



# Lead applicant seminar

**9/10 May 2023, Budapest**

*Lead applicant seminar*



## Guidelines for filling in the AF 1st Call for Proposals





## Timeframe of the 2nd step

- Launch of the 2nd step – 24th April 2023
- Deadline for submission – 16th June 2023
- Selection with conditions – October 2023
- Conditions clearing – Oct/Nov 2023
- Final approval – November 2023
- Subsidy contract signing – December - February 2024
- Implementation – December 2023/ January 2024



## Submission of the application form

- Schedule a consultation with the MA/JS – in case – in an early phase of the elaboration of the AF!
- Don't wait for the submission until the very last moment!
- Get acquainted with all technical requirements and instructions and contact the JS beforehand in case of any questions!
- Check the completeness of all documents before “pressing the button”!
- “Healing period” of 5 days (after respective notification) for missing or incomplete/incorrect documents



## Decision on funding

- Taken by the DRP Monitoring Committee in the second half of October
- Notification of LPs about the funding decision can be expected during the second half of October
- In case of positive funding decision, the notification might (usually: does) include conditions to be fulfilled in a defined time-frame and/or recommendations





## Conditions clearing

- Decision on funding can be based on the fulfilment of conditions, i.e. non-fulfillment leads to the exclusion of a project
- Time-frame for fulfillment is limited
- Conditions can comprise all aspects of a project which can be revised / corrected within a limited timeframe
- Condition can concern revision of the AF (e.g. budget) or additional justifications / explanations
- Efficient conditions clearing through LP and partnership helps to avoid delays in signing the SC and kick-off of project implementation
- Successful conditions clearing ends with a notification about final approval of the project and a request to submit original documents for contracting



# Signing procedure of the Subsidy Contract

- MA/ JS elaborates the SC and sends it to the LP in 2 copies, out of which ...
- 1 copy has to be sent back to the MA/ JS (=formal conclusion of the contract)
- Possible sources of delay:
  - SC cannot be issued due to missing / incorrect original documents
  - Slow proceeding of the SC within the LP organisation
  - Change of LP legal representative
  - Non-availability of LP legal representative
  - Change of legal status of the LP organisation
  - Shipping of original documents
  - Formal mistakes (e.g. date of signature missing)



## General recommendations

- Be aware of the “time-traps” which might occur following to the eventual approval of your project (valid for LP and partnership)
- Be pro-active in avoiding any delays (e.g. compile all original documents before they are officially requested by the MA/JS)
- Contact the MA/ JS immediately in case of any questions (e.g. formal ones) and inform the MA/ JS about any potential “issue” (e.g. change of legal representative)



# Eligibility requirements for the 2<sup>nd</sup> step

**Horst Schindler**  
*Project Officer*

**9/10 May 2023, Budapest**

*Lead applicant seminar*



## Guidelines for filling in the AF

1st Call for Proposals





## **Abstract**

- Nature of the Eligibility check
- Related consequences
- What are the criteria?
- How can criteria be met?



## **Eligibility assessment**

- confirms the correctness of submitted infos and docs to the applicant
  - in timely manner (deadline) and
  - in formal manner (e.g. completeness)
- 
- Eligibility criteria are of “knock-out” nature
  - No subject of interpretation, possible answers just “YES” or “NO”



## **Check is carried out by MA/JS and assisted by DRP NCPs**

- 10 criteria for the overall proposal
- 3 criteria on the level of PPs

## **Failure to meet an eligibility requirement leads to:**

- Rejection of the whole proposal (criteria 1-10)
- Rejection of PP(s) with eligibility problem (11-13)



overall criteria

# 1. The AF has been submitted within the set deadline (date and time)

- Deadline: **16.06.2023, 14:00 (CET)**





## 2. The AF has been submitted through the programme monitoring system

- Jems will not allow submission beyond deadline
- Don't leave tasks to the last moments as Jems could be overloaded!
- Make sure, your application is really submitted in Jems

