputs are applicable and replicable by other organisations/regions/countries outside of the current partnership (transferability) – if not, it is justified | C.5 |
| **4. Partnership relevance** *To what extent is the partnership composition relevant for the proposed project?* | 4.1 | ▪ The project involves the relevant actors needed to address the territorial challenge/joint asset and the objectives specified. | B |
| | 4.2 | ▪ With respect to the project's objectives the project partnership:<br><br>- is balanced with respect to the levels, sectors, territory<br>- consists of partners that complement each other | B, C.5 |
| | 4.3 | ▪ Partner organisations have proven experience and competence in the thematic field concerned, as well as the necessary capacity to implement the project (financial, human resources, etc.) | B |
| | 4.4 | ▪ All partners play a defined role in the partnership and get a real benefit from it | B, C.5 |

**OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

| Assessment questions | | Guiding principles for the assessment – To what extent does the project … | Concerned sections in the Application Form |
|---|---|---|---|
| **5. Management**<br><br>*To what extent are management structures and procedures in line with the project size, duration and needs?* | 5.1 | ・Management structures (e.g. project steering committee) are proportionate to the project size and needs and allow partners' involvement in decision-making<br>・Management procedures (such as reporting and evaluation procedures in the area of finance, project content, communication) are clear, transparent, efficient and effective<br>・Project management includes regular contact between project partners and ensures transfer of expertise across the partnership (internal communication within the partnership)<br>・Necessary provisions quality management are in place (self and/or external evaluation) | C.5 WP 1 (Management)<br><br>C.4.2 |
| | 5.2 | ・The Lead Partner demonstrates competency in managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects or can ensure adequate measures for management support | B.1 |
| **6. Communication and Capitalisation**<br><br>*To what extent are communication and capitalisation activities appropriate and forceful to reach the relevant target groups and stakeholders?* | 6.1 | ・The communication and capitalisation (when relevant) objectives clearly link to the project specific objectives<br>・The approach/tactics chosen are appropriate to reach communication and capitalisation (when relevant) objectives<br>・Communication and capitalisation (when relevant) activities and deliverables are appropriate to reach the relevant target groups and stakeholders | C.5 WP 2 (Communication) |

| Assessment questions | | Guiding principles for the assessment – To what extent does the project ... | Concerned sections in the Application Form |
|---|---|---|---|
| **7. Work plan**<br><br>*To what extent is the work plan realistic, consistent and coherent?* | 7.1 | ・Proposed activities and deliverables are relevant and lead to the planned main outputs and results<br>・Distribution of tasks among partners is appropriate (e.g. sharing of tasks is clear, logical, in line with partners' role in the project, etc.)<br>・Time plan is realistic (contingency included)<br>・Activities, deliverables and outputs are in a logical time-sequence | C.5<br>C.7 |
| | 7.2 | Activities outside (the Union part of) the programme area clearly benefit the programme area (if applicable) | C.6 |
| | 7.3 | ・The added value of investments and their transnational relevance is demonstrated to reach the project objectives (if applicable) | C.8 |
| **8. Budget**<br><br>*To what extent is the budget coherent, proportionate, realistic and valuable?* | 8.1 | ・Sufficient and reasonable resources are planned to ensure project implementation<br>・Project budget appears proportionate to the proposed work plan and the main outputs and results aimed for<br>・Total partner budgets reflect real partners' involvement (are balanced and realistic) | B.1, C.5, C.8, D |
| | 8.2 | ・Financial allocation per budget line is in line with the work plan<br>・Distribution of the budget per period is in line with the work plan<br>・Distribution of the budget per WP is in line with the work plan<br>・The need for engaging external expertise is justified and the costs are realistic<br>・The need for equipment purchases is justified and the costs are realistic<br>・The budget is clear and realistic and in line with the Programme financial recommendations | B.1, C.5, C.8, D |
| **9. Final overview** | 9.1 | ・The project globally answer to the expectations and needs of the Programme. It's coherent in the implementation of all its sections? (no score, only an appreciation) | Full project |

# Communication of results to the Lead Partner

Decisions on funding of projects will be made by the Steering Committee of the Interreg MED Programme based on the results of the assessment described above and on the call budget availability.

After its decision, the Lead Partners of the submitted proposals will receive a communication from the Managing Authority indicating if the proposal is accepted without modification, accepted under conditions or rejected. The communication will contain the reasons for approval (and if this will be the case necessary requirements to be fulfilled within a set timeframe) or for rejection.

PROGRAMME MANUAL

SOUND PROJECT BUDGET

# Sound project budget

The budget of the project must be drafted following the real cost principle[1], fully accomplishing the principles of adequacy of costs and sound financial management. As provided under chapter 7 of the Financial Regulation (Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012) the principle of sound financial management builds on the following three principles:

- The principle of **economy** requires that the resources used by the beneficiary in the pursuit of its activities shall be made available in due time, in appropriate quantity and quality and at the best price;
- The principle of **efficiency** concerns the best relationship between resources employed and results achieved;
- The principle of **effectiveness** concerns the attainment of the specific objectives set and the achievement of the intended results.

Accordingly, the project budget shall reflect the work plan, i.e. outputs, activities and deliverables planned in order to achieve the intended results.

Further guidance on eligibility of the expenditures, budget lines and financial requirements can be found on Factsheet Eligibility of expenditures

The Application Form must contain a detailed budget per partner structured per budget line and work-package. For further information about how to enter the budget, please refer to SYNERGIE CTE Guide.

> Kindly be reminded that no budget modification is allowed during the first year of project implementation. Besides in the case of multi-modular project it would be warmly recommended to concentrate all modifications during the transition from one module to another.

**FIGURE 1: BUDGET CREATION**
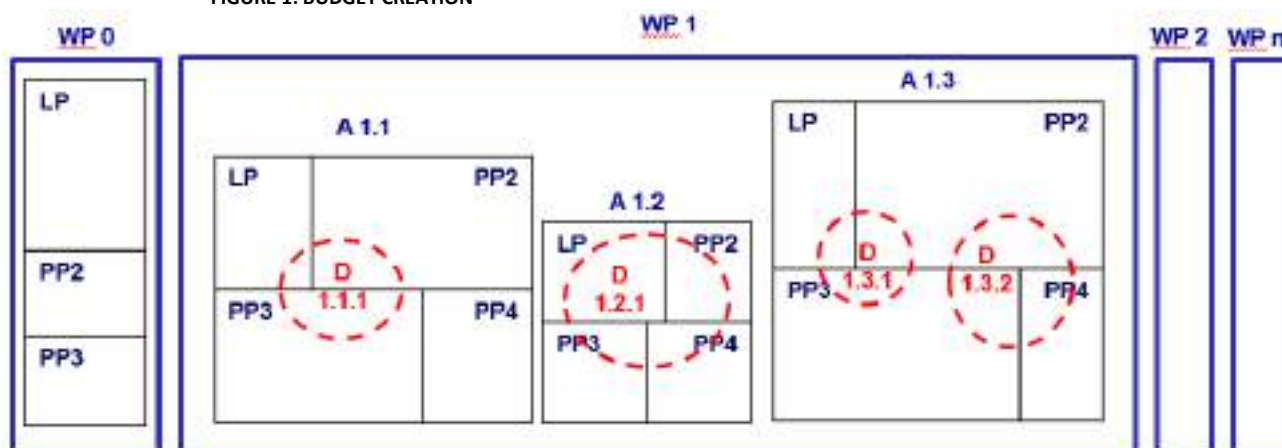


In particular, the following financial information are required in the Application Form:

- Share of the preparation costs lump sum among ERDF partners (for further information, please refer to factsheet project start-up);
- For each WP, budget per project partner and budget line;
- Indicative budget for deliverables;
- Payment forecasts per reporting period;

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[1] Except for preparation costs as well as when simplified cost options are used for calculating costs under office and administration budget line. For further information, please refer to factsheets Eligibility of expenditures and project start-up.

Tools used by applicants when drafting the project budget must therefore allow to plan, at the level of each partner, the budget allocated to budget lines, work packages and reporting periods. Even if the information at level of activity is not required, it is warmly recommended to track this information in order to self-assess the strength of the proposed budget.

Concerning the elaboration of an **indicative budget for deliverables**, the following elements are to be taken into consideration:

- The deliverable budget must cumulate the part to be financed by each partner.
- Eligible VAT needs to be considered.
- The budget foreseen for each deliverable should be an estimation of the costs needed for its development, and may include staff costs, travel and accommodation costs and external expertise and services costs.
- This information will be used for the evaluation of the proposal. Any overestimation of the deliverable budget may be evaluated negatively.

**FOR EXAMPLE**

In order to establish an indicative budget for the type of deliverable "TECHNICAL EVENT", the following expenditures of all concerned partners may be considered:

- Staff of partner in charge for the organisation of the event;
- Communication of the event: website update, production of promotional material;
- Facilities: rent of the room, catering, translation;
- Travel and staff of partners involved during the event;
- Travel of experts, speakers, stakeholders and associated partners invited to the event;
- Post-com activities;
- Draft of the technical event report.

In view of elaborating the **allocation of budget to reporting periods**, the following elements are to be taken into consideration[2]:

- The reporting periods run on a six-monthly basis as from the project start date proposed by the Programme (for further information regarding the reporting process, please refer to factsheet Reporting procedure)
- The budget allocated to a reporting period should be an estimation of the actual payments to be done and certified in the respective reporting period. Therefore, the budget only partly reflects the activities taking place in a certain period. Indeed, if an activity is carried out close to the end of a reporting period, the related payment may take place in the following period and the costs should therefore be budgeted only in such following reporting period.
- The capacity of spending and certifying of each partner in order to adapt as much as possible this estimation to reality.
- The time needed to set up procedures of effective competition.

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[2] Due to a dysfunction of the online monitoring tool this information wasn't requested in the framework of the first call for modular projects.

- The amounts included in the Application Form are incorporated to the Subsidy Contract to be signed between the Lead Partner and the Managing Authority and may be used to calculate the impact of the programme's decommitment on the projects budget. For more information please refer to factsheet decommitment.

Spending forecasts will be subject to analysis during the assessment of project proposals. In particular an artificial distribution of total costs (e.g. evenly throughout the project duration and therefore not reflecting actual payments) will be evaluated negatively due to its negative effect on the decommitment calculations on programme level.

**Some general elements to have in mind while drafting the budget proposal:**

- Even if the programme does not set formal thresholds for budget lines, some budget lines establish recommendations about the maximum percentage to be allocated to them. For further information regarding budget lines, please refer to factsheet Eligibility of expenditures.
- In the case of office and administrative costs, no detailed budget needs to be planned for this budget line since **the expenditure is automatically calculated by the on-line monitoring tool** as a flat-rate of staff costs.
- **Some budget thresholds must be respected regarding distribution per partner and country**: for the most important partner (30% of the total eligible budget: ERDF + IPA + national co-financing) and the most important country (40% of the total eligible budget: ERDF + IPA + national co-financing). The online monitoring tool will block the submission of proposals not observing those limits.
- Depending on the national First Level Control system (centralised or decentralised), partners shall budget external auditors costs under the external expertise and services budget line.
- A progress report and a payment claim, included FLC certificates, will be submitted after each six-monthly reporting period by the Lead Partner.
- In the case of modular projects, projects have to foresee some budget for cooperation activities with the horizontal projects and the Programme Authorities as well as the participation in Programme events. For further information regarding communication tasks of modular projects, please refer to the Communication Manual.
- Activities outside the MED area have to be identified in the Application Form. For further information regarding location of activities, please refer to factsheet Partners co-financing and location of project activities.
- No budget modification will be allowed during the first year of project implementation. For further information regarding budget modifications, please refer to factsheet Project modifications.

PROGRAMME MANUAL

# TYPE OF ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES

A project is structured into Work Packages and activities and produces deliverables and outputs to achieve concrete results that reach the objectives set.

As there is sometimes confusion between "activities", "deliverables" and "outputs" in projects, the aim of this section is:

- to clarify the concepts,
- to define types of activities and deliverables that projects can implement and produce
- to define some common quality standards that will ensure the relevance and the usefulness of the project results for the Programme and its priorities,

Indeed the results of a project depend on the quality of its activities, outputs and also deliverables.

## Concepts

A "**Work Package**" (WP) can be defined as a group of related project activities required to produce project main outputs.

An "**Output**" can be defined as what comes out of an activity or a set of activities carried out. Project outputs are the outcomes obtained following the implementation of project activities. Each output should be captured by a programme output indicator and should directly contribute to the achievement of the project result.

An "**Activity**" can be defined as a process, done for a particular purpose.
Each Work package is divided into activities. Activities have to lead to the development of one or more project outputs.

A "**Deliverable**" can be defined as the physical evidence of what has been produced through an activity or as the physical evidence/support of the output that was produced through an activity. Each activity should include one or more deliverables that contribute to the achievement of project outputs. All steps of a single activity do not necessarily need to be listed as separate deliverables, but should be aggregated into one deliverable when applicable and relevant.

**FIGURE 1: COMPOSITION OF A WORK PACKAGE**



Output
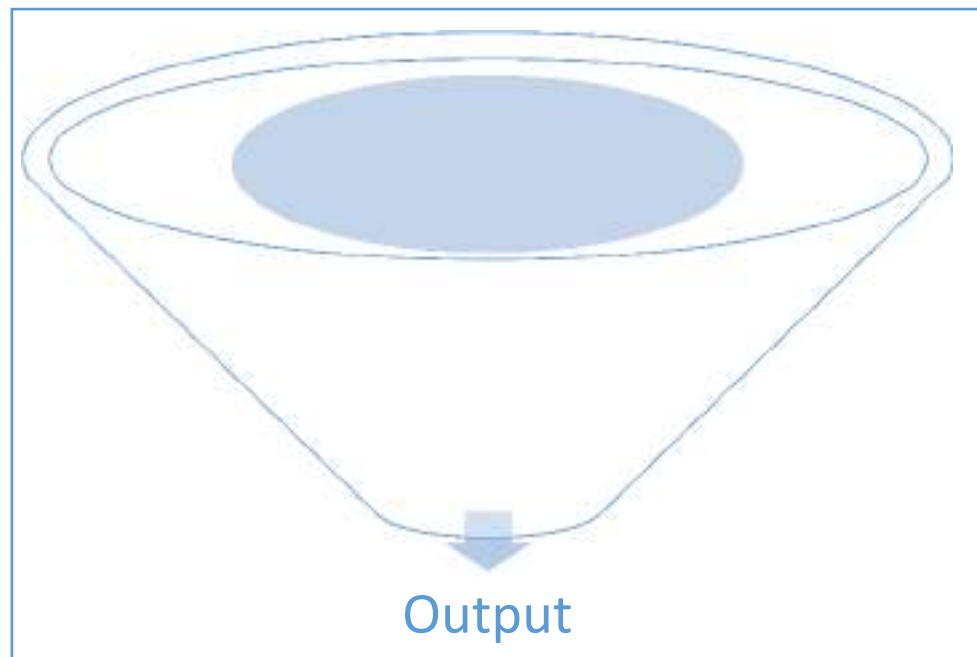
# Types of work packages

Depending from the type of project chosen, a project can be composed from 3 to 7 Work Packages (WP).

Some WP are common to all projects …

- WP0: Preparation costs (optional)
- WP1: Project Management (mandatory)
- WP2: Project Communication (mandatory)

… Whereas thematic work packages differ depending on the type of project:

- For Module 1 projects: one thematic WP: "Studying"
- For Module 2 projects: two thematic WP: "Testing" + "Transferring"
- For Module 3 projects: one thematic WP: "Capitalising"
- For Module 1+2 projects: three thematic WP: "Studying" + "Testing" + "Transferring"
- For Module 2+3 projects: three thematic WP: "Testing" + "Transferring" + "Capitalising"
- For Module 1+2+3 projects: four thematic WP: "Studying" + "Testing" + "Transferring" + "Capitalising"
- For Horizontal projects: HP will use, besides WP0, 1 and 2, the WP "Capitalising"and the WP: "Community building"

# Types of activities and deliverables

Project activities can be related to the management and the evaluation of the project, the communication and the development of the project theme.

In the Application Form, applicants are required to organise their project through Work packages (optional and compulsory ones) depending on the type of project selected. For each work package, applicants have to choose from a list of types of activities and a list of types of deliverables, that they should further define and describe, depending on what they plan to implement and produce. Further-more, outputs produced should be defined, taking into account they should contribute to the Programme output indicators (see section 1.3.4. on Programme output indicators).

This section defines, for each work package, the types of activities and respective types of delive-rables that can be selected, with examples of deliverables (non-exhaustive list) the project could produce.

**FIGURE 2: ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE WP 0 'PREPARATION COSTS' (OPTIONAL)**

| TYPES OF ACTIVITIES | TYPES OF DELIVERABLES | EXAMPLES OF DELIVERABLES |
|---|---|---|
| Preparing and submitting a project proposal | Application Form | Application Form |

**FIGURE 3: ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE WP 1 'PROJECT MANAGEMENT'**

| TYPES OF ACTIVITIES | TYPES OF DELIVERABLES | EXAMPLES OF DELIVERABLES |
|---|---|---|
| Managing administrative and financial issues | Method | Steering and Technical committees procedures Guidelines |
| | Tool | manual / guidance / plan Intranet / online platform Course / training |
| | Meeting | SC and TC meeting minutes |
| Setting up common methodologies for actions | Method | Methodology / guidelines |
| | Tool | manual / guidance /plan Course / training |
| Evaluating the project | Data | Evaluation report |
| | Method | Evaluation method Evaluation plan |
| | Tool | online platform / toolbox survey/ questionnaire/ collecting information tool instructions |

Definitions for each example of deliverable are available in the Glossary of the Programme

Activities related to day to day follow up and reporting to the Programme structures do not necessarily include deliverables but are to be considered under the type of activity "managing administrative and financial issues"

**FIGURE 4: ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE WP 2 'PROJECT COMMUNICATION'**

| TYPES OF ACTIVITIES | TYPES OF DELIVERABLES | EXAMPLES OF DELIVERABLES |
|---|---|---|
| Coordinating the WP | Method | Methodology / guidelines |
| | Tool | manual / guidance /plan |
| | | Course / training |
| Setting up common methodologies for actions | Plan | Communication Plan Capitalisation Plan |
| Networking [1] | Informal grouping of actors | Forum / Blog / Platform |
| | Formalised grouping of actors | Agreement Memorandum of Understanding Charter Protocol |
| | Collaborative network | Living Lab |
| Delivering information | Digital or written communication | Article Booklet / Brochure Newsletter Proceedings Multiple compilation Social networks Story telling Flyer Poster Widget / Goodies |
| | Press conference | Press conference report Press kit |
| Exchanging information [8] | Public / political event | Conference report Forum |
| Transferring knowledge / know-how / expertise [8] | Training material | e-learning platform Training course material |
| | Training course | Training report Training methodology |
| | Tailored event | Atypical / tailored event report |
| Coordinating with Horizontal projects communication and capitalisation activities | Provision of information and data | Report |
| | Meeting | Report |
| Contributing to Programme communication activities | Provision of information and data | Feeding the web platform Report |
| | Meeting | Report |
| Participating to external events | Meeting | Report |

The creation of a poster is compulsory, see Factsheet related to Communication Rules of the Programme Manual

The coordination with Horizontal project and the contribution to Programme communication activities are compulsory for all projects

**FIGURE 5: ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE WP 'STUDYING'**

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[1] Please mention in the Deliverable title if it's related to the governance platform under axis 4, mainstreaming (regional programmes) or European Programmes or networks.

| TYPES OF ACTIVITIES | TYPES OF DELIVERABLES | EXAMPLES OF DELIVERABLES |
|---|---|---|
| Coordinating the WP | Method | Methodology / guidelines |
| | Tool | manual / guidance /plan Course / training |
| Studying field | Report | State of the art SWOT Analysis Needs analysis Diagnosis Case study Comparative analysis Feasibility study Prospective study Benchmarking study Consultation report Technical workshop report |
| Compiling and organising information and data | Data collection | Thematic data collection Good practices Stakeholders and beneficiaries database |
| | Map | Maps GIS Itinerary / routes |
| | Observatory | Observatory |
| Providing tools, methods and services | Method | Indicators list Benchmarking method Methodology / toolkit Road map Guidelines Model |
| | Tool | Training material Decision tool Monitoring tool |
| Developing common approaches and strategies | Method | Strategy Action plan Model |
| | Tool | Tool |
| Exchanging information | Technical event | Seminar report Workshop report Meeting report |

**FIGURE 6: ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE WORK PACKAGE 'TESTING'**

| TYPES OF ACTIVITIES | TYPES OF DELIVERABLES | EXAMPLES OF DELIVERABLES |
|---|---|---|
| Coordinating the WP | Method | Methodology / guidelines manual / guidance /plan |
| | Tool | Course / training |
| Preparing pilot activities | Preliminary study | Preliminary or fine-tuning study for launching pilot activities |
| Testing (processes, techniques, models, tools, methods and services) | Tool Service | Testing report Software Support / service Facilities |
| | Method | Report Methodology Model |
| Simulating (processes, techniques, models, tools, methods and services) | Tool Method | Simulation report |
| Evaluating processes, techniques, models, tools, methods and services | Report | Evaluation report Evaluation tool Evaluation methodology |
| Transferring knowledge / know-how / expertise | Training material | e-learning platform Training course material |
| | Training course | Training report Training methodology |
| Exchanging information | Technical event | Seminar report Workshop report Meeting report |

**FIGURE 7: ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE WORK PACKAGE 'TRANSFERRING'**

| TYPES OF ACTIVITIES | TYPES OF DELIVERABLES | EXAMPLES OF DELIVERABLES |
|---|---|---|
| Coordinating the WP | Method | Methodology / guidelines manual / guidance /plan |
| | Tool | Course / training |
| Transferring tested processes, techniques, models, tools, methods and services | Method | Plan Model |
| | Tool | Protocol |
| Exchanging information | Technical event | Seminar report Workshop report Meeting report |
| Transferring knowledge / know-how / expertise | Training material | e-learning platform Training course material |
| | Training course | Training report Training methodology |
| | Tailored event | Atypical / tailored event report |

**FIGURE 8: ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE WORK PACKAGE 'CAPITALISING'**

| TYPES OF ACTIVITIES | TYPES OF DELIVERABLES | EXAMPLES OF DELIVERABLES |
|---|---|---|
| Coordinating the WP | Method | Methodology / guidelines manual / guidance /plan |
| | Tool | Course / training |
| Systematising knowledge | Data | Thematic data collection Good practices Stakeholders and beneficiaries database Report |
| | Method | Methodology |
| | Tool | Tool Maps GIS |
| | Observatory | Observatory |
| Transferring knowledge, know-how, expertise, systems or processes [2] | Method | Plan Model |
| | Tool | Protocol |
| | Training material | e-learning platform Training course material |
| | Training course | Training report Training methodology |
| | Technical event | Seminar report Workshop report Meeting report |
| | Tailored event | Atypical / tailored event report |
| Mainstreaming results [9] | Method | Action plan Strategy Plan Model |
| | Tool | Legal acts Protocol |
| | Recommendations | Political recommendations Policy paper |
| | Training | Training material Training sessions report |
| | Technical event | Seminar report Workshop report Meeting report |
| | Public / political event | Conference report Forum Meeting report |
| Creating synergies and cooperation mechanisms | Informal grouping of actors | Forum / Blog / Platform |
| | Formalised grouping of actors | Agreement Memorandum of Understanding |

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[2] Please mention in the Deliverable title if it's related to the governance platform under axis 4, mainstreaming (regional programmes) or European Programmes or networks.

| | | Charter<br>Protocol |
|---|---|---|
| | Collaborative network | Living Lab |
| | Meeting | Report<br>Minutes |
| Lobbying and Advocacy [9] | Method | Action plan<br>Strategy<br>Plan<br>Model |
| | Tool | Legal acts<br>Protocol |
| | Recommendations | Political recommendations<br>Policy paper |
| | Meeting | Report<br>Minutes |

NOTE:

A Horizontal Project will capitalise on the existing S.O Interreg MED (Thematic community) projects results, but also it can be enriched by other regional and transnational initiatives. Networking and lobbying activities for the whole thematic community will be part of the HP strategy.

**What are the differences between Capitalising in a M3 and Capitalising in a Horizontal Project?**

The M3 projects capitalise results on a **specific theme chosen by the partnership from former projects** to go one step further. An M3 or M2+M3 project will identify a concrete and limited set of experiences delivered by previous initiatives in one very specific theme and location and capitalise them by merging them, completing or extrapolating to other areas different to the project territory (local, regional, national or European level).
Module 3 projects can be compared to MED 2007-2013 projects from the Capitalisation Call for proposals.
The M3 projects should feed larger horizontal project activities that are covering each specific objective as a whole.

<div align="center">While</div>

**The HP** will capture elements of the modular projects within each thematic Specific Objective will analyse them, summarise and ensure their transnational dissemination and capitalise them towards/ Axe 4, EU Institutions, Mainstream programmes if relevant. The Horizontal project is capitalising results to benefit the whole programme objectives.
The activities of the Horizontal projects do not consider specific territories or local actors, but the whole MED cooperation area. The main task of each horizontal project is to gather information from all other projects in order to synthetize it and spread it out in all the MED area.

**COMMUNITY BUILDING:** Community building is a field of practices directed toward the creation or enhancement of community among individuals within a territory or with a common interest. It relies on varied activities and events to improve relationships and exchanges between the members of the community, to develop a sense of common purpose, and to keep all stakeholders committed to the realization of common goals. In the framework of the Interreg MED Programme, it consists in developing a thematic community of projects in the framework of horizontal projects.

FIGURE 9: ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE WORK PACKAGE 'COMMUNITY BUILDING.

| TYPES OF ACTIVITIES | TYPES OF DELIVERABLES | EXAMPLES OF DELIVERABLES |
|---|---|---|
| Coordinating the WP | Method | Methodology / guidelines manual / guidance /plan Community Building Strategy / plan |
| | Tool | Course / training |
| Animating the Thematic Community | Meeting | Report Minutes |
| | Informal grouping of actors | Forum / Blog / Platform |
| | Networking Sessions | Minutes Conclusions and wrap_ups |
| | Digital or written communication | Newsletter Proceedings Multiple compilation Social networks |
| | Tool | Survey/ questionnaire/ collecting information tool |
| | Training material | e-learning platform Training course material |
| | Training course | Training report Training methodology |
| | Tailored event | Atypical / tailored event report |
| | Meeting | Report Minutes |

DEFINING PROJECT-SPECIFIC OUTPUTS

Unlike types of activities and deliverables are defined by the Interreg MED Programme, outputs have to be defined by each project.

Please note that not every work package must have one or several main outputs (in fact, a project may have only one main output). A project main output is one that can be captured by a programme output indicator and that directly contributes to the achievement of the project result. Project main output and programme output indicator need to have the same measurement unit to be able to aggregate them. An aggregation of project main outputs based on programme output indicators is essential for the achievement of output targets set on the programme level.

Indicatively, some examples of outputs are proposed, for each work package related to the content development of projects:

**For the WP 'studying'**
SWOT analysis, state of the art, benchmarking analysis, definition of approaches, joint action plans, common strategies, establishment of networks…

**For the WP 'testing'**
Preliminary studies (feasibility), common methodology for demonstration, testing and evaluation of pilot activities' reports…

**For the WP 'transferring'**
Plan of results portability, transferability protocol…

**For the WP 'capitalising'**
Policy recommendations, Memorandum of Understanding, agreements, procedures, regulatory proposals….

Following the programme and project intervention logics, project outputs and activities should contribute to the Programme output indicators, defined per Specific Objective:

**FIGURE 10: OUTPUTS INDICATORS AND ACTIVITIES**

| S.O. | Output Indicator title | Examples of outputs or activities |
|---|---|---|
| 1.1. | Number of operational instruments to favour innovation of SMEs | Tool <br> Service |
| | Number of enterprises receiving grants | (Enterprises partner of projects) |
| | Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support | Support services |
| | Number of transnational innovation clusters supported | Support services |
| 2.1. | Number of available planning tools to manage and monitor energy consumption in public buildings | Tools |
| | Number of strategies to develop energy consumption management plans for public buildings | Strategies |
| | Number of targets participating in capacity raising activities on energy efficiency | Events <br> Trainings |
| | Number of regions and sub-regions engaged (through charters, protocols, MoU) in developing energy efficiency plans/strategies | **Agreement** <br> **Memorandum of Understanding** <br> Protocol <br> Legal act |
| 2.2. | Number of planning tools to develop energy plans including local RES | Tool |
| | Population of islands covered by plans | Testing <br> Implementing policies and plans <br> Adopting policies and plans |
| | Population of rural areas covered by plans | Testing <br> Implementing policies and plans <br> Adopting policies and plans |
| | Number of models to develop action plans including local RES in energy mix | Method <br> Plan |
| | Number of regions and sub-regions engaged (through charters, protocols, MoU) in increasing share of local RES in energy mix | **Agreement** <br> **Memorandum of Understanding** <br> Protocol <br> Legal act |

| S.O. | Output Indicator title | Examples of outputs or activities |
|---|---|---|
| 2.3. | Number of instruments available to foster the use of LC transport solutions, including multimodal ones | Tool<br>Service |
| | Number of models to develop urban plans including low carbon transport and multimodal connections soft actions | Method<br>Plan |
| | Population involved in awareness raising activities | Events |
| | Number of urban areas engaged (through charters, protocols, MoU) in developing urban plans/strategies including low carbon transport and multimodal connections soft actions | Agreement<br>Memorandum of Understanding<br>Protocol<br>Legal act |
| 3.1. | Number of instruments available to enhance the development of sustainable and responsible tourism | Tool<br>Service |
| | Number of tourist destinations covered by a sustainable tourism evaluation tool | Testing |
| | Number of strategies applying sustainable tourism management criteria | Strategy |
| | Number of regions and sub-regions engaged (through charters, protocols, MoU) in implementing sustainable tourism plans | Agreement<br>Memorandum of Understanding<br>Protocol<br>Legal act |
| 3.2. | Number of joint governance plans | Plan |
| | Surface of habitats supported to attain a better conservation status | Testing |
| | Number of protected areas engaged (through charters, protocols, MoU) in implementing management strategies | Agreement<br>Memorandum of Understanding<br>Protocol<br>Legal act |
| 4.1. | Number of stakeholders (structures) involved in supported initiatives (per category representing public and private stakeholders) | Events<br>Trainings |

PROGRAMME MANUAL

# CONTRACTING PROCEDURES

The Med proposals presented in the context of calls for projects are approved and selected by the Programme Steering Committee (SC) composed of representatives of all States participating in the Programme.

On the basis of the results of the assessment process established for each call for proposals, the steering committee decides to reject or to approve proposals submitted by applicants, including approving them "under condition" or "with recommendations".

Following the projects selection, the JS will organise a Lead Partner Seminar in order to ensure that projects clearly understand Programme requirements and are quickly operational.

After the Notification of the decision of the Steering committee to lead partners a pre-contracting procedure is initiated individually between each Lead Partner (hereafter LP) of selected project and their designated Project Officer (PO) in the JS, in order to meet the requirements of the SC and to consolidate the information provided the in application form.

# Pre-contracting procedure

All selected projects will undergo a pre-contracting procedure. In most cases this will focus on the consolidation of the contact information and correcting small technical incoherences in the application form. For project proposals selected for funding and approved under conditions, the corrections might be more substantial.

Project partners will have access to the on line monitoring tool Synergie-CTE, only after pre-contracting phase and validation of the consolidated Application Form

During the pre-contracting phase the Lead Partner, in cooperation with the JS, make the necessary adjustments to the on-line Application Form in order to fulfil the conditions established and to correct any technical inconsistencies detected by the JS in the evaluation phase.

PROJECTS APPROVED UNDER CONDITIONS

In the case of projects that have to fulfil conditions for approval before entering into the contracting procedure, a revision of the submitted Application Form and/or the submission of additional documents or information should take place. During this phase the Lead Partner, has to make the necessary adaptations to the Application Form in order to fulfil all the conditions established by the Steering Committee.

MULTI-MODULAR PROJECTS: FOCUS ON MILESTONES AND INDICATORS

In addition, the selected multi-modular projects, in cooperation with the JS, shall identify the key deliverables and milestones on the basis of the planning provided in the Application Form that will be used during the follow-up of the project implementation, as well as in the MA/JS verification to go from one module to another. As a general rule, no more than 2 milestones per year should be identified in order to ensure a feasible management and monitoring.

UPDATE OF PROJECT'S DOCUMENTATION AND FILLING IN THE ADMINSITRATIVE INFORMATION IN THE APPLICATION FORM

The Lead Partner has to complete/update the following information in the Application Form:

- Name and contact details of the project management team, i.e. project, finance , and communication manager;
- Bank information of all partners;
- Download of the eventual updated version of the declarations submitted during the application phase as far as the information is outdated.

Furthermore, this stage can be used to solve any **minor technical issues** or adjustments in the Application Form highlighted during the JS evaluation.

Finally, approved projects including partners benefiting from a State aid regime[1] or international organisations acting under international law must provide the following documents, updated or in addition to those already sent in:

| | |
|---|---|
| **GBER** (General Block Exemption Regulation) | SMEs shall provide a <u>SME status declaration</u>, according to the definition of SME of the Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprise.<br>A template is provided by the Programme. |
| *De minimis* rule | Update of <u>the *de minimis* declaration</u>, only if the included amounts have changed since the submission of the proposal[2].<br>A template is provided by the Programme. |
| *International organisations acting under international law* | International organisations acting under international law shall provide <u>a declaration</u> accepting the requirements deriving from the Treaty for the Functioning of the European Union and the regulations applicable in the framework of the Interreg MED Programme defined in section 2.2.1 of the Programme Manual.<br>No template provided by the Programme. |

**If the relevant document cannot be provided, the concerned partner shall be excluded, and might be replaced by a similar partner in capacity to provide relevant documents.**

NB: ("external") Partners established outside the cooperation area:
Concerning approved projects that include European partners located outside the cooperation area, the Programme provides for **the mandatory signing** of an Agreement on management and control between the Managing Authority and the concerned European country or region.

**The relevant authorities are in charge of this procedure and inform the Programme Steering Committee, the Lead Partner and the partners involved in the operation of its outcome**.

If within 12 months of approval of the project, the procedure does not result in the signing of an agreement between the two authorities, the external partner participation is rejected. The concerned partner may be replaced by a similar and solvent partner, with the support of the JS and NCPS of the MED area.

During the pre-contracting phase, any Partner must provide to their LP an updated version of the declaration submitted during the application phase if the information is outdated

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[1] For more information please refer to the "State Aid" factsheet.

[2] The *de minimis* threshold shall take effect from the date of the MED grant (date of the signature of the Subsidy Contract). Therefore, the de minimis amount granted by the Interreg MED Programme shall include amounts changes from the date of the project submission to the date of the signature of the Subsidy Contract.

# Contracting procedure

Once the information of the Application Form is consolidated[3], a **Subsidy Contract** is signed between the Managing Authority and the Lead Partner of the approved project. The Subsidy Contract determines the rights and responsibilities of the Lead Partner and the Managing Authority, as well as the activities to be carried out, the conditions of financing, the requirements concerning reports and financial controls, etc.

In parallel a **Partnership Agreement,** formalizing the organization of the partnership and defining the responsibilities of each partner for the implementation of the project in accordance with the consolidated application form, is concluded between the Lead Partner and all the partners involved in the project.

Two copies of the Partnership Agreement are to be signed by the legal representative of each partner and the Lead Partner.

In order to speed up this procedure, it is highly recommended that the Lead Partner sends by e-mail the page to be signed by the partner. Once the document is signed, the partner should send it by post to the Lead Partner who will countersign it. At the end the compilation of all signed pages will compose the validated Partnership Agreement.

The Partnership Agreement clearly states the so called "Lead Partner Principle" for the operational management and coordination of the project. The Partnership Agreement allows the Lead Partner to extend the liabilities of the Subsidy Contract to the level of each partner.

**A model of the Subsidy Contract and Partnership Agreement are available on the website of the Interreg MED Programme (**www.interreg-med.eu**), to be used for information purposes only.**

The Subsidy Contract and the Partnership Agreement are produced via the on line monitoring tool of the Programme, Synergie CTE, after the validation of the consolidated version of the Application Form.

NB: The contract will be signed by the MA only if a version of the Partnership Agreement duly filled-in and signed by the LP and its entire partnership has been made available to the JS.

**To do list:**

- Get in touch with the project officer for the pre-verifications of the contracts
- **Two examples of** both documents, the Subsidy Contract and the Partnership Agreement, must be signed in original.
- Both examples of the Subsidy Contract and one of the Partnership Agreement must be submitted together to the JS by regular post.
- After signature of the Managing Authority of both examples of the Subsidy Contract, one version will be kept by the MA/JS and the other one will be sent to the Lead Partner.

The Lead Partner must keep an original of the Subsidy Contract and of the Partnership Agreement as part of the audit trail of the project. A copy is made available to all project partners.

Within three months from the project start, the Lead Partner must send to the Joint Secretariat the **minutes of the first Steering Committee** of the approved project attesting the beginning of the activities and detailing the structures of management that ensure the good performance of the project, as well as the contact person of each partner, following the requirements set by the Programme (please refer to section start up).

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[3] Project selected without modification or project selected under conditions after these conditions have been taken into account. And if needed, after validation of the new Application Form by the Interreg MED Programme Steering Committee.

**FIGURE 1: SUMMARY OF THE PROCEDURE, FROM THE APPLICATION TO THE START OF THE IMPLEMENTATION**
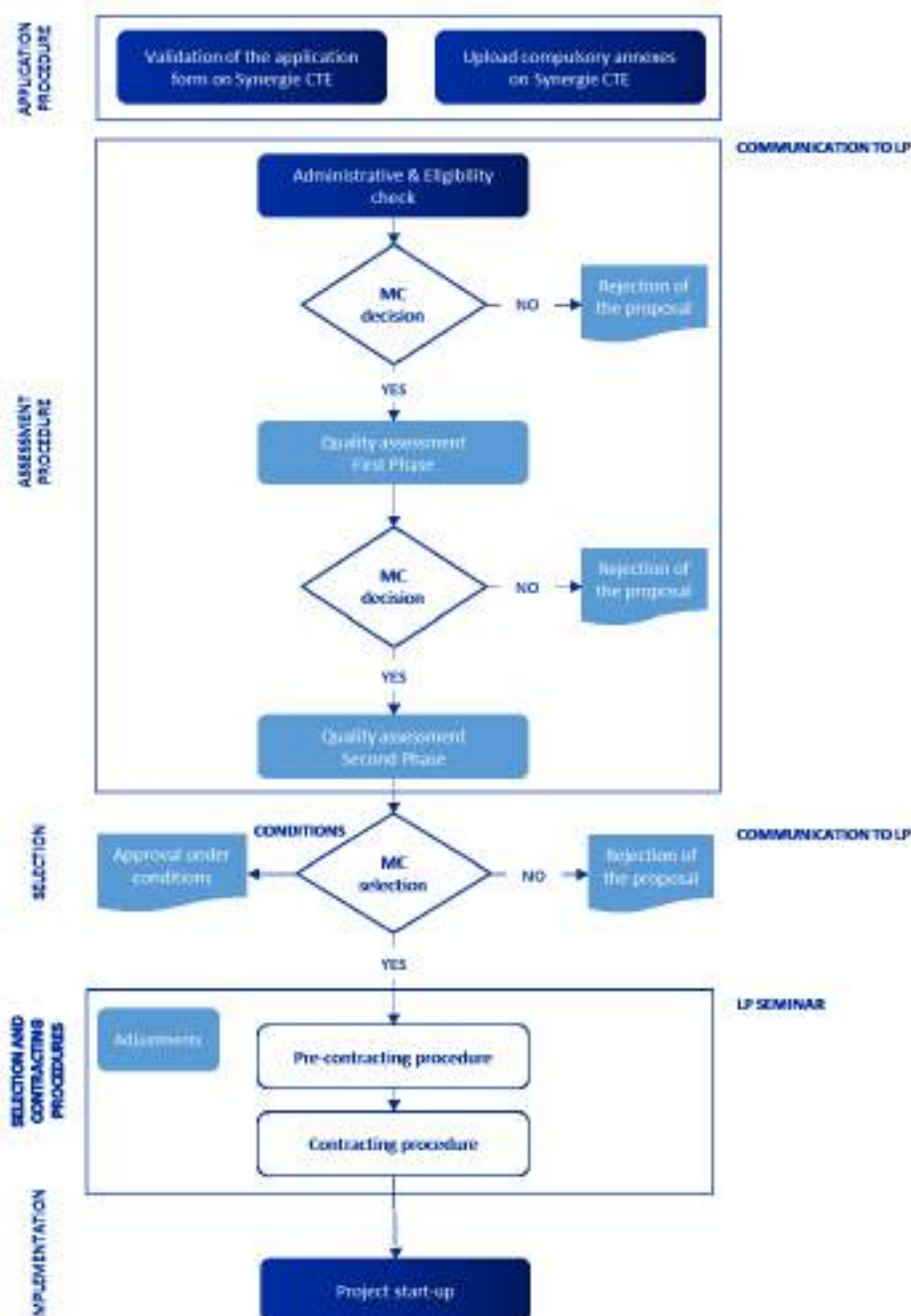
PROGRAMME MANUAL

PROJECT START-UP

After the consolidation of the Application Form and in parallel with the signature of the Subsidy Contract (for more information please refer to the factsheet "Contracting procedures"). Lead partners should start, in cooperation with their Project partners, a series of administrative steps in order to set-up an efficient management system and to secure the first payment to project partners.

The following steps are related to project start-up and must be developed on the first months after the submission of the consolidated Application form allowing project partnership to lay the foundations for a smooth development of the project.

# Set up of the project steering committee

Each project must determine the necessary procedures for decision-making and coordination between the partners. For this reason, and according to Article 3.2 of the Partnership Agreement, MED projects are requested to set up a project steering committee, an internal organ of the project, composed of representatives of all the partners.

The tasks of the Steering Committee include:

- Monitoring and validation of project contents: This includes verifying that the project implementation is in line with activities and outputs defined in the approved Application Form. Furthermore it means validating the quality of main project outputs and the progress towards achieving set objectives;
- Monitoring of project finances: This includes monitoring the project budget, budget flexibility and project spending;
- Review of the management performance and of the quality of progress reporting towards the programme bodies;
- If applicable, decisions on required project modifications (e.g. content, partnership, budget, duration) to be requested for approval to the programme bodies. If a partner jeopardizes the implementation of the project, the Steering Committee can decide to exclude the partner in question from the project. In this case, it will be necessary to address a request for change to the Programme Authorities (please refer to the factsheet on "Partnership architecture, requirements and relevance");
- Working groups, task forces and advisory groups may be established to coordinate the day-to-day running of activities, to fulfil specific tasks, etc. Adequate representation of involved partners must be observed in establishing decision-making and coordination mechanisms.

The setup of the project steering committee and the organization of the first meeting must be ensured within two months from the project's start.

During the first meeting of the project steering committee the following points should be addressed:

- Approval of the rules of procedure of the steering committee ;

- Establishment of management and coordination structures in charge of ensuring a good management and coordination of the project;
- Clarifying obligations mentioned in the contractual documents to all the partners;
- Presenting the main elements related to the qualitative aspects of the implementation of the project as well as of the good administrative and financial management, eligibility of expenditure, first level control procedures, calendar of submission of payment claims and progress reports, and use of Synergie CTE;
- Choice, if applicable, of a contact person for the work to be carried out with the horizontal project.

**The minutes** of the first steering committee of the project, indicating the start of project activities, must be **submitted to the JS within 3 months from the** project start and a copy shall be sent to each partner's National Contact Points. This document proves the start of operations while describing in detail the management structures that guarantee the proper implementation of the project.

## Creation of partner accounts on Synergie CTE

It is necessary to update the contact details of the partners during the pre-contracting phase.

After consolidation of the Application Form in Synergie CTE (for more information see Factsheet "contracting procedures"), an automatic e-mail will be sent by Synergie CTE to each partner contact person in order to create a partner account in the system.

In case of contacts already having an account, they will have to use the existing one.

## Preparation costs for ERDF partners

When preparation costs for ERDF partners are foreseen in the Application Form, this amount may be paid to the structures indicated in the Application form, as soon as the subsidy contract is signed by the MA and the LP institution.

In practice: after notification of the contract signed by both parties, the JS will formalize the request for reimbursement of project preparation costs, according to the sub-division approved in the consolidated application form, and transmit the document directly to the Certifying Authority (CA).

The ERDF payment corresponding to the amount of the preparation costs (€ 30,000 of total eligible budget) will be paid by the CA to partners as indicated in the application form and according to the approved ERDF co-financing rate for each of the partners.

## Advance payment for IPA partners

The Interreg Med Programme offers the opportunity for partners from IPA countries to receive during the project starting phase, an advance payment representing **10% of their IPA budget**.

In practice: after signature of the Subsidy contract by the LP and the MA, the LP beneficiary and the concerned IPA PPs receive confirmation from their Project Officer (PO) of the signature of the Financing agreement between the IPA partner countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania), the European Commission and the MA.  It is only from that date, and after signing the project Subsidy Contract by both parties, that **an IPA partner may issue its request of advance.**
**IPA PPs requiring advance can enter expenses in the system but should not certify any amount before formalizing their advance request.** The delays on the signature of the Financing Agreement might affect mostly the first Call for projects.

An **advance request must be submitted to the JS by each IPA partner,** no automatic mechanism is foreseen

The request of advance payment corresponding to 10% of the IPA partner budget is filled-in online by the partner, then validated, signed and downloaded on SYNERGIE- CTE.

After reception by the JS and if the national representative of the partner country has not issued an opinion contrary to the payment, the JS forwards the advance request to the CA for payment to the IPA partner.

This advance will then be progressively deducted by the Programme from the first four payment claims of the concerned partner (4x deduction of 25% of the advance paid at the beginning of the project).

## Start-up for the FLC certification of costs

In accordance with the terms mentioned in Articles 23 (4) of Regulation (EU) 1299/2013 and 125 (4) and (5) of Regulation (EU) 1303/2013, the "first level control" (hereinafter FLC), ensures the existence of the co-financed products and services and the control of expenditures declared by the beneficiaries. Each participating state (Member State or third country) is responsible for the appointment of FLC and controls on its territory and might have chosen either a centralized or a decentralized FLC system.

The partners should get in touch with their national authorities as soon as possible during the starting phase, to either have the first exchanges on the procedures to obtain the approval of selected FLC, needed time and national forms (for those in centralized systems) or for selection and appointment of the controller (for those in decentralised systems).
Delays in this first contact can lead to delays in the reporting procedures which might have a negative impact on the financial flow of the project.

## Preparation costs

Approved projects which successfully signed the Subsidy Contract with the Managing Authority are entitled to receive reimbursement of their preparation costs in the form of a lump-sum. That means that in case projects foresee this kind of expenditure in the Application Form (**the lump sum is not automatic**), they will be reimbursed with no need to present invoices or other administrative justification for the incurred costs.

