

ENI scheme framework

Background

ENI scheme objectives

The present Call for Proposals is open to **Specific Objective 4.1** Improve institutional capacities to tackle major societal challenges

ENI scheme framework aims to build the capacity of Danube Region territories to work in a more integrated and participatory way through established partnership and networks, through exchange and learning as well as through the action planning, implementation and transfer processes.

Objectives:

- Support the enhanced cooperation of public administrations at national, regional and local levels;
- Increase the institutional capacity of the ENI countries stakeholders to develop and implement transnational projects in the Danube Region in the thematic fields of the Danube Programme 2021-2027.

Call framework

It is expected that **one project** addresses **one single work package** (and the activities included therein) among the ones listed below meaning that there will be maximum **3 projects** financed **for Ukraine** and **3 for Moldova** (maximum 6 projects in total). In case projects addressing a specific work package do not reach the quality criteria of the programme, then, the respective work package will not be addressed in the Call.

Besides the activities listed in the WP below, the Lead Applicants can add complementary activities provided that it is feasible to be implemented within the project timeframe and that they contribute to the objectives of the selected WP. Besides the thematic work packages listed below, each project will have a mandatory management work package. In the WP management, the Lead Applicant shall provide a management plan that ensures the feasibility of full implementation of the proposed activities.

One project consists therefore in total of two work packages – the WP management and one thematic work package selected from the list above:

WP1 - Awareness raising and communication – Raising awareness on transnational cooperation and its benefits in the ENI countries. This WP must include also the mandatory communication requirements in line with Annex XII, section 2.2 of EC Regulation 1303/2013:

- Organisation of thematic conferences on topics relevant for transnational cooperation as defined in the new Danube Programme 2021-2027¹. The projects should not be focused on a single thematic field but should address the topics above in an integrated manner.
 - Create videos showcasing the success stories with territorial focus, illustrating the ENI countries' benefits when participating in Danube Region transnational cooperation projects. The videos in local languages with English subtitles will be used to raise awareness of existence of transnational cooperation funds as well as the added value for the relevant stakeholders;
 - Develop and implement communication / PR campaigns (incl. social media campaigns, e.g. LinkedIn, etc.);
 - Create sectoral networks of key stakeholders that can act as multipliers.

The partnership should ensure that the relevant stakeholders representing also the regional/ local level are reached and should not focus merely on the national level.

WP2 – Set up policy dialogue in thematic fields which represent a major challenge for the region as defined in the Danube Programme 2021-2027. The projects should not be focused on a single thematic field but should address the topics above in an integrated manner.

Activities (non-exhaustive list):

- Scoping study on enabling policy environment; policy briefs as discussion basis for policy dialogues.
 - Local/ regional/ national dialogues events on EU policies with intensified involvement of civic and local stakeholders, forums of ideas and solutions for the development of the capacity of the target Danube Regions to apply EU policies in major topics of the region. The project should serve not only for initiating policy dialogue but also to setting up its whole process and ensuring its durability. For example, each dialogue should have results in the form of jointly elaborated recommendations which are then further used in the policy process (concrete plan/ideas to be developed and ideally already implemented by the project) etc. The partnership should ensure that the relevant stakeholders representing also the regional/ local level are reached and should not focus merely on the national level.

¹ innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies, developing skills for smart specialisation, industrial transition and entrepreneurship, renewable energy, climate change adaptation capacities in the Danube Region and disaster management on transnational level in relation to environmental risks, taking into account ecosystem-based approaches, water management in the DRB; transnational ecological corridors, transboundary ecological regions, water habitats, wetlands along major transnational rivers; policy, planning and institutional capacity towards more accessible, inclusive and effective labour markets in the Danube Region and services in education, training and lifelong learning; culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation, governance

WP3 – Capacity building for the Ukraine and Moldova national/ regional/ local public authorities. The project activities must have a strong territorial focus. The scope is to increase the institutional capacity of the Ukrainian/ Moldovan stakeholders to develop and implement transnational projects dealing with major Danube Region challenges.

- Capacity building survey of training needs in the regions;
- Design and delivery of training programmes/workshops for strengthening the participation of ENI stakeholders in transnational projects relevant for the Danube Region;
- Action plans\Institutional Capacity building road maps;
- Implementation of Action plans and road maps and/or on-site trainings;
- Twinning activities which bring together public sector expertise from EU Member States and ENI countries with the aim of achieving concrete mandatory operational results through peer to peer activities (e.g. experience exchange between FLC, auditors).

Projects outputs (non-exhaustive)

- Awareness raising campaign(s); Studies;
- Action plans\Road maps (to enhance human resource management and development, policy framework (e.g. policies, laws and regulations): (1) organizational management (e.g. structure, staffing, financing, work process, facilities and equipment); (2) task networks (e.g. communication with other departments, stakeholders outside government);
- Capacity building actions (in the focus areas such as: (1) financial management; (2) economic planning; and (3) statistics, (4) organizational management etc.) (e.g. training programmes, conferences, workshops study visits etc.).

