Interreg

EUROPEAN UNION

Danube Transnational Programme

Guidelines for the AF

DTP 3rd Call

A stream of cooperation

Programme co-funded by the European Union

Introduction

The submission of Application Form (AF) is the second step in applying for funding within the third Call for Proposals (CfP) of the Danube Transnational Programme (DTP).

The Application Pack for the second step consists of:

- DTP Cooperation Programme (DTP CP)
- DTP Applicants Manual for the 3rd CfP (DTP AM)
- DTP 3rd CfP Announcement
- Guidelines for AF – DTP 3rd CfP

Before filling in the AF in the DTP electronic Monitoring System (eMS), it is very important for the applicants to carefully read the DTP CP and all the documents in the Application Pack.

The DTP CP is the most important reference document concerning, amongst others, thematic scopes of the four Priority Areas, objectives and intervention logic of the DTP.

The DTP AM provides useful information and guidance regarding the eligibility of partners and expenditure, the assessment and selection criteria, as well as information on how to develop a transnational project proposal.

The CfP announcement offers specific information in relation to the 3rd CfP, such as deadlines, thematic restrictions and/or requirements, if applicable.

The Guidelines for the AF is intended to support the applicants in filling the AF, considering both the content as well as formal and technical requirements.

eMS technical requirements

eMS is a web application that can be used with any up-to-date browser like Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome or Safari. For technical reasons, eMS runs adequately only on the latest version of these browsers.

The LA invited in the second step shall access the eMS using the same user name and password as in case of the EoI submission. All the data already filled in during the submission of the EoI is kept and can be further modified/ improved at this stage in line also with DTP MA/JS recommendations. However, the main characteristics of the project's intervention logic as outlined in the AF must not be modified compared to the one outlined in the EoI.

Applying for the 3rd DTP CfP in eMS

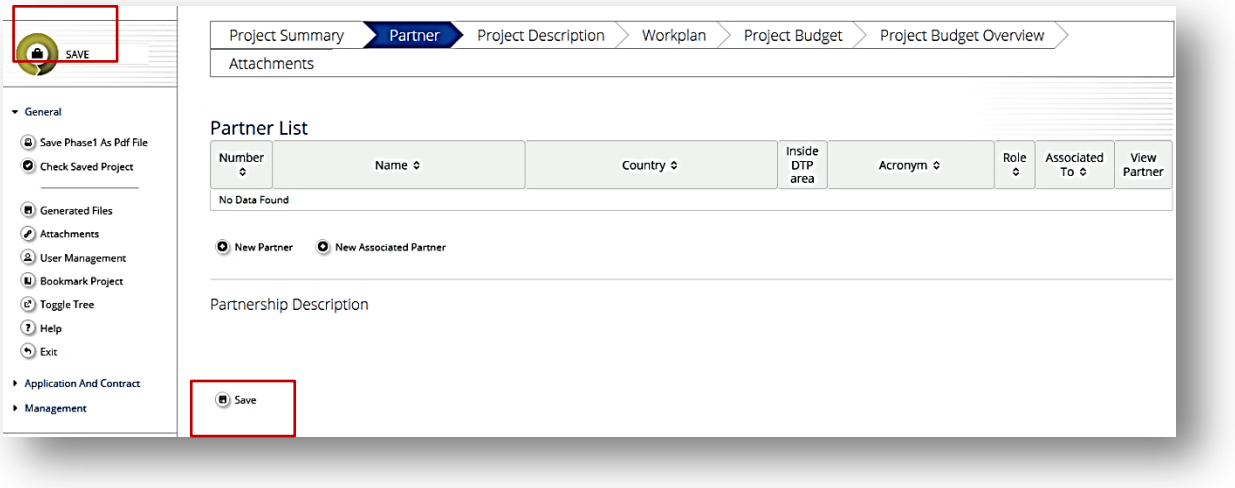
This chapter provides a comprehensive overview on how to fill in all applicable parts of the AF.

Before starting filling in the AF, please carefully consider the following:

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

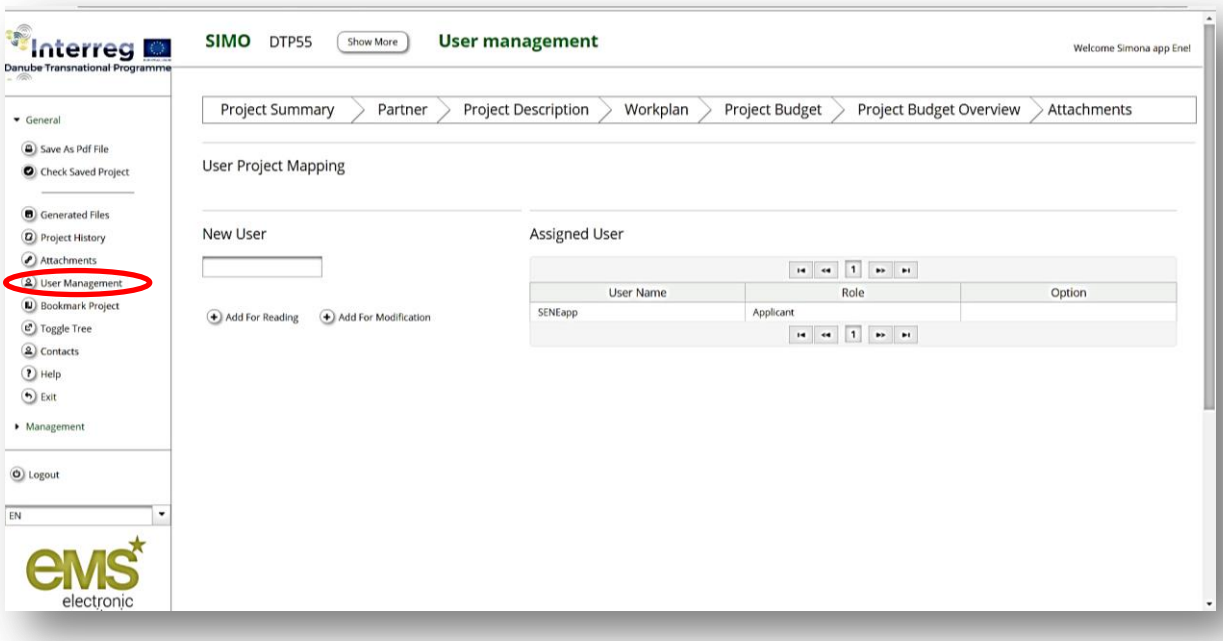
- **AFs shall be submitted within the deadline** indicated in the Call Announcement. Applicants are advised not to submit the AF at the very last moment as the eMS system may not be able to process a high number of submissions in a short time, thus causing delays resulting in late submission, i.e. after the set deadline.
- Only the **AFs submitted through the eMS** in accordance with these Guidelines shall be considered for assessment.
- Only **AFs written in English** shall be considered for assessment.
- The partnership consists of **at least three financing partners from at least three participating countries** of which at least one (the LP) is located in a Member State.
- The Lead Applicant fulfils the **LA eligibility requirements**.
- At least **3 joint cooperation levels** are indicated.
- The main characteristics of the **project intervention logic** as outlined in the AF have not been modified compared to the one outlined in the EoI.
- The **Lead Applicant has not been changed between the two steps** (i.e. EoI vs. AF).
- The maximum number of **financing partners that can be changed** (by withdrawal or withdrawal with replacement) between the two steps (i.e. EoI vs. AF) is **four**.
- There is **no limitation for including new financing partners or ASPs.**
- The Partnership Agreement is complete and signed by all directly financed partners.
- The ERDF/IPA/ENI financed partner fulfils the requirement set in Part 2, section II of the Applicants Manual.
- The documents (Declaration of co-financing, State Aid declaration, Declaration for International organisations) are filled in and signed by the partner.

➢ While filling in the AF, always remember to press the "**Save**" button (either in the left-side menu or at the bottom of the page) before leaving a section.



If the EoI was selected for invitation for the second step, it has "Saved2" status in DTP eMS. At this stage it is available again for the Lead Applicant for modification and submission.

The lead applicant can give editing rights to some sections of the AF to other users (namely, the project partners). These have to be registered in the system before and provide the Lead Applicant with their username. The Lead Applicant can then add new users in the "User Management" section (see screenshot of project menu below). Users can be granted either read-only rights ("add for reading"), or edit and add data rights ("add for modification").



The user accounts created to draft and submit the application will be available until the deadline of the call.

In case the project is selected for funding, a new set of privileges will be created for every project partner.