The reimbursement of these costs will follow the principles detailed below:

- The lump sum is not automatic. Preparation costs budget must be indicated in the Application Form, giving concrete information on the amount allocated to the concerned ERDF project partner(s);

- The lump sum will amount to **EUR 30 000** of **total eligible expenditure** per project;
- The co-financing rate of the preparation costs will be in line with the co-financing rate applicable to the partner(s) to which the lump sum is allocated;
- The lump sum covers all costs linked to the preparation of the project;
- Any difference between the granted lump-sum and the real costs occurred for preparation is neither checked nor further monitored by the Programme;
- Only ERDF partners are entitled to budget and claim preparation costs.

**The partnership decides which ERDF partners will receive what share of the reimbursement of preparation costs. It is strongly recommended to reach a consensus within the partnership on the distribution of preparation costs, reflecting the actual preparation activities carried out by the partners in a fair and transparent way.**

After the signature of the Subsidy Contract, the ERDF corresponding to this lump-sum will be automatically transferred to partners concerned, according to the information included in the approved Application Form. **No changes will be accepted after the approval of the proposal.**

In case a project is not implemented or even started, the MED Programme Monitoring Committee reserves the possibility of recovering the ERDF already reimbursed based on this lump-sum.

> Please bear in mind that one eligibility criterion checks that the lump sum of EUR 30.000 for preparation costs is not exceeded. The non-respect of this criterion will declare the proposal ineligible.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Each project must set up a **monitoring and evaluation system** from the start of the project. This system must enable the Steering Committee of the project to evaluate the general progress of the project. It must give information on the following points:

- Progress noted in the achievement of the objectives of the project on the basis of output and result indicators defined by the Programme;
- Level of effectiveness and efficiency of the project implementation: Does the project proceed in accordance with the initial calendar presented in the Application Form? Is the budgetary programming running correctly and are the allowances by budgetary heading respected? Are the results coherent compared to the expenditures committed (ratio cost/benefit)?
- Quality of the organisation, of the management and coordination: are the management and coordination procedures efficient and are the resources devoted to these processes sufficient?

For further information regarding project follow-up and project implementation support system, please refer to Factsheet "Support for project implementation".
Note that the assignment of an external expert for evaluative monitoring is compulsory for multi-module projects and horizontal projects (see Factsheet "Multi-modular projects" for further information).

PROGRAMME MANUAL

SUPPORT FOR
PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

# Presentation of the support system for project implementation

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECTS SUPPORT SYSTEM

For 2014-2020, the issue of the quality of projects is particularly important. In this context, the MED programme has designed a support system that aims to help Lead Partners and partners to implement their activities and, when applicable, link the different modules in an efficient way.

The support system proposed by the programme is based on the following parts:

**"METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS FOR THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MED PROJECTS"**

During the 2007-2013 period, evaluations have highlighted the difficulties faced by some projects in anticipating and properly planning their activities. For 2014-2020, it is required that projects have a good command of their actions and work sequences.

For this reason, projects can refer to the guidelines provided in "**Methodological tools for the preparation and implementation of MED projects**". In this section, they can draw on the indications provided on the "Planning of the activities of a MED project" that insist on the necessity to anticipate the sequence of operations and of the potential consequences of the modification of an activity, of a deadline on the overall project.

The section also provides guidance on the logical framework, the SWOT analysis and the use of sociogram for the project.

The use of these tools is not compulsory but it is recommended by the programme to ensure a good implementation of the project.

Projects can contract external experts to assist them in the use of these tools.

**"Points of attention"**

An essential aspect for the good functioning of projects lies in their ability to anticipate possible difficulties that the partners may face during the life of the project.

Referring to the experience of the 2007-2013 projects, the programme provides the stakeholders with a list of **"points of attention"** that identifies the main difficulties observed in the implementation of projects. For each point, the programme also provides guidance on actions to be taken in order to limit these risks or reduce their impact on the project.

**Other documents provided by the programme**

Besides the methodological tools presented above that aim to support the implementation of projects, the following document must be taken into account to ensure a proper functioning of the support and monitoring system:

**"ASSESSMENT OF THE SUPPORT SYSTEM"**
This factsheet should allow Lead Partners, partners and external experts (when relevant) to submit their comments on the support system provided by the programme.
Two types of forms are proposed, one for the Lead Partner and one for the external expert.
Lead Partners must transmit their form to the Joint Secretariat at the end of the project with their final report. External experts must transmit their form as soon as their assignment ends.
These contributions will be taken into account by the Joint Secretariat to improve, if needed, the support system for the next calls for projects.

**"PROCUREMENT FOR EXTERNAL EXPERTS"**
Multi-module projects are required to hire an external expert to support them in the evaluative monitoring of the project, and to ensure a proper transition from one module to another.
To facilitate the recruitment of external experts for multi-module projects, the programme provides guidelines for the drafting of procurements (support expected, methodology, skills…).
Such guidelines shall ensure that the projects will benefit from comparable levels of expertise for the implementation of their activities.

PRESENTATION OF THE PROJECT SUPPORT SYSTEM PER TYPE OF MODULAR PROJECT

FIGURE 1: SINGLE MODULE PROJECTS
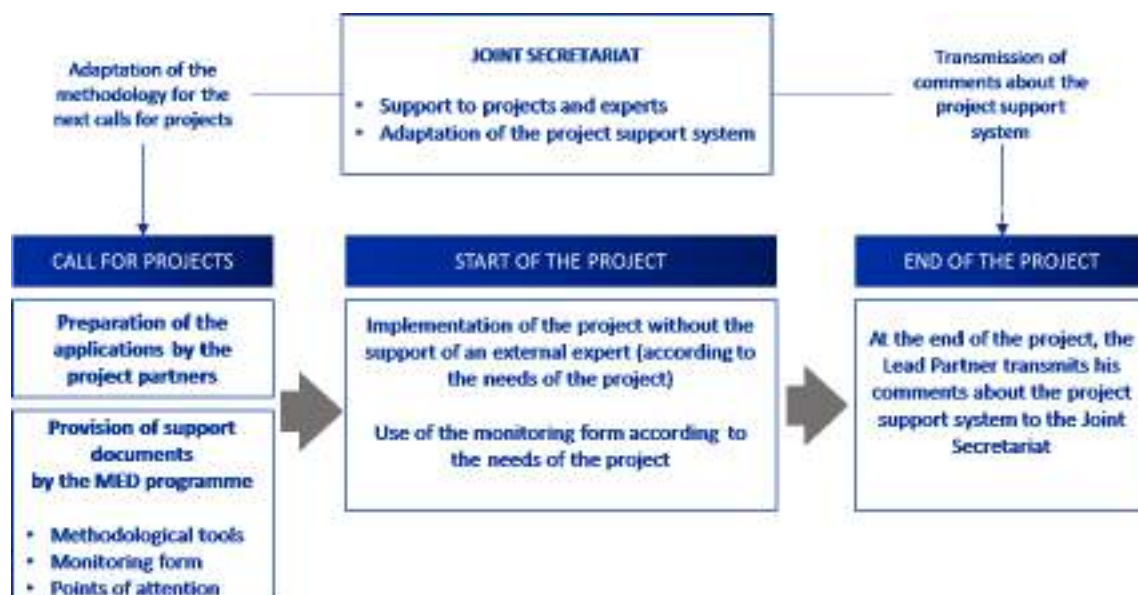
**FIGURE 2: MULTI MODULE PROJECTS**
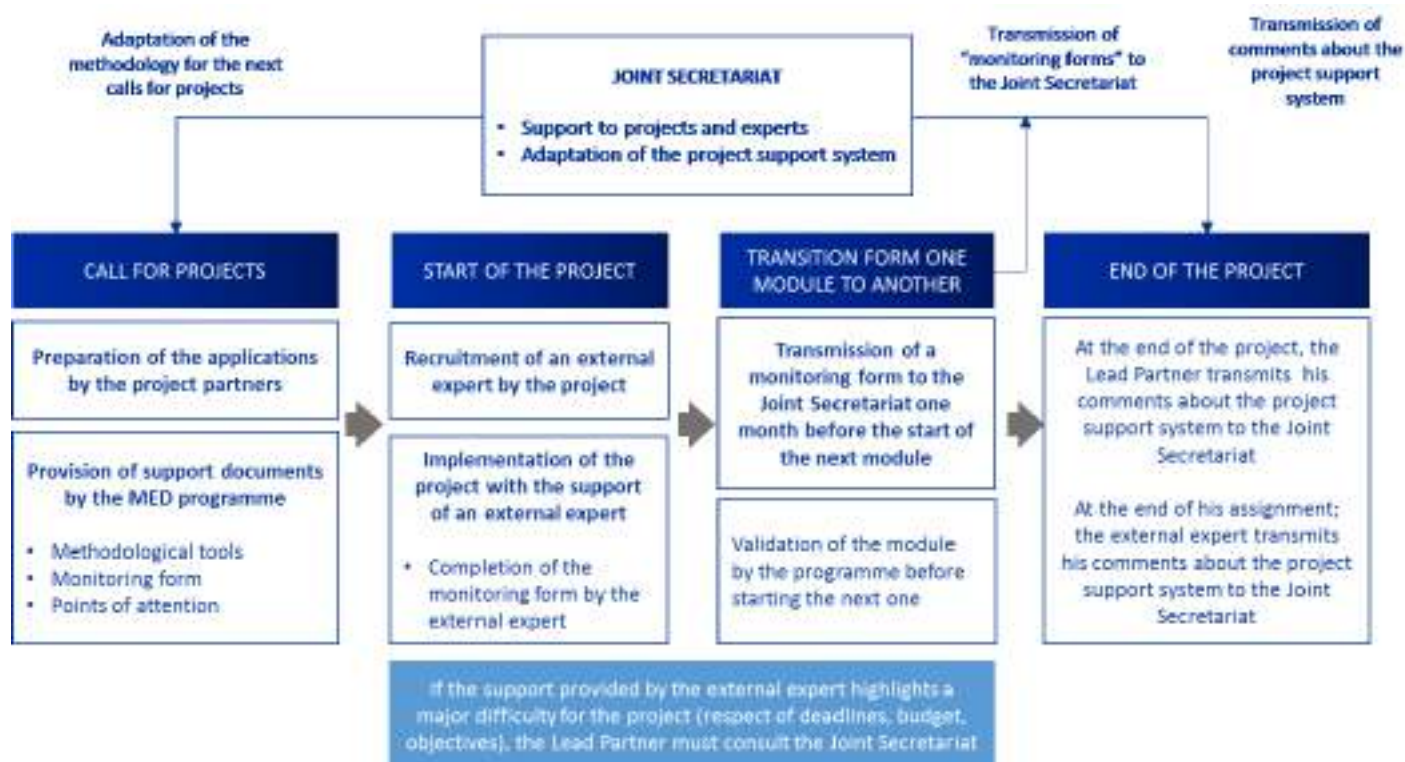
DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE FOR PROJECT SUPPORT

**FIGURE 3: DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE FOR PROJECT SUPPORT**

| Support documentation | Description | Objective | Who is involved | Terms |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Methodological tools** | Description of methodological tools that can be used by project partners | Improving the preparation, planning and implementation of projects | To be used by Lead Partners and project partners | To be used right from the project design phase |
| **2. Monitoring form** | Form dedicated to the qualitative monitoring of the project by the external experts and project partners in multi-module projects | Assessing the progress of the project, identifying difficulties and proposing solutions for a sound implementation of the module | The external expert is in charge of drafting the monitoring form in close relation with the Lead Partner and the project partners | Project partners and external experts specify the use of the monitoring form themselves (frequency) The project must transmit to the Joint Secretariat a form completed one month before the start of the next module |
| **3. Points of attention** | List of points highlighting specific difficulties for the conception and implementation of projects | Anticipating the main difficulties partners can face during the preparation and implementation of the project | Dedicated to the Lead Partner and to project partners The external expert shall pay a specific attention to these points during his/her mission | Points of attention must be taken into account right from the project design phase and throughout its implementation |
| **4. Assessment of the support system** | Form to be used by Lead Partners and external experts to give their comments on the project support system | Improving the project monitoring system for the next calls for project | Two different forms are proposed. One for the Lead Partner and one for the external expert | The Lead Partner transmits the form to the Joint Secretariat at the end of the project (with the final report) The external expert transmits the form to the Joint Secretariat at the end of his/her assignment |
| **5. Procurement external expert** | This document provides guidelines (technical and methodological information) for the drafting of public procurement for the recruitment of external experts by the project | Helping to specify the mission of the external expert and ensure that projects can benefit of comparable level of assistance | To be used by the Lead Partner and the partners for the drafting of the public procurement | The tender for the recruitment of the external expert must be launched as early as possible after the project selection notification |

ROLES OF THE ACTORS INVOLVED IN THE MED PROJECT

The success of the project support system relies on a clear distribution of roles and on a good communication between all the actors involved. In a synthetic way, their responsibilities can be listed as follows:

Joint Secretariat:

- Providing methodological tools on the website of the programme when launching calls for projects
- Screening the quality of each module before the project can start a new one. Analysing of the "monitoring forms" transmitted by the external experts
- Analysing the "assessment forms" transmitted by the Lead Partners and the external experts and adaptation of the project support system for the next calls for projects.

Lead Partner of the project:

- As soon as a project application is considered, project partners must go through the support documents provided by the programme. The Lead Partner must pay a particular attention to the "points of attention" in order to anticipate potential difficulties in the preparation and implementation of the project;
- As soon as the project starts, the Lead Partner recruits the external expert (if relevant). For the drafting of the procurement, the LP must use the guidelines provided by the programme in the document "Procurement external expert";
- During the implementation of the project, the Lead Partner holds a close relationship with its partners and with the external expert (if relevant). In multi-module projects, the LP must provide the external expert with any useful information to ensure an efficient support process (especially for the drafting of the monitoring form);
- At the end of the project, the Lead Partner transmits comments of the partnership on the project support system ("Assessment of the partnership on the project support system" to the Joint Secretariat.

Project partners:

- Project partners must take note of the documents provided by the programme, right from the project design phase. They must pay a specific attention to the "points of attention" which can help to anticipate a number of difficulties as early as the project preparation phase;
- During the implementation of a multi-module project, project partners must maintain a steady relation with the external expert and provide him/her the information necessary for the proper operation of the project (for the drafting of the monitoring form for example);
- At the end of the project, project partners share their comments with the Lead Partner about the project support system ("Assessment of the project support system").

External experts:

- From the start of his/her mission, the external expert should promptly meet the Lead Partner and the partners to explain his/her methodology and the support s/he will provide them with;
- The external expert assists the project in the use of the "methodological tools" proposed by the programme (if project partners are using them);
- During the lifetime of the project, the external expert shall maintain a close relationship with the Lead Partner and regular contacts with the partners to monitor their activities and identify possible difficulties they might be faced with in the implementation of the module. In case difficulties arise, he must propose solutions based in particular on the analysis of the "monitoring form";
- The external expert drafts the "monitoring form" according to the procedure defined with the Lead Partner; a copy of the "monitoring form" is sent to the JS at least one month before the scheduled start for the next module;
- At the end of his/her assignment, the external expert sends comments to the Joint Secretariat using the form "Assessment of the projects support system".

## LIMITATIONS OF THE PROJECT SUPPORT SYSTEM

The quality and usefulness of project support largely depends on the commitment of partners and on the quality of communication between the Lead Partner, the partners and the external experts.

The approach is essentially voluntary and implies that each partner regularly informs the other partners about its activities, especially in case of difficulty.

It also implies that the external expert (when relevant) be actively involved in the process, be considered as an additional resource to promote the effective implementation of the project and be involved in committees, meetings and project information flows.

# METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS FOR PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

# Methodological tools for the preparation and implementation of Interreg MED projects

The methodological tools presented in this section and in annexes are provided by the Interreg MED Programme. The use of these tools is not compulsory but it is recommended by the Programme to ensure a good implementation of the project.

PLANNING OF THE ACTIVITIES OF AN INTERREG MED PROJECT

### Importance of planning activities for an Interreg MED project

One of the main challenges for projects partners is to ensure the sequence, timing and articulation of all the activities of a project. A dysfunction in this sequencing (unsuitable preparation of tasks, improper means, unforeseen administrative delays…) is likely to disrupt the project or to hinder the implementation of activities.

A good management of the sequence of activities is essential for the progress of any project. It is all the more for 2014-2020 MED projects based on multi-modules logic.
In project engineering, the planning of activities (timing, sequencing, and responsibilities) can be achieved using different "**GANTT diagram**" models. The use of this type of tool is highly recommended for the preparation of multi-module MED projects.

### Specify activities, sub-activities, tasks and people in charge

The use of this type of chart requires splitting planned activities in **sub-activities and tasks** (usually going beyond the level of detail required in the application form). Each task should be entrusted to an individual or a team within the partnership. If it is not possible to reach this level of detail when completing the application form, this should be done in the first weeks of implementation of the project. **At this stage, it is essential that each partner knows precisely the level of skills, level of information and availability necessary for the implementation of actions and tasks**.

The level of detail of activities and tasks **shall not be excessive at the project level**. It should especially enable the different partners to have a **synthetic view of the implication of their activities with those of other partners, and vice versa** (If I do not perform such a task on time, what will the potential impact be on my partner and on the overall project). Each partner then has the possibility to develop a more detailed planning of activities to ensure the successful completion of his own tasks (organisation of a seminar, workshop, publications…).

It is essential that activities be detailed when they require the contribution of external services or sub-contractors, the use of public procurement, etc. (execution of a small infrastructure, large event, pilot activity…).

### Competencies and skills

The level of skills, of information and availability of individuals actually involved in the implementation of activities are key factors of success (or bottleneck) of territorial cooperation projects. As for administrative tasks, **it is essential that people involved are aware of the specificities of European projects management beforehand** (previous experience, information, training sessions).

These administrative constraints are usually underestimated and it is necessary to take into account in the planning specific difficulties due to the management of a transnational partnership (transmission of documents, communication, partner confronted to economic, administrative or institutional difficulties (elections…), etc.).

### Detailing sequences and interconnections

Once the activities are sufficiently detailed, they must be connected to each other to determine:

- The sequences: in what order should they be implemented?
- The interconnections: does the start of the activity depend on the completion of the previous one?
- Human resources: can the people in charge simultaneously perform the different tasks they are in charge of

The level of detail will vary according to the nature of the project and activities. It should especially help to **identify constraints of time and resources partners will be confronted to** (for a facility, a pilot project or an event, one must take into account the preparation and launching of public procurement, the validation of expenses by competent authorities (national, regional, local authorities), etc.). One must also take into account regulations and administrative constraints that differ from one member state to another (documents to be provided, deadlines, etc.)

### Key implementation steps and flexibility

Once the sequence of activities and the foreseeable timeframe are defined, it is necessary to **identify milestones to follow the progress of the project.**

Milestones are generally key events or achievements taking place at the end of a phase or a group of tasks, etc. (realisation of a specific event, production of a deliverable…). Milestones are essential for the preparation of technical and financial progress reports. Given the limited available time for the preparation of a territorial cooperation project and the period between the submission of an application and its selection, it is often necessary at the start of the project (kick off meeting or first monitoring committee) **to make sure that the assumptions set in the logical framework remain valid** and that **foreseen activities and tasks are achievable**. At this stage, **each partner must have a clear vision of the skills required, of the available human resources and of the planned activities**.

This capacity for self-analysis and questioning is **essential at the end of each module to start the following one in the best possible conditions.**

### The fundamental role of good communication for the implementation of the project

During the project lifetime, many factors can interfere with the implementation of activities and disturb the progress of the project (legal, administrative, organisational constraints). It is the responsibility of the Lead Partner (with the support of the external expert) to take into account these difficulties and to assess their impact on the implementation of the project (incidence on the achievement of certain tasks, on the production of deliverables, on the reporting; consequences for other partners, etc.). **This work requires constant exchanges between all partners and a regular update of the planning of activities and tasks**. This approach assumes that the Lead Partner

maintains a good communication level but also that each partner commit to informing about its own difficulties.

## Use of a « GANTT diagram » for the planning of activities of a MED project

To plan activities and task of a project, project partners may use different methodological support. Among them, the "GANTT diagram" allows to visualise the timeline of the various tasks that make up the project.

A GANTT diagram can be completed using the PERT method (*Programme Evaluation Research Task*) which is used to specify the sequence between tasks.

In summary, a GANTT chart takes the form of a chronogram. The abscissa axis shows the time unit, the ordinate axis shows the various actions or tasks to be completed.

**FIGURE 1: TIME CHART**

| Activities/Tasks | January | February | March | April | May | June | July |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Activity 1 | | | | | | | |
| Activity 2 | | | | | | | |
| Activity 3 | | | | | | | |

Compared to the time chart, the GANTT diagram can display:

- Resources (people in charge of a task or % of time spent by one person on different tasks)
- Dependencies between tasks (task to be completed in order to initiate the next one)

**FIGURE 2: GANTT CHART**

| Activities/Tasks | Resources | January | February | March | April | May | June | July |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Activity 1 | 20% | | | | | | | |
| Activity 2 | 50% | | | | | | | |
| Activity 3 | 30% | | | | | | | |

This type of diagram can be developed with a spreadsheet to set an image of the organisation and conduct of the overall project (models are available online).
In order to manage the diagram in a dynamic way more easily (especially to include changes on timing or tasks during the implementation of the project), it is better to use specialised software that generate automatic update of schedules (open or paid version accessible online).

The use of this type of tool requires spending additional time for the design of the project but can improve its monitoring and implementation in a significant way.

MODEL OF A LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

A logical framework allows to build the project intervention logic, i.e. the links between the needs addressed by the project, achievements, actions or activities developed by the project, and the expected effects of the project on the mid-long term.

The logical framework will help identifying indicators necessary to monitor the achievement of objectives, to identify the source of information and to highlight the assumptions and risks affecting the project.

Before starting the design of a logical framework, it is necessary to undertake an **analysis of the existing situation**. This analysis includes four main elements:

- Problem analysis: identifying what the main problems are and establishing a cause and effect relationship. This can be done using a "problem tree analysis" (see below)
- Stakeholder analysis: having identified the main problems, the cause and effects relationship between them, it is necessary to consider who these problems impact on most and how the different stakeholders can be involved in the project
- Analysis of objectives (or solutions): giving an image of the improved situation in the future. This analysis can be done using an "objective tree" (see below)
- Analysis of strategies: Comparison of different options to address a given situation

## Problems and solutions tree analysis

With the problem analysis, project partners can identify the negative aspects of a given situation and establish the cause and effects relationship between them. The "Tree" is composed of three parts: the identification of the main problems (trunk); the cause of the problem (roots); the effects of the problem (branches). Ideally, the drafting of a problem tree should be undertaken with the contribution of all identified stakeholders and target groups.

With the solutions analysis, project partners can describe the situation in the future once identified problems have been solved. The negative situations identified in the "problem tree" are converted into objectives that are realistically achievable. An objective tree might show many objectives that cannot all be reached.

**FIGURE 3: SIMPLIFIED SCHEME OF PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS TREES**
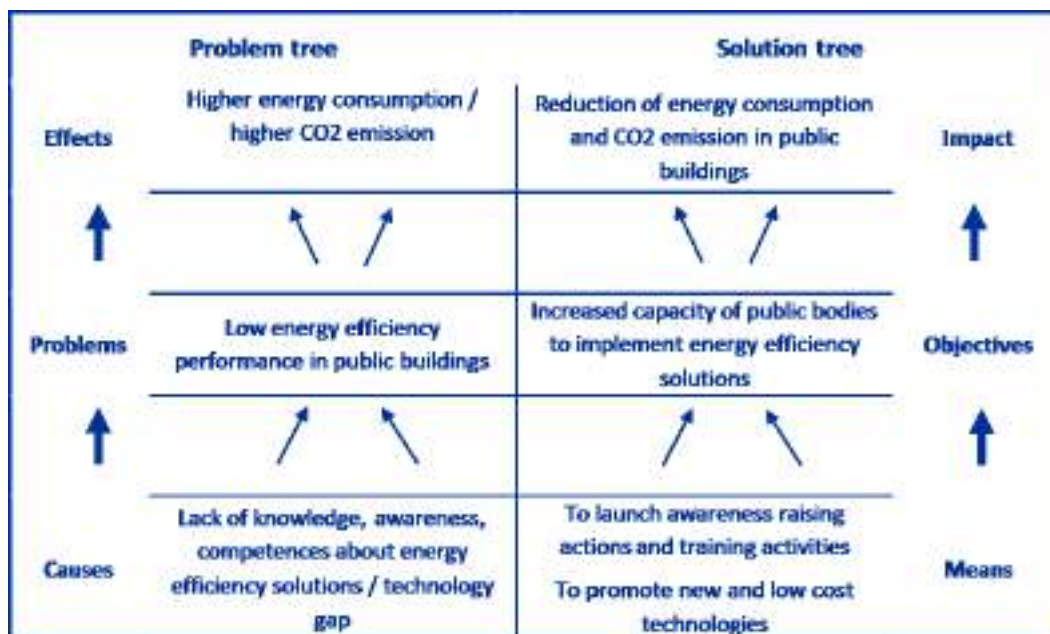


### Drafting of the logical framework

The results of the problem and objective trees are used as a basis for preparing the Logical framework. This is done in four steps (see the table below)

1. Definition of the intervention logic

Starting at the top of the logical framework table and using the information from the Objective Tree, writing the overall objective (Reduction of energy consumption…), specific objective (to increase the capacities of public bodies…), expected results (increased capacities of public bodies…) and activities (awareness raising actions …) of the project. When necessary, specifying the means and cost needed to carry out these activities **(2).**

3. Definition of indicators + source and means of verification

Starting from the top to the bottom of the hierarchy of objectives, identifying the verifiable indicators for measuring the progress in terms of quantity, quality and time (following the requirement of the Programme)

The source and means of verification must be considered and specified at the same time as the formulation of indicators (to test whether or not indicators can be realistically measured at the expense of a reasonable amount of time and money).

4. Definition of assumptions and risks

Reflecting up from the bottom of the Logical framework, considering how, if each assumption holds, it will be possible to move from the activities to the overall objective or the project. Assumptions are external factors that can influence the implementation of the project but that usually are out of the control of projects partners.

**FIGURE 4: MODEL OF LOGICAL FRAMEWORK**
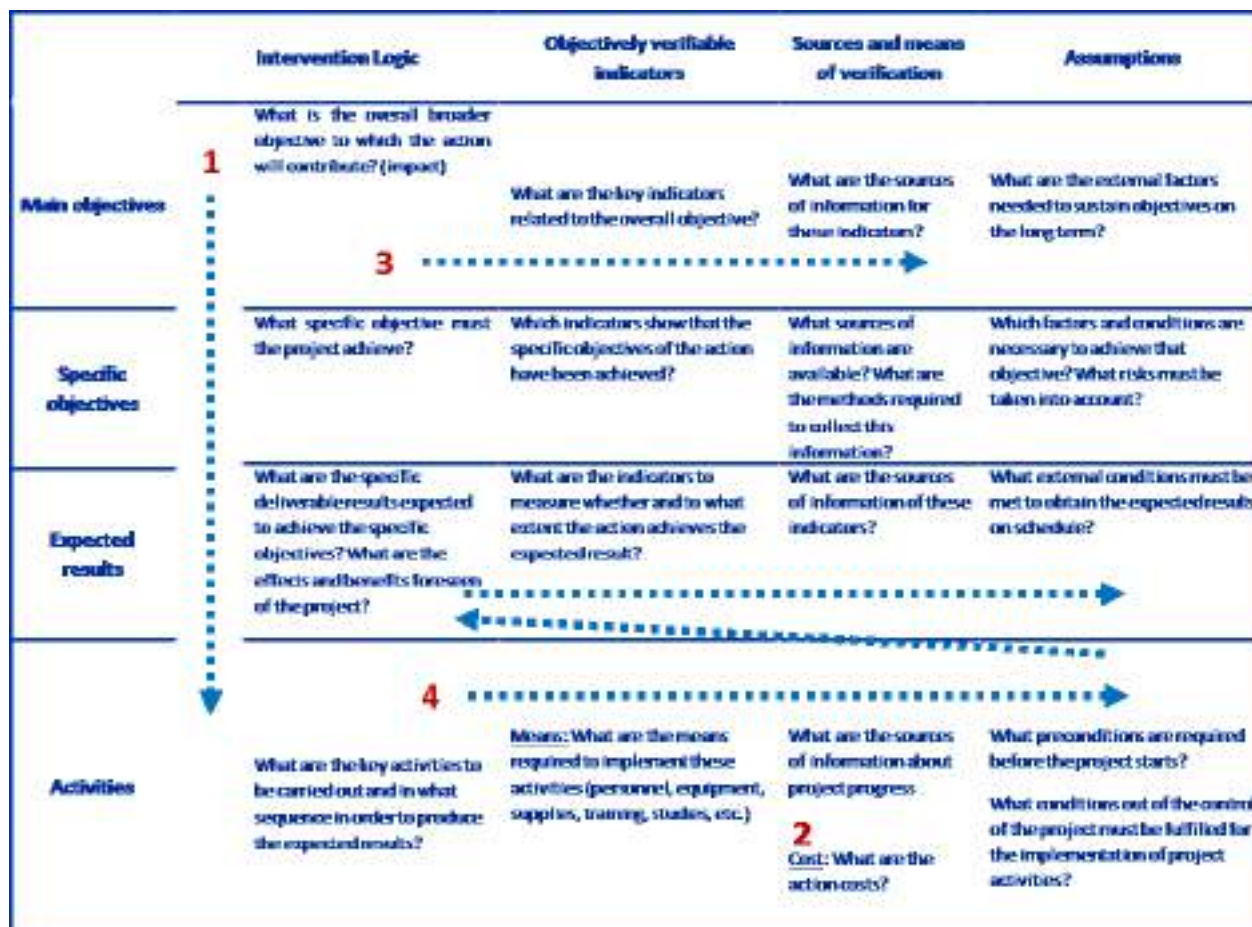


This process can be used for the preparation of applications. For 2014-2020 ETC projects, **one must highlight the clear focus given to the identification of targets and the selection of indicators that must correspond to those listed in the cooperation Programme**. Please refer to section regarding the link between Programme and project intervention logic in factsheet MED Programme Strategic Framework.

MODEL OF A SWOT ANALYSIS (STRENGHTS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS)

The SWOT analysis is a strategic analysis tool. This tool combines the study of strengths and weaknesses of an organisation, a territory, a sector, a project, etc. with the opportunities and threats coming from its environment.

Its goal is to take internal and external factors into account in the strategy of the project, thereby maximising the strengths and opportunities, while minimising the impact of weaknesses and threats.

Using this tool shall help synthetizing the frame of the project

**FIGURE 5: DESCRIPTION OF STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS**

**FIGURE 6: STRATEGY DEVELOPED FROM THE SWOT ANALYSIS**
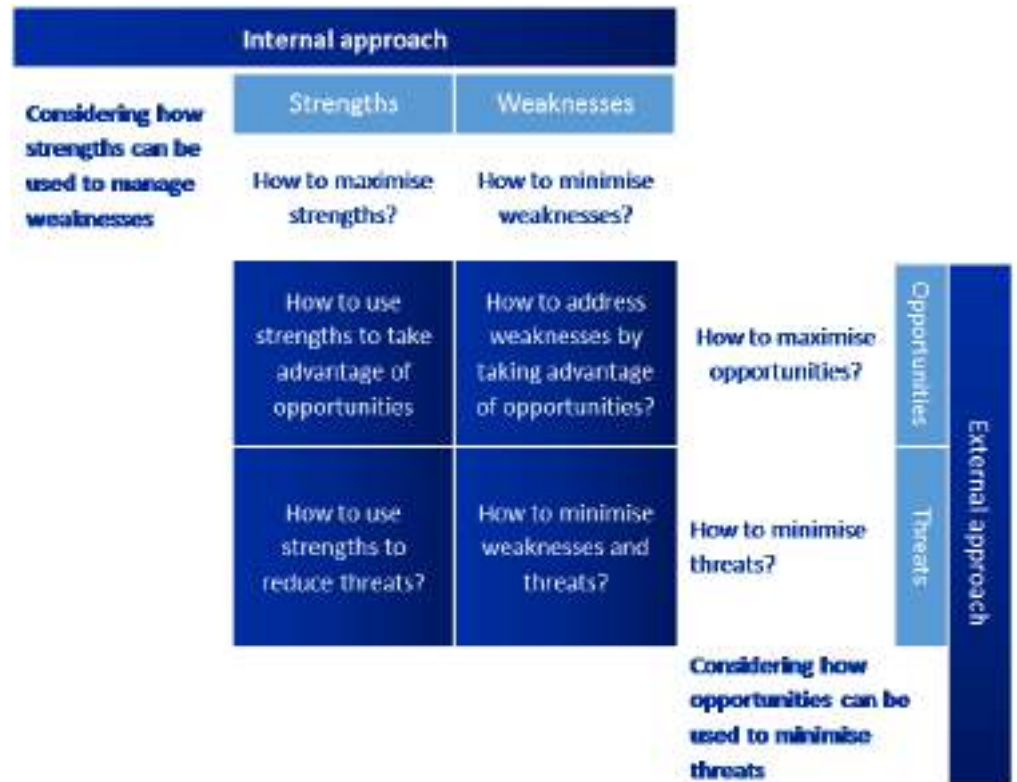


## MODEL OF A SOCIOGRAM

The sociogram is a tool to identify the various people involved in the project. This tool is useful to identify the stakeholders, their role and relationship.

**FIGURE: SOCIOGRAM CHART**

The sociogram can be used as follows:

Each stakeholder involved in the project is placed in the sociogram, either in one of the circles if he belongs to only one category or in the intersection of two or three circles if he belongs to several categories.

- The circle of « funders, decision makers, politicians » represents the decision makers of the project;
- The circle of "implementing actors" represents bodies in charge of the operational and daily implementation of the project;
- The circle of "target groups" represents the final beneficiaries or "targets" of the project.

With the sociogram, the project can:

- Develop a better knowledge of project stakeholders;
- Help selecting the types of partners to meet when organising interviews, meetings, events, workshops…
- Check that the project is targeting well identified final beneficiaries.

# Points of attention in project implementation

OBJECTIVES OF THE LIST OF « POINTS OF ATTENTION »

During the implementation of 2007-2013 MED projects, the main difficulties encountered in the implementation of projects were related to the respect of schedules, budget, the consistency and stability of partnerships.

The objective of this document is to identify the main causes of these difficulties and to give project partners the possibility to anticipate them and ease the implementation of projects.

In the list of "points of attention", many have regard to measures to be taken when drafting the application form. This phase is usually confronted to strong time constraints and the identification of these points should help the partners be better organised and prepared during this period.

Role of the external expert
During the life of the project, external experts will refer to this list to ensure that the partners anticipate potential difficulties and that the necessary measures are taken so that the project can achieve its objectives in good conditions.
The external expert will also use his own experience to adapt the monitoring process to the type and objectives of the project.

Adaptation to the specificities of projects
This document consists of a list of points of attention applicable to all projects. All these points are however not relevant according to the organisation, strategy and objectives of each project. The partnership should focus on the points relevant for their project and specific situation.

LIST OF POINTS OF ATTENTION

|  | 1. Difficulties that could be observed during the implementation of the project | 2. Possible consequences on the project | 3. Measures to be considered |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Administrative and financial management** | - Change of name or reorganisation of a project partner during the implementation of the project | - Necessity to modify the partnership agreement<br>- Delays in the implementation of activities | - To inform the Joint Secretariat<br>- To adapt the planning of the project after exchanging with all project partners |
|  | - Change of the person in charge of the project for one project partner<br>- Change of a project partner (institutional change…) | - Necessity to modify the partnership agreement<br>- Delays in the implementation of activities | - To inform the Joint Secretariat<br>- To adapt the planning (or activities) of the project after exchanging with all project partners |
|  | - Insufficient quality of information provided by the partners to the first level controllers<br>- Insufficient quality of the reports of first level controllers<br>- Slow or inefficient first level control system (especially for centralised control systems) | - Delays in the transmission of technical and financial reports/ delays in payments / delays in activities | - To inform (to train) each partner on the administrative obligations for the first level controls<br>- To make sure that controllers have enough experience and be demanding on the respect of their contractual commitment (in the case of decentralised systems)<br>- To encourage controllers to take part in the information / training sessions offered by the Programme<br>- To inform the Joint Secretariat of any difficulties encountered with centralised control systems in order to intervene in the States concerned |

| | 1. Difficulties that could be observed during the implementation of the project | 2. Possible consequences on the project | 3. Measures to be considered |
|---|---|---|---|
| | - Insufficient preparation of partners for second level controls | - Risks of delays and disorganisation for the partners concerned | - To communicate within the partnership about possibilities of second level control<br>- To consider the effects in terms of receipts management and procedures |
| | - Excessive delays regarding internal procedures for engaging and paying expenses by the responsible authorities (local authorities, ministries, large administrations...) | - Delays in the transmission of technical and financial reports / delays in payments / delays in activities | - To inform the relevant administrations of the specific constraints of ETC projects / To exchange with the relevant administrations before the start of the project to enable faster processing of files<br>- To anticipate possible delays in the validation of expenses in order not to block other partners |
| | - Excessive reimbursement terms from the Lead Partner to the partners | - Can cause delays in subsequent spending (and activities) of partners | - To strictly set the reimbursement system with the relevant services of the Lead Partner<br>- To inform the relevant services of the specificities of ETC projects |
| | - Insufficient cash for the partners<br>- Difficulty (or unwillingness) of partners to incur additional expenses if previous expenses are not reimbursed | - Risk of blockage in the implementation of activities and in finalising the project<br>- Risk of withdrawal of a partner<br>- Risk of disorganisation of the project and of the partnership | - To inform partners of budgetary constraints specific to ETC projects<br>- To ensure that the partners can bear their expenses, without being dependent of previous reimbursement<br>- To take into account the number of other ETC projects in which the partners are already involved<br>- As part of the partnership agreement, to clarify how partners must proceed when they encounter a difficulty. To insist on the necessity to inform the Lead Partner and the Partners as soon as possible in order to adapt the project if necessary (allocation of activities among partners, budget, timing...) |

| | 1. Difficulties that could be observed during the implementation of the project | 2. Possible consequences on the project | 3. Measures to be considered |
|---|---|---|---|
| | - Weak experience of a partner in the management of ETC projects | - Direct delays on administrative and financial reports, on the implementation of operations | - To provide for detailed exchanges during the preparation phase of the project about administrative constrains, good and bad practices…<br>- To insist on the animation role of the Lead Partner and to organise the transfer of experience between partners (meetings, conference calls…)<br>- To provide for a systematic transfer of experience with partners that have never been involved in an ETC project |
| **Implementation of activities** | - Technical, administrative and legal difficulties related to the implementation of specific operations (investments, developments, pilot projects…) | - Direct delays in the implementation of the project | - Include an analysis of the technical, administrative and legal constraints related to specific operations in the project preparation (investments, developments, pilot projects…)<br>-provide for accurate identification of deliverables and to anticipate questions relating to intellectual property when laboratories, universities or companies are involved in the project<br>- Pay a specific attention to the technical preparation of projects related to regulatory matters or requiring investments (equipment), pilot projects, etc.- Pay particular attention to technical and legal issues in the case of a transfer or dissemination of tools, practices, methodologies from one country to another<br>- Anticipate questions related to intellectual property in order to ensure a wide dissemination of methodologies, processes, technics developed by the project |

| | 1. Difficulties that could be observed during the implementation of the project | 2. Possible consequences on the project | 3. Measures to be considered |
|---|---|---|---|
| | - Delays with public procurement procedures | - Direct delays in the implementation of the project | - To ensure the planning and anticipation of tenders required for the implementation of the project (development of technology, building equipment, etc.)<br><br>- To anticipate delays by clearly identifying the type of procurements and the costs when preparing the application<br>- To get in touch with the procurement service during the preparation of the project application to anticipate the launch of future procurements<br>- To inform the procurement service about the specificity of ETC projects |
| | Difficulties to reach the political and institutional levels required for the implementation of public policies and strategies | Risk of non-adoption of policies by relevant decision makers | - To anticipate the difficulties of coordination / harmonisation of public policies between the regions of the different Member States (technical and legal constraints, timing…)<br>- To anticipate political and institutional difficulties related to the mobilisation of key players and to the definition of common transnational strategies |

| | 1. Difficulties that could be observed during the implementation of the project | 2. Possible consequences on the project | 3. Measures to be considered |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Composition and operation of the partnership** | - Lack of coordination and consultation between the partners about the strategy, the objectives, the tools, the implementation of operations, the breakdown of tasks, the deadlines, etc. | - Loss of coherence between activities<br>- Delays in the implementation of the project<br>- May have to modify the allocation of tasks between the partners<br>- Risk of isolation of partners | - To anticipate the setting up of partnerships. If involvement of a less experienced partner, to exchange with this partner and ensure his integration in the project<br>- Emphasize the facilitator role of the Lead Partner who must maintain regular contacts with all partners. Responsiveness and flexibility of project governance are essential to its success. Provide regular use, formal and informal of new communication tools (videoconference…).<br>- The Lead partner must have a strategy for mobilising partners and using activities coordination tools (factsheets, guides, charts, retro planning…)<br>- Provide a detailed distribution of tasks with a clear assessment of the capacities of each partner |
| | - Insufficient awareness of the diversity of partners and of the complexity of their tasks<br>- Difficulty to anticipate the detailed expenditures for the implementation of activities | - Risk of confusion during the implementation of activities<br>- Risk of budget overrun<br>- Risk of non-completion of certain operations | - In the application form, activities are sometimes not sufficiently detailed. The Lead Partner can (must) use additional tools to help each partner elaborate its work Programme and detailed budget. |

| | 1. Difficulties that could be observed during the implementation of the project | 2. Possible consequences on the project | 3. Measures to be considered |
|---|---|---|---|
| | - Insufficient quality of partners reporting (technical and financial reports)<br>- Insufficient description of expenses<br>- The heading of activities and expenditures declared by the partners do not match the heading used in the project application<br>- Documents sent by the partners do not correspond to the documents mentioned in the reports (list of signatures, invoices…) | - Confusion for the drafting of reports, loss of time<br>- Decrease of the quality of reporting with an increased risk of blockage in the expenditures validation process<br>- Loss of cohesion within the partnership | - To choose partners able to cope with administrative constraints (human resources, administrative capacities)<br>- To exchange information and experience between projects partners dedicated to the reporting process from the start of the project<br>- To inform the partners about the potential difficulties and risks. To make sure that they mobilise the necessary resources and provide for adequate action in case of difficulty (exchanges, training, methodological and technical support…) |
| | - Overlap or delays in the implementation of activities of the different partners | - Risk of loss of coherence of the project, isolation of partners, disorganisation, delays or difficulties in completing the project | - To plan an accurate sequencing of all the project activities (especially those related to the coordination of activities between partners)<br>- During the lifetime of the project, provide regular reminders related to and adapt the methodology, the sharing of activities between partners, the division between administrative, technical and coordination tasks, etc. (animation role of the Lead Partner) |

| | 1. Difficulties that could be observed during the implementation of the project | 2. Possible consequences on the project | 3. Measures to be considered |
|---|---|---|---|
| | - Insufficient administrative capacities of partners<br>- Insufficient awareness of procedures for European Territorial Cooperation Programme | - Incorrect definition of deadlines<br>- Delays in the provision of administrative documents and reports<br>- Inadequate content of reports | - To pay a particular attention to partners with no ETC experience<br>- To organise an exchange of experience between all the partners on administrative issues<br>- To provide explanatory documents, guides, forms that can facilitate the work of partners and project management<br>- To provide animation and support for partners that do not have experience with territorial cooperation Programme |
| | - Unavailability or change of person involved; administrative and financial bottleneck due to local, regional or national elections | - Improper implementation of activities<br>- Disorganisation of the partnership | - To take into account periods of election in the planning of activities of the project<br>- To anticipate any period of slowdown of the activities of the project |
| | - Communication difficulties between the partners due to language issues | - Risk of misunderstanding on the distribution of activities, responsibilities; with the definition of objectives<br>- Risk of isolation of partners | - To make sure that partners can communicate in one of the official language of the Programme<br>- To provide for translation costs when necessary (documents, committees, workshops…)<br>- To ensure that each partner can express himself and contribute actively to the project |

| | 1. Difficulties that could be observed during the implementation of the project | 2. Possible consequences on the project | 3. Measures to be considered |
|---|---|---|---|
| | - Insufficient availability or involvement of a partner | - Delay on administrative procedures<br>- Operations not implemented<br>- Disorganisation of the partnership | - Take time to identify and mobilise partners. Partners must know each other and meet regularly<br>- To avoid the mobilisation of « last minute » partners<br>- To exchange and inform clearly about the specific constraints of ETC Programme<br>- Each partner must be in charge of important activities to get involved in the project properly. To stimulate their participation to the project (exchanges, solicitations, …)<br>- To use available methodological tools to facilitate the integration of partners in the project (provided by the Programme or by the Lead partner) |
| | - Insufficient competences of partners in the implementation of activities<br>- Difficulties in having the institutional and political support needed to achieve the objectives of the project | | - pay a specific attention to the specialisation and to the competences of partners for each type of activity they are involved in<br>- pay a specific attention to the composition of the partnership and to the profile of each partner in order to have the institutional and political support needed to achieve the objectives of the project |

| | 1. Difficulties that could be observed during the implementation of the project | 2. Possible consequences on the project | 3. Measures to be considered |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Complex or large projects** | - Difficult management of projects with a large number of partners, with different modules, with a large budget and a large number of operations | - Delays at different implementation steps of the project, and risk that some operations cannot be achieved (coordination, communication between partners, insufficient cash to meet the investments needs, complexity of public procurement procedures, need of technical expertise…) | - To anticipate a period of preparation which is long enough for large projects (setting up of the partnership, preliminary studies, detailed planning of roles, activities and means, etc.)<br>- To ensure that partners are fully aware of their obligations and are able to fulfil them<br>- To adapt monitoring and animation tools to be able to detect any failure or weakness of a partner (animation role of the Lead partner) |
| **State Aid** | - Identification of some activities that fall under the state aid regime during the project implementation | - Risk of stopping some activities and risk of reimbursing if irregularities are detected by subsequent audit<br>- Risk of questioning the participation of some partners to the project | - To provide for a detailed analysis of activities that could fall under the state aid regime. To mobilise relevant competences to perform theses analyses |
| **Financial engineering** | - Possible difficulties with the use of financial engineering tools (expertise, technical, administrative, financial requirements…) | - Risk that some activities cannot be achieved<br>- Risk of disorganisation of activities or of the strategy of the project | - To ask for preliminary analyses and to clearly identify the opportunities and potential difficulties related to the use of financial engineering tools<br>- To have relevant expertise capacities within project partners |

| | 1. Difficulties that could be observed during the implementation of the project | 2. Possible consequences on the project | 3. Measures to be considered |
|---|---|---|---|
| **External communication and valorisation of results** | - Communication activities not coordinated between the partners<br>- Communication activities limited to general information<br>- No clear identification of targets | - Loss of project visibility<br>- Risk of isolation of partners | - To clearly identify the partner in charge of communication activities. To ensure that this partner has the necessary skills and a precise view of its task<br>- To develop a comprehensive communication plan for the project (objectives, means, targets, …)<br>- To exchange with partners about the communication activities that will be undertaken by each one of them<br>- To mobilise external communication services at project or partner level if lack of experience and skills<br>- To pay particular attention to the selection of partners, external stakeholders and target groups on which the project will rely for the capitalisation and dissemination of its results (technical, institutional and political capacities; geographic coverage; diversity of stakeholders…) |
| | - Insufficient identification and involvement of target groups and external stakeholders (at local, regional, national and international level) | - Risk of remaining focused on an administrative management of the project<br>- Low visibility of the activities achieved by the project<br>- Low transfer of knowledge, practices and experiences | - To clearly identify target groups in the project application<br>- To clearly identify lists of final beneficiaries in the different territories covered by the project<br>- To set up concrete actions to involve target groups in the project (technical committees, workshops, working groups, seminars…)<br>- To adapt communication activities to the profile of target groups (public bodies, private bodies, investors, social bodies, …)<br>- To involve key players at territorial level as "external partners", "technical and strategic advisers", etc. |

PROGRAMME MANUAL

LEAD PARTNER ROLE

LEAD PARTNER OBLIGATIONS

The **"Lead Partner principle"** applies to the Interreg MED Programme, in compliance with Article 13 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013. This means that each partnership appoints one organisation to act as Lead Partner, which takes full responsibility for the implementation of the entire project.