Project partnership

Each project should involve **at least 2 Project Partners (PPs)**, out of which one, the LP, should be **from an EU Member State** of the DTP programme area **and one from Moldova or Ukraine**, depending which country is addressed by the project. Additionally the partnership can involve **up to 2 ERDF PPs** and **up to 4 ENI PPs** coming from the UA or MD depending to which country the project is addressed to (in conclusion in total maximum: 3 ERDF and 5 ENI PPs can be involved).

The partnership can opt to choose that the ERDF LP is only a financial LP. The financial ERDF LP bears the overall financial responsibility and is responsible for receiving and transferring the EU contribution to the PPs. Out of the ENI PPs the partnership may nominate a content LP. The content LP is responsible for the management of the content of the project and ensuring a coordinated implementation of the activities. Nevertheless the

partnership can also choose the traditional ERDF LP who is responsible for the overall project implementation (both financial and content).

Besides the project partners, the partnership can involve **Associated Strategic Partners (ASPs)**. Associated strategic partners costs for travel and accommodation can be financed by an ERDF LP/ PP or by an ENI LP/ PP. ENI LP/ PP can sponsor both an ASP coming from an ENI country and/ or an ASP coming from an IPA country, but cannot sponsor an ASP coming from an ERDF country. ERDF LP/ PP can sponsor ASPs coming from an ERDF, ENI and/ or IPA country. The ASPs should represent institutions relevant for the topic. e.g. national/ local/ regional authorities, ministries etc. that cannot participate as PPs due to internal complex procedures, but have decision making power. Additionally relevant stakeholders from the IPA countries can be involved as ASPs.

The LP can be either from an ERDF or an ENI country (from Moldova, in case of the scheme for Moldova, and from Ukraine, in case of the scheme for Ukraine). As a general rule, in case of Ukraine, the LP should come from the eligible Programme area. Nevertheless, in exceptional case, the LP can represent the central level (e.g. ministries) as long as the competences in the programme area are demonstrated.

LPs and PPs eligibility rules:

Legal status

The LP and the PPs should comply with the general programme eligibility rules concerning their legal status.

Private profit making partners are not eligible to apply for funding under the call.

Type of organisations: The ideal LP and project partners should be part of the decision making bodies (either one or supported by one) since those actors are the closest to their communities, offering many essential public services and having in-depth knowledge on the needs of civil society and businesses. In addition, they should have the knowledge of the territories they represent and be a part of relevant networks that can facilitate the involvement of stakeholders. Furthermore, due to the compressed timeframe for project implementation the LP and PPs should have the capacity to implement fast public procurement procedures.

The partners can be:

- a. national, regional and local organisations implementing policies in the relevant thematic fields. b. semi-public institutions such as regional development associations and promoters, innovation and development agencies, research institutes and universities;
- b. regional and local associations of enterprises (e.g. chambers of commerce, unions); professional organisations;

c. regional, local and county self-governments and their organisations acting as legal entities, regional councils;

d. non-state actors such as:

- non-governmental organisation;
- organisation representing national and/or ethnic minorities;
- local organisations (including networks) involved in the decentralised regional cooperation and integration;
- consumer organisations, women's and youth organisations, teaching, cultural research and scientific organisations.

e. International organisations

f. EGTCs² - the applicants must have their seats or a regional/local branch registered in the eligible programme area.

Projects Duration

All projects for increasing the institutional capacity of ENI countries should be finished **until 30 June 2023** (latest project end date) without possibility of prolongation.

Programme support in projects implementation

The MA/ JS will provide a platform for continuous discussion to support the synergies between the projects (e.g. monthly meetings assessing projects progress as well as exchanging experiences and practices).

Call budget

The maximum **ERDF budget** is roughly € **1.4 mil.** For each project a maximum of €230.000 ERDF funds can be claimed.

ENI budget is maximum: € **2.33 mil for MD** and € **2.48 mil for UA** (the allocation for UA is lowered by € 235 000 used by the UA EUSDR presidency for the 2022 Annual Forum).

Eligibility of expenditure

The following budget lines are eligible: staff costs, office and administration, travel and accommodation, external expertise & services and equipment.

Application, assessment and selection

Application is to be submitted through the eMS. Assessment criteria specifically tailored to the ENI call. The following elements are to be assessed: partnership and thematic/territorial

² Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC).

relevance of the partners (including capacity to implement public procurements) and stakeholders' involvement, work plan, budget.

The selection of projects will be done by the MC.

Reporting and implementation rules

One interim 6 month report and one final report are planned. The last reporting period can be longer or shorter than 6 months depending on the actual project duration.

Indicative timetable

Approval of call concept	November 2021
Pre-announcement of the call	December 2021
Finalisation of all call documents and approval of the applicants package	January 2022
Launch of the call	January 2022
Deadline for submission	February 2022
Assessment (eligibility and quality)	March 2022
MC decision	March - April 2022
Start of the project	April- May 2022
End of project	June 2023