ATTENTION: Different users can work in parallel (at the same time) on the same application form. When working in parallel, users have to make sure though that they are not working in the same section or sub-section (in case that the section is divided).

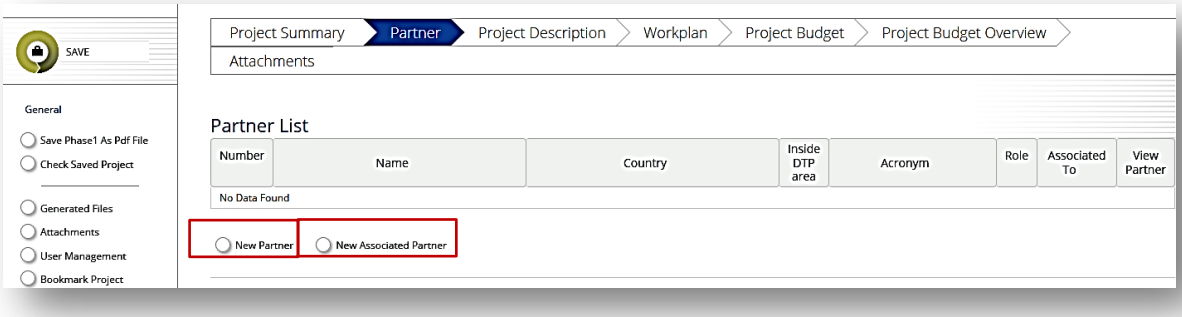
Please, note that only the Lead Applicant has the role to submit the AF.

Section 1: Project Summary

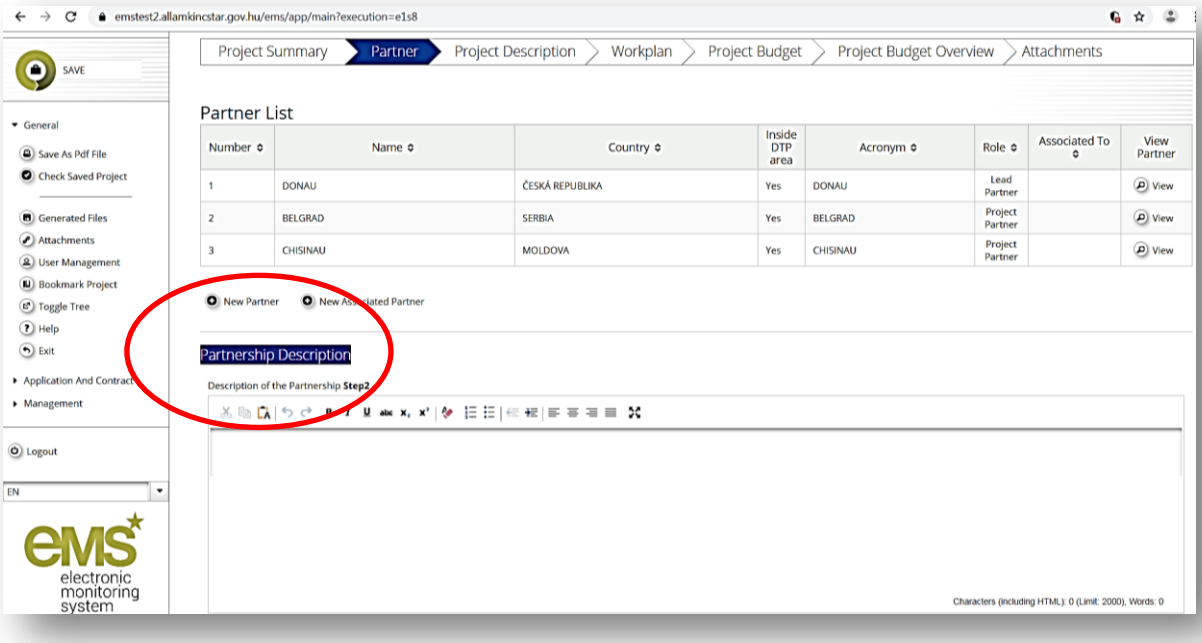
The data previously included in the EoI is available for editing in the project summary in case necessary.

Section 2: Partner

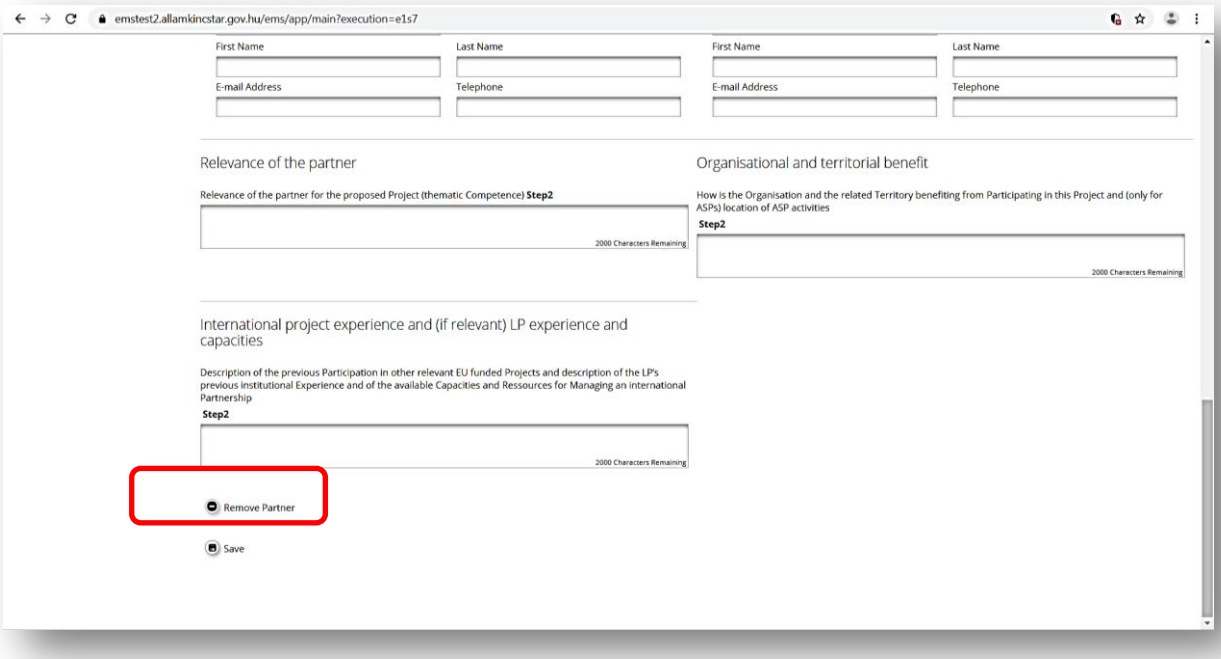
The LP/ PPs/ ASPs already entered in the first step are already included and their data can be updated, if required. The LA can add new PPs/ ASPs by clicking the button *New Partner*; ASPs – *New Associated Partner*) and then fill in requested data for each of them.