According to the definition of the Directive 2014/24/EU, the Lead Partner is a public body or a body governed by public law. The Lead Partner must be physically based in the EU part of the Interreg MED Programme area.

Private institutions, international organisations acting under international law and IPA partners cannot act as Lead Partners.

After approval of a project by the MED Programme Steering Committee, the **Lead Partner signs a Subsidy Contract** with the Programme Managing Authority (Region Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, FRANCE).

During the implementation phase, the Lead Partner is responsible for the coordination of the partnership and of the project in line with **sound financial and project management principle**[1]. For further information, please refer to the following **factsheets: "Partnership architecture, requirements and relevance", "Support for project implementation", "Methodological tools for preparation and implementation", "Sound project budget".**

In addition, the Lead Partner should maintain a **functional and permanent communication flow** among the partnership and ensure an **efficient exchange of information** that enables the successful delivery of the project outputs.
The Lead Partner is also responsible for **communication with the Programme bodies**, namely the Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat.

The responsibilities of the Lead Partner are defined in the Subsidy Contract.
In parallel the **Partnership Agreement** formalizes the organization of the partnership and defines the responsibilities of each partner for the implementation of the project in accordance with the consolidated application form.
The Partnership Agreement is concluded **between the Lead Partner and all partners involved in the project.** It **clearly states the so called "Lead Partner Principle"** for the operational management and coordination of the project.

During the project proposal preparation, the Lead Partner (institution) is responsible for coordinating and driving the partnership from the project idea until the finalisation of the project proposal. It formally submits the Application Form and is thus responsible for related contents and commitments.

**Once the project approved** by the Programme Steering Committee, the Lead Partner is responsible, in line with the Lead Partner principle, for **ensuring sound management and**

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[1] The principle of sound financial management is defined in chapter 7 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012. This regulation states that the budget shall be spent "in accordance with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The principle of economy requires that the resources used by the institution for the pursuit of its activities shall be made available in due time, in appropriate quantity and quality and at the best price. The principle of efficiency is concerned with the best relationship between resources employed and results achieved. The principle of effectiveness is concerned with attaining the specific objectives set and achieving the intended results."

**successful implementation of the entire project**. Therefore, the Lead Partner should be an institution **experienced in the management of projects financed by EU funds.**

The Lead Partner should, at least, have the following profile:

- Experienced in the **management of EU funded projects**
- Prepared to take a **leading and driving role** within the partnership
- Having **sufficient capacity** (institutional, financial and human resources) to prepare the project application and to manage the implementation of the project
- Having the **thematic knowledge** and expertise relevant for the project
- Being **committed** throughout the project proposal application process as well as during the implementation phase

## CONTRACTING PROCEDURE

The contracting procedures the Lead Partner is responsible for concern the **Subsidy Contract and the Partnership Agreement.**

To do list:

- Get in touch with the project officer for the pre-verifications of the contracts
- Two examples of both documents, the Subsidy Contract and the Partnership Agreement, must be signed in original
- Both examples of the Subsidy Contract and one of the Partnership Agreement must be submitted to the JS by regular post
- After signature by the Managing Authority of both examples of the Subsidy Contract, one version will be kept by the MA/JS and the other one will be sent to the Lead Partner

The Lead Partner must keep an original of the Subsidy Contract and of the Partnership Agreement as part of the audit trail of the project. A copy is made available to all project partners.

The models of Subsidy Contract and Partnership Agreement is available on the Interreg MED Programme website and in Annex of the Programme Manual, and will be signed **only after the approval** of the proposals.
For further information, please refer to factsheet **"Contracting procedures".**

## COORDINATION AND SOUND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

To manage the project efficiently, the Lead Partner must elaborate an **efficient and reliable management and coordination system**. The coordination concerns the implementation of the various components of the project, including its **administrative and financial management**. The Lead Partner is also responsible for drafting the **progress and final reports**, as well as the submission to MED joint secretariat of the **payment claims** each six months.

The Lead Partner must appoint a **project coordinator** responsible for the abovementioned tasks. The project coordinator must ensure the **thematic coordination** of the project activities and components. The coordinator should be able to act as a **driving force of the project and to mobilise the partnership** in order to achieve the objectives laid down in the application. To complement project coordination tasks, it is highly recommended to identify a coordinator who can also count on **experience in management of transnational projects.**

The Lead Partner must also appoint a **financial manager** responsible for the management of the project budget, including budget modifications, payment claims and verification of correct ERDF/IPA quota transfer to the partners.

The financial manager should:
- **Closely and regularly monitor** the  financial performance of the project partners
- Work in close contact with the project coordinator and the partners in order to enable **efficient overall financial management** of the project
- Ensure that the project **does not incurs in de-commitment risk**. For further information, please refer to factsheet "**De-commitment**"
- Be familiar with **accounts management**, as well as with handling international transactions
- Be aware of the **EU and national legislation** regarding **financial management and controls, public procurement and, where appropriate, State aid**

In order to ensure efficient communication with the programme authorities, the coordinator must speak fluently French and/or English. It is as well advisable that the financial manager speaks one of these languages.

**Within three months from the** project start, the Lead Partner must send to the Joint Secretariat the **minutes of the first Steering Committee** of the approved project attesting the beginning of the activities and detailing the structures of management that ensure the good performance of the project, as well as the contact person of each partner, following the requirements set by the Programme.
For further information, please refer to factsheet "**Project start-up**" and "**Support for project implementation**".

## REPORTING

The Lead partner is responsible of the **timely submission** of the duly filled in Progress reports to the JS.
Each progress report must be submitted to the JS **within 3 months following the end of the 6 month implementation period**, in line with the **schedule indicated in article 5.1** - Payment claims and progress reports - of the Subsidy Contract.
Specifically the Lead Partner must:
- Collect information regarding activities implemented and deliverables produced by partners
- Verify that partners are certifying their expenditures on time (incl. their own expenditures)
- Validate the expenditures of the partners on SYNERGIE CTE
- Collect First Level Control Certificates of the partners (with national validations if relevant)
- Fill in the project progress report through SYNERGIE CTE
- Fill in the Payment claim through SYNERGIE CTE
- Submit the progress report and the payment claim to the JS
- Upload all deliverables on the project website via the Web Platform

Project Progress reports (PR) is filled in by the LP on the basis of information available on aforementioned single partner reports.

The PR is the responsibility of the LP and should not be a "partner per partner" approach. Indeed, the LP should report the completed activities and the deliverables produced during the concerned period **through summary approach, reporting the situation of the project progress as a whole.**

For further information, please refer to factsheet "**Reporting procedure**".

PROGRAMME MANUAL

REPORTING PROCEDURE

The reporting procedure is a key element for monitoring the implementation of projects and compare the achievements with the approved application form. A timely reporting is mandatory for the partnership in order to reimburse project expenditures in coherence with the approved Application Form and Subsidy Contract. The payment of the ERDF and IPA funds can only be requested on the basis of the check by the Joint Secretariat of periodic reports submitted via the electronic monitoring system (SYNERGIE CTE).

The implementation of the projects is based on 6-months reporting periods fixed by the Programme, deadlines for the submission of the progress reports are set out in the Subsidy Contract.
Project partners are responsible of contributing to Progress report (PR) completion by informing the LP on their achievements and providing the related deliverables for the concerned period.

The Lead partner is responsible of the correct and complete submission of the Progress reports to the JS and has a 3-month time-frame, following the end of the 6-month implementation period, to:

- Collect information regarding activities implemented and deliverables produced at partner and project level (through, among other means, Partners' Progress Reports)
- Verify that partners are certifying their expenditures on time (incl. their own expenditures)
- Validate the expenditures of the partners on SYNERGIE CTE
- Collect First Level Control Certificates of the partners (with national validations if relevant)
- Fill in the project progress report through SYNERGIE CTE
- Fill in the Payment claim through SYNERGIE CTE
- Submit the progress report and the payment claim to the JS.
- Upload all deliverables on the project website via the Web Platform

This factsheet details the different reporting procedures for finance and activity, as well as the procedure to review this performance by the Programme.

# Activity report and Financial Report (Progress Report)

The reporting templates are embedded in SYNERGIE CTE. Projects will be provided access to the relevant section of system after approval of the project by the Steering Committee and upon signature of the Subsidy Contract between the LP and the Managing authority (MA).
Technical information on the use of SYNERGIE CTE concerning the Progress Report is provided in a dedicated guide.

## PARTNER INDIVIDUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Partner Progress Reports have to be submitted by <u>each project partner</u> through the monitoring system SYNERGIE CTE and validated online, in order to provide the FLC and the LP with relevant information on partner activities during the reporting period.

The first step in the reporting procedure is the information inserted at partner level on the progress made in the delivery of activities and the relevant expenditure.
A section in SYNERGIE CTE is dedicated to single partner reports. Each project partner (including the LP) reports on-line on the progress made in the relevant reporting period compared to what was planned in the application form (AF). Deviations from the AF may be possible if they comply with the Programme rules and provided they are duly justified in the relevant sections of the report.

During the reporting period, each project partner is recommended to regularly fill in the report on its activities and the expenditures in the system. This allows for an easy tracking of the progress made and reduces bottlenecks before the deadline for submission of the report.

## PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

Project Progress reports (PR) is filled in by the LP on the basis of information available on aforementioned single partner reports.
The PR is the responsibility of the LP and should not be a "partner per partner" approach. Indeed, the LP should report the completed activities and the deliverables produced during the concerned period through summary approach, reporting the situation of the **project progress as a whole**.

The PR must be submitted by the LP through the monitoring system SYNERGIE CTE within the deadlines set for each Call for Proposals.

**Reporting project activities:**

The main information requested in the PR concerning project's implementation is the following:

- Highlights of main achievements
- Level of achievement of the project specific objectives
- Level of achievement of the project communication objectives
- Project main outputs achievement
- Details on target groups reached
- Description of activities per work packages
- Main deliverables and outputs produced
- Justification of possible deviations from original plan (where relevant) and problems that occurred during the reporting period

Information provided should be clear and concise but exhaustive and in line with the Application form. Any deviation from the plan should be explained. A report of good quality makes its treatment by the JS more fluid and speeds up the reimbursement process.

The reporting process is completed by the reporting of productions delivered during the period.

## REPORTING ON OUTPUTS AND DELIVERABLES

In addition to the reporting procedure in SYNERGIE CTE, where the Lead Partner fills in the Progress Report for each reporting period, the project will have to provide evidence of their activities. In order to facilitate the identification of the outputs and deliverables (referred to here as productions) and ease the follow up of the deliverables of the project, they will be uploaded on the web platform and should be self-sufficient, include some metadata information and follow presentation requirements in line with the programme rules (MED programme logo, EU logo/flag, ERDF or IPA funding indication, etc.). (see Communication manual).
Projects are invited to follow the guidelines set by the Programme for each production when uploading them through the web platform.

### PROJECT WEBSITE CONNECTED TO THE MED WEB PLATFORM

In your website, connected to the MED web platform, you will have a dedicated area where you upload your productions. All documents produced during the project lifetime will be uploaded through this application.
This upload application will be used for different purposes:

- To upload documents and productions in the project website section ( for public use)
- To upload documents and productions in the intranet section (for restricted use)
- To upload documents and productions in the framework of progress reports.

Thanks to this tool, any production will only be uploaded once, and thanks to the metadata you will have to fill in, each production will be available for one or more of these purposes. None of them will have to be sent by email or any other means to the JS (except hard copies when requested).

### USING THE SAME PROCEDURE FOR ALL UPLOADS

When uploading a document, you need to access the upload page of your website and fill in the metadata form that appears. Depending on the type of document and target you select, the type of information requested may vary.

### FILLING THE ASSOCIATED INFORMATION FORM?

This information is essential for project implementation, since it helps to exchange documents and reach your public, but it will be also useful for the JS, the FLCs, the audit trail, the Monitoring Committee of the Programme, to monitor the Programme achievements and to be used for evaluation purposes and possible adjustments of Programme implementation. Accurately recorded information will contribute to speed up the progress report check and payment process.

USING SPECIFIC FORMAT DEPENDING ON PRODUCTIONS

All productions can either be reported in the format they were produced (document), or as a report (pilot activity or event).

### 1. Productions that can be reported in original format

Some of your productions can be directly uploaded in original format, as the production equals the deliverable (e.g a SWOT analysis produced is reported as a SWOT Analysis document).
In this case, different format are possible, depending on the type of production:

- Upload of production in original format (ex.: Word document, PPT, PDF, …)
- Upload of production in digital format (ex.: a printed poster)
- Upload of production in digital format AND sending of hard copy (if applicable) (ex.: a printed book)
- Upload of production in digital format AND sending of item (ex.: brochure)
- Sending of item (ex: DVD)
- Upload of link to online format production AND backup (ex.: online device like a decision support tool)
- Evidence of production in digital format AND sending of item (ex.: widget or goodies)
- Upload of link to production in original format AND sending of digital format on physical support (ex.: video)
- Upload of link to online format production (ex.: website update)

#### When productions in original or digital format are promotional material

The deliverables should be edited following the communication and publicity rules of the Programme and uploaded in the web platform in their digital format. If required, an item should be sent to the JS too.

#### When productions in original format are online tools

The link to the online tool should be uploaded on the web platform, together with the backup of the production. The deliverable should be accompanied by any material or information needed for its transferability and reuse. All online productions should be developed in a format freely accessible for use and reuse, ideally in an open source format.

### 2. Productions that cannot be reported in original format since they are activities, complex productions (such as pilots) or events

In this case you will have to upload a specific report on the activity that occurred or the complex production.

#### What should all reports contain:

For each deliverable, the document should have a cover page. The choice of display is up to the project partners.

#### Minimum content of the cover page:

Project Acronym, project full title, axis, objective
URL of project website

Deliverable number (as identified in SYNERGIE CTE)
Title of deliverable
Work package number, name of Work Package
Activity number, name of activity
Partner in charge (author)
Partners involved
Status (draft, final, N version, etc.)
Distribution (confidential, public, etc.)
Date(s)
Project logo + MED programme logo + EU emblem + ERDF funding

## Minimal presentation requirements

Table of contents if applicable
List of abbreviations and terms if applicable
Executive summary and abstract when applicable

## Valuable additional elements of presentation

Number of pages
Footer or header including number and title of deliverable – distribution – name of project
Revision chart and history log, if applicable
Inclusion of an illustration showing previous steps/deliverables, synchronised deliverables/activities and further steps/deliverables such as (please note that this is just an example, you are free to choose your own way of illustrating):

| Previous steps/deliverables | Reported deliverable | Further steps/deliverables |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Diagnostics per territory | Territorial action plan for C | Pilot actions |
| | Parallel deliverables/activities | |
| | Action plans of 4 other territories | |

## What should reports on organised events contain

In order to facilitate the understanding of the events that took place and of their outcomes, and in addition to the information necessary to easily identify the deliverable (find them above), when reporting an event, it is appreciated that all description, explanation and supporting documents are listed in one single comprehensive document.

1)  an introductory list should specify the following information:
a)  Objectives of the event and expected results
b)  Target of the event
c)  Location of the event and justification
d)  Time of the event
e)  Methodology to reach objectives
f)  Short report on outcomes
g)  Results of the critical evaluation of the event (strengths, weaknesses, ideas to improve)

2)  The partners are requested to provide supporting documents such as:

- invitations,
- agenda
- lists of participants (with the minimum required information requested by the Programme),
- minutes,
- pictures,
- supporting material
- promotional material developed for the event
- etc…

In order to complete the activity report, it is appreciated that the supporting documents are scanned and included in the reporting document. This way, the full picture of the event is made available to any interested beneficiary and its promotion is facilitated.

What should reports on participation in outside events contain

To have the same approach, when reporting on an outside event, the partners are requested to apply the same approach as for the events organised by them and hence provide the supporting list and all elements listed before for the reporting on events.

## Reporting project costs:

The Project financial data is summarised in the project Payment Claim (PC) and supports the part dedicated to activities and deliverables.

Single project partners fill-in the information about project costs and submit them to the LP that validate such costs in coherence with the developed activities.
Partner's FLC verifies the eligibility of declared expenditures and includes them in a FLC certificate (see Factsheet "Controls, audits and verifications").

The project Payment Claim is made up with partner's expenditures included in validated FLC certificates.

The LP fill-in through SYNERGIE CTE the PC that gather the information from each single partner's First level control certificate and allow a summary information to be delivered to the JS. Any incoherences compared to the project financial objectives set out in the Subsidy Contract should be explained and justified by the LP in the activity report.

Reporting according to Programme deadlines and adhering to spending targets are contractual obligations.

Projects and partners lagging behind their spending plan risk losing their funds if there is insufficient spending on Programme level (see information on Risk of Decommitment).

Should a partner not be able to produce a FLC certificate on time, the report of the activities to the LP remains an obligatory requirement.

**Preparation of the Project Payment Claim (PC):**

The lead partner is responsible of gathering the partnership FLC certificates and eventual national validations and to prepare the project Payment Claim through the SYNERGIE monitoring tool.

Only signed version of validated FLC will be taken on board by the LP when preparing the Project Payment Claim that will be composed by the ERDF and IPA payment claim.

Technical information on the use of SYNERGIE CTE concerning the PC preparation is provided in the related factsheet of the dedicated technical guide.

## JS CHECK PROCEDURE AND EVENTUAL CORRECTIONS

The JS will strive to shorten as much as possible the check procedure to allow for a timely reimbursement to the projects. After receiving the project progress report, the JS will carry out the completeness check of the submitted documents. Lead partners submitting an incomplete PR will be informed by the JS and will have to re-submit 5 working days after notification. Only 2 submissions (first and correction) can be allowed in this phase. In case of persisting incompleteness the report will be rejected and postponed until the next reporting deadline.

Following the completeness check, the JS will start with the content part of the check (activities, financial documents and deliverables). The JS will inform the LP immediately of any necessary revision or need of further information and respective documents. Lead partners submitting a PR with incomplete information will be notified by the JS and will have to complete within 10 working days after notification. Only 2 submissions (first and completed) can be accepted in this phase. In case of persisting incompleteness the report will be rejected and postponed until the next reporting deadline and shall be submitted together with the following PR considering the revisions requested by the JS. Reporting deadlines cannot be postponed.

If the report meets the requirements, the JS will finalise the internal check. No hardcopies of the final version of the documents will have to be submitted.

After verification of the coherence of all supporting documents and of the respect of the reporting timing (activities, deliverables, FLC certifications process) the JS will close the check procedure.

As part of the JS verification process, project might be undergoing an internal additional JS control (not implemented by the Project officer in charge) on a sample of projects. In these cases, the JS might get back to the LP to ask for additional clarifications.

The table below shows the procedure to be followed as regards the submission of the reporting documents and the check of the submitted documents by the JS.

| Completeness check | Report content and financial check | Additional JS verification (sample of projects) |
|---|---|---|
| JS max 5 working days<br><br>Revisions: Max 2 times | JS max 10 working days<br><br>Revisions: Max 2 times | Max 10 working days<br><br>Revisions: Max 2 times |
| LP has 5 working days to reply | LP has 10 working days to reply | LP has 10 working days to reply |

## VALIDATION AND PAYMENT PROCEDURE

The MA validates the JS verifications, prepares the request for payment and addresses to the CA that carries out the payments directly to single project partners.

A payment to project partners is possible only if the FLC certificate has been submitted filled in and signed to the LP when preparing the Project Payment Claim (PC). Should a Certificate not be available at the time of closing a PC, it should be included in the following PC.

Note: TRANSITION BETWEEN MODULES for multi-modular projects are not included under regular reporting procedure even though they constitute an important step in checking the overall achievement of project outputs, results and milestones – see related Factsheet regarding "Multi-modular Projects".

PROGRAMME MANUAL

# MULTI-MODULAR PROJECTS

| | Content of the modification | Approval date |
|---|---|---|
| **V1** | - | January 2017 |
| **V2** | Adaptation of the factsheet to all kind of multi-modular projects <br> Revision of the timeframe for the verification procedure | January 2019 |

# Verification phase for multi-modular projects

According to the rules in the Programme Manual, Terms of Reference and the Subsidy Contract definition, the multi-modular projects will undergo a verification from the JS/MA before passing from one module to the other.
This is the case for M1+M2 projects; M2+M3 projects and M1+M2+M3 (integrated) projects.

## When?

The process of JS verification starts 1 month before the closure of the module under verification.
The JS proceeds to its verification within one month from the reception of all documents and information necessary for verification.
If any changes ought to be made in the project, the entire modification procedure – from the proposal to the signing of the amendment – is recommended  to be closed within the first 3 months of the implementation of the subsequent module bringing the duration of this process of verification and changes to maximum four months.

## How?

The LP provides a short specific report ("Module Report", available on SYNERGIE CTE, to be validated on line) considering as a baseline the data available in the consolidated AF (the version annexed to the subsidy contract). The LP is asked to confirm the achievement of the expected milestones and justify any deviations from the AF.

This report, together with the other available elements, is analysed by the JS. Further clarification might be necessary. Once these exchanges are concluded, should any modification take place (including on one hand modifications on partnership, activities or budget or on the other hand the total cancelation of project), the decision is taken by the Programme Steering Committee through a written procedure.

# What?

The verification focuses in four main aspects of the project implementation:

- The involvement of all the project partners in the activities of the project (at least a FLC certificate per each partner would has been submitted to the JS)
- The level of expenditure (at least 75% of foreseen payments, of which at least 50% certified) and respect of the cost eligibility
- The availability and quality of deliverables
- The respect of the timing in the implementation of the activities

To each one of the above points, the LP is requested to identify to which extent the forecast presented in the AF has been accomplished, providing clarification to any deviance.

This verification will be complemented with the analysis of:

- the data included in Synergie system and in the Interreg MED web-platform (namely regarding budget consumption and deliverables)
- the payment claims available
- the information gathered during the day-to-day follow-up of the project
- the result of the external evaluation that is mandatory for the multi-modular projects

# Why?

This verification represents, both to the project partners as to the JS, the opportunity to propose any major modifications deemed necessary to the project.
These modifications could be proposed by the partnership and include a readjustment of:

- the work plan
- the budget
- the partnership

as a consequence of the evolution observed during the first phase and/or the conclusions of the external evaluation.

On the other hand, as defined in art. 3.4 of the Subsidy Contact, the JS will inform the Steering Committee about the outcomes of this verification and might, in particularly difficult cases, suggest to the Programme Steering Committee that the operation should be cancelled or modified when passing from one module to the next one.

Should any modification be necessary, the project Lead partner will be notified and will have to act in the foreseen time to either amend the project or, in severe cases, to cease the project, as foreseen in article 21.1 b of the Subsidy Contract.

# How to go from a module to another in a multi-module type of project?

A verification performed by the MA/JS will determine if a project continue to the next module, in a multi-module project

In case of multi-module projects, at the end of each module, the MA/JS will perform a verification of the activities carried out and the deliverables produced by the project in order to check their compliance with the requirements established and to pass to the next module.

The aim of this verification will be to confirm that the identified expected results for the concerned module have been reached according to the Subsidy Contract and the approved Application Form, and that the partnership is ready to start the new phase of the project.

In particular, the MA/JS verification will focus on following aspects:

- Analysis of content-related progress and production of key pre-identified deliverables in due form as scheduled;
- Financial progress of the project;
- Management and administrative performance;
- Partners' engagement;
- Realistic forecast and recommendations for the remaining modules;
- If applicable, identification of deviations and delays in regard to the Application Form, as well as necessary project modifications (partnership, finance and activities).

This verification will take place in a short period of time between the end of a module and the start of the following one on the basis of a specific report. The MA/JS will ensure that this verification does not hinder the progress of activities and the transition between modules.

Based on this verification, the MA/JS may decide:

- to agree on the **continuity** of the project as foreseen in the Application Form;
- to propose a **modification** of the project in order to adapt it to the new "reality", taking into account the results of the verification;
- to propose to the Interreg MED Programme Steering Committee a **deprogramming** of the forthcoming modules.

Upon transition from one module to another, the partnership may propose a modification of the project regarding the partnership, major budget changes and activities in order to better adjust to the needs of the following module. For further information regarding modifications please refer to Factsheet on "Project Modifications" of the Programme Manual.

# Why an external expert to go from a module to another?

For 2014-2020, the issue of the quality of projects is particularly important for multi-module projects, since their funding is subject to successful completion of each module that compose the whole project (incomplete or unsatisfactory completion of a module can block the implementation of the following one(s)). In order to ensure that all multi-module projects are able to successfully complete their project, a specific monitoring system has been developed by the Interreg MED Programme.

MOBILISATION OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS

For 2014-2020 programmes, partnerships who decide to carry out multi modules projects must recruit an "**external expert**".

This expert will have to meet a number of conditions specified by the programme (see the guidelines provided for the drafting of the tender for the recruitment of external experts.)

Once recruited, the role of the external expert is to assist the Lead Partner and the partners in successfully implementing their project. In particular, the expert must help the project to anticipate any difficulties that could prevent the transition from one module to another.

The level of methodological assistance of the expert may be adapted to suit the needs of each project (needs to be specified in the tender for the recruitment of the expert). The minimum requirements are that the expert:

- provides assistance for the implementation and progression between modules
- provides a "monitoring form" to the Joint Secretariat before the start of a new module
- ensures that the Lead Partner informs the Joint Secretariat in case major problems arise in a project (timing, budget, partnership…)
- transmits any information about his "assessment of the support system" to the Joint Secretariat at the end of its assignment, if relevant

It should be noted that the programme does not require external monitoring throughout the duration of the project. Once the last module has been launched (the second or the third of the project), the project can be finalised with or without the support of the external expert depending the needs of the project (to be specified in the contract signed with the expert).

USE OF A MONITORING FORM

To promote a qualitative monitoring, the programme provides partners with a "**monitoring form**" that should help them assess the project progress on some key points and to propose any adjustments for the transition to the next module. The drafting of this form is provided by the external expert in close collaboration with the Lead Partner and all the partners of the project.

The monitoring form is essentially dedicated to project partners. The partnership and the external expert will specify how this form shall be used (producing a form for each monitoring committee, at key implementation steps of the project, at mid-term, etc.). **The project will have to transmit one copy of this form to the Joint Secretariat to report on project progress one month before the start scheduled for the following module.**

**The form provides information to the Joint Secretariat but does not take part to the formal validation process of the module.**

The transition from one module to another requires that the ongoing module is well implemented and that a number of conditions are met to move towards the next module. This process requires anticipation work because difficulties met in achieving a first module may have direct consequences on the implementation of the following ones (partnership, organization, budgets, skills, goals, etc.).

The "monitoring form" should allow the external expert and project partners to monitor the implementation of the module and anticipate potential difficulties. In particular the form should help to:

- check that the module is implemented in accordance with the framework set out in the application form
- anticipate potential bottlenecks
- ensure that the activities of the ongoing module are well implemented and that the project can move towards the next module

The external expert is in charge of filling out the monitoring form. To be useful and effective, the form shall be completed by taking the situation and the comments of each project partner into account.

Partners and external experts will specify how the form shall be used (completion of a form for each monitoring committee, at key implementation steps, at mid-term, etc.) at the start of the project. This timing is particularly important since the forms will foster exchanges and discussions between the partners for the proper achievement of the project. The form must not only be drafted to describe a situation, but also to anticipate potential difficulties and take the necessary actions at key stages of the project.

The only obligation for partners and the external expert is to provide the Joint Secretariat with a monitoring form one month before the start of a new module in order to inform the programme authorities about the progress of the project.

**FIGURE 45: MONITORING FORM**
Project:
Module:
Date:
N° of monitoring form:

| Key issues for the implementation of the project | | Indicators | Source of information | Findings | Actions already taken or foreseen |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Planned and foreseen operations / targets met | 1.1. What operations / activities foreseen in the current module must be completed (or what target met) in order to start the activities of the next module? | - Listing of operations and activities | Application form<br>Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners | | Actions already taken:<br><br>Actions foreseen: |
| | 1.2. What is the status of these operations? To what extent are the targets met? (or will be met?)<br>What are the possible consequences on the activities planned for the next module? | - Operations not started, ongoing and completed<br>- % of the target met<br>- Qualitative analysis | Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners<br>Control panel, progress reports<br>Minutes of the steering committee | | Actions already taken:<br><br>Actions foreseen: |
| | 1.3. What measures are proposed by the partnership to address any gaps in the implementation of planned activities? (were activities well defined, are objectives shared between partners, are means appropriate, is the organisation of the project efficient, are skills suitable / sufficient? …) | - Types of measures proposed | Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners<br>Minutes of the steering committee<br>Expert opinion | | Actions already taken:<br><br>Actions foreseen: |

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| Key issues for the implementation of the project | | Indicators | Source of information | Findings | Actions already taken or foreseen |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Planned and foreseen operations / targets met | 1.4. Has the partnership planned corrective measures ? | - Qualitative analysis | Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners Minutes of the steering committee Progress report | | Actions already taken:<br><br>Actions foreseen: |
| 2. Set up and operation of the partnership | 2.1. Are partnership operating conditions adequate for a good implementation of the module? What are these operating conditions? | YES / NO<br>- Frequency of meetings<br>- Terms of exchange and cooperation between partners | Application form Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners | | Actions already taken:<br><br>Actions foreseen: |
| | 2.2. Do partners mention specific difficulties in the achievement of their tasks? Which ones? (Administrative, economic, legal, organisational…) Does the external expert observe any other specific difficulty? Which one? | YES / NO<br>- Types of difficulties | Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners Minutes of the steering committee | | Actions already taken:<br><br>Actions foreseen: |
| | 2.3. Can these difficulties alter the implementation of the following module? (availability of partners, responsibilities, skills, …) | YES / NO | Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners Expert opinion | | Actions already taken:<br><br>Actions foreseen |
| | 2.4. What kind of measures are being considered to alleviate the difficulties encountered? (Organisational changes, new partner, share of responsibilities…) | - Types of measures | Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners Minutes of the steering committee Expert opinion Desk analysis | | Actions already taken:<br><br>Actions foreseen |
| Key issues for the implementation of the project | | Indicators | Source of information | Findings | Actions already taken or foreseen |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. Performance of project management | 3.1. Have project management tools been implemented? Which ones (planning, IT project management tools…) | YES / NO<br>- Types of tools | Desk analysis | | Actions already taken:<br><br>Actions foreseen: |
| | 3.2. Are projects management tools in place performing well? (planning and coordination between activities…) | - Qualitative analysis | Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners | | Actions already taken:<br><br>Actions foreseen: |
| | 3.3. Do partners feel comfortable with these tools? | - Grading scale 1-3 (no, somewhat, yes) | Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners | | Actions already taken:<br><br>Actions foreseen: |
| 4. Deadlines and budget | 4.1. Does the implementation of the module respect the original planning? What are the potential sources of delay? | - YES / NO<br>- Delay observed (weeks…)<br>- Source of delay observed | Application form<br>Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners | | Actions already taken:<br><br>Actions foreseen: |
| | 4.2. Can the delays observed/foreseen affect the implementation of the next module?<br>If so, what steps are taken to remedy this situation? | - YES / NO<br>- Qualitative analysis | Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners<br>Expert opinion | | Actions already taken:<br><br>Actions foreseen: |
| | 4.3. Does the project face any difficulty regarding the budget?<br>Is the expenditure in line with the estimated budget? | - YES / NO<br>- Qualitative analysis | Application form<br>Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners | | Actions already taken:<br><br>Actions foreseen: |
| | 4.4. Can the difficulties related to the project budget affect the implementation of the next module?<br>If so, what steps are taken to remedy this situation? | - YES / NO<br>- Qualitative analysis | Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners<br>Expert opinion | | Actions already taken:<br><br>Actions foreseen: |

| Key issues for the implementation of the project | Indicators | Source of information | Findings | Actions already taken or foreseen |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| 4. Deadlines and budget | 4.5. Do the expenses incurred correspond to the estimated budget? Should budget adjustment be considered by the end of the module? Which ones? | - YES / NO<br>- Quantitative analysis | Application form Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners | | Actions already taken:<br><br>Actions foreseen: |

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# PROGRAMME MANUAL

# ELIGIBILITY OF EXPENDITURE

version 5,
approved by the Monitoring Committee on 12 December 2019

| | | Content of the modification | Approval date |
|---|---|---|---|
| **V5** | | *SECTION 4 Eligibility period*<br>- Alignment with article 4.6 of the subsidy contract, requirements for the eligibility of implementations expenditure. Since this is a correction of an error, the rule can be applied retroactively since the signature of the Contract.<br>*SECTION 4 Travel and accommodation*<br>- Inclusion of detailed information about per diem and rent-a-car by staff costs. | 12 December 2019 |
| **V4** | | *SECTION 1 HIERARCHY OF RULES ON ELIGIBILITY OF EXPENDITURE*<br>- Inclusion of Omnibus reference<br>*SECTION 5 CONVERSION INTO EURO*<br>- Reminder: Even if Synergie CTE calculate exchange of expenditure not incurred in euro currency, the FLC should to verify that the conversion has been carried out correctly when certifying the expenditure.<br>*SECTION 6 BUDGET LINES SPECIFICATION / BL 1. STAFF COSTS*<br>- Partners participating in on-going projects (approved before the third call for modular projects) and already using method has the possibility to change from method C (hourly rate) to method B (%).<br>- Projects approved from the third call for modular projects CANNOT claim staff costs under method C (hourly rate).<br>- More guidance about how to report the split of the "fixed percentage" per WP, in the case of use of method B (%). Remove of the inclusion in the job description declaration, when method "part time fixed percentage" is used, the split of the "fixed percentage" per WP (updated in version 3 of the factsheet).<br>*SECTION 6 BUDGET LINES SPECIFICATION / BL 3 TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION COSTS*<br>- Remove the word "original" for tickets and another documentary evidence.<br>*SECTION 6 BUDGET LINES SPECIFICATION / BL 5 EQUIPMENT EXPENDITURE*<br>- Remove the word "full" in example (situation 1) and wording in general principles. | 20 December 2018 |
| **V3** | | *SECTION 6 BUDGET LINES SPECIFICATION / BL 1. STAFF COSTS*<br>- Inclusion in the job description declaration, when method "part time fixed percentage" is used, the split of the "fixed percentage" per WP.<br>- Inclusion of the possibility to modify the % (method B) in the middle of an implementation period based on change of "tasks and responsibilities of the employee change based on the approval of new projects or the closing of on-going projects in the framework of the Interreg MED Programme". | 31 July 2018 |



Programme cofinancé par le Fonds Européen
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Programme cofinanced by the European Regional
Development Fund (ERDF)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *SECTION 6 BUDGET LINE SPECIFICATION / BL 3. TRAVEL AND ACCOMODATION COSTS*<br>- Clarification regarding the respect of the thresholds of daily rates for hotel and subsistence established by national eligibility rules. | |
| **V2** | *SECTION 4 ELEGIBILITY PERIOD*<br>- Inclusion of a reminder regarding the closing date for costs relating to the Programme's operations (30/06/2022). Information is already foreseen in article 4.8 of the Subsidy Contract.<br>*SECTION 6 BUDGET LINES SPECIFICATION / BL 1. STAFF COSTS*<br>- In the case of the eligibility of overtime, a reference has been included to national eligibility rules.<br>- Possibility of extrapolating the employment costs of at least 3 consecutive months to a 12 month period for the establishment of the "latest documented annual gross employment costs", in the framework of the calculation method C (Part-time assignment with a flexible number of hours worked on the project per month).<br>*GENERAL*<br>Minor modifications included in order to make the factsheet more user friendly and to avoid possible misunderstanding (inclusion of reference to other factsheets or programme documents, rewording or clarifications, based on frequently asked questions of partners, change of the layout examples and audit trail list (staff). | 18 January 2018 |
| **V1** | - | January 2017 |

This factsheet aims to outline the main financial requirements to be considered in the preparation of project proposals, the implementation of projects and the justification of project's expenditure.

As a complement, further guidance on how to develop a sound project budget can be found in factsheet "SOUND PROJECT BUDGET".

For further information on financial issues, please refer to factsheets "STATE AID", "PUBLIC PROCUREMENT", "CONTROLS, AUDITS AND VERIFICATIONS", "DECOMMITMENT" and "NET REVENUES".

# 1. Hierarchy of rules on eligibility of expenditure

Three levels of rules apply to the eligibility of expenditure in the framework of all Interreg Programmes, including Interreg MED Programme:

1. **EU rules**: Due to the fact that the Programme is co-financed by ERDF, all general rules concerning eligibility of expenditure regarding the structural funds are applicable. These include:

- Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 2015/1929 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 October 2015 amending Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union;

- Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 (Common provisions regulation) where Articles 6 and 65 to 71 give specific provisions on applicable law as well as on eligibility of expenditure;

- Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 (ERDF regulation) where article 3 gives specific provisions on the eligibility of activities under the ERDF;

- Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 (ETC regulation) where Articles 18 to 20 give specific provisions on eligibility of expenditure applicable to Programmes of the European Territorial Cooperation goal;

- Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 481/2014 containing specific rules on eligibility of expenditure for cooperation Programmes;

- Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 (Omnibus Regulation) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012.

In addition, in the case of partners funded by IPA Funds, the following rules are applicable as well:

- Article 9(3) of Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 (IPA II Regulation) establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II);

- The financing agreements signed between the European Commission, the Interreg MED Programme Managing Authority and the Government of each IPA Participating State[1].

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[1] The signature of the Financing Agreement of each concerned IPA Participating State was concluded in the following dates: Albania July 6th, 2017; Bosnia and Herzegovina July 19th, 2017, and Montenegro July 6th, 2017.

2. **Programme rules:** namely additional rules on eligibility of expenditure for the cooperation Programme as a whole. Except where otherwise noted, Programme rules apply to ERDF and IPA partners and **must be obeyed**.

3. **National eligibility rules:** they apply for matters not covered by eligibility rules laid down in the abovementioned EU and Programme rules and must be verified with your competent National Authority.

# 2. General eligibility requirements

As a general principle, expenditure is eligible for funding when fulfilling **all** of the following **general eligibility requirements**:

- It relates to the costs of implementing a project according to the latest approved Application Form;

- It relates to items that did not receive support from other EU Funds as this would result in **double funding**;

- It is essential for the implementation of the project and it would not be incurred if the project was not carried out;

- It complies with the principle of real costs except for costs calculated as flat rates and lump sums (when applicable);

- It complies with the principle of sound financial management (please refer to factsheet "SOUND PROJECT BUDGET";

The principle of sound financial management builds on three principles: economy, efficiency and effectiveness, please refer to factsheet "SOUND PROJECT BUDGET" for more details.

- It is borne directly by the beneficiary and supported by accounting documents justifying incurred expenses/payments (invoices, pay rolls…) except for costs calculated as flat rates and lump sums;

- **It is incurred, engaged and paid out within the eligible period (as described here below in section « Eligibility period »);**

- It is incurred within the MED area. In case it is incurred outside the MED area, the requirements indicated in the related section have been respected;

- It is registered in the beneficiary's accounts through a separate accounting system or an adequate accounting code set in place specifically for the project (when applicable);

- It complies with eligibility rules at European, Programme and national level; and when applicable, the relevant public procurement rules have been observed;

- It has been validated by an authorised First Level Controller[2].

**Please note that costs which are not eligible according to the applicable eligibility rules cannot be claimed, even if included in the approved Application Form.**

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[2] First Level Controller is the body or person responsible for verifying at national level that the co-financed products and services have been delivered, that the related expenditure has been paid and that it complies with the applicable EU, Programme and national rules. For more information on the First Level Control system to be applied in each Participating State please refer to www.interreg-med.eu.

# 3. Non-eligible expenditure

With regard to **non-eligible expenditure**[3], provisions are given in the following section. The following expenditure should be considered as **not eligible:**

- In-kind contributions[4], as defined in Article 69(1) of Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013;

- Shared costs[5];

- Fines, financial penalties and expenditure related to legal disputes and litigation;

- Costs of gifts, except those not exceeding EUR 50,00 per gift where related to project promotion, communication, publicity or information;

- Costs related to fluctuation of foreign exchange rate;

- Interest on debt;

- Purchase of land;

- Recoverable VAT according to national VAT legislation;

- Charges for national financial transactions;

- Costs for alcoholic beverages;

- Fees between beneficiaries of the same project for services, equipment and work carried out within the project;

- Heavy investments, infrastructures and works, as described by the Directive 2014/24/EU (annex II), with the exception of those defined as small scale investments in the framework of pilot actions.

# 4. Eligibility period

Expenditure is eligible according to the following periods:

A. Costs for the **implementation** of an approved project are **eligible** (incurred, invoiced and paid out) **from the date of the approval of the proposal by the Interreg MED Programme Steering Committee until its official ending date as set in the Subsidy Contract**.

All operational expenditure shall **relate to the implementation of an activity carried out before the official project's ending date** established by the Subsidy Contract. All costs can be paid out within two months after the project's end at the latest. Any expenditure paid out after those two-additional month shall be declared ineligible.

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[3] For more information please refer to:
- Article 69(3) of the Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013 and Article 3(3) of Regulation (EU) No. 1301/2013.
- Article 18 of Regulation (EU) No. 1299/2013.
- Article 2(2) of the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No. 481/2014.

[4] Contributions in the form of provision of works, goods, services, land and real estate for which no cash payment supported by invoices or documents of equivalent probative value has been made. No to be confused with own contribution, for more information see factsheet "PARTNERS CO-FINANCING AND LOCATION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES".

[5] Shared costs derive from activities carried out by one partner whose costs are covered by more than one project partner. Costs sharing systems are forbidden within the Interreg MED Programme.

B. Costs for project **closure** (e.g. preparation of the last progress report, final report and costs for control of expenditure) are eligible. They must be committed and paid out within two months after the official ending date of the project.

However, as the closing date for costs relating to the Programme's operations is set for 30 June 2022, all projects ending after 30 April 2022 will have the additional period of two-month payment delay reduced in line with the limit date of 30 June 2022 (administrative expenses relating both to the closure and the implementation of the project).

In the case of partners issued from IPA countries, it would be not possible neither to request an advance payment nor to submit a payment claim before the signature of a Financing Agreement between the European Commission, the Interreg MED Programme Managing Authority and the Government of each IPA Participating State[6].

# 5. Conversion into euro

The project budget must be developed in Euro and, in case of approval, reporting of project expenditure to the MA/JS shall be made solely in Euro.

Any expenditure incurred in a currency other than the Euro shall be converted into Euro using the monthly accounting exchange rate of the European Commission in the month during which that expenditure was submitted for verification by the concerned partner to its First Level Controller.

The European Commission publishes the monthly exchange rates on the first day of the month under: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro_en.cfm

Please be reminded that the programme on-line monitoring tool, Synergie CTE, already foresees this calculation. However, the FLC is in charge to verify that the conversion has been carried out correctly when certifying the expenditure.

More information can be found in the Synergie guide « HOW TO ENTER AN EXPENDITURE », available in the Programme website.

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[6] The signature of the Financing Agreement of each concerned IPA Participating State was concluded in the following dates: Albania July 6th, 2017; Bosnia and Herzegovina July 19th, 2017, and Montenegro July 6th, 2017.

# 6. Budget lines specification

Project budget must be structured according to the following budget lines:

1) Staff costs

2) Office and administrative expenditure

3) Travel and accommodation costs

4) External expertise and services costs

5) Equipment expenditure

These budget lines apply to all Work Packages. The creation of additional sub-budget lines different to the ones established by the Programme is not allowed.

**More information about the use of Synergie CTE for reporting of expenditure can be found in the website of the Programme. LP, partners and first level controllers are warmly invited to check more specifically the following guides: « HOW TO ENTER AN EXPENDITURE »; « HOW TO ENTER AN OUTSOURCING CONTRACT »; « HOW TO VALIDATE EXPENDITURE AS LP »; and « HOW TO CERTIFY EXPENDITURE AS FLCER AND ISSUE FLC CERTIFICATE ».**

## BUDGET LINE 1. STAFF COSTS

This budget line refers to the costs of **staff employed by the partner institution** (Lead Partner or project partner) for implementing the project. Costs related to staff already employed by the beneficiary or contracted specifically for the project are eligible under this budget line.

Expenditure included under this budget line is limited to:

**A. Gross salary payments** fixed in an employment document (and/or in the appointment decision/contract) or by law relating to responsibilities specified in the job description of the staff member concerned. Salary payments have to relate to activities which the beneficiary would not carry out if the project was not undertaken.

**B. Any other costs directly linked to salary payments** incurred and paid by the employer (such as employment taxes and social security including pensions) as covered by Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 provided that they are:

- Fixed in an employment document or by law;

- In accordance with the legislation referred to in the employment document and with standard practices in the country and/or institution where the individual staff member is working;

- Not recoverable by the employer.

General principles of expenditure allocated under staff budget line:

- Staff members must be assigned officially to the project in order to claim staff costs (inclusion in the list of the staff working in the project and in the respect of the internal policy of the structure with regard to the assignment of tasks, when applicable).

- Each partner must choose the staff calculation method to be applied for each employee involved in the project implementation. This choice is stated in the **list of the staff working on the project (template provided by the Programme)** to be signed by the project coordinator inside the partner structure. This document may be updated in exceptional cases foreseen by the Programme (explained further in the document).

- Claimed staff costs must be calculated individually for each staff member working in the project using the calculation method chosen for each staff member.

- The adequacy of staff costs must always be ensured. The First Level Controller must verify the adequacy in quality and/or quantity to the realised project deliverables and outputs, as listed in the approved Application Form, following the principle of proportionality.

- Taxable benefits[7] are only eligible if they are foreseen in the signed contract, national or internal regulations, in line with the employment policy of the partner organisation (ad hoc regulations applicable only to the project are not allowed), directly linked to the salary payments and figure on the payslip or other documents of equivalent probative value.