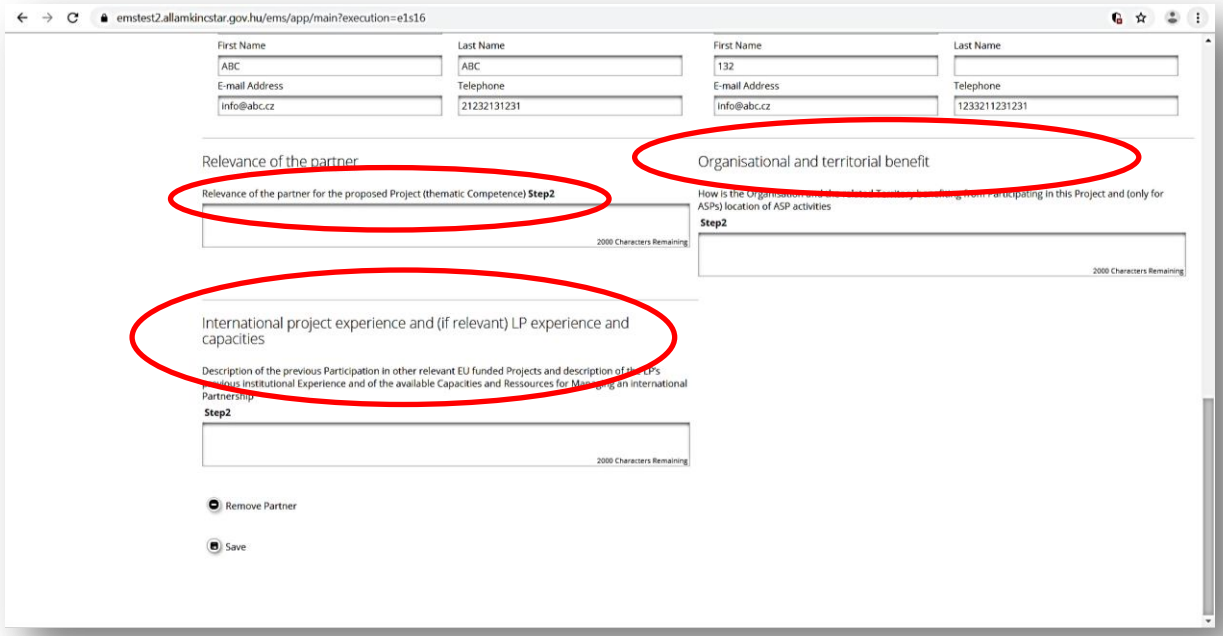
Additionally, in the Partner section the LA has to fill in the **Partnership Description** (for which two text boxes are available)**.** In this section, Applicants shall provide an overview of the partnership composition, indicating the geographical coverage and explaining the reason for which participant countries were selected (and not others) in the light of the identified needs and challenges, their relevance for the addressed topic as well as the type of the involved project partners and their competences to implement project activities and deliver the planned results. In case of partnership changes, as compared to the EoI, the Lead Applicant shall, first of all, indicate them. If a new Partner joins the original partnership as an additional partner, then LA shall provide, in the context of the project, clear details about the necessity and added value of each and every partner. In case a new partner is replacing initial one, concrete information shall be provided about the corresponding competences and appropriate territorial relevance of this new PP in the context of the project. In case of partner(s) withdrawal(s) without substitution, the consequences in connection to the implementation of the project activities shall be indicated.



In order to delete a PP/ASP from the AF, the LA has to click on Remove partner button available in the section dedicated to it. Once the partner is removed from the Partner list also its budget will be deleted from the Application Form.



Additionally to the EoI in the section containing the data of the LP/ PP/ ASP further text fields have to be filled in:



Relevance of the partner: The Applicants shall provide a description of the relevance and thematic competence of the LP/ PPs organisation in view of the project topic and of the specific role in the project.

Organisational and territorial benefit: In this section, the Applicants shall describe the benefits for the LP/ PPs organisation and for the territory represented in the project as a result of the transnational cooperation. Applicants shall highlight the changes which are expected to occur in the long run in the territory represented by the LP/ PPs.

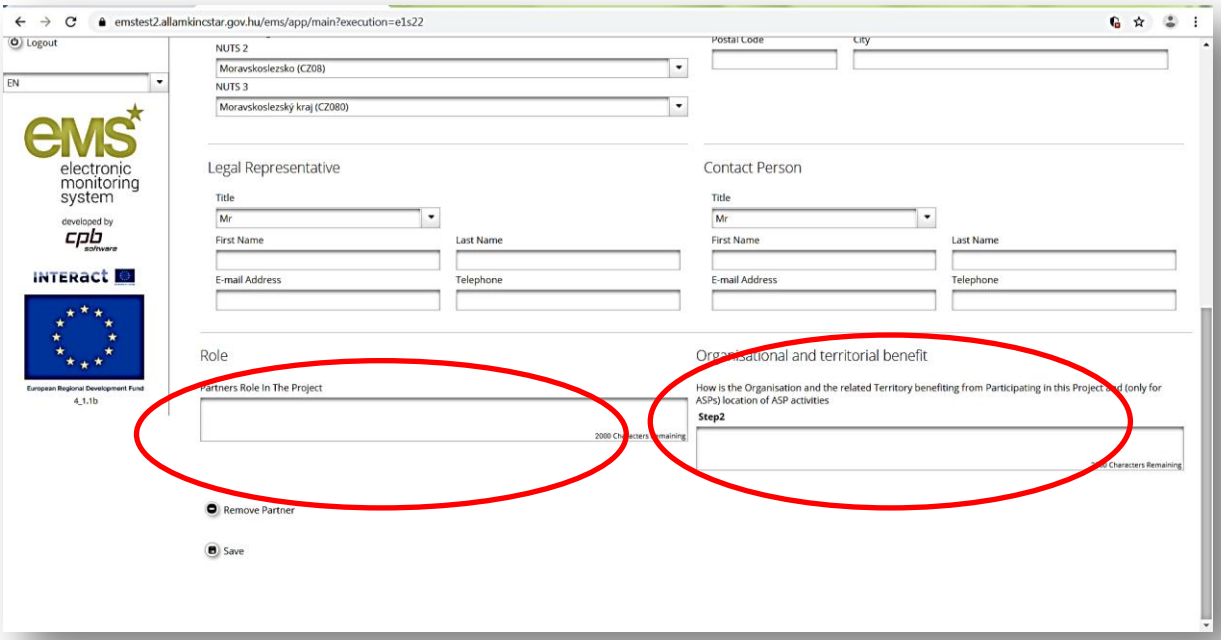
International project experience and (if relevant) LP experience and capacities: The Applicants shall describe their previous participation in other relevant EU funded projects, also providing a list thereof with specific emphasis on INTERREG projects. The role and main tasks previously assumed by the LP/ PPs organisation in other such projects should be also underlined. Furthermore, in case of Lead Applicants, they shall provide a concise, yet comprehensive description of the previous institutional experience both in the field of expertise and in managing international partnerships (INTERREG or other international funded projects). LAs must demonstrate the existence and availability of necessary capacities and resources (skilled personnel, equipment, sound internal procedures, etc.) as well as expertise in the project thematic field allowing them to bring adequate contribution to project activities and play an active role as a coordinator.

For the **Associated Strategic Partners (ASPs)**, besides the general data already included in the EoI, two additional text fields must be filled in:

Partners Role in the project: The Applicants shall provide a description of the relevance and thematic competence of the ASP organisation in view of the project topic and of the specific role

in the project. Applicants shall highlight the importance of the ASP's role in the project and the added value to be brought to the partnership and the project results by its participation.

Organisational and territorial benefit: In this section, the Applicants shall describe the benefits for the ASP organisation and for the territory represented in the project as a result of the transnational cooperation. Applicants shall highlight the changes which are expected to occur in the long run in the territory represented by the ASP. Finally, Applicants are requested to describe the **activities** the ASP is to be involved in within the project as well as the added value of their involvement. They also have to specify the **location of the activities**.



Section 3- PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This section includes 3 sub-sections: **Project relevance**, **Project focus** and **Project Context**.

Project relevance

Territorial needs and challenges

The Applicants shall provide a comprehensive description of the territorial needs and challenges to be addressed by the proposal, underlining the current situation in the involved territories, the status of the issue and the specific necessities, what is concretely needed to be tackled, improved or changed at transnational level by the partnership as well as a short outline of the project activities through which the identified needs and challenges will be addressed.

Project approach

The Applicants are requested to explain the link between the identified needs and challenges and the project main and specific objectives as defined in the project intervention logic. Applicants are requested to demonstrate the appropriateness of proposed project objectives in relation to the identified needs and challenges.

Methodology

The Applicants shall provide a consistent presentation to demonstrate how the planned outputs and the ultimate project result are achievable by following a logical sequence and combination of activities as well as a certain set of well-established and commonly agreed methods. Innovative approaches are highly recommended while defining the project methodology.

Level of joint cooperation

According to Art. 12(4) of Regulation 1299/2013, partners should cooperate in the development and implementation of projects and additionally in the staffing or financing of projects. Therefore, **the DTP already pre-defined the two mandatory levels of cooperation (joint development and joint implementation) and Applicants shall choose to select either one or both among joint staffing and joint financing. Failure in doing so will result in the rejection of the proposal.**

- For a better understanding of the levels of cooperation, Applicants shall consider following explanations:
- **Joint development** means that the project must be developed by representatives of all partner organisations. Therefore, the project proposal must clearly integrate their ideas, priorities and actions. The Lead Partner is the coordinator of this process and the other partners should be involved in the project design process from an early stage.
- **Joint implementation** means that activities must be carried out and commonly implemented as opposed to parallel actions. Clear content-wise links between the activities implemented in each participant country and regular contact between the partners should be demonstrated. The Lead Partner is responsible for ensuring that activities are properly coordinated, that schedules are kept and that the appropriate quality level is achieved.
- **Joint staffing** means that representatives from each participant country should work together on the project. Partners should not merely carry out activities in parallel without coordination and exchange. The project manager appointed by the LP organisation has overall responsibility for project activities. The Lead Partner team is the core project staff, but project partners should also assign staff according to their responsibilities within the project.
- **Joint financing** means that there will be only one subsidy contract per project and therefore one joint project budget. The budget should be divided between partners according to the activities they will carry out. Also, there is only one project bank account (held by the Lead Partner) and payments are made from the Programme to this account.

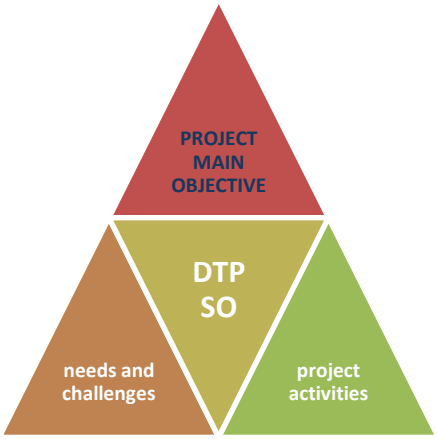
The Lead Partner is responsible for the administration and distribution of the received EU funds and for accounting for their use. Co-funding is provided by all partners and it illustrates the commitment of each partner to the joint project.

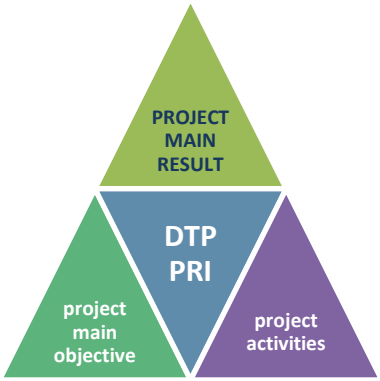
Project focus

This subsection already contains the information provided in the EoI. However the LA can improve/ update it (in terms of better formulation of the main/ specific objectives, result etc.) based on the DTP MA/JS recommendations or if deemed necessary. However, the LA shall not completely change the objective, result of the project.

This sub-section constitutes the core part of the project's **intervention logic** and, therefore, special attention should be paid when defining its main elements. The project's intervention logic will be further complemented by the project activities and outputs to be described under each Work Package (WP).

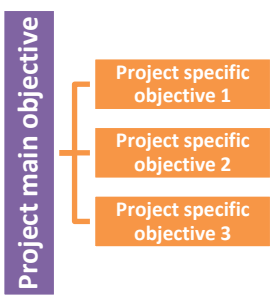
First, the applicants shall define the **project's main objective**. It should be clearly defined, highlighting how it contributes to the achievement of the selected Programme Specific Objective. Furthermore, there should be a clear connection between the project's main objective, the identified needs and challenges in the addressed area and the proposed activities.





The applicants shall then select the appropriate Programme Result Indicator from the drop-down list and define the **project's main result.** It should be clearly defined, highlighting how and to what extent it contributes to the corresponding Programme Result Indicator. The project's main result should be coherent with the project's main objective and there should be clear evidence that it can be reached by implementing the planned activities. Contribution of the project's main result to the Programme Result Indicator has to be quantified (e.g. percentage) considering SMART criteria (i.e. specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound). However, given their absolute character, quality-type project results are excluded from quantification.

The last step is to define (title) and describe up to three **project's specific objectives**. They should be clearly defined and there should be clear evidence that they will contribute to the achievement of the project's main objective.



Project context

Sections **Partnership composition** and **Transnational approach** already contain the information included in the EoI which can be edited and updated/ improved by the LAs.

Policy and Strategic background:

The Applicants shall clearly describe the link between the project proposal and a relevant EU, national or regional policy or strategy, by highlighting the contribution of the project proposal to the implementation of the relevant policy or strategy. The applicants should additionally describe clearly the contribution towards the achievement of the EUSDR current targets and/or corresponding actions, as described in the list of targets and actions *(the EUSDR Action Plan can be checked in the EUSDR website: http://www.danube-region.eu/component/edocman/action-plan-eusdr-pdf*, the targets per priority can be found on each Priority Area website as well as on the 3rd Call webpage of the DTP website http://www.interreg-danube.eu/calls/calls-for-proposals/third-call-for-proposals*)*.
Applicants are advised to check the websites of the PAs in order to better understand how the proposal can contribute to the EUSDR (*http://www.danube-region.eu/about/priorities)*. The website of each PA has the section "contact", so Applicants with specific questions have the opportunity to get in contact with the PA team.

The Applicants will have to demonstrate throughout their entire proposal that EUSDR is embedded in their proposal (at the level of needs and challenges, methodology, synergy/ capitalisation, work plan, durability and transferability).

This can be done, for example by involving the PACs in the project meetings, workshops, pilot actions or development of relevant projects strategies/ tools etc.

Synergies and capitalisation:

LAs are requested to define all those previous projects or initiatives that they intend to capitalise on, describing what exactly is to be capitalised (in terms of outputs, results) as well as the added value brought by the current proposal. In case synergic activities with other on-going projects or initiatives are planned, LAs are requested to describe how these activities will complement each other and explain which the added value of the result will be. When filling in this part, LAs shall pay attention to avoid any possible duplication or overlapping of activities.

Horizontal principles

The Applicants shall select the type of contribution the project proposal brings to the three horizontal principles (neutral, positive or negative). Additionally, LAs are requested to describe how the project proposal will contribute to the sustainable development or ensure the equal opportunities and non-discrimination as well as equality between men and women.

Section 4: Workplan

This section includes 3 sub-sections: **Work package list**, **Target groups** and **Define periods**.

Work package list

WP Preparation

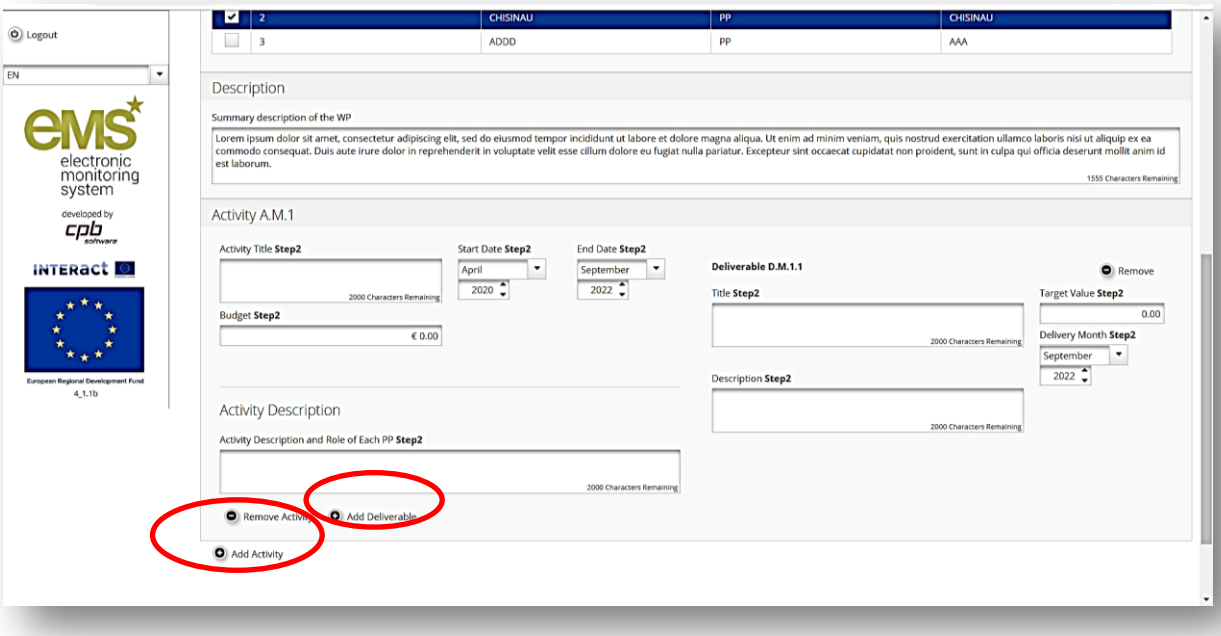
This part shall be filled in only if preparation costs are requested.

The applicants shall first select those partners who contributed to the preparation of the project proposal and then provide a description of the activities that led to the development of the AF in the "WP description" text box.

WP Management

The LA is by default the leader of WP M. The applicants shall select the partners who will be involved in the WP (i.e. all partners must be involved in this WP) and provide a description of the activities within the WP. Activities should refer to the project management and coordination, financial management and quality management. For more information, please refer to Part 5, Section V - *How to set up an efficient project coordination* **-** of the DTP AM.