- Unjustified ad-hoc salary increases or bonuses for project purposes are not eligible.

- Unpaid voluntary work is not eligible.

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The expression «employment document» refers to any employment contract or other equivalent legal agreement that permit the identification of the employment relationship with the partner's organisation.

Staff costs for personnel working in one of the partner institutions on the basis of an employment/work contract and receiving a regular salary do not count as in-kind contribution, but as a cash contribution, since staff costs are actually paid by the partner institution.

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[7] I.e. Lunch vouchers, bonus payments, relocation benefits, commuting to work, compensation related to termination of an employment contract.

- As far as eligible according to national eligibility rules, overtime is eligible, provided that it is foreseen by the employment document, project related and in conformity with national legislation and the standard practice of the partner. Overtime must be paid in addition to the salary and figure clearly on the payslip or other documents of equivalent probative value.

## Which are the methods to claim staff costs authorised by the Programme?

Depending on the assignment (full-time, part-time, contracted on an hourly basis) to work on the project, staff costs of each individual are calculated **based on real costs** using one of the following methods:

> Staff members must be assigned officially to the project in order to claim staff costs.

- Method A: Full-time in the project
- Method B: Part-time assignment with a **fixed percentage** of time worked on the project per month
- Method C[8]: Part-time assignment with a **flexible number** of hours worked on the project per month
- Method D: Contracted on an hourly basis

**ATTENTION: Methods B and C are simplified cost options and the Programme and controllers shall not carry out any re-calculations/checks against the real costs.**

In order to simplify and secure the project's staff cost calculations, projects approved from the third call for modular projects **CANNOT** claim staff costs under **method C**: *Part-time assignment with a flexible number of hours worked on the project per month.*

Partners from previously approved projects and already using method C are highly encouraged to consider reporting staff costs in their next declarations, using method B and following the guidance included in section "How to modify the method of calculation chosen?" of the present factsheet.

The table below summarizes the different methods for the calculation of the staff costs available in the framework of the Interreg MED Programme.

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[8] Following a Programme decision and in order to simplify and secure the project's staff cost calculations, calculation method C does not apply to projects approved from the third call for modular projects.
Partners from previously approved projects already using method C are highly encouraged to consider reporting staff costs in their next declarations using method B and following the guidance included in section "How to modify the method of calculation chosen?" of the present factsheet.

| Methods | Description | Specific supporting documents |
|---|---|---|
| **Method A: Full-time in the project** | An employee dedicates 100% of his/her working time to the project. <br> **Staff costs = total of the gross employment cost** | • Employment document and/or job description declaration (Programme template) **including the full-time involvement in the project** <br> • No registration of the working time (e.g. time sheets) required. |
| **Method B: Part-time assignment with a fixed percentage of time worked on the project per month** | An employee dedicates a fixed percentage of his/her working time to the project. <br> **Staff costs = fixed percentage x monthly gross employment cost** | • Employment document and/or job description declaration (Programme template) **setting out the % of involvement of the employee per month.** <br> • No registration of the working time (e.g. time sheets) required. |
| **Method C: Part-time assignment with a flexible number of hours worked on the project per month[9]** | An employee dedicates a flexible share of his/her working time to the project. The applicable <u>hourly rate</u> per year shall be calculated by dividing the latest documented annual gross employment costs by 1.720 hours. <br> **Staff costs = number of hours actually worked on the project x hourly rate obtained through 1720 method** | • Registration of the working time (e.g. time sheets) providing **covering 100% of the actual working time of the employee**. <br> • Calculation of the hourly rate (dividing the latest document gross employment costs by 1.720 hours) for the related reporting period. |
| **Method D: Contracted on an hourly basis** | An employee is contracted on an hourly basis and dedicates a certain number of hours to work on the project. <br> **Staff costs = number of hours worked on the project x hourly rate stated in the employment document** | • Employment document **including the hourly rate**. <br> • Registration of the working time (e.g. time sheets) providing covering 100% of the actual working time of the employee. |

It is to be underlined that the above categories refer to the **relation of the employee vis-à-vis the project** and not to the employer.

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[9] Following a Programme decision and in order to  simplify and secure the project's staff cost calculations, calculation method C does not apply to projects approved from the third call for modular projects.

Partners from previously approved projects already using method C are highly encouraged to consider reporting staff costs in their next declarations using method B and following the guidance included in section "How to modify the method of calculation chosen?" of the present factsheet.

Information appearing in the present Programme Manual concerning calculation of costs and audit trails must be made available to FLC.

## How to apply each method of calculation of staff costs?

The following is a detailed description of each of the available methods, as well as examples that are intended to assist in their understanding and use. In case of doubt, contact the JS.

Before making any decision on the method(s) to be used please check all the methods here after detailed, the relationship of the employee with the partner organisation and how the partner is organized internally in order to ensure that the administrative requirements of each chosen method can be respected.

★ **Method A:** Calculation of costs of **staff working full-time** in the project

Staff member that dedicates 100% of its working time for the project: all his/her month gross employment cost must be allocated to the project. No further method of calculation is needed.

**The full-time assignment to the project must be mentioned** in the employment document (and/or in the appointment decision/contract) or in the job description declaration (Programme template).

**EXAMPLE:**

➲ **Employee 1:** New staff member contracted for the project implementation of an Interreg MED project. He/she is working only in this project.

The calculation of the staff costs will be the following one:

Monthly gross employment cost: EUR 2.000

*Staff costs claimed: EUR 2.000*

The calculation must be done for each month of project implementation, based on the real monthly gross employment costs paid by the partner organisation.

★ **Method B:** Calculation of costs of **staff working part-time** in the project, **with a fixed percentage of time worked** on the project per month

Staff members employed by the partner to work part of their time on the project according to a fixed percentage of time per month: the staff cost claimed must be calculated by **applying the percentage stipulated in the employment document** (and/or in the appointment decision/contract) or in the job description declaration (Programme template) **to the month gross employment cost**.

Partners should take into consideration that even in case of occasional and limited involvement of staff, method B can be applied. In any case the monthly percentage of involvement should be calculated based the quantity and the frequency of the involvement (Using the compulsory Programme template and based on a realistic estimation of **the percentage of participation per month**).

**EXAMPLE***:*

➲ **Employee 2**: Staff with ten years of experience in the partner organisation. His/her employment document/job description declaration states a 25% of work time of work in an Interreg MED project.

The calculation of the staff costs will be the following one:

        Monthly gross employment cost: EUR 2.000

        % of time worked in the Interreg MED project established: 25%

        *Staff costs claimed: EUR 2.000 * 25% = EUR 500*

The calculation must be done for each month of project implementation, based on the real monthly gross employment costs paid by the partner organisation.

*If claimed staff costs are not adequate in quality and/or quantity to realised project deliverables and outputs, a correction may be applied based on the principle of proportionality.*

 

⭐ **Method C:** Calculation of costs of staff **working part-time in the project with a flexible number of hours worked** on the project per month[10]

Staff members employed by the partner to work part of their time on the project without a fixed percentage of time per month, the staff cost claimed must be calculated by **applying the real number of hours worked in the project in the concerned month to the applicable hourly rate per year.**

The applicable hourly rate per year must be calculated for each staff member by dividing the latest documented annual gross employment costs by 1.720 hours.

The « latest documented annual gross employment costs » corresponds to the available data for last 12 consecutive months of employment costs paid by the partner organisation.

If data concerning the last 12 consecutive months is not available (e.g. for staff employed by the beneficiary as from less than 12 months, or in sick or maternity leave at some point during the last 12 months), it is possible to extrapolate the employment costs of at least 3 consecutive months to a 12 month period for the establishment of the hourly rate (for more information see here below the example concerning « employee 4 »).

The partner has the possibility to use the same hourly rate calculated for the first reporting period throughout the project duration or to recalculate it for each reporting period.

In any case, for each reporting period a unique hourly rate must be used for each concerned staff member.

**Please have in mind that the recalculation of the hourly rate in each reporting period is administratively demanding time for both partner and controller. In order to avoid miscalculations or audit trail issues it is highly recommended to use the same hourly rate up to the end of the project.**

In order to know the number of hours worked by employees in the project, a **working time registration system (e.g. time sheets)** providing information on the number of hours spent per

The compulsory use of « 1.720 hours » for the calculation of the hourly rate is established by article 68.2 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

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[10] Following a Programme decision and in order to simplify and secure the project's staff cost calculations, calculation method C does not apply to projects approved from the third call for modular projects.
Partners from previously approved projects already using method C are highly encouraged to consider reporting staff costs in their next declarations using method B and following the guidance included in section "How to modify the method of calculation chosen?" of the present factsheet.

month on the project is required. More detailed information regarding the content of those documents can be found on the « audit trail » section further on.

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**EXAMPLE***:*

➲ **Employee 3:** Staff with several years of experience in the partner organisation.

The calculation of staff costs to be claimed will be done as follows:

> Latest documented annual gross employment costs: EUR 30.000
>
> Hourly rate: EUR 30.000 / 1.720 = 17,44 EUR/hour
>
> Number of hours worked by the employee in the project (as resulting from the time-sheet covering 100% of the employee worked time): 70 hours
>
> *Staff costs claimed: 17,44 EUR/hour \* 70 hours = EUR 1.220,8*

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➲ **Employee 4:** Staff with no annual gross employment costs to be used for the calculation or the hourly rate (s/he has been working less than a year from the last month of the reporting period, s/he has been in leave for a period during the last 12 months).

> Addition of the last available months' employment costs (3 months): EUR 9.000
>
> Extrapolation of the annual gross employment costs: 9.000 / 3 = EUR 3.000 x 12 = EUR 36.000 + any particular additional costs foreseen in national or internal rules regarding staff costs, for example additional holidays or so called "13th month" or equivalent (according to national legislation and organisation policy).
>
> Hourly rate: EUR 36.000 / 1.720 = 20,93 EUR/hour
>
> Number of hours worked by the employee in the project (as resulting from the time-sheet covering 100% of the employee worked time): 55 hours
>
> *Staff costs claimed: 20,93 EUR/hour \* 55 hours = EUR 1.151,15*

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★ **Method D:** Calculation of costs of **staff contracted on an hourly basis**

In the case of staff members employed by the partner to work on the project on an hourly basis, the staff cost claimed must be calculated by applying the real number of hours worked in the project in the concerned month to the applicable hourly rate in the employment document (and/or in the appointment decision/contract).

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**EXAMPLE***:*

➲ **Employee 5**: Staff whose contract states the number of hours to work in the project as well as the hourly rate. The costs will depend on the number of hours worked per month.

The staff costs should be claimed as follows:

Hourly rate stated in the employment document: EUR 20

Number of hours worked by the employee in the project (as resulting from the time-sheet covering 100% of the employee worked time): 50

*Staff costs claimed: 20 EUR/hour * 50 hours = EUR 1.000*

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## How to formalise the involvement of the staff working for the project and the method of calculation to be used?

In the framework of the Interreg MED Programme, two additional documents are needed to formalise the involvement of the staff working for the project: the **list of the staff working for the project** and the **job description declaration**. More detailed information regarding the content of those documents can be found on the « audit trail » section further on.

Both documents must be produced no later than when the first control of expenditure of the partner starts and submitted to the JS through the webplatform of the Programme within the first FLC certificate including staff costs. Documents may be updated in the cases foreseen here below for each new reporting period before the submission of the expenditure for the verification of the first level controller and any update must be submitted during the relevant reporting procedure.

## How to modify the method of calculation chosen?

At the end of each reporting period, the method of calculation for the following periods may be amended[11] in the cases provided here below:

- Changes in the staff working in the project (inclusion/exclusion of staff members);
- Changes in the employment documents, i.e. modification of the work contract and/or of the appointment decision;
- Changes in the level of involvement of the partner from one module to another in the case of multi-modular projects, foreseen in the approved Application Form or approved by the Programme (project modification);
- Changes in the participation of the partner organisation in the project, based on a modification of the project approved by the Programme (project modification);
- Changes in tasks and responsibilities of the employee.

**To go from method C to method B….**

1) Verify that the involvement period declared in the list of staff is coherent with the reality and the project implementation dates.
2) Update the Job Description Declaration (Programme template), specifying the date of entrance into force of the update (this date shall correspond to the starting date of the implementation period from which the modification is done).
3) Print, sign and stamp (if needed) and inform your LP, so the document would be uploaded in the webplatform.

**A limit to modifications to be respected is that a staff member affected part-time with a fixed percentage (method B) may not be then assigned part-time with a variable number of hours (method C).**

The modification cannot intervene in the middle of a reporting period, except for cases where the working time of the staff member in the partner organisation changes (change of employment document), tasks and responsibilities of the employee change based on the approval of new projects or the closing of on-going projects in the framework of the Interreg MED Programme, or for cases of *force majeure*[12] . In those specific cases, changes must be properly argued and justified in the job description declaration (Programme template), and the request must be approved by the JS.

**ATTENTION:** Kindly be reminded that any update of the method used requires the modification of the all the relevant documents accordingly, and their submission to the JS through the webplatform during the reporting procedure, in order to ensure the eligibility of the related costs.

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[11] The following modifications of method are possible, taking into consideration the guiding principles included in the present section: from A to B, or D; from B to A or D, from C to A, B and D; from D to A or B.
In the case of Method B, the modification concerns the percentage used.
Any modification to or from method D requires a modification of the employment document.
[12] *Force majeure* means finalizing or prolonged suspension of the employment relationship between the employee and the partner institution, and a work stoppage or extended leave. In case of force majeure, it is possible to assign, totally or partially, the tasks of the leaving staff member to one or more other employee(s) already working for the project; in that case the total of the new allocation percentage will be inferior or equal to the percentage declared for part time staff previously to the change. In case the entity chooses to replace the employee by another employee not already assigned to the project, the percentage of allocation to this new employee is also inferior or equal to the one of the replaced staff member.

Taking into account that the national regulation on this issue might be different from country to country, the Programme does not provide a generally applicable definition of the terms used. Partners are required to clarify this according to national law and their institutional regulation, as well as with their first level controllers, and report the conclusions to the JS before claiming such expenditures.

**Natural persons working for the partner institution:**

Payments to natural persons working for the beneficiary under a contract other than an employment/work contract may be assimilated to salary payments and such costs are eligible if:

- The person works under the beneficiary's instructions and, unless otherwise agreed with the beneficiary, on the beneficiary's premises;

- The result of the work carried out belongs to the beneficiary;

- The costs are not significantly different from those for personnel performing similar tasks under an employment contract with the beneficiary.

**If aforementioned conditions are not met, this expenditure must be allocated under budget line external expertise and services costs.**

Audit trail: The following main documents must be available for control purposes:

- **Employment document** (Employment/work contract and/or appointment decision/contract), including the name of the project, and **additional specific information depending on the type of method used**. When the standard practice in the partner organisation does not require the use of specific appointment decisions, Programme documents will be sufficient to establish such involvement.

- **List of the staff working for the project, COMPULSORY template made available by the MED Programme,** including the method of calculation to be used for each staff member), signed by the project coordinator.

The option chosen by the partner organisation for each staff member at the beginning of the project cannot be changed during the project implementation, except in specific cases mentioned in the Programme Manual.

- **Job description declaration, COMPULSORY template made available by the MED Programme,** including the involvement of the employee in Interreg MED projects, other Interreg projects or any other project financed by European, National and/or Regional funds shall be included[13]), signed by the project coordinator and the employee.

- Any other document that the first level controller might require for checking compliance with labour national legislation.

- **Specificities for methods A and B:**

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[13] For each "participation" partners are invited to include the following information: name of the Programme and of the related project, and the method used to calculate the staff costs (according to the rules established by each Programme). If the method "part time fixed percentage" is used, percentage allocated in the framework of each other project must be included as well.

Kindly note that if the employee uses the method "part time fixed percentage" in all his/her participations the addition of all % cannot exceed 100%. If the employee uses in his/her participations this method along with the method "flexible number of hours", a line covering the % allocated to related projects must be included in the working time registration system (e.g. time sheets), in order to verify that the allocation to the projects do not exceed the work time of the employee.

**In the framework of the Interreg MED Programme it is highly recommended to use the same calculation method for a staff member participating in several projects.**

Be reminded that in case of methods A and B, what must be controlled is that the total % of allocation per month included in the Job Description Declaration is respected. The split by WP is something that should be carried out by the partner to be able to declare costs according to the breakdown of the budget approved, and not to exceed the approved budget and respect the budget flexibility rules established by the Programme.

The split of the monthly % of involvement per WP can be established in the Job Description Declaration or by any other means acceptable for the FLC. Partners are invited to include this information as a comment when entering expenditure in Synergie CTE, including both the general monthly % applied to the project per and the total distribution by WP, i.e. method B, 30% allocated to the project (50% to WP1, 30% to WP3 and 20% to WP4).

• Payslips or other documents of equivalent probative value related to staff costs declared for the current reporting period.

• Proof of payment of salaries and the employer's contribution related to staff costs declared for the current reporting period.

• Percentage of time to be worked on the project per month set out in the job description declaration (if not specified in the employment document or in the job description) (if applicable).

- **Specificities for methods C[14] and D:**

  • **Timesheets or equivalent working time registration system,** providing information on the number of hours spent per month on the project. The time registration system must cover 100% of the actual working time of the individual, including holidays, sick leaves, time worked in other EU projects or tasks.

  Moreover, the monthly timesheet to record the actual time worked on the project must:

  - Be filled in separately for each employee involved in the project;
  - Indicate the number of monthly hours worked for the project;
  - State briefly the activities performed within the project;
  - Be signed by the employee and his/her supervisor.

  • Document justifying the calculation of the hourly rate, including the detail of the « latest documented annual gross employment costs » used, including the proof of payment (for the 12 months period).

  • Payslips or other documents of equivalent probative value related to the 12 months period used for the calculation of the « latest documented annual gross employment costs ».

  • Proof of payment of salaries and the employer's contribution related to the 12 months period used for the calculation of the « latest documented annual gross employment costs ».

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**NOTE TO PROJECT PARTNERS**

When entering an expenditure in Synergie CTE, do not forget to include a comment describing the nature of the expenditure (what? where? when? why? how? for whom?), so your Lead Partner, First Level Controller and the programme authorities may understand the amount and its link to the project.
For example, Travel mission – Mr. X attending to Steering comm. & kick off meeting / Rome 23-25.05.2019

In the case of staff costs reported with method B, include the name of the staff member, its total percentage allocated to the project and, if relevant, the participation in other WPs, ex. Mr. X, method B 25%, from which WP 1 : 10% and WP 2 : 15%.

For further tips and guidance, kindly see the Synergie guide « HOW TO ENTER AN EXPENDITURE IN SYNERGIE CTE ».

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[14] Following a Programme decision and in order to simplify and secure the project's staff cost calculations, calculation method C does not apply to projects approved from the third call for modular projects.
Partners from previously approved projects already using method C are highly encouraged to consider reporting staff costs in their next declarations using method B and following the guidance included in section "How to modify the method of calculation chosen?" of the present factsheet.

## BUDGET LINE 2. OFFICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENDITURE

Office and administrative expenditure covers operating and administrative expenses incurred by the beneficiary and necessary for the implementation of the project.

Eligible cost items under this budget line are (exhaustive list):

a) Office rent;

b) Insurance and taxes related to the buildings where the staff is located and to the equipment of the office (e.g. fire, theft insurances);

c) Utilities (e.g. electricity, heating, water);

d) Office supplies (e.g. paper, tonner, pens, folders, tables, chairs, reading lamps, flipcharts, etc.);

e) General accounting provided inside the beneficiary organisation;

f) Archives;

g) Maintenance, cleaning and repairs;

h) Security;

i) IT systems (operating/administrative IT services of general nature, linked to the implementation of the project);

j) Communication (e.g. telephone, fax, internet, postal services, business cards);

k) Bank charges for opening and administering the account or accounts where the implementation of the project requires a separate account to be opened;

l) Charges for transnational financial transactions.

The office and administrative budget line includes equipment for general office use, for which the exclusive use in the project cannot be demonstrated. In consequence, this equipment shall not be allocated under the equipment budget line. Please refer also to section Budget Line 5. Equipment expenditure.

Office and administrative expenditure shall be reimbursed by the Programme according to a flat rate of **15 % of eligible staff costs.** No detailed budget needs to be planned for this budget line since **the expenditure is automatically calculated by the on-line monitoring tool.**

**None of the expenditure included in the previous list can be reported as expenditure in any other budget line and direct costs falling under this budget line are not eligible.**

## Audit trail:

By applying the 15% flat rate option, partners do not need to document that the expenditure has been incurred and paid, neither that the flat rate corresponds to the reality.

**Attention: If direct staff costs used as calculation basis for determining office and administrative expenditure are found to be ineligible, the determined amount of office and administrative costs will be recalculated and reduced accordingly**.

## BUDGET LINE 3. TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION COSTS

Costs under this budget line refer to the expenditure on travel and accommodation of the **staff of the partner institution** for missions essential for the effective implementation of the project (e.g. participation in project meetings, project site visits, meetings with the Programme bodies, seminars, conferences, etc.).

Eligible cost items under this budget line are (exhaustive list):

a)   Travel costs (e.g. public transport tickets, travel and car insurance, fuel, car mileage, toll, and parking fees);

b)   Costs of meals;

c)   Accommodation costs;

d)   Visa costs;

e)   Daily allowances.

Any cost item listed in points a) to d) which is covered by a daily allowance shall not be reimbursed in addition to the daily allowance.

When an employee from the partner institution (not involved in project implementation) is invited to participate in a project event, travel and accommodation costs shall be allocated under budget line travel and accommodation cost, as far as a specific document justifying the participation exists.

Travel and accommodation costs of external experts (including invited speakers, experts and chairpersons of meetings) and service providers, as well as those related to associated partners and in-house companies, can be only claimed under the **external expertise and services budget line**. Please refer to the information of this budget line.

> Projects should foresee travel and accommodation costs for participation in events organised by other entities in which they might participate

Kindly bear in mind that**, during the drafting of the proposal**, the following activities may need some budget allocated under the travel and accommodation costs category: participation in events organised by the Interreg MED Programme, National Authorities, Horizontal Projects, other MED and Interreg projects working on the same subjects, etc. and that some of the latter may take place outside of the MED area.

**General principles of expenditure allocated under travel and accommodation budget line:**

- Travel and accommodation costs must be clearly linked to the project and be essential for effective delivery of the project activities.
- Travel and accommodation costs must be definitely **borne by the partner organisation.** Direct payment by a staff member of the partner organisation must be supported by a proof of reimbursement from the employer.
- The cost-efficiency should be ensured, taking into account the entire cost of the mission (travel cost, staff costs related to the travel, etc.).
- Maximum daily rates for hotel and subsistence should be respected, in accordance with the national eligibility rules[15], **despite of the project partner legal status, public or private**.
- Daily allowances covering any of the costs referring to travels, meals, accommodation or visa (as listed above) cannot be claimed and reimbursed additionally to the daily allowance.

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[15] Kindly be reminded that the threshold to be respected may be different from one country to another.
For specific information about the threshold to be respected for each partner, please contact your National Authority, National Contact Point or visit the national information page at the website of the Interreg MED Programme.

In the case of staff members of the partner organisation (e.g. policy makers, directors, high hierarchy staff, etc.) invited to participate in project events, which do not participate in project implementation, a specific document must justify their participation. In such cases, only expenditures related to travel and accommodation are eligible. Staff costs is not eligible.

- If the partner's structure uses *per diem*, these can be accepted provided that the same requirements are respected as for daily allowances.
- Expenditure related to checked baggage and carbon footprint offset are eligible provided the cost is included or calculated in the price of the flight ticket.
- Services contracted by the beneficiary for arranging travel and accommodation of staff working on the project (e.g. travel agencies, etc.) can be claimed under travel and accommodation budget line.
- Rent-a-car used by staff can be claimed under travel and accomodation budget line provided that the same External Expertise requirements are respected.
- Unused travel tickets are not eligible, irrespective of the reason of the cancellation of the travel.
- Cancellation fees are eligible.
- Travel and accommodation costs of staff of organisations involved in the project as associated partners can be eligible, as long as they are finally borne by a partner organisation, and should be claimed under budget line External Expertise and Services. In the case of in-house companies, please check budget "4. SERVICES AND EXTERNAL EXPERTISE".

### Travels outside of the Interreg MED area

Travel and accommodation costs linked to activities taking place **in EU regions outside the MED area** are eligible only if they are indicated in the approved Application Form or **previously authorised by the MA/JS.**

Travel and accommodation costs linked to activities taking place in **non-EU regions outside the MED area** are eligible only if they are previously authorised by the MA/JS when justified.

ATTENTION:

The request for the MA/JS approval of a travel outside of the MED area must bear at least the following information:

- Title and type of the event, dates, place, content and potential public/participants. Agenda of the event must be attached.
- Relevance of the event to the project and the Programme.
- Principle of additionally, justification that the participation in the event is essential for the project implementation.
- Name of the employees that will participate in the event and type of participation (attendance, speaker, organisers, etc...).
- Estimated cost of the travel for each participating staff.
- If needed, fees or any other charges to be paid.

Kindly be reminded that IPA countries participating in the Interreg MED Programme are considered as MED area, and in consequence no approval for travelling to these territories is needed.

**It is recommended that travels outside the Programme area and the EU are kept limited as the focus is the cooperation in the transnational MED area.**

For more information on the location of project activities please refer also to factsheet "PARTNERS CO-FINANCING AND LOCATION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES".

Audit trail: The following main documents must be available for control purposes:

- Signed mission request/authorisation stating the name of the employed person, date/duration, place and scope of the mission (according to the internal policy of the partner organisation, e.g travel order).

- Agenda or similar of the meeting/seminar/conference.

- In the case of travels outside of the MED area, Application Form or approval by the JS.

- Travel invoices paid directly by the project partner's institution, tickets and all other original documentary evidence (e.g. invoice of travel agent, hotel bills, travel tickets).

- Proofs of payment (e.g. extract from a reliable accounting system of the partner organisation, bank statement).

- Daily allowance claims (if applicable).

- Reimbursement request from the employee, either based on daily allowance or on real cost (in the case of costs borne by a staff member of the partner organisation).

- Travel invoices paid by an employee claiming on real costs basis, tickets and all other documentary evidence (e.g. bus or metro tickets, meal receipts).

- Proof of effective reimbursement to the staff member (if applicable).

- In case of use of own car: reimbursement request through mileage sheet, according to national procedures and agreed values.

- Travel report or equivalent memo.

- Any other document that the first level controller might require for checking compliance with national legislation.

## BUDGET LINE 4. EXTERNAL EXPERTISE AND SERVICES COSTS

Costs under this budget line refer to external expertise and services provided by a public or private body or a natural person outside of the partner organisation. The external experts and service providers are sub-contracted to carry out certain tasks or activities which are essential for the implementation of the project (e.g. studies and surveys, translation, promotion and communication, services related to meetings and events). External expertise and services costs are paid on the basis of contracts or written agreements and against invoices or requests for reimbursement.

Eligible cost items under this budget line are (exhaustive list):

Activities such as FLC costs, subcontracting, travel and accommodation of persons not working as staff for the project fall under this budget line

a) Studies or surveys (e.g. evaluations, strategies, concept notes, design plans, hand-books);

b) Training (e.g. venue and trainers);

c) Translations;

d) IT systems and website development, modifications and updates (e.g. setting-up and/or update of a project IT system or website);

e) Promotion, communication, publicity or information;

f) Financial management;

g) Services related to the organisation and implementation of events or meetings (including rent, catering or interpretation);

h) Participation in events (e.g. registration fees);

i) Legal consultancy and notarial services, technical and financial expertise, other consultancy and accountancy services;

j) Intellectual property rights;

k) Verification under Article 125(4)(a) of Regulation (EU) N 1303/2013 and Article 23(4) of Regulation (EU) M 1299/2013 (i.e. First Level Control costs);

l) Certification and Audit costs on Programme level under Articles 126 and 127 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 (i.e. Second Level Audit costs);

m) Provision of guarantees by a bank or other financial institution where required by Union, national law or the Programme;

n) Travel and accommodation for external experts, speakers, chairpersons of meetings and service providers;

o) Other specific expertise and services needed for the project.

When preparing your proposal, kindly bear in mind the following activities that should be allocated under the external expertise and services budget line: control of expenditure borne by the partners (First Level Controller), evaluation of the project, sub-contracted management and communication activities, translation, organisation of events and project meetings, travel and accommodation of speakers, stakeholders and possible associated partners.

In the case of associated partners, it is recommended to detail in the Application Form which of the partners will bear the expenditure incurred by each one of these bodies. For more information on associated partners, please refer to the related section.

Even if the Programme does not set formal thresholds for this budget line, the share of external expertise at project level **should not exceed 50% of the total eligible budget,** as beneficiaries of a project should be the actual implementers of the project.

**General principles of expenditure allocated under external expertise and services budget line:**

In the case of beneficiaries planning to allocate the majority of their budget to an in-house body, it is recommended to place the in-house body as a partner of the project.

- External expertise and services must clearly and strictly be essential to the effective implementation of activities in the project.
- Eligibility of costs for external expertise and services is subject to the full respect of EU, Programme and national (including stricter institutional) public procurement rules and must comply with the principles of transparency, non-discrimination and equal treatment. For further information, please refer to factsheet on public procurement.
- External expertise and services have to be duly specified in Application Form by describing at least the nature of the expertise/service, the link to the relevant activity as listed in the working plan and the related budget of the concerned project partner. External expertise and services contracts of over EUR 30.000 not foreseen in the Application Form must be approved by the JS in advance.

  ATTENTION: The request for the JS approval of External expertise and services contracts of over EUR 30.000 must bear at least the following information:

  - Type and main object of contract and selecting procedure;
  - Relevance to the project and related activity;
  - Principle of additionally, justification that the service is essential for the project implementation;
  - Estimated cost of the contract.

- No sub-contracting between project partners or associated partners is allowed.
- Contractual advances in accordance with normal commercial law and practice, stipulated in a contract between the partner and the expert/service provider, supported by receipted invoices can be reported and claimed only after the confirmation the service has been properly and timely delivered. These costs are eligible only if they are submitted with the payment (first or final as foreseen in the contract) of the provided services.
- Costs referring to project-related tasks sub-contracted by the beneficiary to in-house bodies, including staff and travel and accommodation cost, as well as costs referring to cooperation between public bodies, are eligible under this budget line as long as they are charged on a real costs basis – thus without any profit margin – and they comply with the applicable public procurement provisions (in line with the legal status of the in-house body). For further information about national requirements, partners are invited to contact their National Authorities.
- Deliverables, promotion material and events must respect the publicity requirement as established in factsheet on the information and publicity rules.
- Gifts are eligible up to a maximum value of EUR 50 per item, they must be branded in accordance with Interreg MED Programme publicity requirement and they must be linked to promotion, communication, publicity or information activities.
- Awards to winners of competitions are eligible provided the link to the project is well justified, the award is necessary for successful project implementation, and the cost has been approved in advance by the JS. Monetary awards (prizes) are not allowed.
- Complementary activities to events (e.g. site visits) must have clear and demonstrable project relevance, otherwise costs linked to them are not eligible.

- Expenditure on legal disputes and litigation is not eligible.
- Travel and accommodation costs of external experts, (including invited speakers, experts and chairpersons of meetings) and service providers, as well as those related to associated partners, can be claimed only under the external expertise and services budget line. It is highly recommended that the travel and accommodation costs of external experts are directly borne by the partner organisation. If this is not the case, the partner must prove the reimbursement of those expenditure to the external experts.

**ATTENTION:** In order to allocate the costs mentioned in the last paragraph ALL general principles and audit trail of expenditure allocated under travel and accommodation budget line must be respected.

Audit trail: The following main documents must be available for control purposes:

- Evidence of the selection process, in line with EU, national or Programme procurement rules, depending of the amount contracted and the type of partner.
- Contract or a written agreement laying down the services to be provided with a clear reference to the project. For experts paid on the basis of a daily/hourly fee, the daily/hourly rate together with the number of days/hours contracted and the total amount of the contract must be provided. Any changes to the contract must comply with the public procurement rules and must be documented.
- Invoice or a request for reimbursement providing all relevant information in line with the applicable accountancy rules. For experts paid on the basis of a daily/hourly fee, the invoice must include a clear quantification of the days/hours charged, price per unit and total price.
- Outputs of the work of external experts or service deliverables.
- Proof of payment (e.g. extract from a reliable accounting system of the partner organisation, bank statement).
- Any other document that the first level controller might require for checking compliance with EU and/or national legislation.

## BUDGET LINE 5. EQUIPMENT EXPENDITURE[16]

Costs under this budget line refer to equipment purchased, rented or leased by a beneficiary, used exclusively to carry out project activities, and to small scale facilities or infrastructures which are essential for the implementation of the project.

Eligible cost items under this budget line are (exhaustive list):

a) Office equipment;

b) IT hardware and software;

c) Furniture and fittings;

d) Laboratory equipment;

e) Machines and instruments;

f) Tools or devices;

g) Vehicles;

h) Other specific equipment needed for the project.

Equipment allocated to the projects shall be identified within the following categories. Kindly note that each category has different rules that should be applied accordingly.

**1. Equipment for general office use** as computers, office furniture, printers, telephones, cameras, etc. necessary for the implementation of the project and used **exclusively** for project purposes.

Equipment for general (office) use for which the **exclusive use** in the project cannot be demonstrated shall be considered as not eligible, since it is already covered by the flat rate of the office and administrative expenditure budget line.

Equipment for general (office) use **shall be reimbursed as depreciable asset** in compliance with national accounting rules and internal accounting policies of the beneficiary. The full cost of such equipment is eligible **solely** in the case that the depreciation period is shorter than the time lap between the purchase of the equipment and the end of the project. In the case of equipment already in possession of the partner organisation, only the lap of the depreciation period overlapping the project implementation period may be reported.

**2. Thematic equipment** directly linked to (or forming part of) the project thematic activities, which will be used for the project implementation by beneficiaries and target groups in line with the project objectives.

Thematic equipment for which the exclusive use in the project cannot be demonstrated shall be charged **pro-rata** on the basis of a transparent method set in place by the beneficiary for allocating the share of its use in the project.

Thematic equipment **shall be reimbursed as depreciable asset** in compliance with national accounting rules and internal accounting policies of the beneficiary. The full cost of such equipment is eligible **solely** in the case that the depreciation period is shorter than the time lapse between the purchase of the equipment and the end of the project. In the case of equipment already in possession of the partner organisation, only the lap of the depreciation period overlapping the project implementation period may be reported.

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Costs of equipment for general office use not exclusively used for the project cannot enter under Budget Line 5. Equipment as they are already covered by the flat rate of the office and administrative expenditure budget line. Please refer also to section Budget Line 2. Office and administrative expenditure.

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[16] This budget line may include "small scale investments" costs in the case of a project including pilot activities and territorial experiences.

**3. Small scale investment** as facilities or infrastructures of limited size or scope, which are essential to the successful implementation of a pilot activity. Their **purpose** must be the demonstration of the feasibility and effectiveness of a proposed solution (e.g. services, tools, methods or approaches). This expenditure may refer either to an object (e.g. a light structure) that will be set up ex-novo or to the adaptation of an already existing infrastructure.

**This last option will be possible only in the framework of pilot activities. Costs for small scale investment outside the MED Programme area are not eligible.**

In case of doubt about how to allocate any expenditure, kindly contact the JS.

**SUMMARY TABLE**

|  | Equipment for general (office) use | Thematic equipment | Small scale investment |
|---|---|---|---|
| Definition and examples | Tools and devices purchased or already in the possession of a partner necessaries for the daily work of the project staff and/or need for carrying out certain specific project activities | Tools, devices and goods purchased or already in the possession of a partner, linked to (or forming par of) the project outputs necessaries for the successful implementation of a pilot activity | Facilities or infrastructures of limited size or scope necessaries for the successful implementation of a pilot activity. |
| Examples | Computers, office furniture, printers, telephones, cameras, IT hard and software, etc. | Tools and devices: Technical IT software, devices, laboratory equipment, machines, instruments, vehicles, exhibition equipment, etc.<br><br>Goods: fuel to run the equipment, planting seeds, animals, chemicals for a research activity, fluids, oxygen, metals, etc. | Light structures, space arrangement. |
| Exclusive use for the project | Yes | Not necessary | Yes |
| Amount to be claimed | In full, according to a depreciation plan | In full (if exclusively used for the project) or pro-rata (if shared use with other projects), according to a depreciation plan | In full, no depreciation plan needed |
| Activities linked to | Management WP | Content-related WP | Testing WP – Module 2 testing type of project |
| Timing | Purchased at the beginning of the project | Based on the calendar established for the related project activities | Based on the calendar established for the related project activities |

**EXAMPLE***: How to claim equipment costs?*

Equipment of general (office) use: In the case of a laptop used by the financial manager of the project, staff member of the Lead Partner working full-time on the project:

> 3 years project starting on March 2016
>
> Full cost of the laptop: EUR 1.000
>
> Depreciation plan: EUR 500 per year (2 years needed for claiming the total cost)

⮑ **Situation 1:** laptop purchased during the project implementation and used solely for the project implementation, the cost of the laptop may be claim using a depreciation plan. If the depreciation plan is longer than the project implementation, only the part depreciation plan covered by the project implementation may be claimed.

> Purchase date: March 2016 (starting date of the project)

*Amount claimed: EUR 1.000 (EUR 500 * 2 years) – EUR 250 in each of the 4 first 6-months reporting periods. Nothing to be declared in the last 2 6-months periods.*

⮑ **Situation 2A:** laptop purchased before the project implementation and used solely for the project implementation, only the part of the cost falling under the project implementation period may be claimed.

> Purchase date: March 2015 (on year before the starting date of the project)

*Amount claimed: EUR 500 (EUR 500 * 1 years) – EUR 250 in each of the 2 first 6-months reporting period. The first year of depreciation cannot be claimed because it didn't fall under the project implementation period.*

⮑ **Situation 2B:** laptop purchased before the project implementation and used solely for the project implementation, only the part of the cost falling under the project implementation period may be claimed, **with a depreciation plan of 5 years (EUR 200 per year)**.

> Purchase date: March 2015 (one year before the starting date of the project)

*Amount claimed: EUR 600 (EUR 200 * 3 years) – EUR 100 in each of each of the 6-months reporting period of the project. EUR 400 of the cost cannot be claimed under the project.*

The first year of depreciation cannot be claimed because it didn't fall under the project implementation period.

The last year of depreciation cannot be claimed because the depreciation plan is longer than the project implementation.

⮑ **Situation 3:** laptop not solely used for the project implementation, its use is shared with another staff member of the Lead Partner, the cost of the laptop cannot be claimed in any case because it is already covered by the flat rate of the office and administrative expenditure budget line.

Thematic equipment: In the case of a device used by a researcher to calculate forecasts and develop tenths in the framework of a content-related WP:

> 3 years project starting on March 2016
>
> Full cost of the device: EUR 20.000
>
> Depreciation plan: EUR 8.000 per year (2,5 years needed for claiming the total cost)

⮑ **Situation 4:** device purchased before or during the project implementation and used solely for the project implementation, the cost of the device may be claimed using a depreciation plan. If the depreciation plan is longer than the project implementation, only the part depreciation plan covered by the project implementation may be claimed.

Purchase date: March 2016 (starting date of the project)

*Amount claimed: EUR 20.000 (EUR 8.000 * 2,5 years) – EUR 4.000 in each of the 5 first 6-months reporting period. Nothing to be declared in the last one.*

➲ **Situation 5:** device purchased before or during the project implementation and not used solely for the project implementation, shall be charged pro-rata on the basis of a transparent method set in place by the partner for allocating the share of its use in the project.

Purchase date: March 2016 (starting date of the project)

% use in the Interreg MED project (on the basis of a transparent method): 50%

*Amount claimed: EUR 10.000 (EUR 4.000 * 2,5 years) – EUR 2.000 in each of the 5 first 6-months reporting period. Nothing to be declared in the last one.*

Small scale investment: In the case of the adaptation of an existing structure for the demonstration of the feasibility and effectiveness of a proposed solution in the framework of a pilot activity (Module 2 – testing type project; WP testing):

Full cost of the adaptation: EUR 15.000

➲ **Situation 6:** the full cost of the adaptation may be claimed. No depreciation plan is needed. All the expenditures related to the adaptation (service providers, materials, etc.) should be allocated under this sub-budget line.

*Amount claimed: EUR 15.000 – total amount claimed at once.*

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**General principles of expenditure allocated under equipment budget line:**

- Equipment must be clearly linked to the project and be essential for its effective implementation.
- All costs related to equipment budget line have to be duly specified in the Application Form by describing at least the nature and quantity of the equipment to be purchased, the link with the relevant activity as listed in the work plan and the related budget of the concerned project partner. During project implementation, purchase of any equipment or any small scale investment not explicitly mentioned in the Application Form will have to be subject to prior approval by the JS.
- Eligibility of costs for equipment is subject to the full respect of EU, Programme and national (including stricter institutional) public procurement rules and must comply with the basic principles of transparency, non-discrimination and equal treatment. For further information, please refer to the factsheet on public procurement and the one on Controls and Audits.
- Full purchase cost of equipment that, according to national and internal accountancy rules, is not depreciable (e.g. low-value asset) is eligible.
- If the equipment is rented or leased, depreciation does not apply, and in consequence full cost can be reported.
- Equipment expenditure cannot refer to items already financed by other EU or third party subsidies (in order to exclude potential double funding).
- In the case of equipment already in possession of the partner organization, only the part of the equipment that has not be depreciated can be claimed. If the equipment has already been depreciated in full no cost can be claimed.

- Where applicable, equipment items must be branded in accordance with EU and Programme publicity requirement rules as provided in the factsheet on Information and Publicity rules.
- Contractual advances in accordance with normal commercial law and practice, stipulated in a contract between the beneficiary and the supplier, supported by receipted invoices (e.g. advance payment for the purchase of a machinery being part of an investment) can be reported and claimed only after the confirmation the equipment and the service (if applicable) has been properly and timely delivered. These costs are eligible only if they are submitted with the payment (first or final as foreseen in the contract) of the provided equipment and services (if applicable).
- Equipment cannot be purchased, rented or leased from another project partner or associated partner within the project.
- Purchase cost of second hand equipment is eligible provided that no assistance has been received for it from the ESI Funds, its price does not exceed the generally accepted price on the market in question, and the equipment has technical characteristics necessary for the project and complies with applicable norms and standards.
- In the case of purchase, ownership of the equipment cannot be changed for at least 5 years after the end of the project.

**Equipment of general (office) use: specific eligibility requirements:**

- Equipment of general (office) use costs can be claimed only if it is used **exclusively** in the framework of the project.
- Equipment for general (office) use for which the exclusive use in the project cannot be demonstrated (e.g. an office computer which could be used also by other staff of the beneficiary institution in addition to those working in the project) is not eligible. **A compulsory template** to prove the exclusive use of the equipment in the framework of the project is **provided by the Programme**.
- Equipment of general (office) use may be reimbursed in full, according to a depreciation plan in compliance with national accountancy rules and internal accountancy policies of the partner. The full cost of such equipment is eligible solely in the case that the depreciation period is shorter than the time lap between the purchase of the equipment and the end of the project.
- The existence of office equipment and its clear identification should be verified in the framework of on-the-spot verifications on projects performed by First Level Controllers, as explained in the related factsheet. In case that equipment items are not checked on-the-spot, controllers shall verify their existence by other means of verification (as e.g. photo documentation).

**Thematic equipment: specific eligibility requirements:**

- Thematic equipment for which the exclusive use in the project cannot be demonstrated shall be charged pro-rata on the basis of a transparent method set in place by the beneficiary for allocating the share of use in the project.
- Thematic equipment may be reimbursed in full, according to a depreciation plan in compliance with national accountancy rules and internal accountancy policies of the partner. The full cost of such equipment is eligible solely in the case that the depreciation period is shorter than the time lap between the purchase of the equipment and the end of the project.

- The existence of thematic equipment and its clear identification to the project must be verified on-the-spot by controllers for all items with a purchase cost equal or above EUR 2.000. In case of equipment items below such thresholds, on-the-spot verifications might be substituted by other means of verification (as e.g. photo documentation).

**Small scale investments: specific eligibility requirements:**

- In case of small scale investments, the full purchase cost is eligible.
- All the expenditure related to small scale investment (service providers, materials, etc.) should be allocated under this sub-budget line.
- The existence of small scale investments and its clear identification to the project must be verified on-the-spot by controllers in any case.
- Costs for small scale investment outside the MED area are not eligible.
- Ownership of the small scale investment cannot be changed for at least 5 years after the end of the project.

Audit trail: The following main documents must be available for control purposes:

- Approval of the purchase by the JS (if the element is not clearly mentioned in the approved Application Form).

- Evidence of the procurement process (announcement, selection, award) in line with the EU, national or Programme procurement depending on the amount of the contract.

- Photos of the equipment, including the branding.

- Invoice (or a supporting document having equivalent probative value to invoices, in the case of depreciation) providing all relevant information in line with the applicable accountancy rules.

- Calculation scheme of depreciation (if needed).

- Pro-rata method of calculation (if needed).

- Proof of payment.

- Any other document that the first level controller might require for checking compliance with EU and/or national legislation.

# 7. Other financial requirements

**INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION**

Responsibilities of Lead Partners and project partners related to information and communication measures (including a set of instructions for project communication and branding) are laid down in EU regulations[17] and specific Programme requirements must also be respected, all necessary information is available in the factsheet of the Programme Manual « PROJECT BRANDING, PROJECT INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY RULES ».

Please note that all information and communication rules apply to promotional material and are relevant for the organisation of meetings and events, the purchase of equipment and the realisation of small scale investments.

**Promotional giveaways (e.g. project gadgets) will only be eligible for funding if they are the only way to reach one or more of the defined target groups and objectives. Such publicity material must be allocated under external expertise and services budget line**

More details as well as guidance on information and communication requirements and the use of Programme branding is provided in the Programme website.

**VAT**

In accordance with Article 69 (3) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, VAT is not eligible except where it is non-recoverable under national VAT legislation.

VAT which is recoverable by whatever means cannot be considered as eligible.

In practice, if a partner can recover VAT (regardless whether it actually does it or not), all expenditure reported to the Programme has to be reported without VAT.

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[17] Articles 115-117 and annex XII of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 as well as in Articles 4-5 of the Implementing Regulation (EU) No 821/2014.

PROGRAMME MANUAL

# QUALITY EXPECTATIONS AND CRITERIA

# Synergies between modular and horizontal projects, links with Axis 4

The experience of the 2007/13 programming period has shown that even the best individual projects cannot provide sufficient impact to prompt "great evolutions" if they cannot rely on processes enabling permanent and structured thematic/cross-sector synergies at the Programme level.

In fact, often the projects themselves have requested the Interreg MED Programme authorities to strengthen their capacity to create, stimulate and stabilize stronger structured synergies.
As a consequence, from 2010, the Programme evolved towards strategic, capitalization and thematically targeted calls that eased and tested an early process of clustering and capitalized project results.

This development facilitated the exploration and exploitation of synergies and complementarities therefore it enabled a sounder understanding of the achievements and gaps at transnational level per thematic priority.

The results of this exercise provided important elements for the construction of the new 2014/20 Interreg MED Programme architecture. The new architecture foresees 3 different types of interconnected projects: modular, horizontal and a top down governance project.

Modular projects seek to develop results with an impact at a more limited level while the horizontal project will cluster and capitalize these results at the transnational level, through the development of thematic communities.

The origin of the concept of Horizontal Projects lies in the observed lack of overall coordination and overview by theme. Hence, the objective is to provide summaries and synergies interesting to project developers but also political decision makers– eventually even the citizens in general. The Horizontal projects are thus foreseen to provide answers to the difficulties mentioned above, to contribute directly to improve the visibility of the results of all projects towards national and European institutions, to provide knowledge and to be used within new contexts and territories.

The interaction between modular and horizontal projects to create thematic communities and networks as key suppliers of "messages" from the Interreg Programme in the Mediterranean, is the main challenge that the Programme shares with its projects. This challenge is linked with the governance approach of the Programme priority axis 4 (Enhancing Mediterranean governance).

Indeed the Programme also promotes a reinforced capacity of national and regional authorities of the Participating States to actively contribute to the governance processes in the Mediterranean on strategic sectors with an evidence based approach. This will be achieved through an axis 4 top-down project involving the Programme national and regional authorities.
This new dimension of cooperation will involve more the Participating States and will be less related to the field level players /stakeholders but should instead provide a clear added value for the transferability of the results of projects throughout the Interreg MED area, in line with national and European priorities. In this framework the modular and horizontal projects will feed the axis 4 top-down project with the results they will develop in the course of their implementation.

2

Based on Programme requirements such as the Cooperation Programme, the Programme Manual, the thematic Terms of Reference, information and guidance provided by Programme authorities, it should be clear to all beneficiaries that the commitment provided in their application form to implement the project co-financed by MED, needs to be respected.

This is true primarily for "multimodular and horizontal" projects which will be subject to milestone assessments but also for single module projects. Relevant contribution to Programme indicators will need to be ensured by all project participants!
Failure to meet targets foreseen for performance framework could indeed have consequences in terms of ERDF /IPA funding. Thus, any deviation of the application form shall be justified to the SC Interreg MED and validated before its implementation, as stated in the Subsidy Contract and Partnership Agreement.

Beyond all technical issues, the improvement of the quality level of the projects and hence of the Programme is an asset to all actors contributing to Interreg MED.

# Basic principles

We need to answer together the challenges that concern territories at the local and regional level but equally on the level of the whole area of our Programme: **transnationality** remains the priority criterion and should be well understood and concretized in project goals and actions.
Wherever possible, priority should be given to common solutions to achieve real results with crosscutting partnerships.

These results should be adapted to other contexts in the Programme area, hence there is a strong need for **transferability**. The latter must not be understood only as a direct transferability within the territories concerned by the partnership (which is one of the objectives of implementation of certain modules) but also towards other areas, in the widest possible way.
The results are to be built according to this requirement, which can sometimes mean adapting the format with which the deliverables are produced to the reference context (internal or external), albeit keeping the same content.

The coordination and harmonization skills, and the share of tasks and roles between modular and horizontal projects will be crucial to the success of these aspects. Only a solid understanding between the horizontal project (on the respective specific objective) and the modular project community referring to it, will respond adequately to provide synthesis, communication, consolidation, capitalization and transfer for the application of achieved results in all territories of the Mediterranean.

Naturally, we cannot produce satisfactory results if all **technical and institutional capacity** is not deployed within the partnership including external support, which explains that a self-assessment process or external evaluation is required in the project implementation to fill any gaps.
Furthermore, it is essential that following project objectives and expected results, the partnership can cover all categories of beneficiaries who represent the selected target groups. This will depend primarily on project accumulated skills. Beneficiaries should not be identified too generically. A target group should involve any potential player directly concerned by the

results of the project who is committed to the evolution of the relevant sector by his own profession, specialization or political responsibility.

All of the above has naturally a chronological sense resulting to **deadlines**. Compliance with these deadlines is also paramount to ensure maximum efficiency for your activities and results, of course combined with all the other criteria listed above.

It is therefore very important that the partnership is able to get organized and kicks off as quickly as possible once the result of the selection is known. This means concretely that the managerial and administrative part (coordination, contracts, human resources, public procurements, contacts with first-level control body...) should be rapidly transformed into the flow of information needed within each partner organization, and correspondingly assigned responsibilities.

A final quality criterion for a successful implementation, closely related to maintaining deadlines, is the respect of the financial commitment, the **budget**. Too often, cash flow difficulties that jeopardize the active participation of partners are discovered late, and too often they affect a key activity for the success of the project.

**<u>Please, keep in mind that the Interreg MED Programme will not make any advance payments of the ERDF co-financing</u>!**

Any participating structure should properly measure the risk that this entails with respect to its obligations towards the Interreg MED Programme but also in regard to its own functioning.

Finally, an important cash flow is required in order to avoid the **reimbursement of your ERDF co-financing becoming a condition of survival of the structure**, preventing the progress of the project in which you participate.

All these criteria have a more operational nature, directly related to a successful implementation of your project. Nevertheless, the horizontal principles, transversal to all your actions and activities: sustainable development; equality and access for all, should also be taken into account. The Programme has issued relevant guidance in the Manual to help the projects secure the respect of the listed principles all throughout the project lifetime.

Though the main quality criteria for the implementation of a project are considered within the implementation framework of each individual project, the types of synergies that are expected between modular projects and horizontal projects are of the same nature. Subsequently, also the synergies between thematic projects and the Axis 4 projects and how these synergies should increase the quality of the Programme results should be kept as a priority.

# Accurate solutions for real needs

The project idea must address a common need among the involved territories with concrete actions that will enable sustainable joint solutions.

This main objective (usually one for a project), set in the long-term, must clearly contribute to the chosen programme specific objective[1].

The specific objectives of the project (not more than three) ought to be as **precise** as possible and relevant for the programme and the involved regions. They should be ambitious although still being realistic to be reached within the timeframe of the project. These objectives will be clearly defined in the Application Form, and their achievement within the project duration will need to be demonstrated.

The **transnational cooperation** means added value to address the need identified in the involved territories. It should clearly activate synergies going even beyond the project partnership: just compiling up local and/or regional actions is therefore not sufficient for a project to be successful.

The project must be **innovative**. It should be built under the perspective of capitalising any relevant experiences and results (from activities financed by Interreg MED or other programmes) in order to go farther and improve existing/create new solutions. This point of departure has to be fully identified, as well as the strategy for its use in the development of the project proposal.

**Sustainability** of a project is another key element. A transnational cooperation project has a "start-up" function: It is thought to be the first step of further developments (e.g. a larger investment) and improvements (e.g. an improved policy). The uptake of results, the deployment at a larger scale and/or the mainstreaming is a crucial success factor to be already considered during project development. **Communication** also plays an important role in achieving sustainability.

Last but not least, it is worth considering whether other **EU programmes**, beyond MED, could better fit your project idea.

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[1] For more information please refer to section on MED Programme strategic framework.

PROGRAMME MANUAL

# STANDARDS FOR ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTIONS

The check of activities and productions (outputs and deliverables) will be based on a set of quality standards that will have to have been applied during their implementation and production.
For format and content of deliverables, please refer to the related Factsheet on Reporting procedures - How to report project's productions?

# What are the common standards for activities?

The Interreg MED programme has identified 3 main standards.
Within a transnational cooperation programme, activities undertaken must meet three main standards:

- Coordination
- Transnationality
- Transferability

**What does coordination mean?**

All actions must be coordinated by a partner in charge. Coordination is not natural, it must be supported by strong organisational skills; and modalities of organisation must be agreed with and communicated to the whole partnership in time.

None of these activities will happen naturally. It takes a leader to build common understanding, provide guidelines and monitor the process to ensure its effectiveness.

Common definition of the work to be done, practical guidelines and ways of monitoring the process must be set beforehand, involving the entire partnership in the process. The result of this procedure should be documented and serve to describe how to perform the activity and give all the practical common instructions that each partner needs to apply in order to ensure a harmonised work.

Activities must be coordinated to ensure the steadiness of the outputs

From the beginning of the project, all partners in charge of WP and/or activities must:

- Have a complete overview of the development of the activity (partners' responsibilities and work load, time table, expected results, deliverables, etc.)
- Provide partners with precise instructions on the WP implementation

**Therefore, it is requested that all main activities be provided with the methodology or the practical instructions that will ensure their proper coordination.**

Hereafter some indicative specific guidelines/methodologies that can be produced by and aimed at partnership:

Project management and monitoring guidelines and methodologies, produced by MED 2007-2013 projects, are available in the MED library

- Procedures for administrative management
- Procedures for internal communication
- Procedures for monitoring project activities
- Internal training material
- Practical instructions for conducting a study
- Practical instructions for conducting a pilot action
- Protocol for testing a tool, a service
- Communication and dissemination plans
- Evaluation of project outputs and results protocol, plans,

**What does transnationality mean?**

2

All actions of a cooperation project should be transnational. This implies that approach, actions and results transcend the limitation to the sub-national boundaries of the territories of intervention of the partners. Approach is shared by the partnership, actions are complementary within the partnership and the whole partnership will benefit from the results of the actions. Transnational perspective should prevent projects from being limited to a patchwork of local initiatives.

Therefore, the actions must meet criteria such as:

- Sharing common methodology for performing actions of the same type between partners territories
- Ensuring complementarity of work
- Ensuring comparability of data and information to permit a transnational synthesis and use of results.

**What does transferability mean?**

All protocols and results must be transferable within the MED area and therefore, the actions should be replicable and / or adaptable. The partnership must ensure that the following criteria are met:

- Comparability of data and information
- Reliability and traceability of data and information
- Strength of methodology and protocols used
- Relevance of format
- Clear definition of target

Therefore, follow-up procedures include the **systematic delivery by the partnership of methodologies applied for the achievement of key deliverables and outputs**. This is necessary to ensure the quality of activities, outputs and deliverables and facilitate the evaluation by the Programme.

The **raw data** should also be provided. The formats of all productions should be guided to maximise their potential for reuse. Open data approach should be considered as the rule when compiling or delivering information.

> All productions should refer to the methodology applied and the data used for their achievement

# What are the standards for productions?

In transnational cooperation projects, any type of output and deliverable requires the development of common understanding of types of productions. The common understanding is based on the definitions presented in the Glossary of the Programme that includes the standards that will be used to check the compliance of the productions with the Programme's expectations. Besides, the partnership, within the guidelines/methodologies for implementing activities, must decide on and describe the specific standards required for each deliverable/output produced within the project.

# What are the standards for outputs contributing to output indicators?

Following the intervention logic of the Programme, contributing to Programme output indicators demonstrates contribution to the Programme's objectives and results.

Besides, following the projects' achievements in terms of objectives met constitutes for the Programme a measure to reach the objectives set.

The projects' direct contributions to Programme objectives and indicators are the OUTPUTS related to the project theme that match the Programme expectations in terms of standards and quality. Therefore the quality of the production and the reporting of outputs will be closely checked and supervised especially for those that are meant to be computed as indicators.

The quality standards will be checked thanks to evidences/deliverables supplied during the reporting procedure. If evidence is not sufficient, the quality of the outputs will be discussed between the project and the JS as part of the progress report and payment claim procedure.
As regards to the outputs that are meant to contribute to the Programme indicators, only outputs that will demonstrate sought quality features will be validated and computed for the values of the output indicators.
Evidences/deliverables of produced output to be supplied are detailed in the related Factsheet on Reporting procedures

Specific standards have been developed by the Programme to ensure that outputs declared as contributing to the Programme output indicators can be counted as such by the Programme, and be reported to the European Commission when necessary. The criteria that should be considered are listed in the table below.

| Indicators | Types of units | Criteria | Methodology for criteria assessment |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of operational instruments to favour innovation of SMEs | Transnationally designed, tested and used:<br>*support service for auditing, assessing and providing solutions through face-to-face tailored meetings<br>*support service for auditing, assessing and providing solutions through online human support<br>*support service for auditing, assessing and providing solutions through implemented facilities such as centres<br>*support service<br>*roadmap for implementing living labs experiences<br>*self-service online automated decision making tool for auditing, assessing and implementing solutions<br>*Self-service (disseminated or accessible) guidelines for auditing, assessing and implementing solutions<br>*teaching/learning material (content/activities/assessment) activated through face to face teaching campaign<br>*teaching/learning material (content/activities/assessment) activated through learning platform with automated feedback<br>*teaching/learning material (content/activities/assessment) activated through learning platform with tutor feedback<br>*disseminated teaching/learning material | To be taken into account only instruments demonstrating following features:<br>*operationality (not demo);<br>*testing before implementation;<br>*result of test available (improvement incl.);<br>*used with targets;<br>*FB from users to assess benefit | Mandatory delivery of:<br>*operational tool (not demo);<br>*report of testing if tested in previous projects;<br>*if testing not done yet, detailed protocol for testing including tester profiles;<br>*report on testing and improvements to be implemented;<br>*list of targets with profiles (via registration form via web platform);<br>*survey used to measure benefit for beneficiaries;<br>*results of survey and evaluation report |

| Number of enterprises receiving grants | Entreprises being active partners | Entreprises receiving an ERDF contribution through the MED Programme | Mandatory delivery of:<br>*Signature of Partnership Agreement<br>*Financial execution of partner in SYNERGIE CTE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support | End-users benefitting directly from implemented instruments | To be taken into account only end-users registered via a registration form providing the minimum information requested by the Programme (see template) Simple declarative numbers won't be taken into account | Mandatory delivery of:<br>*type of support: Collective action / Common service / individual support<br>*description of support provided;<br>*support material;<br>*list of entreprises benefitting from implemented instruments;<br>*cost estimated per supported enterprise |
| Number of transnational innovation clusters supported | Transnational innovation clusters benefitting directly from implemented instruments | To be taken into account only targets transnational innovation clusters supported and reported through a registration form providing the minimum information requested by the Programme (see template) Simple declarative numbers won't be taken into account | Mandatory delivery of:<br>*list of supported clusters via registration form<br>*description of supported clusters<br>*description of provided support<br>*completed survey<br>*cost estimated per supported cluster |
| Number of available planning tools to manage and monitor energy consumption in public buildings | Available planning tools: planning tools include specific and targeted actions plans, IT solutions allowing data collection for auditing and assessment, assessment grids, monitoring and management tools for public authorities, building managers and users, guides and other information supports | To be taken into account only planning tools demonstrating availability to target public | Mandatory delivery of:<br>* planning tool<br>* demonstration of availability<br>* provision of dissemination means |
| Number of strategies to develop energy consumption management plans for public buildings | Common transnational strategy providing a common vision and setting objectives and priorities on a defined timing. The formulation of the strategy must be carried out with involvement of relevant stakeholders (targeting the policy level) and must foresee provision for its subsequent implementation. | To be taken into account only strategies demonstrating the set standards | Mandatory delivery of:<br>* methodology for drafting the strategy<br>* Strategy document<br>* list of relevant stakeholders involved including their location (reported through registration form) |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of targets participating in capacity raising activities on energy efficiency | End-users benefitting directly from implemented capacity raising activities | To be taken into account only end-users registered via a registration form providing the minimum information requested by the Programme (see template) Simple declarative numbers won't be taken into account | Mandatory delivery of: *type of activity *capacity raising material; *list of targets benefitting from implemented activities |
| Number of regions and sub-regions engaged (through charters, protocols, MoU) in developing energy efficiency plans/strategies | Number of NUTS 2, NUTS 3, LAU 1 or LAU 2 signing charters, protocols and MoU aimed at developing energy efficiency plans or strategies | To be taken into account only targets reported through a registration form providing the minimum information requested by the Programme (see template) Simple declarative numbers won't be taken into account | Mandatory delivery of: * list of relevant stakeholders involved including their location (reported through registration form) * Signed documents (charter, protocol, MoU) |
| Number of planning tools to develop energy plans including local RES | Available planning tools: planning tools include specific and targeted actions plans, IT solutions allowing data collection for auditing and assessment, assessment grids, monitoring and management tools for public authorities, building managers and users, guides and other information supports | To be taken into account only planning tools demonstrating availability to target public | Mandatory delivery of: * planning tool * demonstration of availability * provision of dissemination means |
| Population of islands covered by plans | Inhabitants of areas covered by developed plans | To be taken into account only targets reported through a registration form providing the minimum information requested by the Programme (see template) Simple declarative numbers won't be taken into account | Mandatory delivery of: * list of relevant targets involved including their location (reported through registration form) * Plans developed |
| Population of rural areas covered by plans | Inhabitants of areas covered by developed plans | To be taken into account only targets reported through a registration form providing the minimum information requested by the Programme (see template) Simple declarative numbers won't be taken into account | Mandatory delivery of: * list of relevant targets involved including their location (reported through registration form) * Plans developed |
| Number of models to develop action plans including local RES in energy mix | A transnational simplified representation of a system to explain and describe how to develop an action plan | To be taken into account only models demonstrating availability to target public | Mandatory delivery of: * model * demonstration of availability * provision of dissemination means |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of regions and sub-regions engaged (through charters, protocols, MoU) in increasing share of local RES in energy mix | Number of NUTS 2, NUTS 3, LAU 1 or LAU 2 signing charters, protocols and MoU aimed at developing energy efficiency plans or strategies | To be taken into account only targets reported through a registration form providing the minimum information requested by the Programme (see template) Simple declarative numbers won't be taken into account | Mandatory delivery of: * list of relevant stakeholders involved including their location (reported through registration form) * Signed documents (charter, protocol, MoU) |
| Number of instruments available to foster the use of LC transport solutions, including multimodal ones | Instruments: tools and services created or adapted from existing ones for transport users and managers (traffic information, integrated information systems on public transports, car sharing management tools…) | To be taken into account only instruments demonstrating following features: *operationality (not demo); *testing before implementation; *result of test available (improvement inc.); *used with targets; *FB from users to assess benefit | Mandatory delivery of: *operational tool (not demo); *report of testing if tested in previous projects; *if testing not done yet, detailed protocol for testing including tester profiles; *report on testing and improvements to be implemented; *list of targets with profiles (via registration form via webplatform); *survey used to measure benefit for beneficiaries; *results of survey and evaluation report |
| Number of models to develop urban plans including low carbon transport and multimodal connections soft actions | A transnational simplified representation of a system to explain and describe how to develop an action plan | To be taken into account only models demonstrating availability to target public | Mandatory delivery of: * model * demonstration of availability * provision of dissemination means |
| Population involved in awareness raising activities | Inhabitants of areas benefitting directly from implemented awareness raising activities | To be taken into account only targets reported through a registration form providing the minimum information requested by the Programme (see template) Simple declarative numbers won't be taken into account | Mandatory delivery of: *type of activity *awareness raising material; *list of targets benefitting from implemented activities |

| Number of urban areas engaged (through charters, protocols, MoU) in developing urban plans/strategies including low carbon transport and multimodal connections soft actions | Number of NUTS 2, NUTS 3, LAU 1 or LAU 2 signing charters, protocols and MoU aimed at developing urban plans/strategies including low carbon transport and multimodal connections soft actions | To be taken into account only targets reported through a registration form providing the minimum information requested by the Programme (see template) Simple declarative numbers won't be taken into account | Mandatory delivery: * list of relevant stakeholders involved including their location (reported through registration form) * Signed documents (charter, protocol, MoU) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of instruments available to enhance the development of sustainable and responsible tourism | Instruments: tools and services created or adapted from existing ones for enhancing the development of sustainable and responsible tourism | To be taken into account only instruments demonstrating following features: *operationality (not demo); *testing before implementation; *result of test available (improvement inc.); *used with targets; *FB from users to assess benefit | Mandatory delivery of: *operational tool (not demo); *report of testing if tested in previous projects; *if testing not done yet, detailed protocol for testing including tester profiles; *report on testing and improvements to be implemented; *list of targets with profiles (via registration form via webplatform); *survey used to measure benefit for beneficiaries; *results of survey and evaluation report |
| Number of tourist destinations covered by a sustainable tourism evaluation tool | Areas covered by developed tools | To be taken into account only targets reported through a registration form providing the minimum information requested by the Programme (see template) Simple declarative numbers won't be taken into account | Mandatory delivery of: * * list of located areas covered by activities (reported through registration form)) * Tourism evaluation tool the destinations are covered by |
| Number of strategies applying sustainable tourism management criteria | Common transnational strategy providing a common vision and setting objectives and priorities on a defined timing. The formulation of the strategy must be carried out with involvement of relevant stakeholders (targeting the policy level) and must foresee provision for its subsequent implementation. | To be taken into account only strategies demonstrating the set standards | Mandatory delivery of: * methodology for drafting the strategy * Strategy document * list of relevant stakeholders involved including their location (reported through registration form) |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of regions and sub-regions engaged (through charters, protocols, MoU) in implementing sustainable tourism plans | Number of NUTS 2, NUTS 3, LAU 1 or LAU 2 signing charters, protocols and MoU aimed at implementing sustainable tourism plans | To be taken into account only targets reported through a registration form providing the minimum information requested by the Programme (see template) Simple declarative numbers won't be taken into account | Mandatory delivery: * list of relevant stakeholders involved including their location (reported through registration form) * Signed documents (charter, protocol, MoU) |
| Number of joint governance plans | Governance plan: set of roles, responsibilities and processes to involve relevant stakeholders in the conservation goals (objectives and legal framework, stakeholders conditions for participation in management bodies, conflict management procedures, governance activities and reporting,…) | To be taken into account only plans demonstrating availability to target public | Mandatory delivery of: * governance plan * demonstration of availability * provision of dissemination means |
| Surface of habitats supported to attain a better conservation status | Hectares benefitting directly from implemented activities | To be taken into account only targets reported through a registration form providing the minimum information requested by the Programme (see template) Simple declarative numbers won't be taken into account | Mandatory delivery of: * list of located areas covered by activities (reported through registration form) * Report on activities resulting in improving conservation status |
| Number of protected areas engaged (through charters, protocols, MoU) in implementing management strategies | Number of protected areas signing charters, protocols and MoU aimed at implementing management strategies | To be taken into account only targets reported through a registration form providing the minimum information requested by the Programme (see template) Simple declarative numbers won't be taken into account | Mandatory delivery of: * list of relevant protected areas involved including their location (reported through registration form) * Signed documents (charter, protocol, MoU) |

# Ownership of project results, outputs and deliverables (Intellectual property rights)

According to article 13 of the subsidy contract, the LP and all the other project partners should ensure that all the deliverables and results of the project should be accessible and available for free to the general public in a usable format.

The Managing Authority and any other relevant Programme stakeholder can use them for information and communication purposes.

An agreement regulating the cooperation between each Modular project and the related specific objective Interreg Med Horizontal project is made available by the JS.

PROGRAMME MANUAL

# PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

version 2,
approved by the Monitoring Committee on 31 July 2018

| V1 | - | January 2017 |
|---|---|---|
| V2 | Specification that the Programme rule (request three offers for contracts over EUR 5,000) is a recommendation. | 31 July 2018 |

The acquisition by means of a public contract of works, supplies or services from economic operators is subject to rules on public procurement. Such rules aim to secure transparent and fair conditions for competing on the common market and shall be followed by the beneficiaries when procuring the above mentioned services, works or supplies on the market.

Rules may differ depending on the kind of goods and/or services to be purchased, as well as the value of the purchase and the legal status of the awarding institution. They are set at the following levels:

- EU rules (i.e. public procurement directives[1] for ERDF partners)
- National rules[2]
- Interreg MED Programme rules and recommendations

Public authorities and other institutions falling under the scope of application of the procurement laws[3] must comply with the applicable rules on public procurement.

With regard specifically to **Interreg MED Programme**, for all contracts with contracting amounts between **EUR 5 000,00** (excl. VAT) and the threshold set by the applicable EU or national rules, beneficiaries are highly encouraged to ask **at least three offers** from three different providers. Documented proof need to be kept as part of the project audit trail.

In the case where the partner must comply with national or internal stricter rules, these stricter rules apply.

Both previous rules apply to all partners, public or private, ERDF or IPA.

**For IPA partners**, IPA participating countries may opt to make use of the Practical Guide to Contract Procedures for EU External Actions (PRAG). The version of PRAG to be used shall be the one in force at the time of the initiation of the relevant procurement procedure. IPA beneficiaries may contact their national authority for further information.

Institutions not falling under the scope of application of the public procurement laws (e.g. private companies for most procurement activities as defined under the EU regulation) are exempt from the application of public procurement laws. Notwithstanding this, such institutions (e.g. private bodies, non-governmental organisations, international organisations) **have to observe the basic principles on which the procurement rules are based and ensure the best value for money or, if appropriate, the lowest price**. Please check national rules and guidelines in this respect.

It is strongly recommended to become familiar with the applicable procurement rules and, if necessary, seek the advice of procurement experts early enough before launching an award procedure.

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[1] More information on EU rules on public procurement can be found at the following link:
*http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/publicprocurement/index_en.htm*
[2] National rules include laws on public procurement, related delegated or implementing acts or any other generally applicable legally binding rules and decisions.
[3] Namely "contracting authorities" within the meaning of Directive 2014/24/UE.

Errors in public procurement are among the most frequent errors detected in the Interreg projects. For this reason public procurement must receive special attention from project partners[4] and in the verifications of first level controllers (FLC). It is important that once established the value of the public procurement, the project partners check the value of the works, goods or services against the EU threshold. The procurement procedures can be open, restricted, negotiated or carried out through direct contracting. **Whenever possible, green procurement guidelines should be applied and project partners should take the occasion to reflect on social inclusion measures too**. In any case, the project partners need to keep a proper documentation on the procurement procedure including but not restricted to:

- Initial cost estimate made by the project partner to identify the applicable public procurement procedure;
- A copy of the procurement publication/announcement;
- A copy of the Terms of reference;
- Offers/quotes received by the bidders;
- Report on the assessment of the bidders;
- Information on the acceptance or rejection of the bidders;
- Complaints by bidders submitted to the project partner, if any;
- Contract stipulated with the chosen bidder, including any amendments;
- Invoices of the external consultants and proof of payment;
- Other pieces of information, if relevant.

The FLC will check the above listed documentation in the verification of expenditure and might request also additional information to be able to confirm that:

1) there has been **no artificial splitting of the contract objective or value** in order to avoid public procurement procedure;

2) **in case of issued amendments or extensions**: there has been no significant change in in the overall objective, content or economy of the tender that would invalidate the initial tender procedure;

3) in case there no public tender was carried out there is a documented justification of this decision;

4) in case an **in-house** was contracted or there were cases of **inter-communal cooperation** there is enough documented evidence that this kind of choice is justified and that only real costs are charged in the project costs and correctly allocated to the right cost categories.

In case of Interreg projects also communication and publicity requirements need to be respected and in case of public procurements with a potential relevance for bidders in other countries, when carrying out a public procurement procedure, the project partners need to respect the principles of transparency, non-discrimination and effective competition.

The FLC, second level controllers and auditors will check also that the contracts are in line with the selected offers.

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[4] For further information on the avoidance of the most common errors in project funded by the European Structural and Investment Funds, please consult the public procurement guidance for practitioners (available at http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/publications/guidelines/2015/public-procurement-guidance-for-practitioners).

PROGRAMME MANUAL

GREENING
AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

All project partners cooperating under any of the Programme themes must comply with the Sustainable Development Strategy, adopted by the European Council in June 2006, as well as the respective national Sustainable Development Strategy. In the assessment of applications, consideration is given to the project's adherence to the principles and objectives of sustainable development. Furthermore the projects shall ensure that equality between men and women and the integration of gender perspective is taken into account and promoted throughout the preparation and implementation of the projects.

The projects in the Interreg MED Programme shall take appropriate steps to prevent any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during its preparation and implementation. In particular, accessibility for persons with disabilities shall be taken into account throughout the preparation and implementation of the projects.

The Interreg MED Programme intends to follow-up concretely the measures and actions taken by the projects to apply the horizontal principles: sustainable development, equal opportunities and equality between men and women. With reference to those there are greening and social inclusion measures that could be developed in all Interreg MED modular and horizontal projects.

Among these measures, the JS will design an online self-assessment questionnaire to be filled in by the project partners at the beginning and at the end of the project to assess the progress and give further proposals and guidance.

In the following few pages you will find information on greening for the project publications and a checklist for organizing green and inclusive events. The above mentioned self-assessment grid will be more detailed and approved projects will get a direct link to the online tool.

# Project publications and dissemination products - greening

- Publications can be disseminated electronically. Printing of publications should be foreseen only if strictly necessary and only if following a specific dissemination plan.
- Publications should be printed for external communication purposes (if needed only) on both sides and on recycled paper. For electronic publications, an "eco-friendly" version (less colours, more compact text, less pages) should be made available.
- Publications should be printed where they are going to be distributed or close enough in order to minimize transportation distances.

# Checklist for organizing green and inclusive events

### BEFORE THE EVENT

- Consider if a phone or a video conference could be organised instead of a meeting.
- in case of a smaller meeting, prefer the Work Cafè procedure
- green public procurement procedures are applied

### SETTING UP AND RUNNING THE EVENT

- Electronic means (e.g. e-mail, website) are used rather than printed materials for pre-meeting and follow-up communications.

- Participants are encouraged to use sustainable ways of travelling by providing the following information:

- For short trips favour train to bus/plane and if train is not an option, favour car/bus to plane.
- Participants are encouraged to share the transport means with other participants: the organizers of the event can provide a platform for them to communicate and organize ride-sharing. Otherwise the participants are encouraged to use the existing car-sharing and car-pooling platforms
- Walking and cycling are promoted as well
- The organizers of the event can provide website addresses to offset the environmental costs of travel.
- Information on the greening efforts made at the event is provided electronically before and after the meeting.
- Participants' bags/packs are avoided or produced locally using recycled material, and are reusable.
- Pens are provided only upon request, are made of a high content of recycled material, and are refillable.
- In case participant's packs cannot be avoided, only strictly necessary material is included. Copying/printing is available upon request at the location of the event.
- All material produced for the event is designed and produced in a generic way (no date or location mentioned) to allow them to be reused for other events.
- The start and end of the meeting are adjusted to the schedules of public transportation means.
- The caterer is informed on the exact number of participants and is able to re-evaluate the quantities needed to avoid waste.
- A dedicated area is provided for participants to return material that can be re-used (such as badges).

In the sense of "full accessibility for all" accessibility for all participants is ensured, guidelines for accessibility are met and the venue is adapted for people with reduced mobility (e.g. access to buildings and stages with low ramps, acoustics appropriate for hearing aid users and working loop systems in theatres and reception desks).

- A variety of seating space allocation is provided (e.g. space for deaf people to sit next to sign language interpreter, hearing-aid users to benefit from the use of an induction-loop).
- A system that allows all guests to access the catering service is put in place: long queues for food are avoided, enough chairs for people to sit down are available, people with disabilities or special needs are provided with the necessary facilities

OTHER SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE CONSIDERATIONS

The organizers of the event

- Consider the representation of diversity in event literature and among hosts/speakers to reflect that of the target audience
- Provide personal assistants if a large number of disabled people are attending
- Promote local attractions and amenities to the participants to benefit the local economy and give the necessary information to participants

FOOD AND DRINKS, CATERING

The organizers of the event take into account the following:

- Locally grown and produced food and drinks are used and menus reflect the seasonal products of the region.
- The quantity of meat products offered is minimized and at least one vegetarian option is offered (as the production of meat involves considerably more $CO_2$ than non-meat products).
- Tap water is used and served in jugs instead of in single-use bottles.
- In case fish or other marine or aquaculture products are served, it is certified that they have been caught or produced using sustainable measures. More info can be sought on the WWF website or on www.seafoodchoices.com
- The use of reusable dishes, cutlery, glassware and linens is ensured and aluminium foil avoided.
- The use of single-use bottles for beverages is avoided. The use of any plastic decoration is avoided as well.
- The surplus of edible food should not be wasted but rather donated.

LOCAL TRANSPORT

Clear instructions are provided to participants on appropriate public transport and/or walking arrangements from point of arrival or departure (railway station, airport) to the venue, accommodation, town centre, etc. This is provided by e-mail shortly before the event and can be additionally displayed at the venue.

LOCATION AND ACCOMMODATION

Priority is given to locations available in the premises of one of the project participants in order to reduce the need for staff to travel. The hotels are located near public transportation and as close as possible to the conference facilities (preferably within walking distance or reachable by public transport).

LINKS

UNEP publications and website
http://www.unep.fr/shared/publications/pdf/DTIx1141xPA-GreenMeetingGuide.pdf

The EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme – EMAS
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/index_en.htm

ICLEI publications and website
http://www.iclei-europe.org/topics/sustainable-events/

European green office website
http://www.eugreenoffice.eu/en/

Alternatives to Skype
http://www.pocket-lint.com/news/131512-5-best-alternatives-to-skype-apps-with-im-video-calls-and-file-sharing

Ecolabels by product
http://ec.europa.eu/ecat/

# PROJECT BRANDING, INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY RULES

FORWARD NOTE

For the 2014-2020 programming period, the Interreg MED Programme has adopted a new approach for project management that drives new orientation on project identities and on (expected) results rather than on processes or simple outputs. Each project will be part of a thematic community of projects running during the whole programme period and to which they will contribute. Project partners will have to develop their relations in the spirit of the "MED community" in order to allow the development of a true "community identity". In this sense, the project communication approach will be based on thematic communities rather than on the identity of the project itself. Following this new approach, project partners as well as Programme bodies will permanently be interconnected in one consistent and single manner.

# PROJECT BRANDING, INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY RULES

All projects need to observe a series of obligatory publicity rules and branding guidelines for all their communication actions. **These requirements are laid down in the Annex XII of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and the Annex I of the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 821/2014.**

The fundamental principle is that project beneficiaries must inform the general public and all those involved in the operation about the assistance received from the European Union.

EU and Programme branding illustrative elements have to be clearly and visibly displayed in all published materials and/or activities addressed to the public. These obligations stand for:

- printed publications: reports, promotional handouts;
- audio-visual: videos, audio podcasts, channels;
- digital or electronic materials (websites, web tools, videos, podcast, etc.);
- events (e.g. on PPT presentations, agendas, bags and other conference material);
- Stationary and office materials.

The observance of these rules is critical for the co-financing of the communication materials.

LOGOS

Following these rules, the Interreg MED Programme has adopted a single branding for project logos that includes the following elements:

- THE INTERREG LOGO (symbol of the *European Territorial Cooperation* objective), associated with the EUROPEAN UNION flag, in accordance with the graphic standards, and the reference to the European Union;
- THE PROGRAMME LOGO ("Mediterranean" naming with the brush stroke symbol coloured with gradient that includes all its four axis colours).
- THE INTERREG MED THEMATIC COMMUNITY LOGO (eight communities) or the related PROJECT'S LOGO in the case of Modular projects.

This approach allows to comply with the EU eligibility rules as to the use of the EU emblem and logos.

All communication materials developed by Interreg MED projects need to display the project logo provided by the Programme and when necessary add the reference to the European Regional Development Fund. Failure to do so will result in ineligibility of expenses

a) The thematic community logo

The Horizontal projects must use the thematic community logo (see model here under) as well as a thematic community naming created by the Programme, instead of a project name.

When a publication or a communication action is developed by several projects from the same thematic community, it is not necessary to display all the project logos on the communication materials. A list of project names with the "thematic community logo" can be displayed instead.



b) Modular Project's logo

The Modular projects must use the following logo model here under:



c) Using the logo

A branding package with all the versions of the project logo will be available in JPG and EPS files. EPS versions are mostly used by professional illustrators and with professional illustration software while JPGs can be used also for WORD, PPT, EXCEL and similar standard software.

A brand book explaining the logo design rules will be available for download on the Programme website as long as with a branding package for each project. Nevertheless, please take notice here of some **unacceptable modifications of the original versions:**

**The following is not allowed:**

- Disproportionate resizing;
- Rotation of the logo combination;
- Modifications as regards typography and colour;
- Changes between the different elements of the logo.


**Positioning, size, background and transparency of the logo**

- Display the logo in a visible position, top central or other (e.g. on the outside, front or back cover for brochures, on the starting page of the project website, on the cover of a DVD, etc.).
- Use a white or suitable, one coloured background. If placed on coloured background, foresee a contrast between the background colour and the logo. In case the logo combination is placed on a photo, a suitable, not overloaded background shall be chosen.
- Also, the logo must be placed in its non-transparent version (this means that inside the frame the background remains white). The use in its transparent version can only be accepted on a suitable, one coloured and light background.

- For reduced size materials (PEN Drives, for example), use the minimum size: 1,55 cm x 2,55cm so as the textual elements remains readable. If it is not possible, please contact the JS Communication unit to find solutions to avoid any ineligibility.
- No vertical version of the logos is foreseen.

### REFERENCE TO EU CO-FINANCING

All projects **co-financed by the ERDF** should be aware that the reference to the fund must appear on all promotional materials, if otherwise they will not be eligible.

a) Projects with partners from EU Member States only shall use the following sentence:

«Project co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund»

The ERDF reference can be written in any language used in the cooperation area. In this case, it must be also guaranteed that the transnational project approach will nevertheless be clear to the public (e.g. in textual reference and background descriptions). Moreover, it can be integrated in the text (for example in press articles, brochures...), added somewhere visible or simply added to the project logo.

When adding it to the logo, make sure to use the font Montserrat. This font can be downloaded for free via *http://www.fontsquirrel.com/fonts/montserrat*.

b) Materials co-financed by the IPA (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro)

No specific reference to the fund is necessary. **The project logo is the only compulsory element** in that it already includes the EU flag emblem and the reference to the «European Union» (as mentioned before).

### PROJECTS ACRONYM

The acronym chosen to identify the project (Horizontal and Modular) on Synergie CTE must not be longer than 12 characters. The choice of project acronym should respect a few guidelines:

- Be short and memorable;
- Not to repeat acronyms of previous projects, to avoid any confusion or mistakes with them;
- Be intuitive, meaning that it must correctly identify the project purpose or mission;
- Be easy to pronounce and "catchy". For this reason, technical information should be avoided, including Programme specific terminology, like "M1" (Module 1), or reference to the Interreg MED Programme (already included in the logo), for example.
- Be in lowercase for Modular projects. Upper case letters are reserved for Horizontal projects in order to respect the branding coherence.

As previously mentioned, Horizontal Projects will make use of a thematic community naming, instead of a project name in the logo. The partnership name can be used in descriptive texts of the communication materials and displayed in a place where it shall not overshadow the thematic community logo – e.g. in the footer – as "Interreg MED Blue Growth featured by 'project partnership name". The partnership name shall not be bigger than the thematic community logo.

### POSTER

According to the Annex XII of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, all approved projects should place a poster (of minimum A3 size) with information about the project including the financial support from the Union and the project logo, **at least at the Lead Partner's premises**, at a location readily visible to the public, such as an entrance area of a building.

In order to help project partners to comply with this obligation, the Programme will provide a Poster template available for download on the web platform.

All projects should send a photographic evidence of this poster display together with the first progress report.

BILLBOARDS AND PLAQUES

In the case of infrastructure investments receiving funding of more than EUR 500,000 specific illustrative requirements, set out in Annex XII of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, have to be adopted. More specifically, this relates to the production and the setting up of billboards and plaques at the relevant sites which shall contain the logo and references as set out above.

**In this very rare case, please contact the JS Communication Unit to adopt relevant solutions.**

PROJECT WEBSITE

The Programme will provide and host a complete ready-to-use website (calendar, document library, directory, tools, etc.) to each approved project. Shortly after their approval, the communication managers of the project will receive the elements to manage and configure their website (visuals, features, content, social networking, etc.).

Project websites will have to be updated on a regular basis and provide a short description of the project in English including its aims and results and highlighting the financial support from the Union.

The Programme will hold trainings and develop tutorials to illustrate the different features of the platform so as to help webmasters in using the web platform and to improve their performance and contents. However, projects can still work with specialised service providers for the development of graphics, content editing and translation or implementation of multimedia elements, in accordance with their communication strategy.

**As a consequence of this approach, no website development costs should be budgeted. Only staff costs for regular content updates should be considered.**

Projects developing specific web tools requiring a dedicated website that cannot be provided by the Programme can develop a specific website for this tool (to be checked with the Programme) as long as it complies with all the publicity rules of branding and funding mentioned before.

However, a link to the web tool must be placed in a visible place of the projects website in the Interreg MED platform and the update of the latter one must not be overlooked.

PARTNER INSTITUTIONAL WEBSITE

All project partners should publish on their institutional websites ("where such website exists") a short description of the operation, as set forth in the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 (Annex XII, Article 2.2 paragraph 2.a).

This description should be proportionate to the level of support, including its aims and results, and highlighting the financial support from the Union".  Partners should also include the project logo and the reference to the EU co-financing and, both set in a visible place and complying with the publicity rules herein detailed. A link to the project website in the Interreg MED platform should also be added.

EVENTS

The project logo, as well as a clear reference to the EU co-financing has to be used on agendas, list of participants, related publications, promotion materials and presentations. (Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013). During the events, projects are encouraged to place the project poster or a project banner in a readily visible place (e.g. the front of the meeting room).

PUBLICATIONS

All project publications, including brochures, newsletters, studies, articles and others must include the project logo and the reference to the EU co-financing. When this is not possible, for example, in scientific articles, conference proceedings or other publications, projects should explicitly mention the contribution from the EU co-financing and the Interreg MED Programme.

In addition, projects are strongly recommended to publish most essential results (or a summary of them) in the two official languages of the Programme: English and French in addition to the other languages.

PROMOTIONAL GOODIES

Promotional goodies can be a good way to raise awareness about a project. However, they should be produced only if they meet strategic objectives and are linked to a promotion strategy. Please take notice of some parameters to take into account when producing goodies:

- is it relevant for the promotion of my project?

- is it useful, creative and memorable enough?

- Is it green? It is strongly recommended to produce green goodies having in mind the fewer the better.

Again the golden rule: all promotional goodies should be branded with the project logo and the reference to the EU co-financing.

TIPS

- ⮕ To **avoid ineligibility** of any activity or product, you can countercheck the products with the programme's Communication Unit before printing.
- ⮕ A **communication handbook** on the techniques and PR specific activities can be found on the Programme website. The Interreg MED Programme will also offer communication trainings and seminars.

PROGRAMME MANUAL

# DESIGNING YOUR EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

FORWARD NOTE

For the 2014-2020 programming period, the Interreg MED Programme has adopted a new approach for project management that drives new orientation on project identities and on (expected) results rather than on processes or simple outputs. Each project will be part of a thematic community of projects running during the whole programme period and to which they will contribute. Project partners will have to develop their relations in the spirit of the "MED community" in order to allow the development of a true "community identity". In this sense, the project communication approach will be based on thematic communities rather than on the identity of the project itself. Following this new approach, project partners as well as Programme bodies will permanently be interconnected in one consistent and single manner.

# Introduction

Six months after their approval, Modular projects are requested to provide a communication strategy, together with the first progress report. Whereas, Horizontal projects must present a first draft version of their communication strategy including a communication plan (or activity plan), no later than 4 months after the project approval.

When designing their communication strategy, both Horizontal and Modular projects should carefully take into consideration the development of a true "community identity", thematic and Mediterranean, in order to create a greater awareness of results.

Bearing this in mind, there are three interactive levels that must regularly communicate and cooperate with each other:

- Transnational/Programme level;
- Thematic community/horizontal projects level;
- Project level.

Each level should find means of coordination and define their degree of intervention, as well as the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder in terms of communication activities and supports, definition of the communication strategy and media communication. Clear separation will allow enhanced complementarity and will help to avoid any overlapping.

The communication strategy of the Horizontal project must be set up in coordination with the Programme and with the Modular projects of its thematic community, through meetings, working papers or consultations. This positioning has the purpose to grant the strategy the coherence and adherence of every modular project to develop a clear understanding of mutual tasks and coordination methods. In this respect, the communication responsibilities of Horizontal projects can be summed up as the following, they must:

- Draw the communication strategy of the thematic community they are in charge of;
- Implement this communication strategy through an annual communication plan;
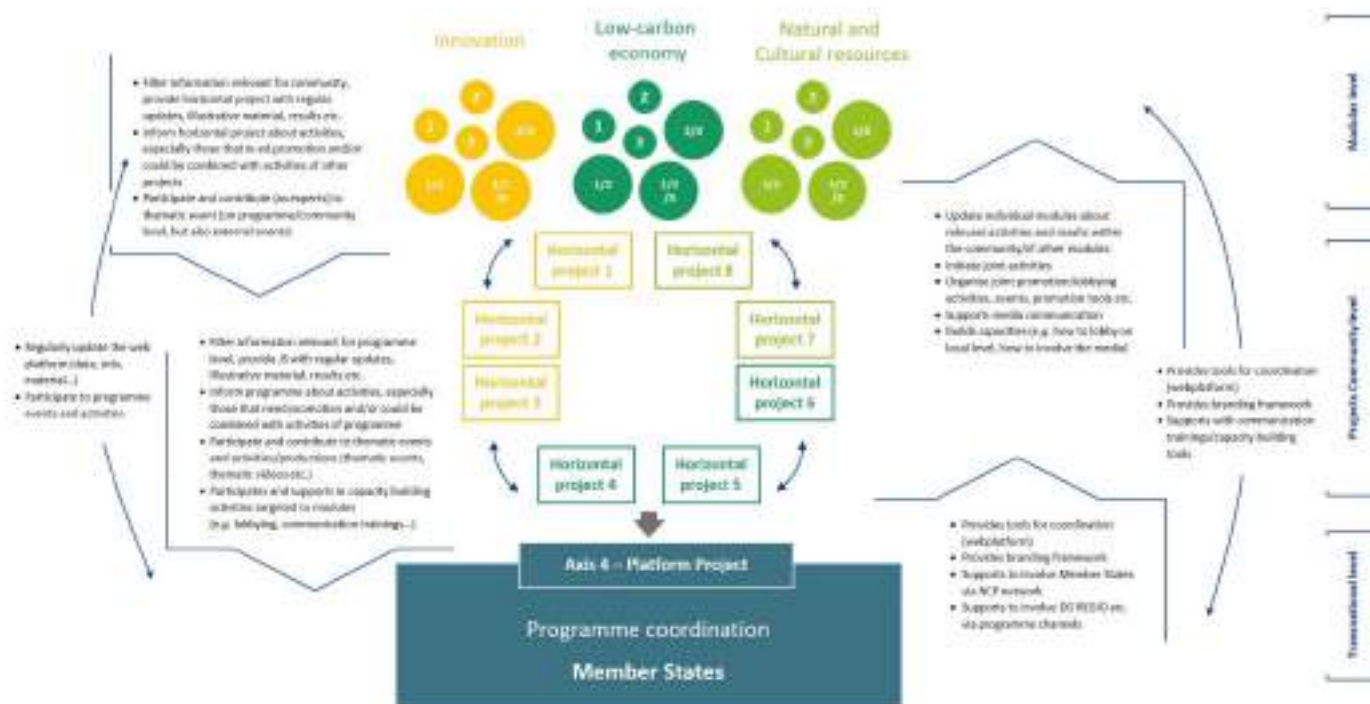- Coordinate this communication strategy between all the stakeholders (see part "internal communication).