Activities can be added by clicking the button *Add Activity*. Up to 5 activities can be added by the LAs. Afterwards they have to indicate the title, budget, start and end date and a description of each activity and the role of the partners. Similarly the LAs can add deliverables by clicking the *Add Deliverable* button following by an indication of the title of the deliverable, a concise description, the delivery date and the quantification of the target value. Partner Reports, Project Progress Reports, Application for Reimbursements or regular reimbursements to partners shall not be listed as deliverables.



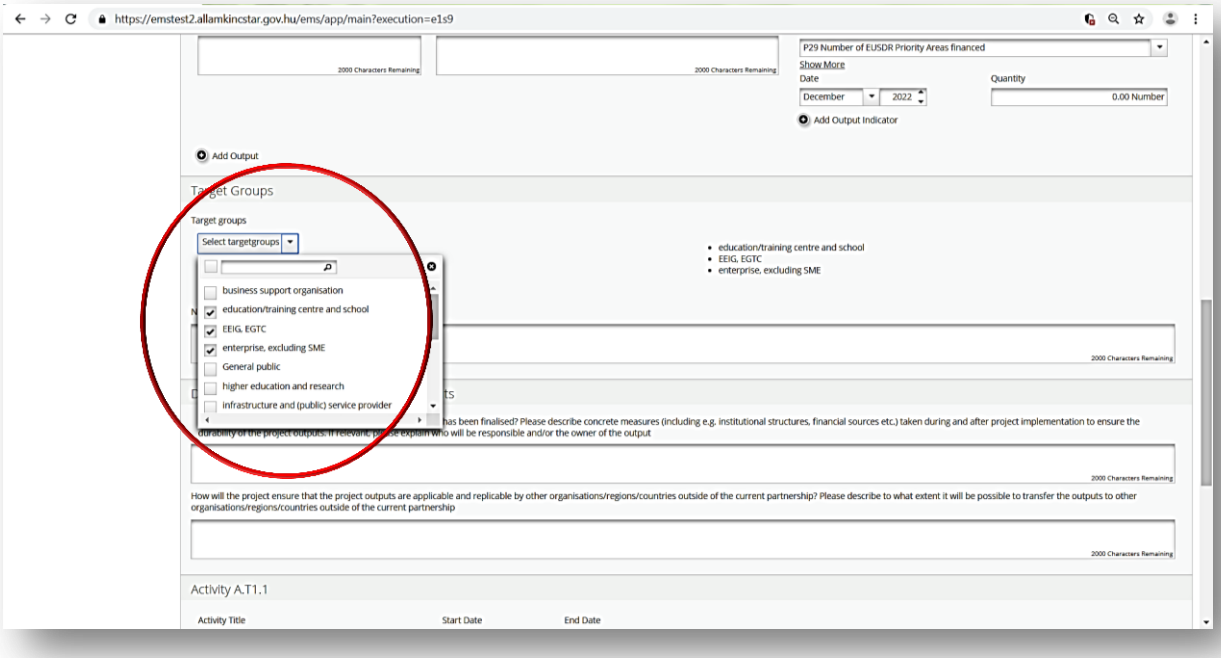
WP Implementation

The applicants are allowed to add up to **maximum 4** (four) Implementation WPs.

The information included in the EoI is available in eMS for editing (improvement/ update/ modification in line with the recommendation). The LAs shall not change the core elements of the intervention logic by decreasing the number of outputs unless recommended by the MA/ JS in the invitation letter. The core elements of the intervention logic must be kept, however its improvement (by increasing the number of outputs/ reshaping them without modifying the content) is allowed.

Besides the information already included, in the second step the applicants are requested to fill in further text fields.

Then, Applicants shall select the **target groups** of the Work Package from the drop down list. Additionally LAs shall provide a comprehensive description on how partners plan to involve the target groups in the activities of the project, highlighting also the added value of their involvement, as well as their benefit from participation in the activities.



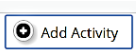
Durability and transferability of outputs within the WP: the Applicants shall provide answers to the questions regarding the durability and transferability of the project outputs after the closure of the project by describing the measures taken during the project implementation to ensure durability of project outputs and their transferability and applicability to other organisations/ bodies/ countries. If applicable, the role of the ASPs in ensuring the durability and transferability has to be described in this section. Durability refers to the long lasting effects of the projects outputs including their further valorisation. The section should also tackle the sustainability of the project outputs and its three dimensions:

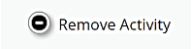
- **Financial sustainability** - financing of follow up activities, leverage of funds etc.
- **Institutional sustainability** - "ownership" of project outputs - which structures will allow, and how, for the results of the project to continue and to be in place after the project end?
- **Political sustainability** - what structural impact will the project have? – e.g. will it lead to improved policies, legislation, plans, codes of conduct, methods, etc.?

Transferability refers to the potential to use/ apply the outputs of the projects in other regions or in different contexts.

After filling in the target groups, Applicants can fill in the section dedicated to the **activities**. Up to 5 activities can be added by the LAs. Applicants shall fill in the title of each activity, the starting and end date (please, make sure that each activity starts on the first day of the starting month and ends with the last day of the closing month), the budget of the activity and a detailed description of the activities as well as the role of the partners.

The description of the activities must be clear and concise and should contain the tasks that are going to be performed by the project partners. Applicants should avoid generic terms (such as concepts, definitions) or too general descriptions that do not contain a geographical and time reference. Role of each involved partner shall be described in the corresponding field. Besides the roles, tasks and responsibilities of each partner, Applicants should describe also the role of the Associated Strategic Partners. Generic descriptions: such as "all partners contribute", should be avoided, Applicants being requested to underline how each project partner is involved in each activity.

Activities can be added or removed by clicking on the "Add Activity" 

or "*Remove Activity*" 

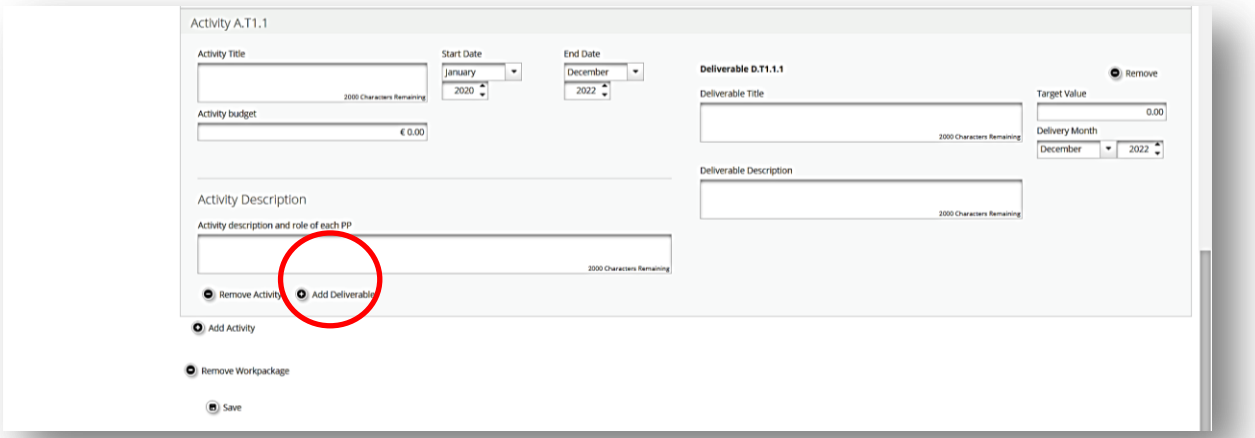
button.

Examples:

Correct description: *ERDF PP3 and IPA PP1 will organise each one workshop for stakeholders regarding policy development in cluster field in August 2019 (ERDF PP3 will organise the workshop in Budapest and IPA PP1 in Novi Sad). All the other project partners will participate in the workshops. ASP1 will provide support in the presentations and will feed back after the workshops. After the workshops, all the project partners and ASP1 will meet in September 2019, back to back with the project meeting and summarise in a common paper the recommendations for the next steps to be taken in enhancing the capacity of the relevant policy makers in advancing coherent cluster policies.*

Generic description: *two workshops will be organised by the ERDF PP3 and IPA PP1 based on which a recommendation paper will be drafted.*

Deliverables: appropriate deliverables shall be linked to each Activity providing a short description (max 250 characters) and indicating the target value and the delivery period. Deliverables will be automatically numbered and additional ones can be inserted by clicking the **"+"** button. Each activity should include one or more **deliverables** (e.g. analysis report, benchmark studies etc.) that contribute to the achievement of project outputs. In general, small steps of a single activity, such as working groups, partner meetings etc., do not need to be listed as separate deliverables, but their result should be aggregated into one deliverable, e.g. a qualitative report describing the policy initiatives in a certain field. Deliverables can be added by clicking on *"Add Deliverable"* button.