**FIGURE 1: COMMUNICATION LEVELS OF INTERVENTION**

Either way, project partners are strongly advised to follow the recommendations detailed hereunder to draft their communication strategy that should be based on discussions and decisions involving all project partners. The communication strategy shall be short and precise and at least include the following main sections:

1. Strategic overview and situation analysis
2. Objectives
3. Target groups
4. Tailor messages
5. Communication channels and activities
6. Timeline
7. Financial and human resources
8. Evaluation

## Strategic overview and situation analysis

Project partners are strongly advised to perform a SWOT analysis beforehand. For this purpose, they need to list all the project's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in terms of communication. A SWOT analysis will help them look realistically at the project's communications environment and plan accordingly. Project partners can answer the following questions to undertake their SWOT analysis:

- STRENGTHS: What are the strengths of your project?
- WEAKNESSES: What are the potential weaknesses of your project? What could be damaging or negative?
- OPPORTUNITIES: What communications opportunities are there? Is there anything new, different, interesting or unique in your project that you could capitalise upon for publicity?
- THREATS: Are there any potential threats that your project could face? What might go wrong? How could this affect your communications and PR activities?

# Objectives

Communication needs to be goal-driven. We communicate to achieve or change something.

The communication objectives derive from the management objectives. Project partners are advised to build-up their communication strategy on the same grounds as their project strategy, in order to achieve better results and coherence.

Project's overall communication objectives should be expressed in short bullet point format and clearly indicate what the project communication will bring to the project.

It is important to define these objectives in a way to be able to measure the success of communication activities. This should be about setting SMART (specific, measurable, assignable, realistic and time-related) goals that are broad enough to allow flexibility and room to adapt to changing circumstances.

# Target groups

All projects need to communicate with a number of people who are – or might be – interested in their project and can have an influence on their ability to achieve their goals rapidly and efficiently.

Knowing your "target audience" is the main starting point of a communication strategy.  Meeting their different needs, perceptions and expectations is in fact a critical success factor of any effective communication strategy.


"Who is our target audience in the project?" is the first question that project partners should asked themselves. The target groups need to be identified as accurately as possible so as to ensure that the key messages are transferred to the right audience. For this purpose, it is advisable to list and map all the groups or segments of public and analyse their interest, their attitude and the best channels to reach this group to adapt their communication activities accordingly.

A stakeholder mapping will help prioritise stakeholders in terms of the strength of their interest and the degree of their influence. A good way to create a stakeholder map is the grid below, which shows at a glance which categories of stakeholder demand priority attention.

After listing the concrete target groups, this grid is used by inserting the names of groups and significant individuals in the four quadrants. There should be between **five and ten individuals in each quadrant**. The individuals **in the upper-right box are the ones that project partners should be focusing on**. However, projects should also try and therefore adapt their communication activities accordingly to make the groups of individuals located in the left hand box move into the right hand box.
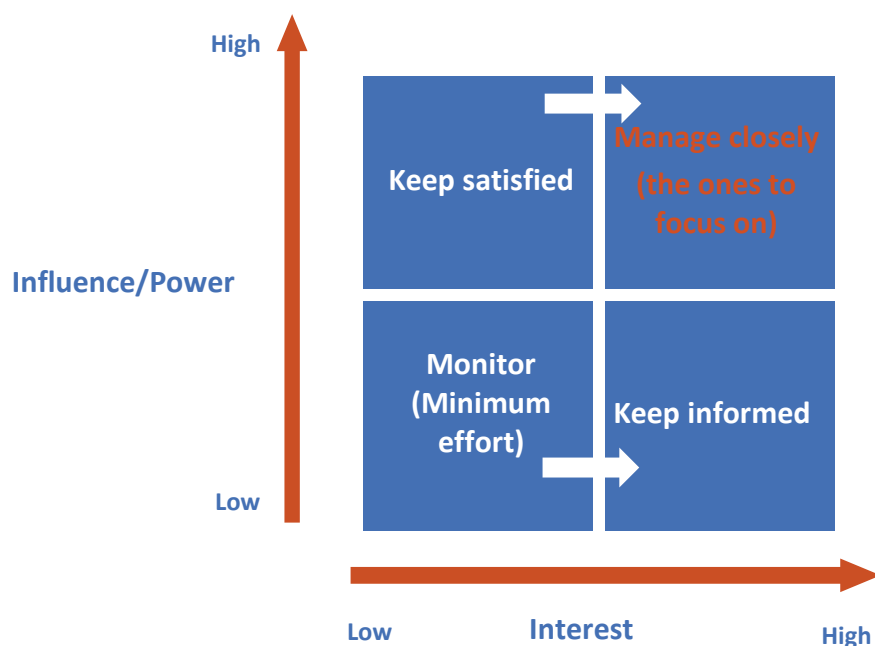
# Tailor messages

Projects need to tailor their messages to their target audience in order to meet their interests and expectations. The messages have to be easily understood. The wording should be carefully crafted to be appealing to the public.

So what is a good message? A good message is distinctive, consistent (your target groups need to hear the same message from different sources and on different occasions), concise, clear and simple.

# Activities

Project partners need to define the activities and tools that they will undertake in order to achieve their objectives and set in place the communication approach. The choice of the tools must address the targets in an effective manner.

As seen previously, the Programme will provide a web platform (please refer to the related section), on which the thematic communities, the Programme and the projects will be able to publish information about project management, deliverables, outputs, results, events, news and databases, capacity building information. However, this tool should be completed with other activities. It is up to the project to decide which tools other than the Interreg MED Programme platform are the most appropriate to reach their target audience.

There is a wide variety of tools, each with different purposes. Nevertheless, all projects are strongly advised to follow the recommendations described here below.

a) General recommendations for Modular projects

All modular projects shall include at least the following general activities in their communication plan:

- Social media communication of/for project and active participation in thematic community and Programme social media communication;
- Publication of at least one short portrait of the project – adapted to main target group(s) (printed publication such as flyer or audio-visual such as video);
- Presentation at and contribution to external events (e.g. with other projects, the community of projects, etc.);
- At least one promotional activity to promote the final output(s), e.g. social media campaign, an event, exhibition, seminar has to be foreseen;
- At least one activity targeted to the general public, possibly via local, regional or specialised media, in line with the targeted public;
- Participation in information and training seminars (and/or following guidance provided):
  o Web platform trainings;
  o Communication trainings;
  o Other capacity building seminars.

When filling in the Application Form on Synergie CTE, each kind of modular project (M1, M2, M3 or a combination of modules) has to consider its own specific communication activities, adding and complementing to the general activities described before, the ones that are the most suited to their activities.

b) Specific recommendations for MODULE 1 and MODULE 2 PROJECTS – Studying and testing

To better communicate the results of Module 1 and Module 2 partners are specifically advised to observe the following recommendations:

- Publish short project summaries targeting the general public in both languages: French and English;
- Projects delivering policy recommendations must draw up at least one communication activity or a strategy to build credibility for the project output in relation with the horizontal project;
- Technical studies (Module 1) and tests (Module 2) are extremely difficult to understand by unprofessional specific targets but even by professionals of other scientific areas. In this regard, it is highly recommendable for projects to use an accessible language and a user-friendly format in order to make the whole concept and its details easily understandable. Story telling could be an option;
- Results of analyses, studies and tests shall be communicated to projects target groups in the most adapted ways, according to the practices of the targets;
- Projects with Module 1 can include the reinforcement or establishment of networks. In order to communicate a network, specific coordination and information tools should be built up guaranteeing that the members of the network can receive up to date information, can exchange, can be identified, etc. The web platform of the Programme already offers a useful coordination tool. In any case, other efficient tools can be used, depending on the partner's dynamics, as for example a dedicated coordination platform or blog (integrated in the website). Project partners must state in their communication approach how they intend to address this coordination issue. Which methods and tools they will be setting up.

c) Specific recommendations for MODULE 3 PROJECTS – Capitalisation activities

Projects with Module 3 must transfer results from previous projects to territories and targeted beneficiaries. This means that concrete actions on local or regional level or directed to specific targets should be undertaken in order to raise awareness of the target public.

The activities foreseen or expected to be carried out by module 3 are:

- Public relations and/or outreach strategy (e.g. local markets, local entities, associations professional, involving local schools etc., specialised media to draw the attention of specific targets, participation in events as fairs, sectorial and professional meetings);
- Stories, interviews, end user testimonials, images that will nourish communication on several levels;
- Social media activities to get in contact and raise awareness of local/regional citizens;
- Video or radio strategy to bring the stories to a higher level of visibility;
- Seminars or living exhibitions to present demonstrations, experiences, i.e. get the target groups into direct contact or experiencing the subject of the project.

In the case of policy recommendations, a lobbying orientated strategy should be implemented and targeted to local levels of government or to specific targets. Lobbying activities are common to Horizontal projects, therefore, more details on this technique on the section "ACTIVITIES FOR HORIZONTAL PROJECTS".

Multi-module projects (M1+2, M2+3 and M1+2+3) are expected to combine the activities foreseen for the specific modules they are including in the project.

**Please note that the roles and tasks of the horizontal projects and the Module 3 projects are very different and cannot be merged.** The basic criterion to distinguish them is the scope of the dissemination process. Module 3 projects mostly keep a thematic and territorial focus. While a horizontal project can coordinate several Module 3 projects and make the synthesis of their results. Horizontal projects and Module 3 projects should therefore be perfectly coordinated in order to avoid any overlapping.

d) Activities for horizontal projects

Horizontal projects are the centre of capitalisation and communication of the Programme, in every level. They represent the thematic communities of modular projects.

In this context and for transnational transferability purposes, they have to process and filter the results of the exchange with modular project contributions to the thematic community, in particular with results of their activities, qualitative information, participation in events, delivery of stories from the field that could be interesting at the transnational level in order to promote the thematic community.

They should also guarantee the quality of the materials to be published, not only from the point of view of the written contents. The texts should be written in plain language, and demand quality image files: high resolution professional images and high quality audio-visual materials. For this purpose, the horizontal project must establish guidelines and orientations for the modular projects. The Programme can provide guidance on this matter and can also provide joint training webinars or seminars in this and other capacity building events.

In a more precise way, here is the list of the minimum concrete activities to be included in the communication plan of the Horizontal Projects:

1) Strategy building and updating (annual plans);
2) Management/regular update of the thematic website:
   - Nourished by information and data of project;
   - Further nourishing (after selection) the Programme website;
3) Social media communication of/for the thematic community and active participation in the Programme social media communication;
4) Participation of the communication officers in the MED communication working group;
5) Publication of:
   - One thematic Community brochure after 1 year then regular production of thematic publications (printed or online publications);
   - Short leaflet of the selected projects after 6/8 months of their respective implementation;
6) At least one videos for the project (promotional videos, coverage, video streaming of the events);
7) Organisation of:
   - Thematic events involving projects and coordinated with the Programme;
   - 4 key events : preparatory meeting; official kick-off; mid-term conference; final conference;
8) Participation in Programme events and active contribution (with possible co-organisation);
   - Thematic working groups;
   - Axis 4 "platform" project meetings;
   - Coordination events with programme bodies (JS and NCP);
9) Presentation at and contribution to external events (e.g. with modular projects and other thematic communities etc.); Public Relations and media communication (division between programme and horizontal projects to be defined, during pre-kick off).
10) Transferable and reusable databases. For this purpose it could be suggested to projects to produce databases connected to smartphone applications (improvement of complementary instruments and tools);
11) Lobbying activities in Brussels with relevant international networks and at the EP/CoR/EC, if needed. Therefore, it is advised and expected to draw an approach focused on personal public relations with activities such as:
    - Stakeholder mapping, analysis and targeting strategies;
    - Using expert columns in local media, as a public intervention in the agenda setting;
    - Finding a media partner for an expert event mixing and involving it with the political level;
    - Getting a public character or high credibility and prestigious institution to sponsor the project;
    - Organising a minimum of hearings and establishing regular direct contacts and travels;
    - Participating in relevant meetings;

- Influencing relevant and political working groups in the drafting of important policy or legal documents at local and European level.

More detailed information on lobbying can be found in the Communication Guide.

Again, all the activities mentioned above must comply with EU and Programme communication rules. All the activities shall be coordinated together with the Interreg MED Programme authorities, through planning and an Interreg MED communication working group.

# Timeline

It is advisable to create a timeline that identifies when each activity will take place. This will help to ensure that deadlines and opportunities are not missed. Taking the minimum activities as reference, the calendar allows to set in place the main milestones of the communication strategy and the coordination tasks.

The calendar for Modular project communication activities must be in line with the Horizontal projects one, in order to better set up the coordination between all levels of the Programme architecture.

For Horizontal projects, the calendar should be further developed at the beginning of the project, taking into account key events and milestones of the Modular projects belonging to their thematic community.

As far as possible, in particular for projects with lasting longer than one year, the Horizontal project and the Programme should be informed each year of the planned activities for the following year, in order to better frame complementarities of communication actions and avoid repetitions and waste of resources.

**FIGURE 2: MODEL OF CALENDAR FOR COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES OF HORIZONTAL PROJECTS**
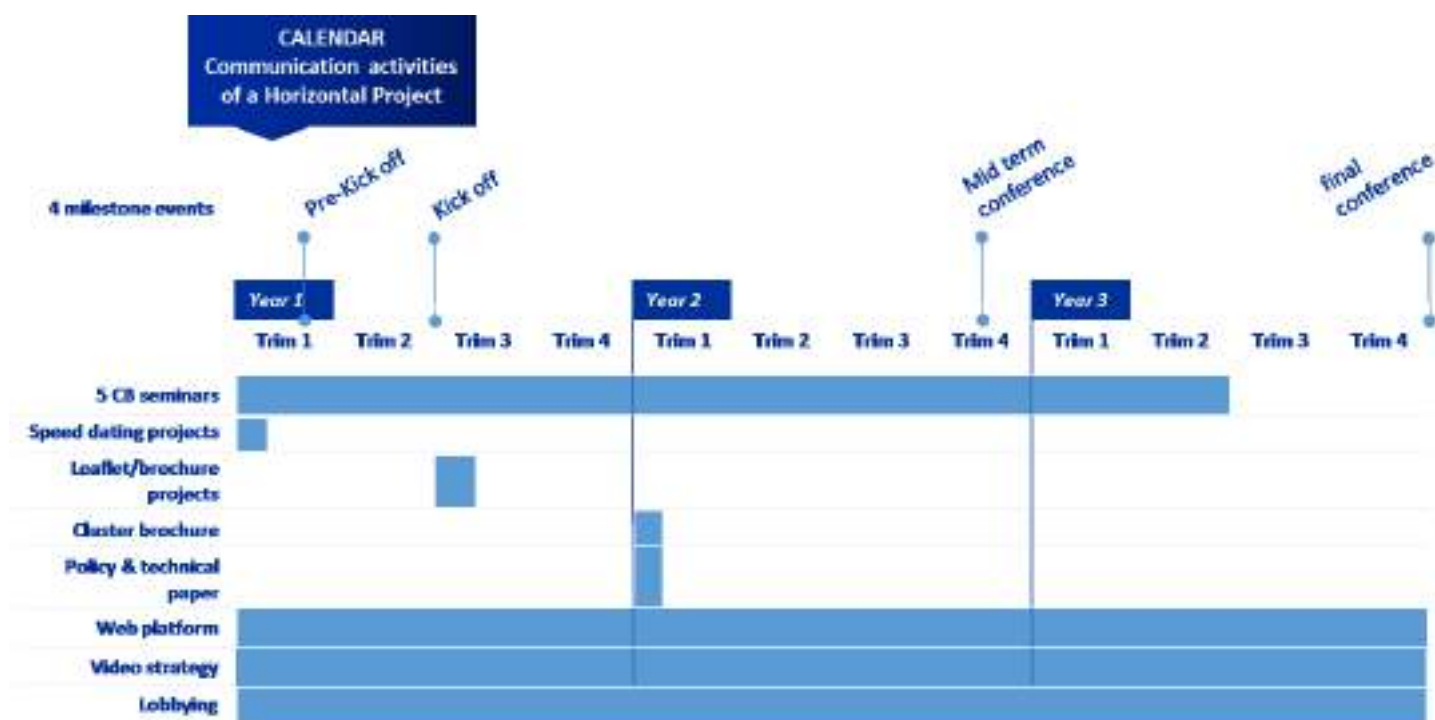


# Financial and human resources

First and foremost, all projects (Modular and Horizontal) should not allocate resources to the development of a website and a logo as those are provided by the Programme. However, financial and human resources should be

assigned to develop communication content and regularly update the web platform. Specific branding can also be created for event campaigns and products or services delivered by the project, if necessary, or to enhance the contents of the website and other related digital strategy.

### a) Modular Projects

Modular project partners should allocate resources for their own communication activities and in order to establish a regular work relationship with the related Horizontal project and with the Programme.

The partnership should assign communication responsibilities to a single partner, whereas a contact person should be designated to act as a liaison officer with the Horizontal project and the Programme. Please see hereunder the "mediator".

Financial and human resources must be allocated to ensure the project participation in external events, when justified and useful for the project, other than the horizontal project events and seminars.

### b) Horizontal Projects

The coordination of communication activities being rather complex, resources should be assigned to follow up the strategy from the conception, up to the evaluation, in order to guarantee the follow-up and connection at all levels.

Likewise, financial and human resources must be allocated to ensure the project participation in external events, promoted by other thematic communities or by the Programme or thematically relevant specific transnational events.

Concerning the project budget allocated to communication activities, specific branding can be developed for event campaigns.

In terms of human resources, each Horizontal project shall foresee one full time professional communication officer that could also be responsible for the capitalisation activities. If the Horizontal projects propose two separate officers, one for communication work and another for capitalisation (moreover, if they are from different partners or countries), it is critical to present a model of hand-in-hand cooperation between them.

# Evaluation

It is highly important to assess the effectiveness of a communication strategy so as to know whether the objectives have been met, which activities were successful and which ones should be improved or left aside. Evaluation also creates useful feedback to share with other projects and the Programme, so that they can learn from the project experience.

The communication evaluation criteria, indicators, measures and methods, during the operation and at its closure have to be defined in line with the project specific and communication objectives. If it is an operation of long-term duration, a mid-term evaluation should be foreseen.

To establish comparability of results, the Horizontal project can propose a common framework and structure of evaluation, sufficiently flexible to be adapted by the projects. In alternative, the Horizontal project can analyse the results of the communication evaluation and submit it to the Programme.

The modular projects will cooperate with the horizontal project in setting up a common evaluation grid and methods.

In these common or individual exercises the Programme can provide the necessary knowledge to support and frame the exercises of evaluation of communication activities.

Evaluation of communication activities should be included in the global project evaluation.

Here is a set of possible qualitative indicators:

- Satisfaction level of activities implemented (questionnaires for conferences, publications etc.);

- Identification and communication with target groups (distribution lists developed, number of direct mailings to number of persons, how is the feedback within interactive web tools developed (how many 'likes' on FB, how many comments in discussion forum etc.);
- Further analyses of web statistics: where are most of the hits (after a press article, conference, newsletter);
- Hits on different sections.

Quantitative indicators:
- Number of downloaded publications, number of printed and actually distributed publications;
- Number of participants to events;
- Number of press articles.

SUMMARY OF THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR THE APPLICATION FORM

➲ Each project must present its communication approach in the related field of the Application Form (section C.5. of the AF, Work Plan, and Communication Work Package); for this purpose, the project should draw major lines stating the name of the project, the communication objectives, the target groups as well as the communication activities and tools.

➲ Beware, there are only 2000 characters available to describe the project communication approach, therefore we recommend all applicants to be as specific as possible. Internal communication – coordination and community building.

PROGRAMME MANUAL

# INTERNAL COMMUNICATION – COMMUNITY BUILDING

FORWARD NOTE

For the 2014-2020 programming period, the Interreg MED Programme has adopted a new approach for project management that drives new orientation on project identities and on (expected) results rather than on processes or simple outputs. Each project will be part of a thematic community of projects running during the whole programme period and to which they will contribute. Project partners will have to develop their relations in the spirit of the "MED community" in order to allow the development of a true "community identity". In this sense, the project communication approach will be based on thematic communities rather than on the identity of the project itself. Following this new approach, project partners as well as Programme bodies will permanently be interconnected in one consistent and single manner.

# Introduction

The quality of project communication results comes from a committed work of all partners and not only the Lead Partner or the partner responsible for communication activities. This is why a good internal communication management is a key for the external communication of any project.

First and foremost as main principals, regarding the communication inside the partnership of both Modular and Horizontal projects, it is advisable to:

- Make sure there is a good collaboration system, and that partners are aware of the purpose and their fundamental role in increasing the impact and visibility of the project.
- Define a workflow and a reporting system based on:

What is common to the partnership?

- o Project's objectives, processes, results;
- o EU communication obligations.

What is specific to each partner of the project?

- o Proximity with certain stakeholders;
- o Linguistic & cultural issues.

# Tasks and responsibilities of modular projects

After approval, Modular projects will be associated with a Horizontal project which coordinates the communication strategy of the thematic community to which they belong. This means that, alongside the communication strategy of each project, all modular projects must foresee communication coordination roles and tasks in order to facilitate cooperation between partners and with the Horizontal project, such as:

- At their own project level, to ensure that they involve all their partners in every communication action, to share or merge activities with other modular projects, including the development of an evaluation of communication activities, discussing common methods, sharing tools, exploring complementarities and economies of scale, between other modular projects within the thematic community of projects;
- At the thematic community of projects level, they should give an active contribution to the strategy-set/update/realisation of the related horizontal project, in order to enrich the horizontal project/thematic community communication strategy and actions. Regarding target groups, modular projects should distinguish, with horizontal projects, the target groups to be addressed directly with those that should to be covered by the horizontal project.

- Modular projects are also requested to provide and share regular information to Horizontal projects and the Programme in format and deadlines to be defined (for thematic publications, events, etc.), mainly through the web platform that the Programme will be providing to the projects (please consult the section on the web platform) and other tools and forms of participation, decided in the Horizontal project strategy.

Mediator

It can be useful to appoint a "Mediator" in charge of the mentioned coordination and moderating tasks between the Modular project and its related Horizontal project. This professional could also be in charge of mediating with the Programme.

Also, the "Mediator" appointed in the partnership will help the projects strengthen and foster synergies between themselves and therefore be an integral part of their crossed-exchanges to facilitate them.

# Tasks and responsibilities of horizontal projects

a) Coordination methods and mechanisms

Horizontal projects play an important coordinating and facilitating role among the thematic community. Indeed, in order to ensure a good information flow between all stakeholders, all of them should be perfectly coordinated between each other. It is notably the responsibility of the Horizontal project to establish guidelines and set up the rhythm for the delivery and exchange of information with project partners to occur in a regular, usual flow of communication.

As a consequence, Horizontal projects must draw an external AND internal communication strategy taking into consideration a regular information flow and coordination mechanisms between:

- The Horizontal project own partners;
- With the modular project partners of the thematic community and with other Horizontal projects;
- With the Programme in order to feed communication at a transnational level.

The Horizontal project must therefore meet these three dimensions, drawing a strong internal communication strategy, by bringing together competences, capacities, best practices, exploring complementarities.

b) Coordination between the partners of the Horizontal and the Modular projects

It is most relevant to establish the tools, means and approach to produce a single voice, a single behaviour among peers. The Horizontal project must start its communication addressing its own project partners, making sure that everyone is involved and lined up with project objectives and responsibilities. The Horizontal project must set forth an internal and effective dynamic of cooperation and coordination inside the project itself.

The roles and responsibilities of each partner within the partnership shall be clearly defined (for example, define who is in charge of press relations and media campaigns, etc.). If instead all the project communication activities are assigned to a single partner, his role must be clearly stated.

Cooperation mechanisms between partners of the whole thematic community, can be achieved through some of the following concrete activities:

- In every communication the project must ensure that **all partners** will, in their own media, publish the same content about the Horizontal project;
- A cooperation method to take these responsibilities must also be explained in the communication plan, i.e. how the project will organise itself to address the different elements of the communication strategy. For example, if it creates «working groups» or if it specialises each partner on a specific task;

- It must be clearly mentioned the role of communication in the management model of the project;
- The partners of the thematic community will meet at least once a year to plan and evaluate the ongoing communication activities of the project;
- Team building among the selected projects should be ensured, with for example the organisation of a "speed dating" at the launching event;
- A proportionate number of communication and capitalisation seminars including networking sessions/speed dating/project display corners/expositions/trainings (e.g. maximum 5 in the period between the kick-off and the final conference and short *ad hoc* decentralised meetings/stakeholder consultations with key stakeholders in a team building spirit);
- Establish guidelines and a calendar to set up the rhythm for the delivery and exchange of information with the thematic community project partners.

The organisation of local communication or capitalisation events by modular projects should be included in the Horizontal project plan/calendar and inform/involve one representative; the financial resources for the organisation of these meetings should be borne by the Modular projects.

c) Provision of information and coordination with the Programme

The Programme must be involved and informed in the process of all changes occurred in the communication strategy and plans. Other Horizontal projects might be involved in the discussion of common approaches regarding management issues of the communication strategy, namely:

- Providing to the Programme regular information on the ongoing development of the strategy, following the planning and evaluation activities demands from the Joint Secretariat.
- Regular update of the Programme web platform, inter alia, including news, events agenda, summaries, and feed of documents issued by the projects activities of the related thematic web pages.
- Cooperating with the Programme in the organisation of transnational events, seminars, capacity building trainings and publications, providing printed and audio-visual materials, and an active participation in the events animation with related thematic content. This active participation will involve costs to be foreseen in the budget.

Otherwise, the Programme will provide the framework to the Horizontal projects for the preparation of joint activities, including a communication working group involving all communication officers or personnel in charge of communication in the horizontal projects and the NCP representatives.

d) Community building

Horizontal Projects are responsible for coordinating the whole thematic community and also for building a strong community. To this end, it is not sufficient to coordinate activities and share information between partners of all projects part of the community, it is also necessary to create a sense of membership and belonging. All partners should feel part of a community and identify themselves as a member of this community. For this purpose, Horizontal projects should provide a clear direction and a sense of purpose: i.e. together with all the community members they should set up the community objectives, a common goal and clear tasks recognised by all.

Once the objectives have been clearly set, Horizontal Project partners shall start creating and fostering a team spirit. This can be done for example through team building activities. However, more importantly, Horizontal Projects shall carefully listen to Modular projects, take their comments/remarks into consideration and show that their opinion matters. They shall establish work relationships so as to create an environment where members feel like they have a say in what happens and that their voice is heard. They should instil a sense of mattering.

However, all of the above is not enough if the community members do not see any benefit in contributing to the community. In some way, the members must feel rewarded for their participation and efforts. Horizontal projects should therefore clearly demonstrate the advantages of actively participating in the community and help Modular Projects with their communication and capitalisation activities to better promote their results and

transfer them to a broader audience. Yet, they should pay special attention not to take credit for the Modular Project's work and instead encourage ownership of their work.

This "Community Building" task being one of the main Horizontal project objectives and purposes, a specific work package including a list of types of activities and deliverables has thus been foreseen. For more details about this work package, please see figure "Activities and deliverables for the work package 'community building", section 2.3.3 of the Application Manual.

PROGRAMME MANUAL

# RISK OF FRAUD AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS

| | Content of the modification | Date of the update |
|---|---|---|
| **V1** | - | January 2017 |
| **V2** | Update of the name of the JS coordinator's name and JS email address | August 2018 |

For the programming period 2014-2020, prevention and management of the risks of fraud or conflict of interest are formalized through procedures involving project partners and Programme Authorities or control bodies, in that perspective, "declaration mechanisms" have been put in place by the Programme.

As defined in the Article 19 of the Programme Subsidy Contract "the MA / JS is committed to the principle of" zero tolerance "in the fight against fraud and corruption, and to be especially vigilant about these and to report any conduct that could be considered a suspected fraud to the participating States at any time. "

# Definitions

### *Fraud*
Fraud is defined as any intentional act or omission related to
 "- The use or presentation of false statements or documents, inaccurate or incomplete, having effect the misappropriation or wrongful retention of funds from the general budget of the European Communities or budgets managed by them or on their account;
 - Non-disclosure of information in violation of a specific obligation, with the same effect;
 - The misapplication of such funds for purposes other than those for which they were originally granted".

### *Conflict of interest:*
A conflict of interest appears where the impartial and objective performance of an operation is compromised for reasons involving family, emotional life, political or national affinity, economic interest or any other reason.

### **Prevention:**
The **absence and prevention of conflicts of interest** are adopted as principles of work of the various decision-making bodies of the Programme and internal prevention tools were implemented.  The Interreg MED Programme calls for the same vigilance from the part of LP and PPs in regard to any situation of potential conflict of interest.

By signing the Subsidy Contract and the Partnership Agreement, the LP and the whole partnership shall take all necessary measures to "prevent any conflict of interest that could undermine the impartial and objective performance of the operation and shall take immediate measures to remedy any situation constituting a conflict of interest or likely to lead to a conflict of interest"

In the same way, the LP and all partners undertake to comply with the principle of "zero tolerance" in terms of fraud prevention and corruption and to be especially vigilant on this subject. They also undertake to denounce any conduct likely to be considered as suspected fraud to the competent national authorities and to inform the MA of any suspected fraud.
A principle of prevention and vigilance must therefore be applied by beneficiaries; any situation of (potential) conflict/fraud will finally be reported to the JS.

The Programme encourages the set-up of preventive mechanism internal to projects (preventive self-declaration, etc.) and integrating these concepts in the project Steering Committee rules.
The MA/JS may consult the outcome of this processing and do whatever is necessary to protect the financial interests of the European Union.

Additionally to the internal procedures foreseen at Programme level for reporting suspected conflict of interest or fraud or cases of proven fraud, those can be **detected and reported to the JS** by:

- **A project beneficiary** (LP or PP)
- **The FLC** as a result of its check of partners' activities and validation of expenditures
- **Whistle blowers** (Anonymous or not)
- **Second level Auditors**
- **Monitoring Committee members, other Programme Authorities** (Certifying Authority, Audit Authority), Group of Auditors members and National Contact Points
- **The Commission** (OLAF or other services) / other EU Funded Programs

# Reporting Tools

Suspected or established fraud or conflict of interest should be reported in one of the Programme official languages, the contact person for these matters is mentioned below.

**The Programme Contact person is the following**:
Name/Surname: Curzio CERVELLI , JS coordinator
Email address: alert_med@maregionsud.fr

**Protection of whistleblowers:**
A procedure to ensure the protection of whistleblowers who could report suspected fraud or conflict of interest has been validated by representatives of the Programme Participating States and, if the competent national authority is responsible for monitoring of possible fraud cases concerning the beneficiaries of its national territory, the cooperation between all authorities will be ensured while securing **the confidentiality of an alert**.

# Follow-up measures

Where fraud is suspected or reported or in case of confirmed suspicion of conflict of interest, the MA/JS will inform the competent national authorities (Members of the GOA and the Monitoring Committee) in order for the latter to start appropriate investigations and follow-up measures. The Programme will follow the progress of the procedure.

In specific cases, the MA/JS can use a tool called ARACHNE made available by the European Commission to detect potential risks of fraud that undermine the financial interests of the European Union. In this context, specific data can be sent to the system managers for processing. Some Interreg MED countries have set up specific national systems for fraud prevention and they might be consulted too, in case it is deemed necessary.

After the follow-up measures are implemented and any eventual irregular amount is balanced/recovered, the MA/JS will inform the following bodies about the closure of the case:

- AA / Group of Auditors
- Monitoring Committee,
- If relevant, national authorities of the respective country,
- And in case of suspected fraud, the European Commission (cf. Art. 122 (2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013).

PROGRAMME MANUAL

# THE INTERREG MED
# WEBPLATFORM

FORWARD NOTE

For the 2014-2020 programming period, the Interreg MED Programme has adopted a new approach for project management that drives new orientation on project identities and on (expected) results rather than on processes or simple outputs. Each project will be part of a thematic community of projects running during the whole programme period and to which they will contribute. Project partners will have to develop their relations in the spirit of the "MED community" in order to allow the development of a true "community identity". In this sense, the project communication approach will be based on thematic communities rather than on the identity of the project itself. Following this new approach, project partners as well as Programme bodies will permanently be interconnected in one consistent and single manner.

# Introduction

As previously explained, the Interreg MED Programme will provide websites to all approved projects.

The web platform will constitute the communication and coordination hub of the whole Programme. It will be hosted on dedicated webservers, integrating the following:

- The Interreg MED Programme website;
- Specific thematic community websites, 8 thematic communities and Axis 4 website: blue growth, green growth, social and creative industries, efficient buildings, renewable energy, low carbon urban transports, sustainable tourism, biodiversity protection;
- Projects websites;
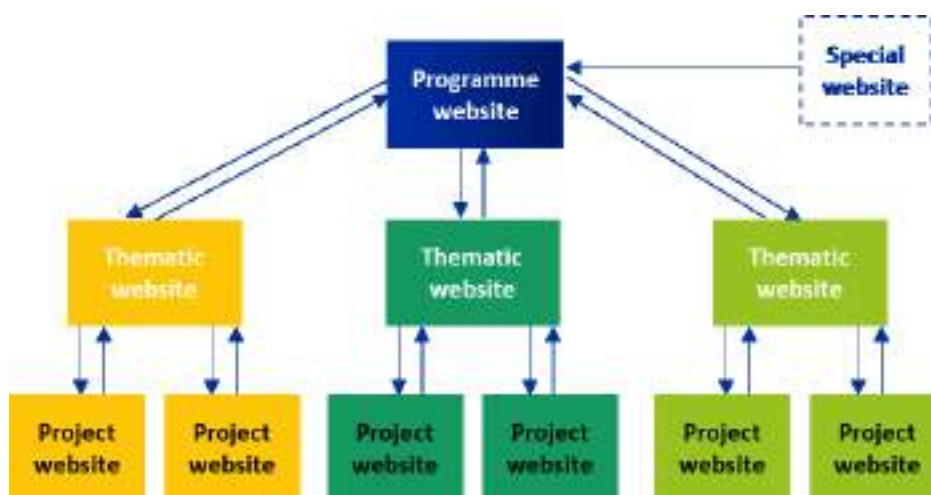- Special Websites (for events)



**FIGURE 3: ARCHITECTURE OF THE WEB PLATFORM**

All these websites are generated under a common architecture, the same concept with similar and shared functionalities, in order to ease the follow up as well as their evolutions and maintenance.

# The main objectives of the platform:

For projects:

- Harmonise all websites of the programme in terms of organisation and layout of the content, user interfaces and navigation experience to facilitate the navigation from a website to another for all stakeholders of the programme;
- Ensure the presence of the main features on all websites, compliance with disclosure rules of the programme and the online publication of specific information;
- Reduce development and hosting costs by providing projects a basic website integrating the functionalities necessary for the project life, adapting to each project type;
- Propose to all projects technical tools to facilitate the transfer and analysis of data through common formats and technologies (calendar, directory, documents, etc.).

For the programme:

- Ensure the duration of projects' productions in their context and in time, even after the programming period;
- Facilitate and automatize the collection of data present in the project websites, including directories, calendars, documents (maps, databases ... etc.) and news;
- Improve  pedagogical materials and support offered to project partners by providing them with similar tools as well as customised resources and technical support;
- Propose dashboards summarising data from the websites of the projects, from extractions of the monitoring tool and from fields filled in by the JS responsible officer for the monitoring during project implementation.

Sharing and broadcasting data must primarily be based on the general principles of flow (RSS, etc.). To this end, there are various tools of the platform that users can choose to follow to keep up with calendars as well as document libraries, news or discussions.

# Available features

- Configurable user interfaces
- Authentication / Single Sign
- Multiple profile accounts
- Directory of individuals and institutions
- Project Organization
- News
- Integration of Social Networks
- Research
- Exchanges and discussions areas
- Private area
- Calendars
- Form Tool
- Deliverables data base
- Multimedia galleries
- FAQ and Glossary

- Mailing Tools
- Dashboards and monitoring tools
- Statistical Analysis

FURTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS AND LINKS

- Commission Annex XII of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013;
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 821/2014;
- The European Commission's website with guidance on the use of the EU emblem: *http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information/logos/index_en.cfm*

PROGRAMME MANUAL

STATE AID

# What is State Aid?

According to Article 107 (ex. Article 87) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, State aid is defined as any aid granted by a Member State or through State resources in any form whatsoever which distorts or threatens to distort competition by favouring certain undertakings or the production of certain goods.

All entities engaged in an economic activity fall under the State aid rules, regardless of their legal status and regardless of whether they aim to make a profit. This means that both public and private partners can be affected by state aid. Public institutions may perform economic activities (e.g. a regional council can implement a support scheme for SMEs) and such activities are State aid relevant. On the other hand, the participation of an SME in a project does not necessarily mean that its activities will be State aid relevant

Based on this definition, it can be concluded that there is State aid only if ALL the following 5 points (cumulative criteria) are fulfilled:
1) The measure must confer a benefit or advantage on the recipient which it would not otherwise have received (which is always the case for any Interreg programme);
2) It must be granted by a Member State or through State resources (which is always the case for any Interreg project);
3) It must selectively favour certain undertakings or production of certain goods[1];
4) It must distort or threaten to distort competition;
5) It must affect trade between Member States.

**STATE-AID SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**
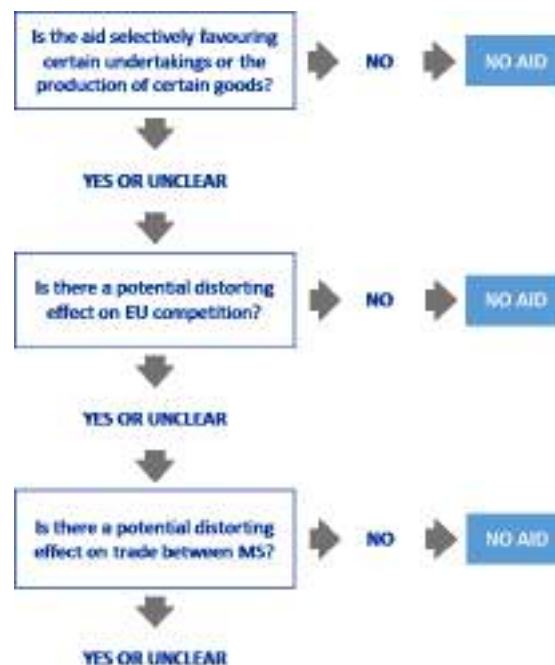


# Who is concerned by State Aid?

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[1] With the meaning of the Article 87(1) EC in comparison with other undertakings in a comparable legal and factual situation in the light of the objective pursued by the measure concerned.

Any project partner offering goods and services in the market in the context of the proposed project is considered an undertaking, regardless of its legal status ownership, the way it is financed and whether its aim is to make profit or not.

Activities carried out within the framework of statutory tasks normally performed by public authorities do not fall within the concept of an undertaking, in view of their non-business purposes and procedures, but in some cases, however, local public or administrative bodies may be considered to be similar to undertakings. The concept of "undertaking" is very wide and may include SMEs, large companies, public bodies, NGOs, associations, universities, etc.

Even if an entity provides the goods or services free of charge or is financed entirely by the state, it can be subject to the State aid rules. State aid rules apply thus to both public and private partners. In the evaluation of the existence of a potential State aid issue, the nature of the beneficiary is therefore not relevant since, as said, even a not-profit organisation can be engaged in economic activities.

As a consequence, the main element to take into account is the nature of the activities that the partner institution and the project intend to implement through the public funding. From that perspective, in the Partner declaration, a question concerning whether the partner carries out or not an economic activity in the project (undertaking offering goods and services on the market regardless of its legal status and whether its aim is to make profit or not).

Economic activity definition:

If after the project's evaluation it appears that a project partner did not fill in its partner declaration correctly, this document should be updated before signature of the project Subsidy Contract.

# How to deal with State Aid?

The co-financing of activities falling under state aid rules is prohibited in the European Union, but some exemptions relevant for project partners participating in Interreg projects has been put in place by the regulation:

In the case of the Interreg MED Programme, State aid relevant activities can be co-financed as project's activities financed only if they are in strict compliance with Article 20 of the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)2 or in compliance with the de minimis Regulation3. Only the exemption modality here mentioned (GBER or De minimis), can be considered under the MED Programme.

The decision on whether to apply the GBER or the de minimis Regulation is to be made by the applicants themselves, taking into account the information included below. Both instruments specify certain limits on the maximum amount of aid and/or on the co-financing rate to be applied. Project partners should consider carefully the implications before opting for one of the two instruments.

**If you're an SME participating in the INTERREG Med Programme: Article 20 of the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)**

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[2] Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014.
[3] Commission Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid.

As part of an administrative simplification, the European Commission adopted the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER) and allows any Member State not to notify a number of State aid measures to the Commission. It consolidates and harmonizes the rules previously existing and enlarges the categories of State aid covered by the exemption. Compared to the previous GBER, a specific and new Article 20 has been adopted which is directly opened to Interreg Programmes and projects.

Article 20 of the GBER applies only to SMEs4 fulfilling the conditions established regarding thresholds, transparency, incentive effect, aid intensity, eligible costs, accumulation, publication and information.

In case these conditions are fulfilled, the following costs can be deemed eligible5:
- costs for organisational cooperation including cost for staff and offices to the extent that it is linked to the cooperation project;
- costs of advisory and support services linked to cooperation and delivered by consultants and service providers;
- travel expenses, costs of equipment and investment expenditure directly related to the project, depreciation of tools and equipment, to the extent that they are used exclusively for the project.

The services referred above shall not be a continuous or periodic activity nor relate to the undertakings usual operating costs, such as routine tax consultancy services, regular legal services or advertising.

The aid amount under Article 20 of GBER shall not exceed 50%6 (all types of public sources included) of the eligible costs. In addition, aid to SMEs for cooperation costs incurred by participating in Interreg projects cannot exceed EUR 2 million **per undertaking and per project.**

**During the application phase the applying structure submit its partner declaration stating that it applies for ERDF under the GBER. In case of project selection a SMEs status declaration7 must be submitted to the JS before signature of the Subsidy Contract.**

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[4] "SME" stands for small and medium-sized enterprises as defined in EU law: Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprise
The main factors determining whether a company is an SME are the number of employees and either turnover or balance sheet total.
- Medium-sized: Employees < 250; Turnover ≤ € 50 m; Balance sheet total ≤ € 43 m.
- Small: Employees < 50; Turnover ≤ € 10 m; Balance sheet total: ≤ € 10 m.
- Micro: Employees < 10; Turnover ≤ € 2 m; Balance sheet total ≤ € 2 m.
These ceilings apply to the figures for individual firms only. A firm which is part of larger grouping may need to include employee/turnover/balance sheet data from that grouping too. For the details of how this works, please refer to: http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition/index_en.htm
[5] In order to adapt those cost categories to the budget lines established by the Interreg MED Programme, kindly use the following correspondences:
- BL 1: Staff costs: cost for staff
- BL 2: Office and administrative expenditure: cost for staff and offices
- BL 3: Travel and accommodation: travel expenses
- BL 4: External expertise and services costs: costs of advisory and support services linked to cooperation and delivered by consultants and service provider
- BL 5: Equipment expenditure: costs of equipment and investment expenditure directly related to the project, depreciation of tools and equipment, to the extent that they are used exclusively for the project
[6] Co-financing rate of 50% for the SME partner.
[7] according to the definition of SME of the Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprise

**If your institution corresponds to other type of undertaking than SMEs : De minimis rule**

In other cases for which a potential State aid issue was identified, partners that are not SMEs may decide to apply the de minimis rule.

To benefit from the de minimis rule, the maximum co-financing is limited to a certain amount and the following criteria must be obeyed:

- The ceiling for the aid covered by the de minimis rule is EUR 200 000 (cash grant equivalent) over any three tax year period.
- **The ceiling applies per Member State.** Unlike as in the past, in the case of the Interreg MED Programme the aid will be considered as granted by France (location of the MA) and will not cumulate with State aid under de minimis regime granted by another Member State of the Interreg MED Programme.
- The ceiling will apply to the total of all public assistance considered to be de minimis aid.
- The ceiling applies to aid of all kinds, irrespective of the form it takes or the objective pursued.
- The regulation only applies to "transparent" forms of aid, which means aid for which it is possible to determine in advance the gross grant equivalent without needing to undertake a risk assessment.

During the application phase and additionally to their Partner declaration, structures applying the de minimis rule must sign a de minimis self declaration indicating any contribution received during the previous three fiscal years falling under the de minimis Regulation, to be submitted along with the Application Form. The maximum ERDF grant rate will be calculated on the basis of this declaration.

In case of project's selection, aforesaid document must be updated before signature of the Subsidy Contract.

## Comparative chart

The comparative chart included here below aims to give information regarding the differences between the two possible State aid schemes to be used by concerned partners in the framework of the Interreg MED Programme.

**COMPARATIVE CHART FOR STATE AID**

| | GBER | *De minimis* rule |
|---|---|---|
| Maximum public contribution (ERDF grant) | Up to **EUR 2 million** per SME and per project. If the SME is participating in a second different project, this operator will be able to receive EUR 2M + EUR 2M. | Up to **EUR 200 000** over a period of 3 fiscal years, this being the fiscal year of the date of the MED grant (date of the signature of the subsidy contract) and the previous two fiscal years. An undertaking (and all other entities belonging to the same company group) can receive the *de minimis* aid several times provided that it is a different Member State granting the *de minimis* aid. Within the Interreg MED Programme, the *de minimis* is considered as granted by the Member Stated where the Managing Authority is located (France). |
| Co-financing rate | Up to 50% | Up to 85% |
| Undertakings concerned | Only SMEs (for Interreg) | Undertakings in all sectors |
| Application phase | The undertaking shall state that it applies for ERDF under the General Block Exemption Regulation in the Partner Declaration to be submitted with the Application Form | The undertaking shall state that it applies for ERDF under the *de minimis* Regulation in the Partner Declaration and shall submit a *de minimis* declaration with the Application Form, indicating any contribution received during the previous three fiscal years falling under the *de minimis* Regulation |
| Eligibility and evaluation phase | Plausibility check undertaken by the MA/JS and Consultation of the relevant Member State (e.g. undertakings in difficulty should be excluded; Member States confirmation that the relevant partners have social security expenses and taxes up to date proving the solvency of the partner) | Plausibility check undertaken by the MA/JS and Consultation of the relevant Member State (e.g. undertakings in difficulty should be excluded; Member States confirmation that the relevant partners have social security expenses and taxes up to date proving the solvency of the partner) |
| Documents to be provided after the approval and before the signature of the Subsidy Contract | SMEs shall provide a SME status declaration, according to the definition of SME of the Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprise. Once the entity has proven its SME status, no further controls to be carried out about the nature of its activity In case it is not a SME, the project will only be approved under the condition that this partner is excluded, and replaced by a similar solvent undertaking under the definition of SME | Update of the *de minimis* declaration, only if the included amounts have changed since the submission of the proposal[8] and eventual modification of the Application form. |
| Suspensory clause included in the | The undertaking will be excluded and amounts unduly paid will be recovered in case of false | The undertaking will be excluded and amounts unduly paid will be recovered in case of false |

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[8] The *de minimis* threshold shall take effect from the date of the MED grant (date of the signature of the subsidy contract). Therefore, the de minimis amount granted by the Interreg MED Programme shall include amounts changes from the date of the project submission to the date of the signature of the subsidy contract.

| | GBER | *De minimis* rule |
|---|---|---|
| subsidy contract (Art. 20) | statement proven after the approval of the project (e.g. during the complementary tests to be carried out during the follow-up of the project; ERDF expenditures reimbursement stop from the date the undertaking does not constitute an SME anymore) | statement proven after the approval of the project (e.g. during the complementary tests to be carried out during the follow-up of the project; *de minimis* amounts were not declared before the signature of the subsidy contract, consequent reduction of ERDF *a pro rata*) |
| Eligible costs | Only the following costs are eligible: <br> - costs for organisational cooperation including cost for staff and offices  to the extent that it is linked to the cooperation project; <br> - costs of advisory and support services linked to cooperation and delivered by outside consultants and service providers; <br> - travel expenses, costs of equipment and investment expenditure directly related to the project, depreciation of tools and equipment, to the extent that they are used exclusively for the project. <br><br> The services referred above shall not be a continuous or periodic activity nor relate to the undertakings usual operating costs, such as routine tax consultancy services, regular legal services or advertising. | All costs that are eligible under the MED Programme |
| Complementary tests to be carried out during the follow-up of the project | Interreg MED JS will carry out complementary tests during the management verifications. | Interreg MED JS will carry out complementary tests during the management verifications in order to ensure that the *de minimis* threshold is not exceeded and to verify the scope of the Regulation. |

**Solutions to mitigate the State Aid relevancy risk**
- Respect of Community and National public procurement rules for all activities co-financed on the framework of an Interreg Med project (-even if you are a public authority or if specific rules allow your structure not to use public procurement rules)
- Wide dissemination of project outputs, results and deliverables to avoid selective advantage,
- Open source softwares,
- Open trainings.

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

During the implementation of the project, the Lead partner ensures that all the partners respect the above measures in order to avoid falling under the concept of State aid relevancy.
In the same way, First Level Controllers will verify if community rules on State aid have been respected by the related partner.

The project partners need to be vigilant because infringement of State aid rules can lead to major **financial errors and irregularities**.

The INTERACT programme has also summarised a list of questions and answers on this topic: _http://admin.interact-eu.net/downloads/9263/Questions_Answers_ETC_and_State_Aid_April_2015.pdf_

Applicants may also consult the relevant national authorities to obtain more specific information on rules and limitations concerning State aid.

PROGRAMME MANUAL

CONTROLS, AUDITS AND VERIFICATIONS

During the programming period 2014-2020, different categories of verifications are being implemented by the Interreg MED Programme Authorities and should be described individually.

The word "control" describes the verifications carried out by the First Level Controller according to article 23 (4) of the Regulation 1299/2013 for ERDF partners and article 108 of the EC Regulation 718/2007 for IPA partners. The task of First Level Controller designated by Member States is to validate the expenses declared by each beneficiary taking part in the operation.

The word "audit" describes the checks carried out by the Audit Authority, called second level auditors, according to articles 127 of Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013 and Article 25 of (EU) Regulation No. 1299/2013. The task of second level auditors consists of carrying out audits of operations based on a sampling for verification of declared expenditure.

Furthermore, the word "verification" describes the checks carried out by the Managing Authority, the Joint Secretariat and the Participating States according to article 125 (4) and (5) of Regulation (EU) № 1303/2013. The task of the Programme authorities is to perform administrative and on-the-spot verifications during project implementation.

# The First Level Control

## Different National First level Control Systems

In accordance with Article 23 (4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, **it is the responsibility of each Member State to set-up a first level control system and designate the controllers** responsible for verifying that the expenditure declared by beneficiaries from its territory complies with the applicable law and the Programme rules.

Those controllers also ensure that the co-funded products and services were delivered and paid. More information on national control systems can be found on www.interreg-med.eu and the websites of the national contact points.

Participating State sets up a National Control System and designate the FLC responsible for verifying the legality and regularity of expenditures declared by each beneficiary established in its territory.

Therefore, in the Programme Interreg MED, the First Level Controller designation procedure is different from a Participating State to another. Each partner should refer to the National Control System of the country where its structure is located. (Contacts of National authorities and descriptions of national First Level Control system of each participating State are available on the Interreg MED Programme web site).

There are two types of national control systems in the Participating States of the Interreg MED Programme:

- **Centralised systems**, the control is carried out at national level through a public administration or an audit firm acting under the responsibility of the Participating State. In this case, beneficiaries must submit their expenditure for verification to this body.

- **Decentralised systems**, the control is carried out by a controller proposed by the project partner and approved by a body designated at national/regional level for this purpose, according to instructions/procedures set in place at national level. Controllers appointed by the beneficiaries can be either internal (functionally independent department within the beneficiary organisation) or external (auditors belonging to independent institutions or selected on the market). In some cases, beneficiaries should select the controller from a short-list proposed at national/regional level. In any case, FLC selected by beneficiaries are subject to approval of the Participating State before the controls.
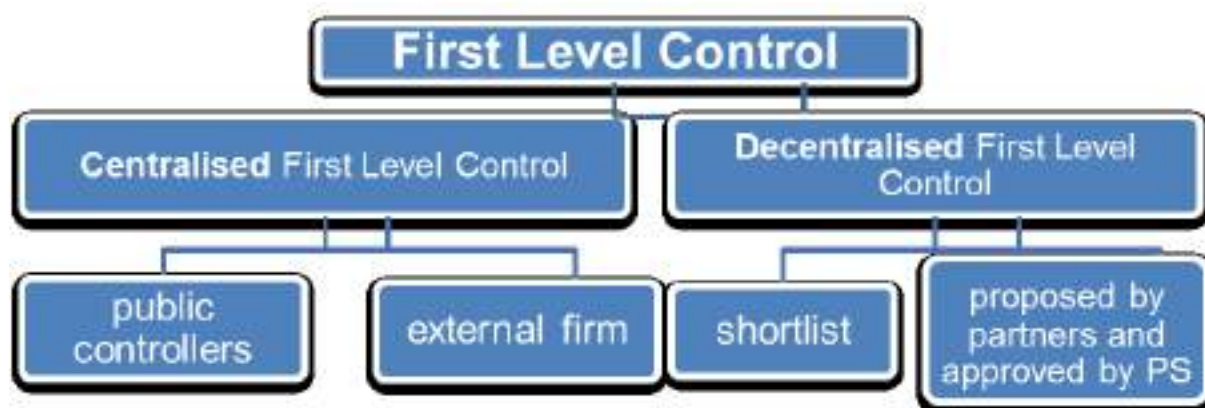


In the following table, you may find an overview of the different control systems depending on each Participating States of the Interreg MED Programme.

| Centralized systems | Decentralized systems |
|---|---|
| Croatia | Cyprus |
| Gibraltar (UK) | France |
| Greece | Italy |
| Slovenia | Malta |
| Albania | Portugal |
| Bosnia & Herzegovina | Spain |
| Montenegro | |

Controls performed on the expenditure can either be free of charge or charged to the beneficiary depending on the National Control System. More information on national control systems, including information on the cost of the control, can be found on www.interreg-med.eu and the websites of the national contact points.

Beneficiaries are requested to check carefully national provisions and procedures applicable in the concerned Participating States.

**In a centralized FLC system:** A national central public body controls expenditures of all partners from its territory.

**In practice**:

- Partners of approved projects established in a Participating State where control system is centralized should contact the national body in charge of FLC or their national contact point who will inform them about the First Level Control procedure to be followed for the certification of expenditures (name and contact of the controller(s), timeframe and deadlines, compulsory documents,...).
- Partners whose national system is centralized should send their declarations of expenditures to their national public body for certification before their inclusion in a project payment claim.
- Control costs may be borne by the State or by the beneficiaries and are, in this case, eligible as project expenditures (refer to your National Control System description for details).

**In a decentralized FLC system:** The controller is selected by the partner, each project partner has to provide an **approbation certificate delivered** upon request **by the approbation body designated by the Partner State,** for the chosen first level controller

**In practice:**

- Immediately after project approval partners located in a Participating State with a decentralized system should contact the national/regional body in charge of the FLC approval or their national contact point, which will inform them about the procedure to be followed in order to have their FLC approved (specific terms for selection of FLC, documents to be provided,...).
- The partner will then fill out a form - provided by the national / regional body - detailing the choice of controller and qualifications.  Upon receipt, the central national / regional approbation body will assess the information provided and validate the choice of the controller.
- Once approved by the approval national/regional body, the partner must include the information of the approved FLC in Synergie CTE in order to grant him/her access to the on line monitoring tool of the Programme.
- Partners must send their declarations of expenditures to their approved FLC and obtain certifications before their inclusion in a project payment claim.
- In some Participating States, the expenditures certified by FLC must be validated at national level before their inclusion in a project payment claim. In these cases, timing for certification process should be adjusted and the national validation accompanying each certificate will be uploaded on SYNERGY CTE and provided by the PPs when submitting their certificates to their Lead Partner.
- Control costs borne by beneficiaries are eligible (refer to your National Control System description for details).
- If, during the project implementation, a new FLC is appointed, a new approval has to be provided.
- If an external controller is selected by the project partner, this controller has to be chosen in line with public procurement rules.

NB: Access to Synergie CTE is given to the controller; only once he is approved by the national/regional authority. The First Level Controller can begin the work of verification of expenditures entered by partners from the day he receives the access.
The national control system may provide further conditions concerning the choice of FLC.

# The role of the First Level Control

Expenditure incurred and paid by beneficiaries can be claimed within the project only after it has been verified by a FLC.

First Level Control carry out formal **checks on partner expenditures declared during the project implementation each time before submitting a Payment claim**.

The aim of the FLC is to ensure to the Managing Authority, the Certifying Authority and, most importantly, to the project itself, that costs claimed for reimbursement by the ERDF / IPA Interreg MED Programme are justified and that their payment is requested by Lead Partners in accordance with the legal and financial provisions of the Subsidy Contract, the Interreg MED Programme rules and EU and national provisions.
 First level control also gives to the "beneficiaries" (a term that refers to both the Lead Partner and the project partners), the guarantee that project accounts comply with the above-mentioned obligations and with legal and financial obligations of each structure contributing to the co-financing of the operation, in accordance with its legal situation and the valid legislation in the concerned State.

The FLC is responsible for verifying that all activities and expenditures have been incurred in compliance with Programme, national and EU rules on eligibility of expenditures (see the factheet Eligibility of expenditures of the Programme Manual, as well as fact sheets on State aid and Public procurement).

The FLC must verify that:

a) Expenditure is in line with European, Interreg MED Programme and national eligibility rules and complies with conditions for support of the project and payment as outlined in the Subsidy Contract;

b) Expenditure was actually paid with the exception of costs related to depreciations and « simplified cost options »;

c) Expenditure was incurred and paid (with the exceptions above under point b) within the eligible time period of the project and was not previously reported;

d) Payment of staff costs is proven on the basis of payslips or documents of equivalent probative value;

e) Expenditure based on « simplified cost options » (if any) is correctly calculated and the calculation method used is appropriate;

f) Expenditure reimbursed on the basis of eligible costs actually incurred is either properly recorded in a separate accounting system or has an adequate accounting code allocated.

The expenditures reported under SCO are recorded in the programme monitoring tool. The necessary audit trail exists and is available for inspection;

g) Expenditure in currency other than Euro was converted using the correct exchange rate;

h) Relevant EU/ national/ institutional and Interreg MED Programme public procurement rules were observed;

i) EU and Programme publicity rules were observed;

j) Co-financed products, services and works were actually delivered;

k) Expenditure is related to activities in line with the consolidated application form and the Subsidy Contract.

l) The beneficiary received external national public counterparts corresponding to validated expenditures

NB: The First Level Control covers 100% of the expenditure declared.

NATURE OF CONTROLS

NB: Given the nature of the activities financed by the Interreg MED Programme (meetings, studies, seminars, etc.), and in order to inform the FLC on the type of supporting documents that should be checked, you can find under factsheet "eligibility of expenditure" of this Manual a selection of possible controls, supporting documentation, and references aiming to help controllers on their tasks.

The control of expenditure carried out by the FLC is done through administrative verifications (i.e. desk-based verifications) as well as on-the-spot verifications. Besides the Programme rules, the FLC has to respect national requirements and procedures set up by each Participating State. On-the-spot verifications are performed by the controller at the premises of the beneficiary as well as in any other place where the project is being implemented.

The on-the-spot verification allows to check the existence and delivery of goods and services especially with regard to cost items referring to the budget line equipment as well as to check the accuracy of the management system put in place in each partner structure and the existence of accounting documents forming the audit trail.

Furthermore, on-the-spot verifications should check the existence and effective functioning of an accounting system on the level of the controlled beneficiary.

The Interreg MED Programme highly recommends to perform an on-the-spot verification **at least once during project's lifetime**, and without waiting until the project's closure unless the concerned Participating State rules indicate differently in the national control system.

Furthermore, an on-the-spot verifications are **compulsory on those beneficiaries realizing investments in thematic equipment with a value of more than EUR 2.000 per cost item and/or any investment in infrastructure/works**.

In any case, it is important to document in the first level control checklist the check on the existence and reality of goods, works and services procured, the type of evidence viewed and the method chosen. If a first level controller decides not to carry out an on-the-sport check for a partner at all, sound justifications have to be provided.

The national authority responsible for the designation of FLCs and the private controllers are responsible for the **methods** used in the control. The Programme formulate a series of recommendations, set out here-below, but the controllers are required to consult the description of First Level Control System of their State, and available on the Programme website, for more details.

**In practice:** The FLC should:

- Verify the compliance of project partner expenditures controlled under the rules set in the Programme Manual;
- Verify the date entered by the partner in Synergie CTE;
- Validate the partner expenditures and fill-in a checklist in Synergie CTE regarding the control performed;
- Validate in Synergie CTE a FLC certificate (containing an official commitment on validation of expenditures, the control checklist and a list of verified expenditure) indicating the amounts presented, validated and rejected, (a template of FLC certificate is available in the Programme website);
- Print, sign and stamp the FLC certificate in order to be included in the partner audit trail.
- By signing the FLC certificate including the declaration of validation of expenditures, the controller confirms all the items and declares the proper use of funds. This statement should be based on proper checks as well as on a checklist whose format is provided by the Programme.

COMPETENCES OF FLC

As a general principle, and independently from the centralised or decentralised system in place, the criteria for professional qualifications and independence of FLC from activities and finances of the operation must be respected and justified. Wherever possible, the controller should have prior experience of control of projects co-financed by the EU.
Whether internal or external, the controller is required to be independent from the controlled structure and qualified to carry out the control of project's expenditure.

In order **to be considered independent,** the controllers have to fulfil certain criteria. An internal controller, if authorized by the national authority, has to belong to a unit which is organisationally separated from the units dealing with project activities and finances. An external controller can only be considered Independent if there are no other contractual relationships with the project or partner organisation that could lead to a conflict of interest.

With regard to **the qualification of the first level controller**, the partners have to bear in mind that the task of controlling project expenditure co-financed under the Interreg MED Programme goes beyond classical checks on accounts: it also involves a judgment on the **compliance with ERDF, national and Programme rules**. The controllers are therefore expected to have a profound knowledge of controlling project expenditure under the Structural Funds regulations as well as a good knowledge of English or French (considering that all Programme documents and reports are in one of the two Programme languages).

In the case of decentralised systems, the criteria of independence and qualifications, as well as the ones established at national level, must be respected for the selection of the FLCs.

TIMEFRAME FOR THE FLC VERIFICATIONS

The FLC should be performed at the end of each reporting period before validation of the project payment claim by the Lead Partner. A calendar to be respected for the submission of the payment claims is included in the Subsidy Contract.
After the submission of the expenditures for control, the FLC has three months to perform this control.

**In practice:**

- Partners should enter their expenditures in Synergie-CTE as soon as possible.
- FLC should be available at the end of the reporting period in order to perform the control without delay.
- The exchanges between the controlled partner and the FLC should be fluid in order to speed up the control.
- Every six months the project beneficiaries should ask the controller to execute as soon as possible the control on project expenditures and foresee a time of exchanges and clarifications with the FLC.
- Once the FLC declaration is signed by the controller and the partner report filled-in by each beneficiary; the full documentation should be made available to the project lead partner, or, where applicable, sent to the national authorities in charge of issuing the national validations (case of Spain and Portugal Only).
- Before the end of the period of 3 months after the end of the reporting period, the lead partners should receive the full documentation from each partner (FLC certificate + eventual National validation) duly filled-in and signed, and all their annexes.
- The lead partner should gather all partners' documentation on time in order to prepare the project payment claims and related report of activities and to send it to the JS.

> NB: Lead Partners should send their project payment claims and all certificates and reporting documentation to the JS no later than 3 months after the end of the reporting period. After that date, the payment claim could be rejected by the JS.

INFORMATION ON THE FLC OF EU PARTNERS LOCATED OUTSIDE THE MED AREA

For partners from the European Union but located outside the area eligible to the Programme, once the project is approved and a specific agreement is signed between the MA and the authority in charge of FLC systems on the EU partner territory, the EU external project partners should contact their national/regional authority in order to get information on the process for appointing the FLC.
In states where the cost of the first level control (centralized or not) are the responsibility of the partners, such costs are eligible for reimbursement and must be included in external expertise budget line of partner budgets.

# On-the-spot verifications (JS or PS)

On-the-spot visits or verifications are implemented by the Participating States and the MA/JS in accordance with section 125.4 and 125.5 (b) of Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013.

Annually the JS selects a sample of beneficiaries (Lead Partners and partners) to be controlled on-the spot, taking into account a list of criteria approved by the Interreg MED Programme Monitoring Committee. The Monitoring Committee is informed of the sample and the results of on-the-spot verifications.

This type of control is complementary to the project follow up and the payment claims verifications carried out by the MA/JS, and focuses on the respect of the elements constituting the audit trail, the management structures as well as the financial and accounting monitoring systems of the beneficiary and the qualitative monitoring of the project.
At the end of each on-the-spot verification, a report is drafted by the JS and submitted to the concerned beneficiary in order to undergo a contradictory procedure. Within the contradictory procedure, each beneficiary, assisted by their national authority, has the possibility to make comments on each finding. At the end of this procedure, the MA/JS has to confirm or renounce the findings; following this, the audit report becomes final, and the audit follow-up process starts. An on-the-spot verification may lead to the formulation of recommendations or identification of financial corrections.
For what concerns on-the-spot verifications carried out by the Participating States, they will be conducted in accordance with a specific methodology and work plan established by the Participating State itself. The results of those verifications will be communicated to the JS in order to follow the implementing of the recommendation or financial corrections.

# Second Level Audits

The word "audit" means the checks carried out by the second level auditors in accordance with Article 127 of Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013 (General Regulation) and Article 25 of EU Regulation 1299/ 2013 (ETC Regulations). The second level audits constitute an additional check of expenditure organized by the Programme that focuses on a sample of operations. These audits are coordinated by the AA of the Interreg MED Programme, in cooperation with the Group of National Auditors (GOA), and supported by the MA/JS.

The AA is the body that, in compliance with Article 127 of Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013 is responsible for ensuring the effective functioning of the management and control system of the Programme, by performing:

- Audits on the MA/JS as well as on the national control systems, via the so called audits of systems;
- Audits on an appropriate sample of projects, according to internationally accepted audit standards, on the basis of the expenditure claimed by the beneficiaries and certified by the CA to the EC, via the so called audit of operations.

In the framework of the Interreg MED Programme, the AA is supported by the GoA, which, in compliance with Article 25 (2) Regulation (EU) No. 1299/2013, is composed of a representative from each Participating State of the Programme. The AA and GoA must be independent from

other Programme bodies (MC, MA, JS, FLCs) as well as from the projects co-financed by the Programme.

The audit work is performed by the AA and the GoA on the basis of an audit strategy setting out the audit methodology, the sampling method for audits on projects and the planning of the audits. In the framework of the Interreg MED Programme, the AA and the GoA entrust the implementation of audit work to an external audit firm. This firm carries out its work in accordance with the audit strategy set in place by the AA and GoA and under their supervision. Audits on operations are performed once a year during the entire Programme lifetime.

The same beneficiary might be audited several times if the same project is selected more than once or if the beneficiary is involved in more than one project.

The audit follow-up is different in relation to the type of findings detected:

- In case of findings having financial consequences (i.e. in case of detecting irregular amounts), the amounts considered as not eligible will be withdrawn from the next payment claim submitted to the MA/JS or be recovered from the concerned partner if the project is already closed or if the amount to be reimbursed is lower than the irregular amount;
- Should the findings have no financial consequences, the affected beneficiary (and/or its controller if applicable) will have to document that recommendations set by the auditors have been followed up.

As a precautionary measure, and in compliance with provisions in the subsidy contract, the MA is entitled to withhold any ERDF payment to projects undergoing an audit, until its conclusion.
The MA/JS are not directly involved in the implementation of controls but support the communication flows between all parties involved in the audit process, i.e. the AA, GoA members, audit company, Lead Partners and Project Partners.
The MA/JS will also provide further guidance to beneficiaries on audit preparation and follow-up.

# Other controls and audits

In addition to the Programme bodies, the European Commission, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), the European Court of Auditors (ECA) and, within their responsibility, the auditing bodies of the Participating States or other national public auditing bodies are entitled to audit the proper use of funds by the beneficiaries. The concerned beneficiaries are notified in due time about any audit to be carried out by authorised persons of such bodies.

Beneficiaries undergoing an audit have to provide any project-related information to the above auditing bodies and give access to their business premises. Audits may occur at any time until the end date for the retention of documents.

PROGRAMME MANUAL

PROJECT MODIFICATIONS

As much as possible, projects should be implemented in accordance with the approved Application Form. However, if necessary, projects may request a modification of some of the elements of the project. Any modification must be duly justified and cannot alter the objectives of the approved project.

Depending on the <u>impact of the modification on the development of the project</u>, two types of modifications have been identified:

❖ **Non-substantial**, managed by the LP in cooperation with its partnership, validated by the project steering committee, and communicated to the JS via the progress report. They do not need the approval by Programme bodies.

❖ **Substantial**, requesting a modification of the Application Form and an official approval by Programme bodies. Depending on the type of substantial modification, approval would be made by the Programme Committee or the MA/JS. For more information, kindly see the summary table included at the end of this factsheet.

Depending on the <u>content of the modification</u>, the following types of modifications have been identified:

❖ Modifications on partnership composition

❖ Budget modifications

❖ Modification regarding the Work plan, activities, deliverables and project outputs

❖ Extension of the project duration

At the end of the present Factsheet, a table including the different types of modification can be found.

**ALL types of modifications must be essential for the achievement of the objectives of the project and must be validated by the project steering committee prior to any further action. Then proceed to implementation if is a non-substantial modification, or request for approval by Programme bodies if is a substantial modification. In case of doubts, LP should contact the JS as soon as possible in order to define the type of modification needed.**

It needs to be reminded that no modification will be possible during the first year of project implementation, neither during the pre-contracting procedure.
However, modifications will be exceptionally possible only if requested by the Programme bodies or for the application of new national rules.

Besides, in the case of multi-modular projects it is strongly recommended to concentrate all modifications when passing from one module to the next.

# General principles concerning project modifications

★ Modifications are allowed in exceptional circumstances and ONLY if they are considered essential for the achievement of the objectives of the project as approved by the Interreg MED Programme Steering Committee.

★ **Non-substantial modifications** are accepted provided that they are monitored by the LP, reported to the JS in the relevant progress report, and only if they do not impact project objectives and outputs, or the project implementation timetable.

★ **Substantial modifications** must be authorized by the Programme bodies, according to procedures established by the present Factsheet.

★ Modifications that may compromise the positioning of the concerned operations against the selection criteria that formed the basis of the corresponding financing decisions will not be accepted.

★ It is recommended that the partnership reviews the progress and conditions of implementation of the project when passing from one module to another (only multi modular projects) and makes, if needed, a general request for modifications including all adjustments that may be necessary until the project closure. In the case of single module projects, modifications should be avoided as much as possible.

★ ONLY the Lead Partner can submit a request for modifications to the JS after approval of the project steering committee.

★ All the requests for modifications have to be justified and submitted with the additional documents depending on the type of request.

★ On a case by case basis, and according to the type of modification faced by the project, an updated version of the Application Form (through Synergie CTE), of the Partnership Agreement and/or the signature of an Amendment to the Subsidy Contract may be needed.

★ If during the JS verification performed, when passing from one module to another modifications are deemed necessary, requested by the project or by the JS, the same procedure presented in this Factsheet must be applied. For further information, please refer to the Factsheet of the Programme Manual **«** MULTI-MODULAR PROJECTS **»**.

**LP are invited to contact the JS before starting any type of modification procedure in order to have an informal exchange regarding the nature and the scope of the modification and the procedure to be followed.**

# Update of administrative information

The LP should inform the JS of any change of administrative information[1] and, when necessary, update this information in Synergie CTE.

| MODIFICATION | ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS TO BE PROVIDED |
|---|---|
| Administrative data (except partner's designation, legal status[2]) | ▪ Official document stating the modification |
| Change of contact data of LP/PP, finance or communication manager | - |
| Change of the postal address of LP | ▪ Official document stating the modification |
| Change of legal representative LP | ▪ Official document stating the modification |
| Change of the bank account of LP/PP | ▪ Updated bank information form |

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[1] Kindly note that any modification of administrative elements linked to (or affecting the) structure and/or legal status of the partner is to be regarded as a substantial modification and it has to be managed as a **«** Modifications on partnership composition **»**.
[2] Idem.

# Non-substantial modifications

A **non-substantial modification** is any adjustment that does not have a significant impact on project objectives and/or implementation. Non-substantial modifications apply ONLY to the **work plan and budget adjustments** within the flexibility limits allowed by the Programme.

**Non-substantial modifications do not require approval by the Programme bodies nor submission of a revised project Application Form.** Although, non-substantial modifications must be managed by the project LP, validated by the project steering committee, and reported to the JS, through the relevant progress report.

Notwithstanding LP are strongly encouraged to contact the JS before starting any type of modification procedure in order to agree on its nature and scope as well as the appropriate procedure to be followed. Otherwise, should a modification be initially considered and validated by the project steering committee as "non-substantial" and identified, only a posteriori, as "substantial" according to the Interreg MED Programme rules, its eligibility is not guaranteed.

Non-substantial modifications include:

- Adjustment on activities and deliverables
- Budget deviation: 20% flexibility rule during project implementation
- Final budget adjustment within the 10% flexibility rule (not exceeding the total approve project budget)

## Adjustments on activities and deliverables of the work plan

A **non-substantial modification** on activities and deliverables of the work plan refers to any deviation from the latest approved Application Form that is considered essential for the achievement of the foreseen objectives of the project with positive impact on project objectives and outputs, and not interfering with the timetable for project implementation and nor the budget within the limits of the flexibly rules. Any modification going beyond this flexibility, and especially those having an impact on the result indicators and outputs should be considered as substantial modification, and in consequence it must be approved by the Programme bodies and will require a modification of the Application form by the LP under the JS supervision.

The following modifications can be considered as adjustments:

- Non-substantial adaptation of the timeline of activities, deliverables and outputs with no impact in the budget within the limits of the flexibly rules and timetable for project implementation.
- Modification of the format, content and scope of activities or deliverables with positive impact on project objectives and outputs, and not interfering with the timetable for project implementation and nor the budget within the limits of the flexibly rules.
- Inclusion of new activities and deliverables in line with the approved Application Form, with positive impact on project objectives and outputs, and not interfering with the timetable for project implementation nor the budget within the limits of the flexibly rules.
- Reduction of activities and deliverables in line with the approved Application Form, with positive impact on project objectives and outputs, and not interfering with the timetable for project implementation and nor the budget within the limits of the flexibly rules.
- Change of WP and activity leader, with no impact on project objectives and outputs, timetable for project implementation and budget within the limits of the flexibly rules.

> ▪ Alteration to the content, participation and target groups of communication actions, with positive impact on project objectives and outputs, and not interfering with the timetable for project implementation and nor the budget within the limits of the flexibly rules.

**EXAMPLES:**

⇒ Concrete example of activity modification:

*A project foresees a pilot activity to be developed in one municipality by a regional authority partner in the concerned project. After one year from the submission of the project proposal, the same municipality started to develop the activity internally outside the framework of the project. The partner (regional authority) propose to the project to extend the activity at regional level, including 2 additional municipalities.*

⇒ Concrete example of new activity:

*In order to optimize the organization and management of the two rounds of sub-regional training courses included in a foreseen activity, the project sees the opportunity to organize additionally a comprehensive course for all partners in each round. This new activity (organisation of an additional course) would have as output the seminar reports of the four training courses to which the partners from the pilot actions will participate. In order to organize this new activity, no budget modification or delay would be needed.*

Adjustments that may lead to the modification of the nature, quantity and use of the planned outputs are to be considered substantial modifications and, in consequence, a request for modifications has to be submitted to the JS by the LP.

### Budget deviation: 20% flexibility rule during project implementation

The Application Form contains a detailed budget per partner and project, structured per budget lines and work packages.

Each partner, in the limit of its total budget, has the possibility to shift funds between budget lines and work packages up to 20% of its total eligible budget. This means that overconsumption at budget line and work package level cannot exceed the 20% of the partner total eligible budget and that the total eligible budget of the partner has to remain unchanged.

For this calculation, the budget to be used as a reference is the budget included in the consolidated Application Form. The consolidated Application Form is the one annexed to the signed Subsidy Contract validated after the pre-contracting procedure[3].

According to Article 7 of the Partnership Agreement, the LP ensures that this flexibility rule is followed within the partnership. An Excel table to follow the deviation will be provided by the Programme.

There is no need to modify the Application Form or request approval of the JS when applying the 20% flexibility rule. Please note that **exceeding the flexibility limits without prior authorisation of the Programme bodies will result in the ineligibility of the amount exceeding the flexibility.**

Some restriction to this flexibility rule have to be taken into consideration:

> ▪ The total eligible budget of the partner cannot be exceeded;

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[3] In the case of an increase/decrease of the total eligible budget of the partner through a budget substantial modification or the inclusion of new partners, the budget of reference for the partners on which the flexibility rule will apply, will be the one included in the Application Form that states the increase/decrease/inclusion and validated by Programme bodies (i.e. the AF validated with/resulting from the procedure of substantial modification).

- The approval of the JS is needed in case of expenditure not foreseen in the Application Form that need a validation of the JS according to the Interreg MED eligibility rules;
- The nature, quantity and use of planned equipment cannot be changed without approval of the JS.

**EXAMPLE:** In the case of a partner with a total eligible budget of EUR 200.000, the addition of the overconsumption of the different budget lines and work packages cannot exceed EUR 40.000, this is 20% of its total eligible budget.

| Original breakdown of the partner's budget (ideal budget with only one BL and one WP) | | |
|---|---|---|
| BL : EUR 100.000 → 20% flexibility → claim up to EUR 140.000<br>WP : EUR 100.000 → 20% flexibility → claim up to EUR 140.000 | | |
| REAL CONSUMPTION OPTIONS | | |
| Option A | Option B | Option C |
| BL : EUR 140.000<br>WP : EUR 60.000 | BL : EUR 150.000<br>WP : EUR 50.000 | BL : EUR 120.000<br>WP : EUR 120.000 |
| Possible, flexibility respected and total eligible budget not exceed. | Not possible, **flexibility exceed**. | Not possible, **flexibility respected but total eligible budget exceed**. |

In the case where a reallocation of budget exceeding the 20% flexibility is needed, a substantial modification of the Application Form would be required. Please refer to section « Modification of the budget » of the present Factsheet.

### Final budget adjustment

At project closure, within the Final Report, a final adjustment based on the real consumption of the project would be possible.

During final budget adjustment, each partner, in the limit of its total budget, would have the possibility to declare to the budget lines and work package additional expenditure not foreseen in the last approved Application Form, without exceeding a flexibility amount of 10% of its total eligible budget.

More information about the implementation of this final budget adjustment is included in the Factsheet « PROJECT CLOSURE ».

## Substantial modifications

A **substantial modification** refers to any deviation from the latest approved Application Form that goes beyond the flexibility rules presented in the previous section. Any substantial modification **must be approved** by the Programme bodies **and will require a modification of the Application form by the LP under the JS supervision**.

Substantial modification apply to one or more of the following project elements:

1. Modifications on partnership composition
2. Modification of the budget (beyond the flexibility rule presented here after)
3. Work plan, project outputs and results
4. Extension of project duration

## Modifications on partnership composition

This modification can be necessary in case of withdrawing partner, the substitution or the inclusion of new partners.

In the case of a withdrawing partner, the Programme recommends to replace it with a partner with similar experience and technical competences coming from the same participating country; and taking over the same activities and budget. If this is not possible, partners that match such description may be found from other countries before resorting to spreading the activities/budget among the remaining partners or completely excluded them from the work plan. This last option is only possible in the case of activities that would not impact the achievement of project results as planned in the Application Form initially approved.

The eligibility of expenditure of the new partner starts the day of approval of the modification by the project steering committee. If the modification is not validated by the Programme bodies, no payment may be requested.

In case of institutional changes where, according to the national law, the entity's legal personality does not change and all assets of the replaced structure are taken over (i.e. in cases of universal succession), a prior consent by the Programme bodies is not necessary. However, the LP must submit in due time the related information to the JS together with any document necessary to analyse the legal case.
If the JS, in cooperation with the relevant National Authority, concludes that the conditions for considering the change as a "structural or legal status change" are not fulfilled, the LP will be informed that a partnership modification has to be initiated.

In case of modifications on the partnership composition, the Application Form should be modified and the documentation hereafter mentioned must be added to the request for modification: the new partner(s) declaration(s) (new co-financing amount according to the new Application Form) and the new partner(s) signature of the Partnership Agreement. The LP and the MA should sign an amendment to the Subsidy Contract, once the modification is accepted and the procedure is finalized.

The following table identifies all documents that must be submitted according to the different requests for modifications on partnership composition:

| MODIFICATION | ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS TO BE PROVIDED |
|---|---|
| Partner withdrawal with activities and/or budget taken over by one or several of the remaining partner(s) | <ul><li>Withdrawal letter of the concerned partner</li><li>In the case of a withdrawing partner that already received funds from the Programme: a declaration concerning the observation of obligations deriving from the Subsidy Contract and the Partnership Agreement</li><li>Updated partner declaration of partner(s) taking over the budget of the withdrawing partner (with new co financing)</li><li>New breakdown of the budget between budget lines and/or work packages</li><li>Approval of the project steering committee</li></ul> |
| Partner withdrawal with replacement by a new partner | <ul><li>Withdrawal letter of the concerned partner</li><li>In the case of a withdrawing partner that already received funds from the Programme: a declaration concerning the observation of obligations deriving from the Subsidy Contract and the Partnership Agreement</li><li>Partner declaration of the new partner</li><li>Approval of the project steering committee</li><li>Signed Partnership Agreement</li></ul> |

| | |
|---|---|
| Partner withdrawal without replacement (activities and budget removed) | ▪ Withdrawal letter of the concerned partner<br>▪ In the case of a withdrawing partner that already received funds from the Programme: a declaration concerning the observation of obligations deriving from the Subsidy Contract and the Partnership Agreement<br>▪ Approval of the project steering committee |
| Structural or legal status change of partner institution (partner's designation, legal status and region) | ▪ Official letter stating the structural/legal change of institution<br>▪ In the case of a partner that already received funds from the Programme: a declaration from the changed partner concerning the observation of obligations also related to the previous partner institution deriving from the Subsidy Contract and the Partnership Agreement<br>▪ Updated partner declaration |
| Addition of a new project partner taking over activities and budget of remaining partners | ▪ Letter of partners accepting budget reduction<br>▪ Partner declaration of the new partner<br>▪ New breakdown of the budget between budget lines and/or work packages<br>▪ Approval of the project steering committee |
| Addition of new associated partners or replacement of an associated partner | ▪ Letter of the partner in charge of the associated partner accepting the inclusion<br>▪ Associated partner declaration of the new associated partner<br>▪ Approval of the project steering committee |

In case of inclusion of a new partner, the relevant national authorities will have to perform the same verifications that were performed during the assessment phase. Moreover, the eligibility rules regarding the partners and the partnership applied to the relevant call will be checked by the JS.

**Any of these modifications necessarily imply another type of modifications related to the work plan and the budget. All related modifications must be requested at the same time.**

## Modification of the budget

This modification concerns the redistribution of the budget lines and/or work packages exceeding the 20% flexibility allowed[4] by the Programme; as well as budget modifications that may occur when the project needs a budget reallocation between partners on the framework of a partnership modification or a redistribution of activites and responsabilites. For any substantial budget modification an **approval from the Programme bodies is required**. Projects should be aware that a substantial budget modification cannot be requested during the first year of project implementation. In addition the Programme recommends the LP to wait to have a real overview of the project implementation and to make full use of the flexibily rule of 20% before requesting this type of modification.

The modifications on the budget may be the result of:

- A redistribution between budget line and/or WP exceeding the 20% flexibility rule during the project implementation;
- Modifications related to the work plan, as well as in the partnership, that require a transfer of activities and responsibilities together with the budget for the implementation.

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[4] For more information please refer to section « Budget deviation: 20% flexibility rule during project implementation » of the present factsheet.

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| MODIFICATION | ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS TO BE PROVIDED |
|---|---|
| Redistribution between budget lines and/or WP exceeding the 20% flexibility | ▪ New breakdown of the budget between budget lines and/or work packages<br>▪ Approval of the project steering committee |
| Redistribution of the budget between partners[5] | ▪ New breakdown of the budget between budget lines and/or work packages<br>▪ Letter of concerned partner(s) acknowledging a reduction of their budget<br>▪ Updated partner declaration (with new co financing)<br>▪ Approval of the project steering committee |
| Reduction of the project budget | ▪ New breakdown of the budget between budget lines and/or work packages<br>▪ Letter of concerned partner(s) acknowledging a reduction of their budget<br>▪ Approval of the project steering committee |

It is to be noted that following the approval of a substantial budget modification, partners having not reached the 20% flexibility threshold can still benefit from the budget flexibility rule (as described here before) in order to perform non-substantial modifications till the project closure. Kindly remember that the 20% flexibility is calculated using as a reference the budget included in the consolidated Application Form attached to the Subsidy Contract of the project after the pre-contracting procedure, and not the Application Form resulting from the substantial modification.

**Partners that have reached or exceeded the 20% of flexibility with reference to the consolidated Application Form** (attached to the Subsidy Contract of the project after the pre-contracting procedure)**, can no longer benefit from this budget flexibility rule. And in consequence, if they need a further budget modification it would necessary to request a substantial budget modification.**

## Modification of the work plan (deliverable and activities), project outputs and results

This modification regards changes in the nature of the project, and more specifically the project objectives and expected results, going beyond the adjustments to the work plan allowed within the flexibility rule.

These modifications include:

▪ Modification of outputs and/or their characteristics including output indicators targets (quantitative and qualitative changes)
▪ Substantial adaptation of the timeline of activities, deliverables and outputs with impact on the budget and timetable for project implementation
▪ Inclusion, reduction or modification (format, content and scope) of activities and deliverables with impact on project objectives and outputs, timetable for project implementation and budget

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[5] The redistribution of the budget between partners must always be made between partners financed through the same fund. That is, the ERDF released by an EU partner can only be taken over by other EU partners. And the IPA released by an IPA partner can only be taken over by other IPA partners. If a released budget cannot be taken over by another partner, the budget of the project would be reduced.
At the same time, the ERDF and IPA budget initially approved by the Interreg MED Programme Steering Committee cannot be exceeded. In consequence, in the case of a budget transfer between partners with different co-financing rates, the total eligible budget of the project would be modified without, in any case, increasing the ERDF and IPA budgets initially approved.

- Change of WP leader and activity leader, with impact on project objectives and outputs, timetable for project implementation and budget
- Alteration to the content, participation and target groups of communication actions, with impact on project objectives and outputs, timetable for project implementation and budget

Any modification related to activities considered State Aid relevant or revenue-generating will require a check of the JS and a validation by the Programme bodies.

**Any requests for substantial modifications shall be justified and submitted to the JS and validated by the Programme bodies at least 1 month before the activity takes place according to the work plan.**

### Extension of project duration

Partners should respect as much as possible the timing established in the last approved Application Form. The respect of the time plan will be closely checked during the analysis of each progress report and during the verification from the MA/JS before passing from one module to the next.

In exceptional and duly justified cases, the project may request an extension of the duration of the project implementation. This extension has to be necessary for the full achievement of the objectives and outputs of the project.

The extension of the project duration cannot exceed 6 months. And shall be requested at least 3 months prior to the original project ending date. <u>No increase of budget will be allowed in the framework of a project extension</u> and all project activities need to be completed by the 30th of June 2022 (ending date of the Programme project activities).

**Only one request of extension can be accepted per project.**

# Procedure to be followed in the case of a request for substantial modifications to be approved by Programme bodies

**As a general principle, ALL project modifications must be considered essential for the achievement of the project objectives, validated by the project steering committee prior to their implementation and communicated to the JS. An approval of the Programme bodies will be needed depending on the nature and scope of the modification according to the Programme rules established in the present factsheet.**

LP are invited to contact the JS as soon as possible before starting a modification procedure in order to define with the responsible Project Officer the nature of the modification and the procedure to be followed.

In the case of **substantial modifications**, the following procedure needs to be followed:

Please note that the eligibility of expenses of the eventual new partner starts from the date of the project steering committee decision validating the inclusion of the new partner (*under the condition that the Programme bodies do approve the partnership change*).

1.  The LP submits to the JS the request for modifications accompanied by the following documents for their analysis:

    o   **Decision of the project steering committee**: either the minutes of the meeting during which the decision took place or, the emails of the launch and of the closure of the project written procedure, in case the decision has taken place via a written procedure[6].

    o   Programme template **« REQUEST FOR MODIFICATIONS »** filled in (available on the website of the Programme).

    o   New breakdown of the budget between budget lines and/or work packages (template provided by the Programme) – *if relevant.*

    o   Partner's documents needed depending on the type of modification – *if relevant.*

    o   Any other document needed by the JS for the analysis of the request.

    The JS performs an analysis of the request. If needed the JS can contact the relevant National Authority.

    The JS informs the LP of the result of this analysis giving detailed feedback. If needed, clarifications and amendments may be requested.

    Once the request is accepted for treatment, the LP amends the Application Form in Synergie CTE based on the **« REQUEST FOR MODIFICATIONS »** submitted. The completeness of the Application Form is verified by the JS.

    The LP signs the new version of the Application Form, and uploads the signature page on Synergie CTE.

    **Kindly remember that the acceptance of the request for treatment by the JS cannot be considered as an approval by the Programme bodies.**

    **The full procedure must be followed until the end in order to grant the approval.**

2.  The JS submits the request to the Program Authorities authorized to approve the amendments along with its technical opinion.

    The Programme bodies' decision (approval/rejection of the request) is communicated by the JS to the LP.

3.  In case of approval, and if needed, an amendment of the Subsidy Contract is signed by the LP and the MA of the Interreg MED Programme in the cases foreseen in article 18.3 of the Subsidy Contract[7].

    In those cases the LP must send to the JS two original versions of the Amendment of the Subsidy Contract (signed by the LP) and, if applicable, one original version of the revised Partnership Agreement (signed by the LP and the new partner).

    One copy of the Amendment and of the revised Partnership Agreement has to be kept by the LP with the rest of the project contractual documents. For more information, please refer to Factsheets of the Programme Manual **« CONTRACTING PROCEDURES »**.

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[6] This possibility should be foreseen in the Rules of Procedure of the project steering committee.
[7] An extension of the foreseen deadline for closing activities; change in the partnership; a change in the project's ERDF or IPA allocation; a change in the operation's co-financing rate.

# Types of modification: Summary table

| Type of modifications | | Responsible level for validation | | | | Tool | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | LP | Project Steering Committee | Programme bodies | | PR[8] | WPL | AF |
| | | | | MA/JS | Programme Committee | | | |
| ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION UPDATE | | | | | | | | |
| ADM | Administrative data (except partner's denomination, legal statute and region) | X | | | | | | ▲ |
| ADM | Change of contact data of LP/PP, finance or communication manager | X | | | | | ▲ | ▲ |
| ADM | Change of the postal address of LP/PP | X | | | | | | ▲ |
| ADM | Change of legal representative LP/PP | X | | | | | | ▲ |
| ADM | Change of the bank account of LP/PP | X | | | | | | ▲ |
| MODIFICATIONS ON PARTNERSHIP COMPOSITION | | | | | | | | |
| SUBSTANTIAL | Partner withdrawal with activities and/or budget taken over by one or more several of the remaining project partner(s) | | X | | ★ [9] | | | ▲ |
| SUBSTANTIAL | Partner withdrawal with replacement by new partner | | X | | ★ | | | ▲ |
| SUBSTANTIAL | Partner withdrawal without replacement (activities and budget removed) | | X | | ★ | | | ▲ |
| SUBSTANTIAL | Structural or legal status change of partner institution (partner's denomination, legal statute and region) | X | | ★ | | | | ▲ |
| SUBSTANTIAL | Addition of a new project partner taking over activities and budget of remaining partners | | X | | ★ | | | ▲ |
| SUBSTANTIAL | Addition of new associated partners **or replacement of an associated partner** | | X | | ★ | | | ▲ |
| BUDGET MODIFICATIONS | | | | | | | | |
| NON-SUBSTANTIAL | Budget deviation: 20% flexibility rule during project implementation | X | | | | ▲ | | |
| SUBSTANTIAL | Redistribution between budget lines and/or work packages exceeding the 20% flexibility rule | X | X | ★ | | | | ▲ |
| SUBSTANTIAL | Redistribution of the budget between partner | | X | | ★ | | | ▲ |
| SUBSTANTIAL | Reduction of the project budget | | X | | ★ | | | ▲ |
| NON-SUBSTANTIAL | Final budget adjustment | X | X | | | ▲ | | |
| MODIFICATION REGARDING THE WORK PLAN, PROJECT'S OUTPUTS AND RESULTS | | | | | | | | |
| NON-SUBSTANTIAL | Non-substantial adaptation of the timeline of activities, deliverables and outputs with no impact in the budget and timetable for project implementation | | X | | | ▲ | | |
| NON-SUBSTANTIAL | Modification of the format, content and scope of activities or deliverables with positive impact on project objectives and outputs, and not interfering with the timetable for project implementation and nor the budget | | X | | | ▲ | | |
| NON-SUBSTANTIAL | Inclusion of new activities and deliverables in line with the approved Application Form, with positive impact on project objectives and outputs, and not interfering with the timetable for project implementation and nor the budget | | X | | | ▲ | ▲ | |
| NON-SUBSTANTIAL | Reduction of activities and deliverables in line with the approved Application Form, with positive impact on project objectives and outputs, and not interfering with the timetable for project implementation and nor the budget | | X | | | ▲ | ▲ | |
| NON-SUBSTANTIAL | Change of WP and activity leader, with positive impact on project objectives and outputs, and not interfering | | X | | | ▲ | | |

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[8] PR: Progress Report; WPL: Web Platform; AF: Application Form.