WP Investment

The information already included in the EoI (summary description, justification, outputs) is available to be edited (updated/ modified/ improved) by the LAs. Additionally the applicants shall also indicate the **location of the investment and its description** and select the appropriate **NUTS II or III** region division from the drop-down list.

Applicants are further requested to describe the **risks** associated with the investment, provide information on the necessary **investment documentation** and its availability and provide information about the **ownership** of the investment. Similarly to the Implementation WP, the applicants will indicate the target groups of the specific investments, their involvement in the implementation, describe the durability and transferability and define the activities that will be implemented and their deliverables (*for detailed explanation please see the above information included in* **WP Implementation**).

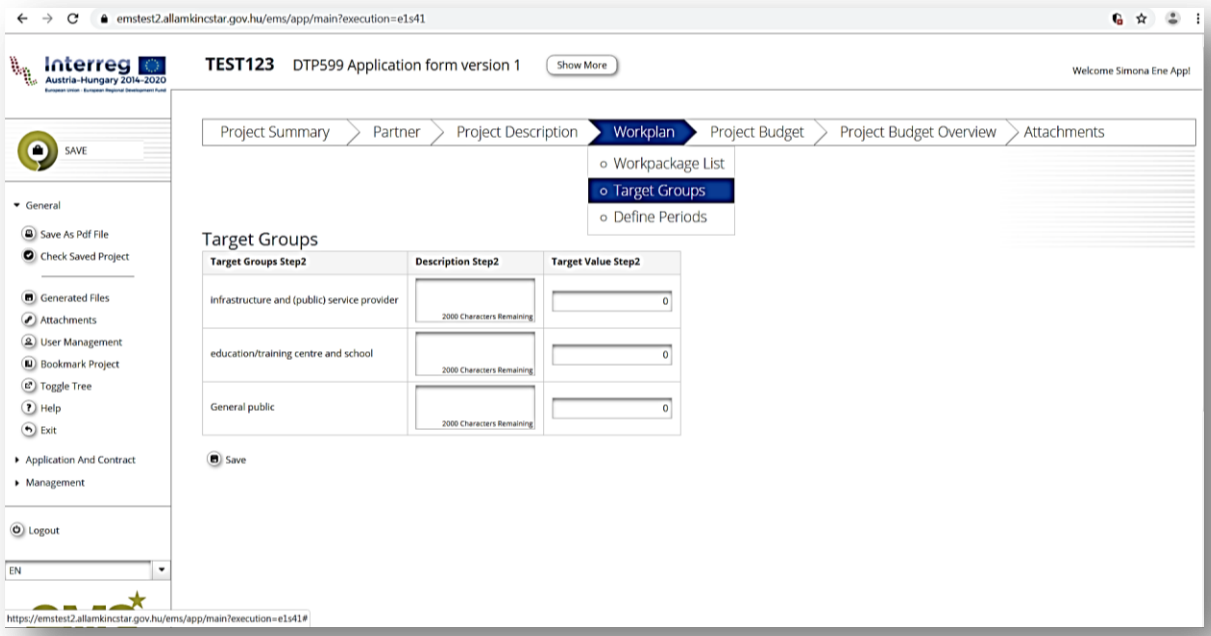
WP Communication

The information included in the EoI is available in eMS for editing (improvement/ update/ modification in line with DTP MA/JS recommendations, if any).

Additionally, the LAs will have to indicate how the communication activities proposed will help reaching the Specific objectives, similarly to the other WPs, shall define the activities, related deliverables with the starting and end date, the budget of the activity and a detailed description of the activities and the role of the partners.

Target Groups

The target groups section is automatically filled in with the data included in the WPs.

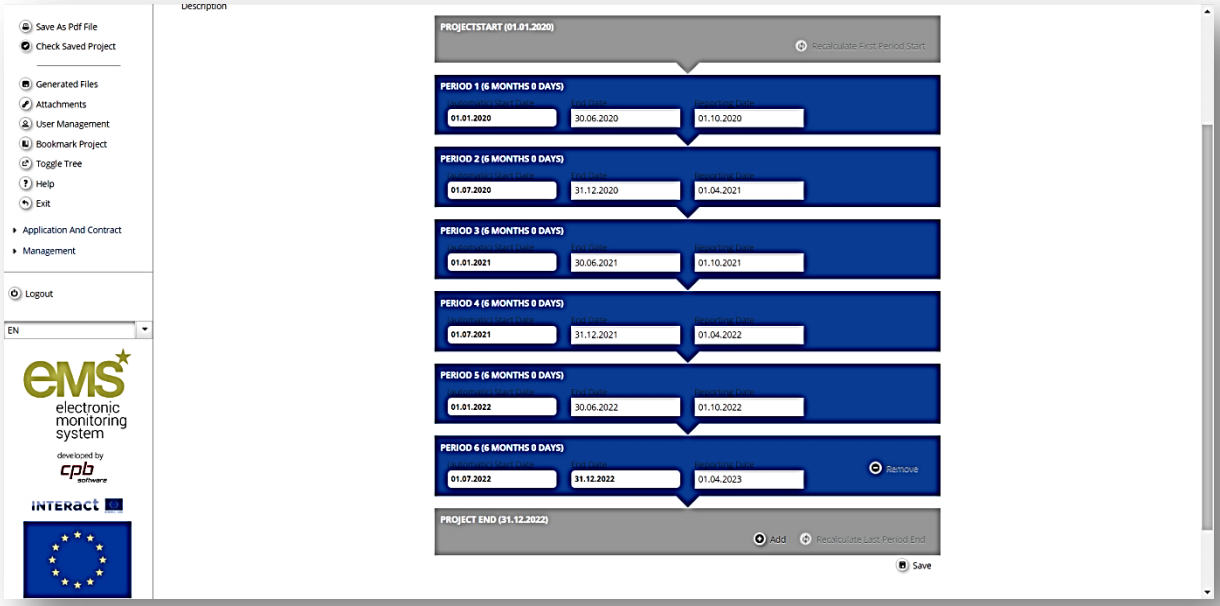


The LA should fill in Description field where the type of institutions involved are detailed and the target value to be reached by the end of the project. The target values have to be realistically defined bearing in mind that, in case the project is financed, during its implementation the MA/ JS will request from the LPs to indicate the sources of verification for the reached targets and detailed explanations on how the target groups have been approached.

Define Periods

In this section, the applicants are requested to add **five reporting periods of six months each** by pressing the Add button. After adding the five reporting periods the start date and end date for each period must be filled in (e.g. 01.05.2020 – 30.10.2020; 01.11.2020 – 30.04.2021 etc.). Only after filling in this data, the Reporting deadline should be filled in (these are always 3 months after the end of the reporting period).

Please be aware that only after filling in this section the budget of each partner can be filled in.

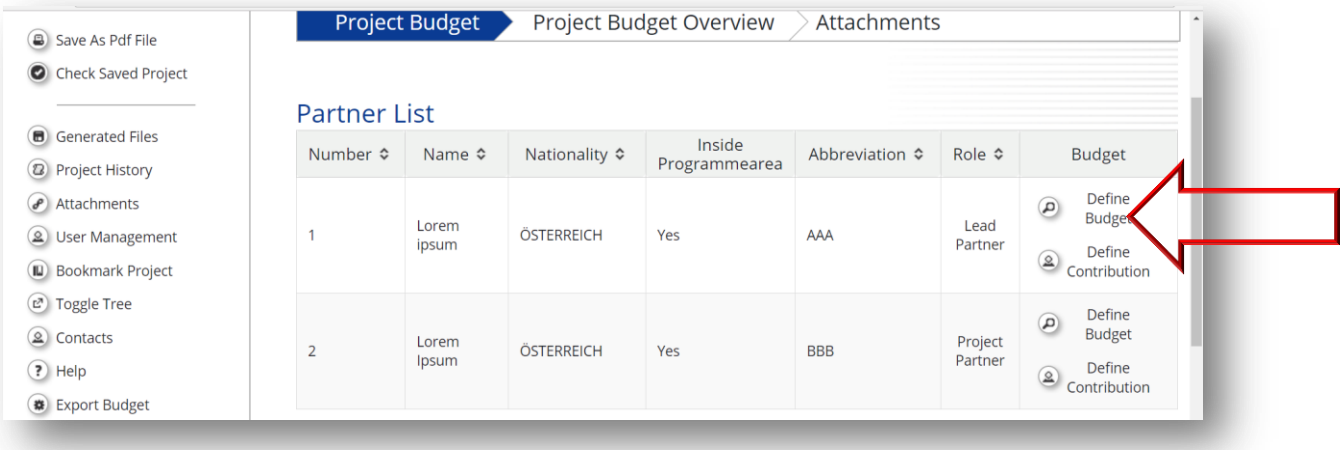


SECTION 5 – Project Budget

In order to fill-in the partner budget section, Applicants **first** have to fill-in the following sections of the application form:

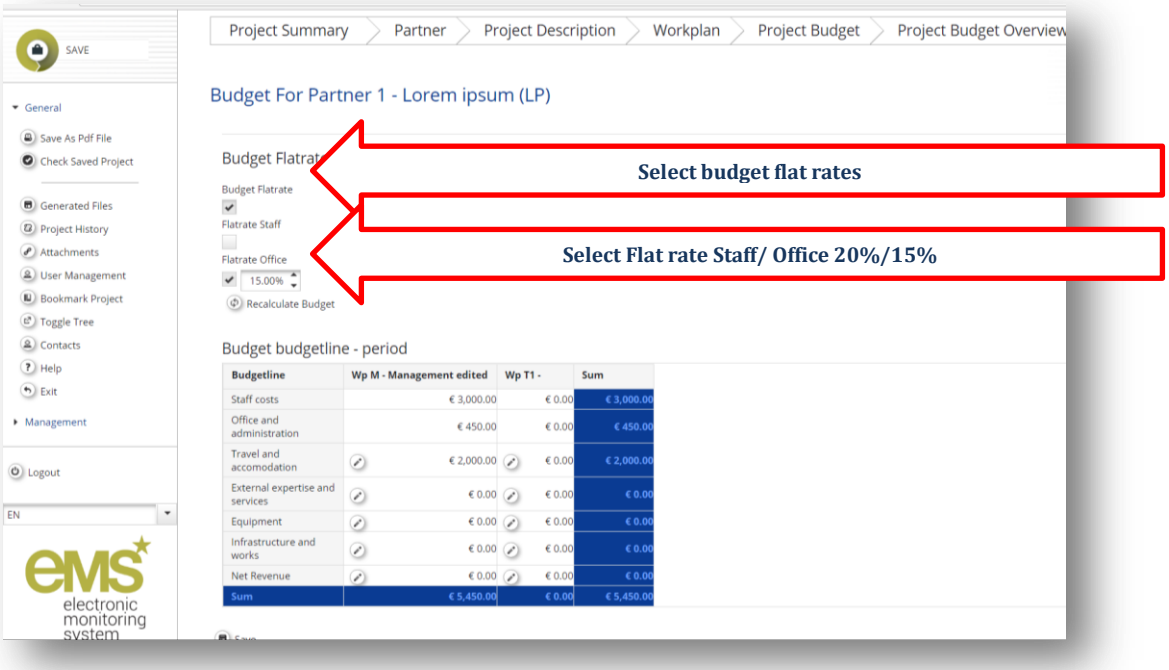
- Section A “Project summary”
- Section B “Project partners”
- Section D “Work plan”, including define periods

Partner budget: Each partner budget can be defined by clicking on the *Define budget* button:

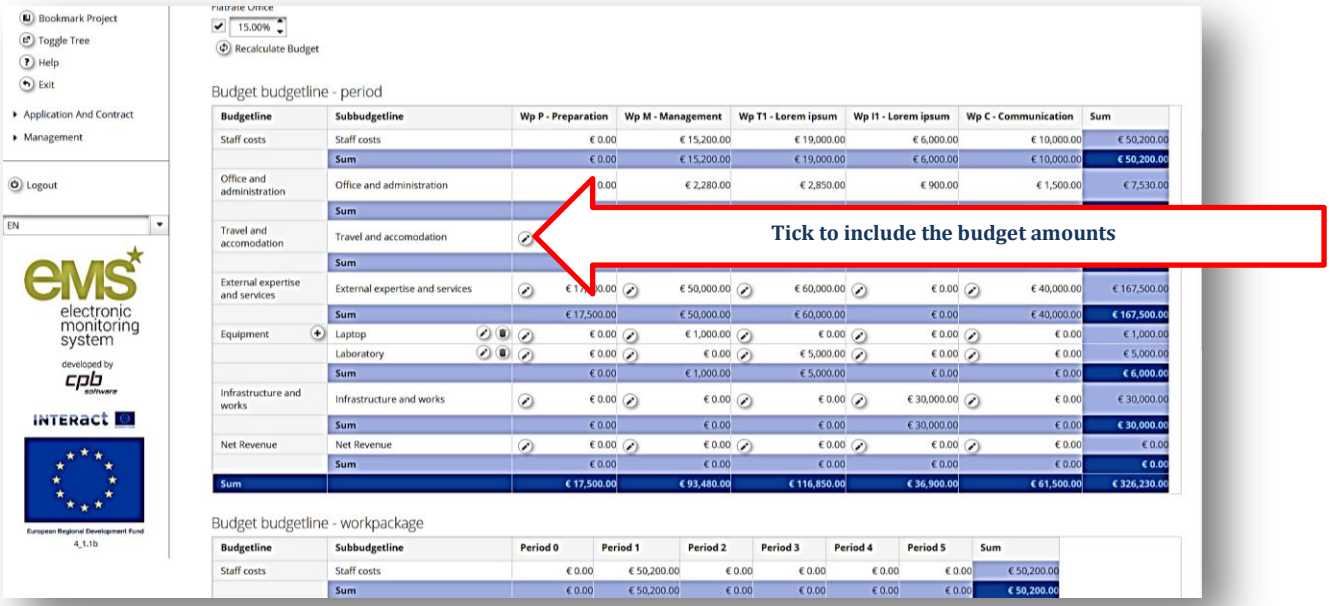


Opening up the budget of LP / PPs the amounts defined in the first step will be visible, which shall be revised so to define the LP / PP budget in all details per WP / BL / period.

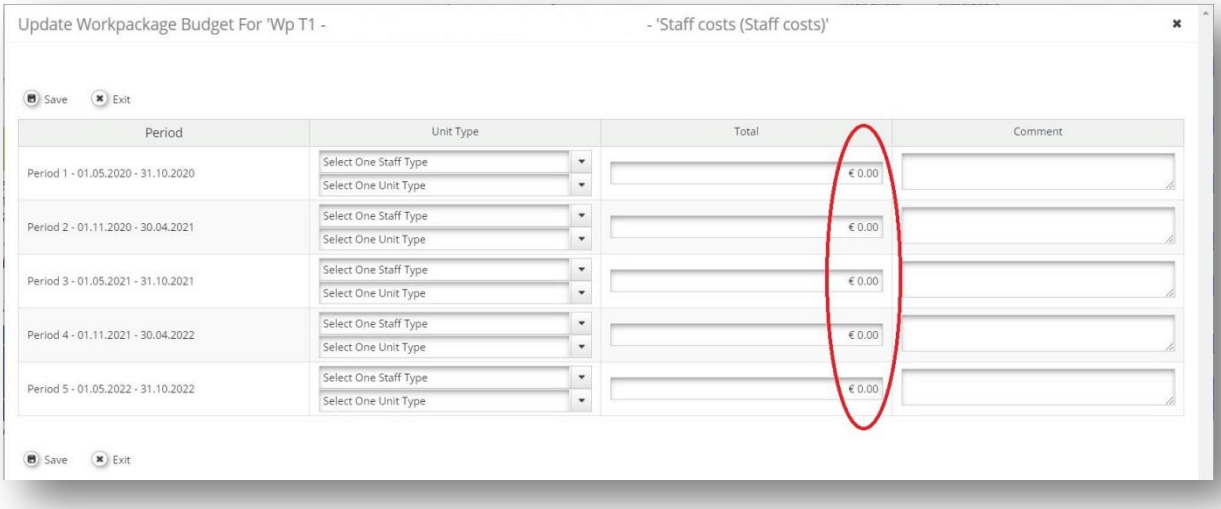
As a first step, in order to allow the flat rates for staff costs (if applicable) and / or office and administration to be selected the LA shall tick the *Budget Flat Rate* box and then also the relevant box(es) for flat rate staff and / or flat rate office. .