[9] In the case of replacement of a withdrawing partner with a partner with similar experience and technical competences coming from the same participating country; and taking over the same activities and budget (Programme recommendation), the replacement is to be validated by the MA/JS, after verification of the relevant National Authority.

| Category | Description | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | with the timetable for project implementation and nor the budget | | | | | | |
| NON-SUBSTANTIAL | Alteration to the content, participation and target populations of communication actions, with positive impact on project objectives and outputs, and not interfering with the timetable for project implementation and nor the budget | | X | | | ▲ | ▲ | |
| SUBSTANTIAL | Modification of outputs and/or their characteristics including output indicators targets (quantitative and qualitative changes) | | X | | ★ | | | ▲ |
| SUBSTANTIAL | Substantial adaptation of the timeline of activities, deliverables and outputs with impact on the budget and timetable for project implementation | | X | | ★ | | | ▲ |
| SUBSTANTIAL | Inclusion, reduction or modification (format, content and scope) of activities and deliverables with impact on project objectives and outputs, timetable for project implementation and budget | | X | | ★ | | | ▲ |
| SUBSTANTIAL | Change of WP leader and activity leader, with impact on project objectives and outputs, timetable for project implementation and budget | | X | | ★ | | | ▲ |
| SUBSTANTIAL | Alteration to the content, participation and target populations of communication actions, with impact on project objectives and outputs, timetable for project implementation and budget | | X | | ★ | | | ▲ |
| EXTENSION OF THE PROJECT DURATION | | | | | | | |
| SUBSTANTIAL | Extension of the project duration (3 months or less) | | X | ★ | | | | ▲ |
| SUBSTANTIAL | Extension of the project duration (between 3 and 6 months) | | X | | ★ | | | ▲ |

PROGRAMME MANUAL

DE-COMMITMENT

According to Article 136 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 the European Commission shall automatically de-commit any part of a budget commitment of a Programme that has not been used by 31 December of the third year following the year of budget commitment (s.c. N+3 rule). This de-commitment risk on Programme level is consequently replicable on project level.

Article 5, paragraph 5.1 of the Interreg MED Subsidy contract (SC) regulates the following:
"Should the LP submit a request for reimbursement lower than the (…) forecast, there is no guarantee of availability of the certified ERDF/IPA amount(s) for the (…) periods".
In case the LP requests fewer funds on behalf of the project partnership than the budget commitments indicated in the Application Form (AF) spending targets table, available there and in the Article 5 of the SC, the following rule shall apply: if less than 80% of the spending target (ERDF tranches to be requested per reporting period as indicated in the annex) is met, the difference is to be considered as "under risk" and might be lost if the Programme experiences a de-commitment of funds."

The obligations of the partners are further stated in the partnership agreement (PA) where
- in Article 5.3, paragraph e it is defined that "Each project partner agrees to the (…) duties and obligations with regard to the LP (…) to making every effort to ensure compliance with financial commitments, as provided for in Article 5.1 of the Subsidy Contract ;
- in Article 15.1 it is stated that "Should the ERDF/IPA funds for the project be subject to automatic de-commitment by the Programme Authorities because of non-spending or underspending compared to the budget and planned timetable, the LP will have one month after receiving an official communication to attribute this reduction to the partners that have contributed to underspending following a distribution approved by the project steering committee."

## How to avoid a de-commitment on project level?

The risk of facing a de-commitment during project life time can be reduced by considering the following:

a) the financial plan of the project, especially the budget distribution in time shall be defined carefully (considering already in advance possible delays, e.g. delays due to the first level control procedures). The project partners shall stay in contact with their first level control bodies so to ensure that the expenditures can be certified in time (as stated in article 6.5 of the PA the project partners shall ensure timely reporting of activities and costs);

b) the financial performance of the project partners shall be monitored closely and regularly by the LP (as stated in article 4 g and 6.1 of the PA the LP shall ensure sound financial management of the project).

# Other financial requirements

Even if detailed information on financial requirements related to project implementation is provided in section on Controls and Audits, key principles explained in this factsheet must be kept in mind by applicants when preparing their project proposals.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE AND DECOMMITMENT OF FUNDS

In order to be considered as eligible, expenditure must have been actually paid out and then verified by First Level Controllers. Financial performance of projects will be measured exclusively on the basis of verified expenditure.

It is to be kept in mind that Programmes may get funds de-committed by the European Commission[1] in case that allocations set in the financial tables of the Interreg Programme are not translated into effective requests for payment to the European Commission within the set timeframe. Should this loss of funds (ERDF and/or IPA) result from projects lagging behind their payment targets based on the spending forecast included in the Subsidy Contract signed between the Lead Partner and the Managing Authority (as further explained in), the Programme might have to reduce contribution to these projects.

Applicants are strongly advised to carefully plan the budget allocation to reporting periods within the Application Form and the Subsidy Contract, by realistically reflecting the actual spending capacity of the project as well as the time needed for paying out and certifying costs incurred.

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[1] As provided for in Article 136 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

PROGRAMME MANUAL

NET REVENUES

As a general principle[1], eligible expenditure of a project (and consequently the Union contribution to it) shall be reduced according to the net revenue generated by the project both during its implementation as well as until three years after its completion.

Net revenues are:

> Cash in-flows directly paid by users for the goods or services provided by the project, such as charges borne directly by users for the use of infrastructure, sale or rent of land or buildings, or payments for services.
>
> MINUS
>
> Any operating costs and replacement costs of short-life equipment incurred during the corresponding period

Please note that operating cost-savings generated by the project shall be treated as net revenue unless they are offset by an equal reduction in operating subsidies.

In case of revenue-generating projects, applicants are to calculate the expected net revenues following the method described under Articles 15 to 19 of the Delegated Regulation (EU) No 480/2014.

Expected net revenues, generated during the project implementation and after completion, **are to be indicated in the budget of the Application Form** in order to offset the corresponding Union contribution. Applicants shall not indicate expected net revenues in the Application Form in the following cases:

- If the total budget of the project does not exceed EUR 1 000 000[2];
- If the specific project output generating net revenue is State aid relevant.

In the case of net revenues not foreseen in the Application Form, the same rules would apply. Those have to be reported by concerned partners in each reporting period and checked by the FLC, to be included in a project payment claim submitted to the JS. The generation of revenues will be duly checked by the JS and any competent authority **during project implementation** as well as **after its complete closure**.

In any case, net revenues generated in the framework of project activities will be offset by a reduction of the corresponding EU contribution and if applicable, the restitution of the ERDF/IAP amounts paid by the Programme.

In accordance with Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 Articles 61 and 65, if a project generates net revenue for example through services, conference participation fees, sales of brochures or books, it must be deducted from eligible costs in full or pro-rata depending on whether it was generated

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[1] In accordance with Articles 61 and 65(8) of Regulation (EU) 1303/2013.

[2] Please note that even if a project below EUR 1 000 000 total budget is exempted to include the forecast of expected net revenues in the Application Form, such project – in case of approval - must record and deduct from Union contribution net revenues generated during implementation or after closure.

entirely or only partly by the co-financed project. The ERDF/IPA funding is calculated on the basis of the total cost after deduction of any net revenue. In line with Article 65, the revenues generated during the implementation period of the project, need to be reported at the latest with the final project payment claim.

PROGRAMME MANUAL

RESOLUTION OF COMPLAINTS

# Resolution of complaints

The procedures set in place for the resolution of complaints are differentiated according to the object of the complaint.

COMPLAINTS RELATED TO THE ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

Lead Partners of rejected project proposals will be informed in writing about the decision of the Steering Committee, providing details on the reasons why an application was not eligible or approved, according to the information included in the related factsheet.

Any complaint related to the assessment and the selection of the proposals shall be submitted in either French or English by the Lead Partner as the representative of the project partnership affected by the funding decision. It is therefore the task of the Lead Partner to collect and bring forward the complaint reasons from all project partners.

The right to complain applies to the Lead Partner whose project application was not selected during the project assessment and selection process. It applies also to the projects approved under conditions, this only if no agreement on the conditions can be reached during the contracting process between the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat and the Lead Partner.

The complaint can be lodged only against the following criteria:
a. the assessment and the selection of the proposal, based on the criteria approved by the Monitoring Committee, do not correspond to the information provided by the Lead Partner during the project assessment and selection process; and/or
b. the project assessment and selection process failed to comply with specific procedures laid down in the Cooperation Programme, the Programme Manual and the Terms of Reference of the concerned call that materially affected or could have materially affected the decision.

The complaint should be lodged in writing by e-mail (programme_med@regionpaca.fr) with the function of confirmation of receipt to the Managing Authority of the Interreg MED Programme within 2 calendar months after the Lead Partner had been officially notified by the Managing Authority about the results of the project selection process. If a complaint is submitted after that deadline it will be rejected without further examination. This decision can also be contested and may be brought to the Administrative Court of Marseilles within two months starting from the date of the notification.

The complaint should include:
a. name and address of the Lead Partner;
b. reference number of the application which is a subject of the complaint;
c. clearly indicated reasons for the complaint, including listing of all elements of the assessment which are being complaint and/or failures in adherence with procedures limited to those criteria mentioned previously;
d. date, signature and stamp of the legal representative of the Lead Partner;
e. any supporting documents.

No other grounds for the complaint than those criteria indicated above will be taken into account during the complaint procedure.

The Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat examine the complaints on the basis of the information brought forward by the Lead Partner in the complaint lodged and the supporting documents. It

may involve the Monitoring Committee if necessary. If a beneficiary from an EU territory outside the Programme area lodges a complaint, the competent national/regional authority will be informed by the MA/JS of all stages of the procedure.

The decision, based on French law, of acceptance or rejection of the complaints is made by the Managing Authority and communicated to the Monitoring Committee. The Lead Partner is notified about the decision within 2 months.

In case of acceptance of the complaint, the case will be sent back to the Steering Committee to review the project application and its assessment.

COMPLAINTS RELATED TO DECISIONS MADE DURING THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Any complaint in relation to decisions made by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat on the basis of the Subsidy Contract or Monitoring Committee decisions will follow the rules laid down in the Subsidy Contract concluded between the Managing Authority and the Lead Partner. In principle, the complaint shall be submitted by the concerned partner to the MA/JS that will examine and provide in due time an answer (in collaboration with the MC, if necessary).

Where courts, public prosecution offices or other national institutions are competent in relation to the object of the complaint, the beneficiary has the right to turn also to these authorities in France, where the MA/JS are located.

**Complaints related to First Level Control, Second Level Control and Audit** have to be lodged to the responsible national authority according to the applicable national rules.[1]

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[1] For further information about these specific complaint procedures please contact the concerned National Contact Point and check the national information included on www.interreg-med.eu.

PROGRAMME MANUAL

# PROJECT CLOSURE PROCEDURE

This factsheet aims at defining all the steps beneficiaries should follow when their project is coming to its end, and at reminding the obligations of beneficiaries after project closure.
Indeed, the actual duration of a project goes much longer than its implementation period.
Overall, before formally closing the project, project partners must ensure that:

- Each Partner's organisation (not just the staff involved in the project implementation) is aware of the obligations after project ending date and project closure. A future control may need to be facilitated by someone without any knowledge of the project.
- A communication line is kept with all partners during project closure.
- The project documentation is available (all of it) and organised in a way that anyone with no knowledge of the project can ensure a smooth control by the relevant bodies.

## IMPLEMENTATION AND ELIGIBILITY PERIOD

As indicated in Art. 5.1. of the Subsidy Contract, the final implementation period ends on the official end date of the project, as set out in Article 3.3 of the Subsidy Contract and indicated in the latest approved Application Form.
The period of eligibility of expenditure differs depending if the expenditure is related to the implementation of the project or to the closure of the project. The period is defined in art. 4.6 to 4.8 of the Subsidy Contract.  For more information regarding the period of eligibility of expenditures, please consult Factsheet "Eligibility of expenditure".

## FINAL PAYMENT CLAIM

As a general rule, the Reporting procedure detailed in the Factsheet "Reporting Procedure" should apply to submit a final payment claim, respecting the following specificities:

- The last FLC Certificates should be switched into "Final" in Synergie CTE, before their signature by the FLCs. In the last certificate, FLCs should take into account any specific control to be performed until the end of the project.
- The Payment Claim should be switched into "Final" in Synergie CTE, before its signature by the LP.
- Submission of a progress report regarding the last implementation period filled in and submitted through Synergie CTE.
- Submission of a final report filled in and submitted through Synergie CTE.
- If the 10% budget flexibility is used, a dedicated excel file should be provided to the JS.

## FINAL REPORT

In accordance with Art. 5.2. of the Subsidy Contract, a final report should be submitted at the same time as the final payment claim. The Final Report shall therefore be submitted within 3 months from the official ending date of the project indicated in the latest approved Application Form. The submission of the final report together with the last progress report is a condition for the final payment.

The final report should provide information on the actual achievements, results and impacts of the project as a whole. The report will serve the improvement of implementation procedures on project and programme level, but also provide the necessary framework to further promote, transfer and capitalise on the results of the project.

This report is addressed to Programme bodies. It will not be published (except "project summary").

This report should be filled in by the Lead Partner. However it is highly recommend consulting the project partnership beforehand since project partners were involved in specific project tasks. Furthermore this consultation shall allow the integration of experiences and perspectives of the whole partnership. When filling in the report, please be concise, honest and realistic. Your project will not be evaluated on the basis, but your direct and realistic answers will allow improving the conditions for upcoming projects.

**This report should be used to give an overview of what has been done and achieved, including information for communication purposes and programme statistics.**

The main objectives of this document are:

- To assess the project performance
- To collect evidence of contribution to programme and project commitments
- To understand the durability and transferability potential and readiness of project outputs and results at project, programme and policy level
- To serve for capitalisation activities, at project and programme level
- To publicise project results on programme level
- To capture the added value of transnational cooperation

The final report consists of the following main elements:

- Information on project overall implementation, its objective, results, outputs and main achievements, including its contribution to strategies and horizontal principles, as well as the added value of transnational cooperation
- Information regarding communication activities, and specifically a story telling or testimonial
- Feedback on the Programme, its bodies and its architecture
- A focus on future outlook, in terms of durability, transferability and replicability of project results and outputs after project closure and impact of the project
- Identification of net revenues

The JS will assess the final report together with the last Progress Report and Final Payment Claim, following the Reporting procedure detailed in the Factsheet "Reporting Procedure".

Furthermore, the JS can ask the LP to complete a specific template to register project information in the online project database of DG REGIO: **Database Inforegio**. In that case, the project officer will inform the LP in due time and provide assistance to complete the requested information.

## FINAL BUDGET ADJUSTMENT

In order to cope with real needs, at project closure, within the Final Report, a final adjustment based on the real consumption of the project is possible.
This is considered a non-substantial modification, as indicated in the Factsheet « Project Modifications ».

During final budget adjustment, each partner, in the limit of its total budget, would have the possibility to declare to the budget lines and work package additional expenditure not foreseen in the last approved Application Form, without exceeding a flexibility amount of 10% of its total eligible budget and without exceeding its total approved budget.
This flexibility is calculated on the basis of the latest approved application form.

In order to use this flexibility, the LP will have to submit a dedicated excel file together with the final report. The JS will verify that the 10% flexibility rule has been applied correctly during the final payment claim process.

## SURVEY ON HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES

The Interreg MED Programme follows-up concretely the measures and actions taken by the projects to apply the horizontal principles: sustainable development, equal opportunities and equality between men and women.

To this end, the JS has designed an online self-assessment questionnaire to be filled in by the project partners at the beginning and at the end of the project to assess the progress and give further proposals and guidance. The survey regarding the end of the project will be sent to closing projects. The compilation of the survey is compulsory for all projects and should be finalised with the submission of the final payment claim.

## NET REVENUES

In line with Article 65 of the Common Provisions Regulation, the revenues generated during the implementation period of the project, need to be reported at the latest with the final project payment claim.
This should be specified in the Final Report in order to ensure that all related requirements have been taken into account. Should the project be identified as revenue-generating in accordance with art. 61 of the Common Provisions Regulation, the Managing Authority is entitled to ask for refunding to the Programme in proportion to the contribution from the funds.

More information regarding net revenues are available in the Factsheet "Net revenues".

## PROJECT WEBSITE AND INTERNET-BASED TOOLS

The Programme will ensure the mandatory maintenance of projects websites hosted on the Programme web-platform, however Lead Partners are responsible for entering up-to-date information if deemed necessary.
Any external website or internet-based tool should be maintained online by the beneficiaries until 31st December 2023.
After that period, they have to be stored locally to be able to show them in case of a control. A log of the evolution of web-sites and adequate local back-up systems have to be required from developers. The local back-up has to be provided to the JS with the final report.

## CLOSING LETTER

After reimbursement of the final payment to all project partners, the MA will issue a Closing Letter addressed to the LP, formalising the closure of the project.

## CONTROL AFTER PROJECT CLOSURE

Controls can occurred after the project ending date. Key factors, related to being prepared for control after project closure, are indicated below.

- The organisations acting as project partners should understand their obligations during the open-to-control period, regardless of the continuity of the staff assigned to the project, especially in terms of the access to documents, information systems and infrastructure and equipment financed by the project;
- The original documents and the computerised systems need to be easily accessible during the full open-to-control period. If the period for retention of documents and computerised records required by the national rules or the organisation's usual practice is less than the

open-to-control period, ad-hoc adequate procedures have to be designed and implemented at the beginning of the project;

- Even if infrastructure or equipment property is transferred after the project closes, the agreement with the recipient has to include the right of access during the open-to-control period. All technical documentation and photographs should be kept in the project archives (as needed, copies of the technical documents can be given to the owners of the equipment or infrastructure);

- Any equipment at the end of its useful life for example, obsolete computers, needs to be removed from the organisation's inventory following adequate recorded procedures which have to be archived with the project documents, even after project closure;

- Technical documentation must include all supporting documents and photographs proving all the activities financed during project implementation, both tangible and intangible;

- Financial documentation must be accessible in its original form or equivalent according to national law and must include proof of delivery of services and supplies;

- The Lead Partner and project partners must agree to nominate a contact person during the open-to-control-period with adequate knowledge of the project, its content, its archives and computer systems and records.

## AUDIT TRAIL

Regarding the retention of documentation, projects should consider both national and EC regulations. The strictest rule should be applied. All project partners shall keep all supporting documents available

According to Art. 16.1 of the Subsidy Contract and Art. 3.3.d of the Partnership Agreement, the LP and all the partners undertake to archive and store in a single location the technical, financial and administrative file on the operation in accordance with the provisions of the regulations up to 31 December 2028.

The following main documents must be available for control purposes:

- Approved Application Form signed by LP
- Partnership Agreement (and its amendments)
- Subsidy Contract (and its amendments)
- FLC Certificates (in original for each partner)
- Each invoice and accounting document of probative value related to project expenditure (originals to be retained at the premises of the project partner concerned)
- All supporting documents related to project expenditure (e.g. payslips, bank statements, public procurement, documents etc) to be retained at the premises of the project partner concerned
- If relevant, documentation of on the spot visits by the MA/JS and national authorities

PROGRAMME MANUAL

# REPORTING OF INELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE ALREADY DECLARED TO THE EC

This factsheet aims to give guidance on how to report an ineligible expenditure which has been detected after being certified and included in a FLC certificate, verified by the Managing Authority, paid to the beneficiary and declared to the EC by the Certifying Authority[1]. The procedure described below will enable the Joint Secretariat (JS) to take the appropriate actions concerning the unduly paid funds.

Several situations may lead to the identification of irregular[2] expenditure (non exhaustive list):

❖ A FLC checking a reporting period that founds out a mistake on previous reported expenditure;

❖ National Authorities based on quality controls checks performed over reported expenditure;

❖ Any partner that founds on a mistake on claimed expenditure already reimbursed.

**ATTENTION:** Kindly be reminded that this type of corrections cannot be entered in Synergie CTE by FLC or National Authorities and that, in consequence, the following procedure should be followed with the aim that the JS can include them in Synergie CTE, and the Certifying Authority declare them to the Commission as soon as possible as provided for in article 143 of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

As soon as an expenditure which has already been certified in a previous reporting period and paid by the Certifying Authority has been detected as ineligible, this ineligible amount has to be officially reported to the JS by filling in the **Ineligible Expenditure Report** template available on the Programme's website.

This document[3] is have to be sent to the JS **immediately after** the irregularity is detected to the following email address: programme_med@maregionsud.fr in a high priority email message, with the following email subject line: Ineligible Expenditure Report /***acronym of the project***/***name of the concerned partner***.

The JS will then examine the information provided and a financial correction will be included in Synergie CTE and forwarded to the Certifying Authority.

Depending on whether the irregular expenditure has already been paid and whether further expenses are expected to be paid to the concerned partner, the MA/JS will decide to recover the amount through a compensation process with future payments or through a recovery procedure, if the project is already closed or if the amount to be reimbursed is lower than the irregular amount.

According to article 143 of Regulation (EU) 1303/2013, the part of the operation budget cancelled based of financial corrections according individual or systemic irregularities may not be reused for the operation that was the subject of the correction or, where a financial correction is made for a systemic irregularity, for any operation affected by the systemic irregularity.

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[1] In case of doubt, kindly contact the JS to check in which situation is the expenditure.

[2] According to article 2, point 36, of Regulation (EU) 1303/2013: 'irregularity' means any breach of Union law, or of national law relating to its application, resulting from an act or omission by an economic operator involved in the implementation of the ESI Funds, which has, or would have, the effect of prejudicing the budget of the Union by charging an unjustified item of expenditure to the budget of the Union.

[3] A report is to be filled in for a project and a partner. If several projects and partners are concerned by the irregularity several reports will be provides accordingly.

PROGRAMME MANUAL

# COMPLYING WITH THE GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION

# FORWARD NOTE

The new European Union General Data Protection Regulation (EU-GDPR) was enforced on 25th May 2018, producing new rules for Interreg Programmes and the projects regarding the management of private data collected for various purposes and in different stages of their implementation.

As a general principle, the new regulation gives citizens the rights to access and control their private data obliging data keepers to implement a certain number of measures to meet such requirements. The Interreg MED Programme and the Project Partners are data controllers and processors[1], and therefore are required to abide by the GDPR.

It is however important to highlight that the Regulation did not substantially change the core concepts and principles of the data protection legislation put in place back in 1995.

This means that the vast majority of controllers and processors will not need to make major changes to their data processing operations to comply with the Regulation provided that they are already in compliance with the existing EU data protection laws.

This factsheet briefly presents the GDPR regulation and its consequences for the Programme and projects. It aims to answer the questions raised by projects about this topic during their implementation.

However, the Interreg MED Programme holds no responsibility or liability whatsoever regarding the personal data collected and processed by the Project Partners.

# KEY QUESTIONS

- WHAT IS CONSIDERED AS PERSONAL DATA?

  Personal data relates to any information about a natural person or 'Data Subject', which can be used to directly or indirectly identify the person. It can be anything from a name, a photo, an email address, bank details, and posts on social networks, medical information, or a computer IP address.[2]

- WHO IS CONCERNED BY THE GDPR IMPLEMENTATION?

  The GDPR applies to organisations based in the EU and outside, if these organisations collect data from EU citizens. Therefore, the Interreg MED projects collecting data from IPA countries are also concerned by this regulation.

- WHAT RIGHTS DO DATA SUBJECTS HAVE?

  Data subject, e.g. someone registering for a project event or newsletter has the right to access the information defined as personal data, receive it "in a structured, commonly used and machine-readable format" rectify it, erase it, asks the restriction of its processing, etc.[3]

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[1] See definition of « data controller » and « data processor » as stated in the GDPR Regulation (CE) nº 2016/679, Chapter 1, article 4(7)(8).

[2] See definition in the GDPR Regulation (CE) nº 2016/679, Chapter 1, article 4 (1) .

[3] For a full description of the « data subject » rights, please check Chapter 3 of the GDPR Regulation (CE) nº 2016/679.

- WHAT IS A DATA CONTROLLER AND PROCESSOR(S) ?

" 'Controller' means the natural or legal person, public authority, agency or other body which, alone or jointly with others, determines the purposes and means of the processing of personal data […]".

"A 'processor' means a natural or legal person, public authority, agency or other body which processes personal data on behalf of the controller."[4]

In the case of an Interreg MED project, any partner falling under the definition of "data controller" and "data processor" established by the regulation can be considered as such.

- WHAT ARE THE RESPONSABILITIES OF THE DATA CONTROLLER?

The controller "shall implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure and to be able to demonstrate that processing is performed in accordance with this Regulation."[5]

Therefore, the data controller must ensure that institutions managing personal data implement systems that enable the inventory of databases, allow interested people to access their personal data, change it or deleted it.

These databases must be kept safe of any data breach. In the event such incident occurs, institutions have the obligation to communicate it within 72 hours to the national data protection authority.

**The data controller and data processor(s) must appoint where necessary[6] a data protection officer (DPO)** that will "inform and advise the controller or the processor and the employees who carry out processing of their obligations pursuant to this Regulation […]; monitor compliance with this Regulation […]; provide advice where requested […]; cooperate with the supervisory authority; act as the contact point for the supervisory authority on issues relating to processing [of personal data]"[7], etc.

"Data subjects may contact the data protection officer with regard to all issues related to processing of their personal data and to the exercise of their rights under this Regulation."[8]

Please note that Public Bodies must appoint a DPO.

- WHAT PENALTIES IN THE CASE OF INFRIGEMENT?

Organisations failing to comply with the GDPR can be fined up to 4% of annual global turnover or €20 Million (whichever is greater). This is the maximum fine that can be imposed for the most serious infringements e.g. not having sufficient consent to process data or violating the core of Privacy by Design concepts.[9]

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[4] Definition of a "data controller" and "data processor" according to the GDPR Regulation (CE) nº 2016/679, Chapter 1, article 4(7)(8).

[5] Regulation (CE) nº 2016/679, Chapter 4, article 24(1).

[6] Please check the GDPR Regulation (CE) nº 2016/679, Chapter 4, article 37 to see in which cases a DPO must be appointed.

[7] For the detailed list of the DPO tasks, please see the GDPR Regulation (CE) nº 2016/679, Chapter 4, article 39.

[8] See GDPR Regulation (CE) nº 2016/679, Chapter 4, article 38(4).

[9] For detailed information, please refer to the GDPR Regulation (CE) nº 2016/679, Chapter 8, article 83.

- WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DATA COLLECTED IN PROJECTS WEBSITES AND BY OTHER MEANS?

The Programme Managing Authority (Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region) is only responsible (Data controller) for the data collected by the Joint Secretariat and stored in the Programme website and other IT or non IT systems, for the legal obligations to be fulfilled by the Programme (accounts data, project partner's contacts, webmasters lists, etc.).

The Interreg MED Programme cannot be held responsible for the information contained on a project's website and Privacy Policy page.

All data collected and stored by the projects, collected either through the Interreg MED web platform via the registration forms or surveys, or through any other softwares and applications, are the responsibility of the project data controller.

## SUBJECT CONSENT

Please note that not all data is subject to consent. Absolute consent is needed in case of sensitive and risky data. If the data is collected under the framework of a legal contract or in compliance with legal regulations, the consent might not be necessary. However, in this regard, project partners have a duty of transparency and for that matter; they must explain for what purposes they use the information. In addition, they must grant consultation rights for a claimant requesting access to their own data.

As far as Newsletter contacts/mailings are concerned, the GDPR requires the express consent of the recipients. To do this, project partners must ask for the express agreement of their targets and grant them the right to access, change or delete their personal data. Some project partners used contact data collected without the consent of their targets. In this case and in any other cases, the JS recommends to send them an email to obtain their consent thus giving them the opportunity to exercise their rights.

Data subjects should always have the possibility to exercise their rights. An opt-out option should therefore always be available for newsletters and similar communication tools.

## WHAT DO PROJECT PARTNERS NEED TO DO – CHECK LIST

Several actions must be undertaken, in order to comply with the GDPR:

- First and foremost, project partners must organise a meeting to appoint the partner institution that will act as the project data controller. As for the projects starting after 2018, this appointment will have to be made during the first Steering Committee at the latest.

- The data controller together with the data processor(s) must then appoint a DPO for the project. The Joint Secretariat strongly recommends appointing a DPO within the data controller institution. As a consequence, the institution elected as data controller must

have the capacity to take such responsibility and preferably already count with a DPO within its structure.

- The data controller must review regularly all the protection measures of the project partner databases and make an inventory to prevent data breaches;

- Have ready a personal data management system, to be able to quickly respond to any demands of access, deletion, modification or even complaints.

- Have a privacy policy page on your website, in full compliance with the GDPR. The Programme prepared a template to be used only as a guidance. It is not intended to address the specific circumstances of any particular project or entity.

  In no case, this template can be considered as a professional legal document.

  All project websites already count with the "Privacy Policy" template.

- Adapt the template provided by the Programme to your project specificities or where necessary, draft a new one. Please note that this template has been updated on 28th December 2019, so check whether your text is consistent with the latest version.

- Add the contact of your DPO and your website manager;

- As for the registration forms and surveys, project partners need to add:

  o A paragraph informing about the purpose of the data collection and guaranteeing that the data is collected and processed in compliance with the GDPR;

  o A paragraph stating that anyone registering for an event or filling in a survey / form confirm having read the excerpt on GPDR and that by clicking on the "SUBMIT" button they give [ACRONYM'S] project partners their explicit consent for collecting and using your personal data.

  The registration and form templates provided in the example site already count with those new paragraphs. They can be used as example.

REFERENCES

Privacy policy of the Interreg MED Programme
EU GDPR web site

PROGRAMME MANUAL

# FINANCIAL FLOWS AND BANK INFORMATION

The following factsheet aims to describe the procedure to be followed for the reimbursement of partners in the framework of the Interreg MED Programme, as well as practical information about the bank data to be provided and its update.

## The reimbursement system

The payments within the Interreg MED Programme are only made on a reimbursement basis[1].

Payment claims are submitted by the Lead Partner to the Managing Authority on behalf of the partners every six months[2]. Organisations wishing to participate in the Programme must have sufficient financial resources and cash flow to be able to advance their own funding until receiving payment[3] by the Programme. Based on our experience, upon receipt of the payment claim, the effective payment may take about 4/5 months, during which time the payment claim will be processed, checked and validated.

In any case, reimbursements are made as soon as possible to the partner's account by the Certifying Authority of the Programme. Payments are made in Euros only.

The Certifying Authority is designated to certify statements of expenditure and applications for payment before they are sent to the European Commission. It first receives ERDF and IPA payments from the EC to the Programme. Ultimately, it is the body that pays ERDF and IPA funding to each single Lead Partner and project partner.

**The Certifying Authority is the Ministry of Finance of Spain**.

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[1] The Interreg MED Programme offers the opportunity for partners from IPA countries to receive during the project starting phase, an advance payment representing 10% of their IPA budget. For more information, see Factsheet « PROJECT START-UP ».

[2] For more information, see Factsheet « REPORTING PROCEDURE ».

[3] For more information, see Factsheet « QUALITY EXPECTATIONS AND CRITERIA »:
*A final quality criterion for a successful implementation, closely related to maintaining deadlines, is the respect of the financial commitment, the budget. Too often, cash flow difficulties that jeopardize the active participation of partners are discovered late, and too often they affect a key activity for the success of the project. Please, keep in mind that the Interreg MED Programme will not make any advance payments of the ERDF co-financing !*
*Any participating structure should properly measure the risk that this entails with respect to its obligations towards the Interreg MED Programme but also in regard to its own functioning.*
*Finally, an important cash flow is required in order to avoid the reimbursement of your ERDF/IPA co-financing becoming a condition of survival of the structure, preventing the progress of the project in which you participate.*

# Financial flows

The financial flows between the different Programme authorities, Lead Partners, partners and the Commission are presented schematically here below. It should be noted that under the Interreg MED Programme the Certification Authority reimburses each partner directly.
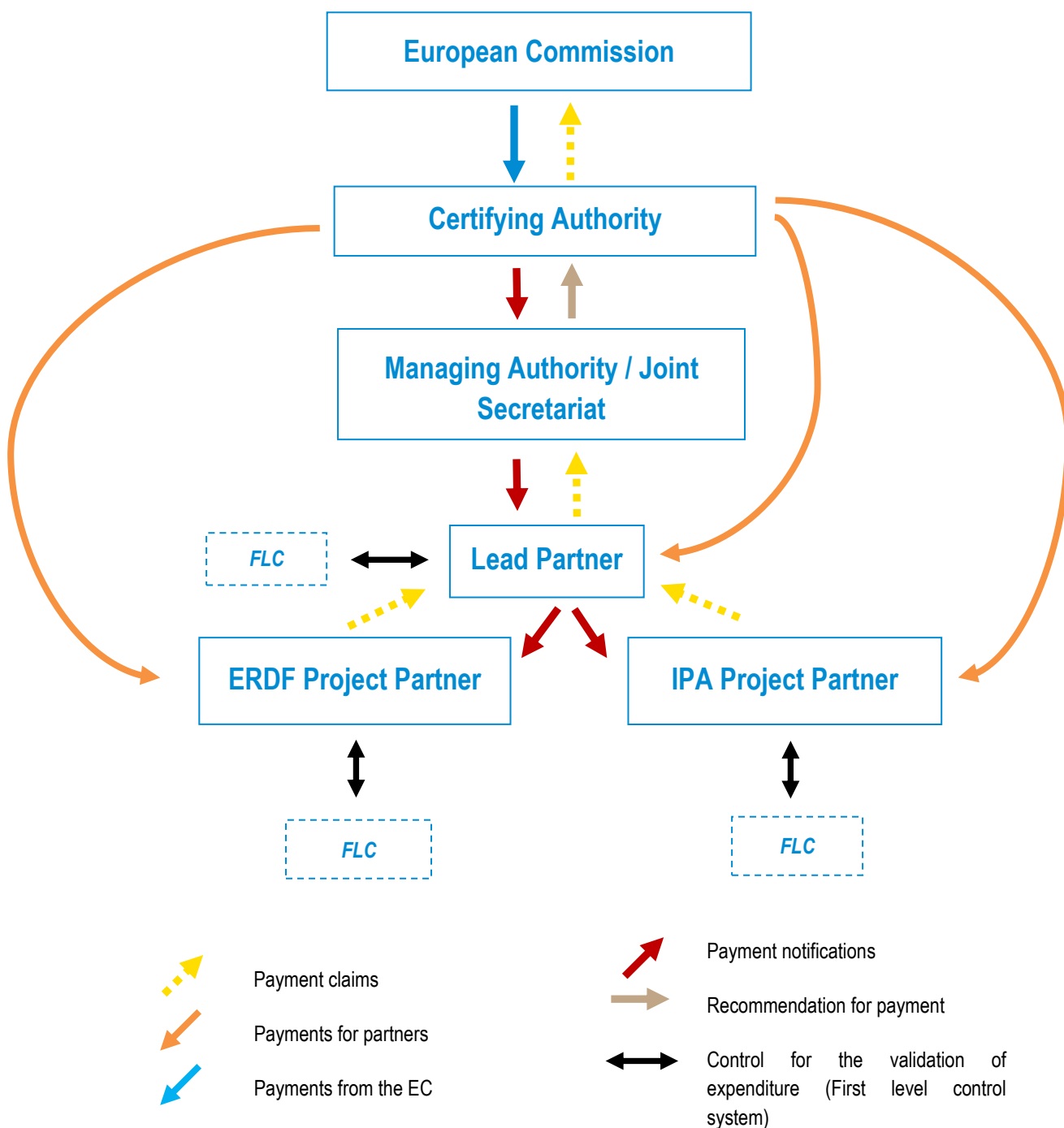
# Bank information

Partners participating in Interreg MED projects must provide the details of the bank account to which they wish the Certifying Authority to pay the reimbursements using the Financial Identification form via the link below:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/financial_id/financial-id_en.cfm

This form summarises the partner's bank account details and information about the bank account holder. This statement must be signed and stamped by a bank representative.

The account details of each partner must then be entered by the Lead Partner of each project in Synergie CTE, information system of the Interreg MED Programme.

Lead Partners must keep scanned copies of all forms as part of the project audit trail.

Before entering the information in Synergie CTE, Lead Partners are invited to check that the information provided, specially the IBAN and the SWIFT, are coherent according to international regulations using one of the available free on-line sites providing this type of service.

Kindly be reminded that in Synergie CTE, there can be no more than one active bank account for each partner. When several accounts have been entered in Synergie CTE, only one of them should be identified as active by concerned partner.

More detailed information about how to updated bank information in Synergie CTE are available in the relevant Synergie guide in the Programme website.


**How to communicate a change of bank account**

If during the project implementation, a partner needs to change its bank account, it must inform its Lead Partner as soon as possible, providing the completed Financial Identification form with the new bank account details.

The Lead Partner then needs to enter the new details in Synergie CTE (*without removing the old one[4]*) and inform immediately the Project Officer. Therefore, the Joint Secretariat can then provide the updated information to the Certifying Authority, in order for them to make the payment to the desired bank account. This communication of information is more particularly important if a payment claim is in the process of being paid by the Certifying Authority.

In addition, the Joint Secretariat highly recommends not cancelling an account without knowing if any payment is being made to that account in a context where, the payment process by the Certifying Authority can take several weeks. If a payment is returned

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[4] For more information about the entering of a new bank account in Synergie CTE, please refer to the following Synergie CTE guide: « How to add partners bank information in Synergie CTE and update it », available in the Programme website.

because the bank information is not correct or the bank account has been cancelled, the reimbursement process may take longer.

**Single bank account principle**

Following the European Commission recommendations on transparency, combating fraud and money laundering, kindly be reminded that the single bank account principle applies. In other words, all reimbursements linked to Interreg MED projects must be made to a single bank account, even if a partner is involved in several projects. In this respect, in the case of participation in several projects, regardless of the call, special attention should be paid so that only one bank account is declared in the system.

**Specificities for Spanish partners**

In the case of Spanish partners, the bank account to which the reimbursement should be made has to be necessarily registered in a specific database of the Spanish Public Treasury. In order to avoid blockages on the payment procedure, Spanish partners must verify that the bank information included in Synergie CTE complies with this requirement.

If this is not the case, concerned partners should either provide a registered bank account (that LP will have to enter in Synergie CTE) or register the account according to the registration procedure detailed on the Treasury website via the following link: http://www.tesoro.es/pagos-del-tesoro/como-dar-de-alta-o-de-baja-cuentas-bancarias-en-el-fichero-central-de-terceros

For more information about the entering of a new bank account in Synergie CTE, please refer to the following Synergie CTE guide: « How to add partners bank information in Synergie CTE and update it », available in the Programme website.

PROGRAMME MANUAL

PROJECT INTERVENTION LOGIC

# Project intervention logic

Projects have to strictly apply a **result-oriented approach**[1], clearly defining the **results** and the **changes** the project is striving for and **linking them with the territorial challenges and needs identified**. **The coherence of the project intervention logic with the targeted specific objective of the programme is a pre-condition for a project to be approved and funded.**

Project intervention logic has to be coherent and shall provide the necessary information for the programme to assess the contribution of a project to the "achievement of the specific objectives and results of the relevant priority", in line with Article 125(3) (a) (i) of the CPR.

**A project should demonstrate through its intervention logic that it:**

- Targets one single programme priority specific objective;
- Contributes to the respective programme result and result indicator;
- Links in a logic sequence the project activities and outputs to the specific objective target

In order to be able to assess and measure project's contribution to the achievement of programme objectives, the project needs to establish project intervention logic mirroring the programme intervention logic[2].

This has to be highlighted and justified in the Application Form, under section C.2.1. where project overall objective and results are asked to be linked with a programme specific priority and programme result.

Projects will be assessed by their contribution to both output and result indicators related to the programme priority specific objective under which they have submitted their Application Form. Projects have to demonstrate in their Application Form how they will contribute to achieving both types of indicators by clearly linking their foreseen outputs and main results to the corresponding indicators under the chose Programme priority specific objective. This implies a shift in the approach and focus of projects compared to previous programming periods: the emphasis is now first and foremost on the delivery of outputs and results rather than on the implementation of project activities.

LINK BETWEEN PROGRAMME AND PROJECT INTERVENTION LOGIC

Project and programme intervention logics are intrinsically linked and cannot be considered separately.

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[1] For more detailed information about the result-oriented approach please refer to Factsheet "Interreg MED Strategic framework" – Key principles.

[2] INTERACT, Establishing ETC Programme logic and linking Programme and Project intervention logics.

**PROGRAMME AND PROJECT INTERVENTION LOGIC (source: INTERACT)**
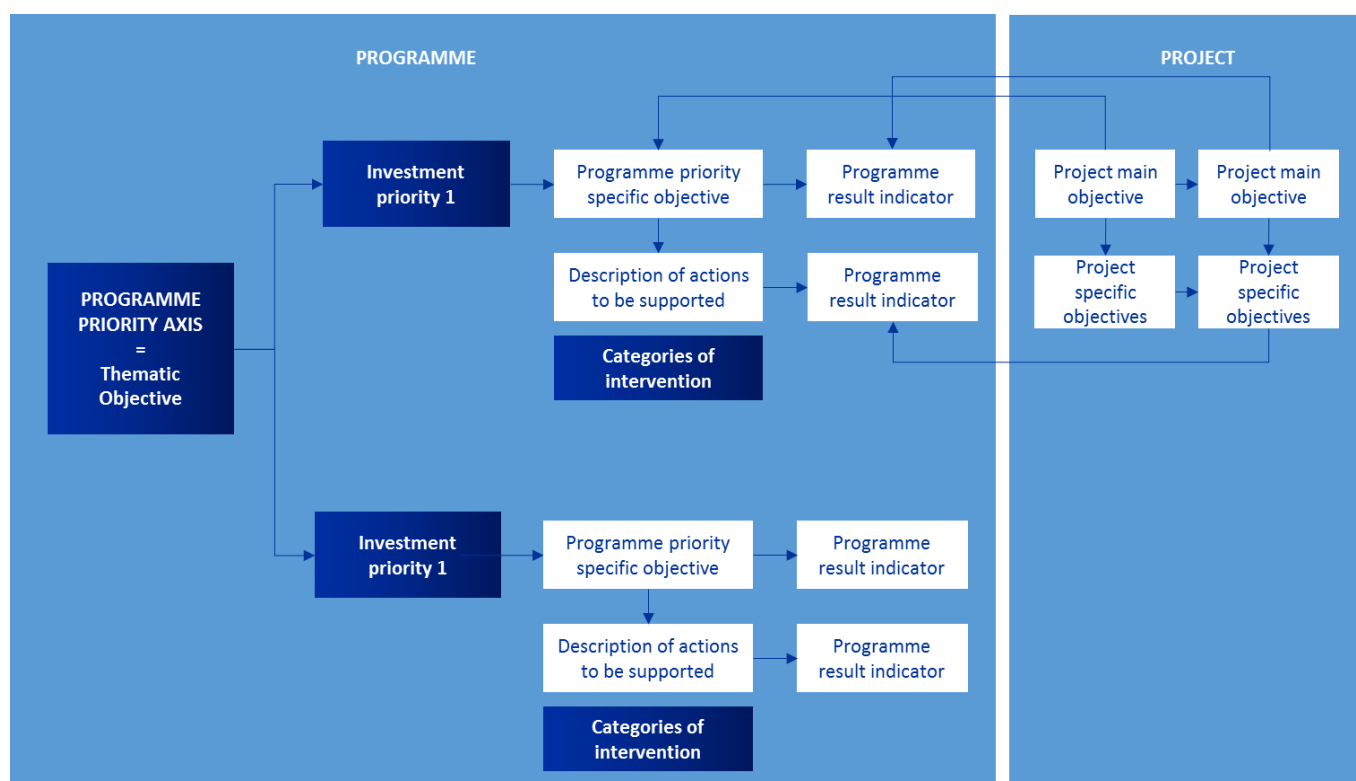


In the above scheme, the keywords should be interpreted as follows:

- Priority axis -> thematic area which reflects the most relevant needs and potentials of the programme area
- Programme specific objective -> what the programme wants to change for its inhabitants in this thematic area
- Actions to be supported -> the kind of activities the programme intends to finance to achieve this change
- Programme outputs -> the direct products of the activities, which will contribute to the change
- Programme results -> the measurements which will capture the effect of the actions financed
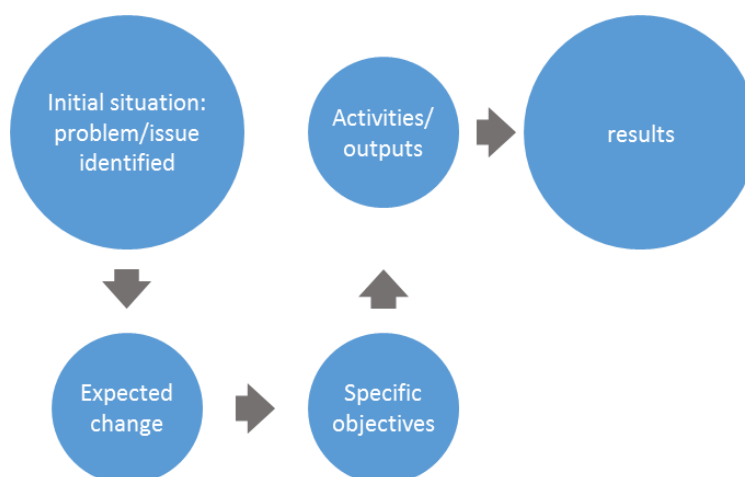
THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The **theory of change** should be at the heart of each project. The aim of this approach is to produce a narrative of how the change envisaged will take effect. By focusing project logic on the theory of change, the ability to establish contribution to results in the programme cooperation area that were deliberated in their theory is strengthened.

Projects have to develop an intervention logic taking into account the attempted change as the basis for result-orientation. The project intervention logic will have to show how a desired change will be achieved. It should thus reflect the current situation (e.g. a problem), its underlying causes

The project intervention logic has to show how a desired change will be achieved

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and the change which the project seeks to achieve by implementing the planned activities. It also needs to indicate what has to happen in order to trigger the change.

Project development should start from describing the initial situation, i.e. the problem and/or issue to be addressed. Project partners should then think about what they want to achieve and define expected outcomes and results. These envisaged results have to reflect the desired change and need to be translated into specific project objectives.



**THE THEORY OF CHANGE**

After the intervention logic is set in place (starting from the initial situation and ending with the envisaged change), preconditions, activities and outputs necessary to reach the objectives and results need to be defined.

Please consult the Factsheet on "Methodological tools for preparation and implementation" for developing the project intervention logic.