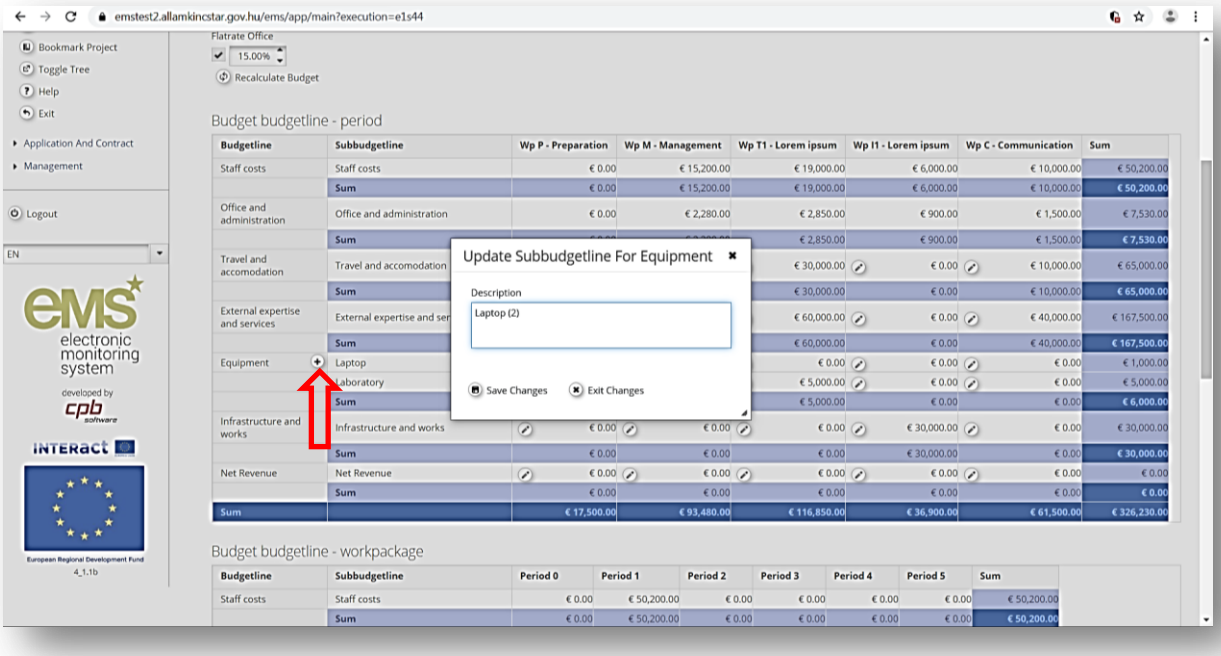
Following that LAs can insert the budget by clicking on the pencil corresponding to each WP / budget line.



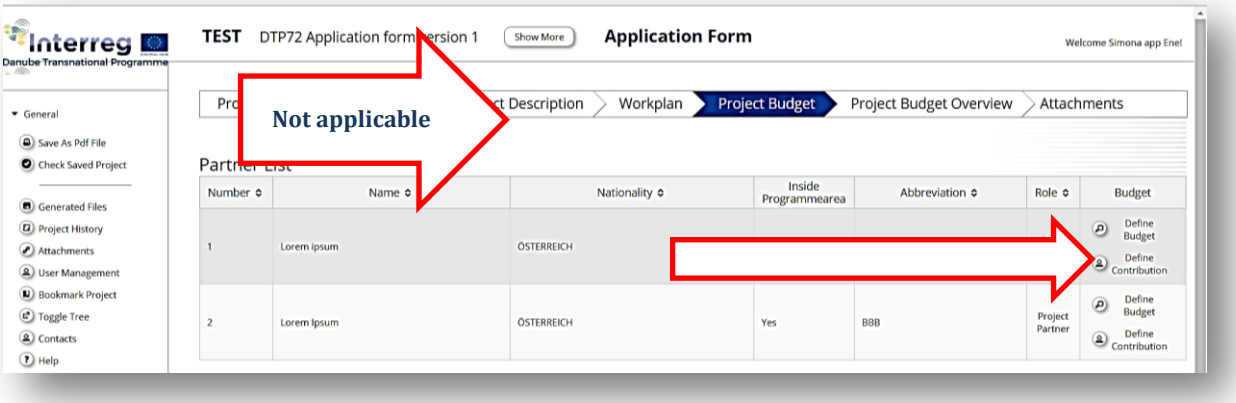
Each PP / WP / BL budget item amount is to be defined by detailing the amounts along those periods in which the respective costs are planned to be spent and reported, while the unit type column is to be left blank:



For the Equipment budget line the applicants will have to define each equipment item to be purchased within the project in the corresponding WP by clicking on the button next to the *Equipment* title, indicating in brackets the number of items and how it/they will be used for the related project activities.

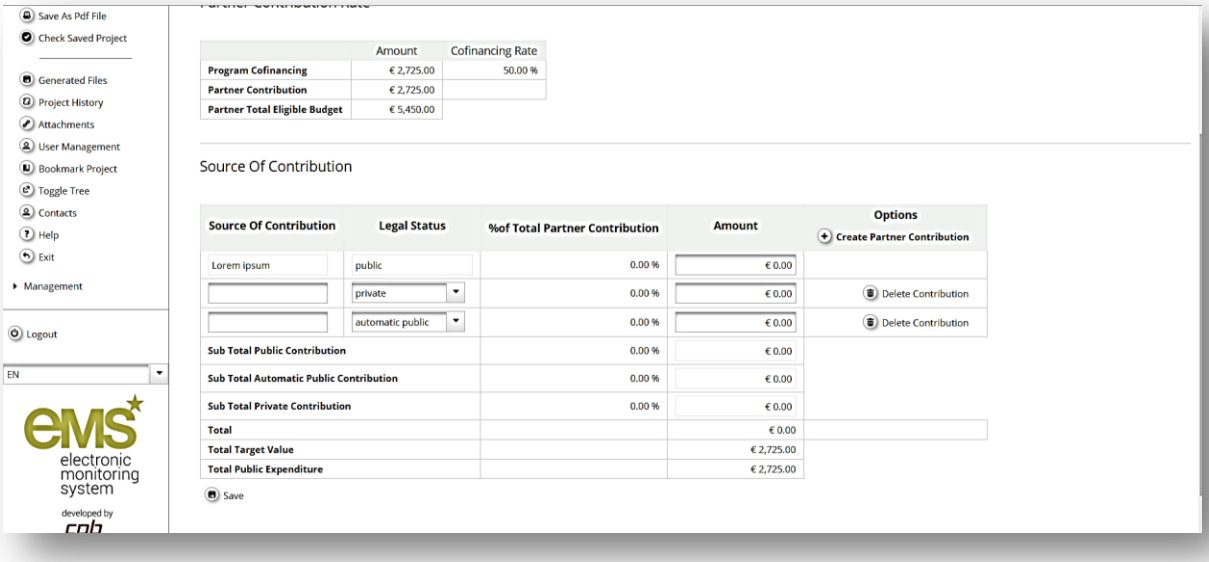


After defining the budget, Applicants have to *Define the contribution*:



Under this section, two tables are available. The first one presents the overall programme co-financing and the partner contribution according to the applicable co-financing rate (automatically filled-in by the system), while the second one refers to the partner co-financing sources and is to be filled in by the applicant.

Applicants will have to define their contribution (co-financing) by indicating the amounts that are public and/ or private (by clicking on *Create Partner Contribution* button) and/ or automatic public (by clicking on *Create Partner Contribution* button). Please note that "automatic public" stands for "state contribution" relevant for BG, HU and RO PPs. Please, check the national co-financing systems in the following link: http://www.interreg-danube.eu/relevant-documents/programme-main-documents (section Other relevant documents).



SECTION 6 – PROJECT BUDGET OVERVIEW

Section F of the application form provides the following set of predefined project budget overview tables, automatically filled in by the system:

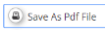
- Per partner and source of financing
- Per partner/per budget line
- Per partner/per period
- Per partner/per WP
- Per work package/per budget line
- Per work package/per period

These overview tables are exportable to an Excel file and no data is to be entered in this section.

SECTION 7 – ATTACHMENTS

Applicants shall upload all the mandatory annexes to be submitted with the AF (e.g. Partnership Agreement, Co-financing Declarations, State Aid Declarations, Lead Partner Confirmation; International Organisation Declarations and ASP Declarations are to be submitted only if applicable).

Submission of the application form

Before the final submission of the application form the applicants have to save the final version of the application form as pdf file. 

Only if all automatic checks are successfully passed (to be initiated by clicking the

button), the application form can be officially submitted by pressing the submit button

.

In case of successful submission the AF has “Subm” status in DTP eMS.