➤ Check & Submit

Run pre-submission check

Submit project application

- Status of the application is now **“Submitted” CHECK!**



### **3. The AF is compiled in English**

- All parts of the AF are compiled in English, the official language of the DRP

### **4. Partnership is composed by at least three financing partners from at least three DRP partner countries. At least one partner shall be a beneficiary from an EU Member State**

- Financing PPs receive Interreg funds co-financing



## **5. Lead applicant (LA) is an eligible beneficiary**

- Checked during the 1<sup>st</sup> step
- Can be relevant in case of institutional change
  - In such a case turn to the NCP for advice
  - Describe this additionally briefly in the partnership description in C.3 “Project partnership”



## 6. At least 3 joint cooperation levels are indicated

According to Art 23(4) of EU reg. 1059/2021:

- Joint development
- Joint implementation
- Joint staffing
- Joint financing

No need for description, just  
ticking

Make your choice in Jems section C.7.5!



## **7. Completeness of partnership agreement**

- Scanned version of PA is uploaded in Jems
- PA containing all compulsory parts
- Only Article 5 may be adapted by the partnership
- Must be signed by all directly financed partners (PPs but no ASPs)



## 8. Changes of partners between the EoI and the AF respected the thresholds

- **MAX 4 PPs** may be changed between EoI and AF
- This refers just to
  - Financing partners. (not ASPs)
  - replaced ones and/or those who withdrew from EoI
- Adding partners is allowed without limitation



## **9. The project intervention logic in the AF has not been modified compared to the one outlined in the EoI**

- Main & specific objectives, results, outputs basically stay unchanged, but more elaborated
- Only corrections/improvements according to the recommendations of DRP
- Essence of content and logic stays the same



## **10. The lead applicant in the AF has not been changed compared to the one in the EoI**

- Lead Applicant is the same institution/organisation
- Administrative changes (legal succession) are not considered as change





PP criteria

## **11. Financed partners are eligible**

- PP fulfils the requirements of the programme

**Reminder**

## Eligible applicants

- Local, regional, national **public bodies/ bodies governed by public law**
  - “body governed by public law” according to Article 2(1) of Directive 2014/24
- **International organisations** (under national (DRP Partner State) / international law)
  - Fulfil EU, programme and national requirements in terms of control, validation of costs and audits
- **Private bodies** (non-profit & profit making, founded by private law)
  - Legal personality
  - Make available results of the project to general public
  - Apply principles of public procurement
  - They assume the final financial liability for all sums wrongly paid out



**Reminder**

## **Eligible applicants**

- **Private non-profit bodies**
  - Can be LP, PP, ASP
- **Private profit making bodies**
  - Cannot be Lead Partner



## Geographic eligibility

Reminder

- Direct EU financing only for **PPs located in Programme area**
- Legal entities in **DE outside Programme area**
  - Competent in their scope of action for eligible area
  - Activities for the benefit of the programme area
  - Fulfil general eligibility (II.1.1)
- Legal entities in **UA outside Programme area**
  - implemented operations outside programme area must directly contribute to the objectives of the programme
- ASPs
  - EU countries
  - Non-EU countries of the programme area





## 12. **Completeness of submitted partner documents**

- For each PP the scans of the following docs have to be uploaded filled in, signed and scanned:
  - **Declaration of co-financing**
  - **State aid declaration**
  - **Declaration for international organisations**



## 13. Completeness of submitted ASP documents

- For each ASP a scan of the filled in, signed and scanned **declaration of interest for ASP** has to be uploaded to Jems



**Missing documents** (i.e. Annexes),  
**parts of documents** and/or **signatures**  
may be completed in Jems  
by LA within **5 working days** from MA/JS notification.



- **Lead partner confirmation and signature** - filled in and signed by LA
- **Partnership agreement** – 1 document, filled in and signed by each financing PP
- **Declaration of co-financing** - filled in and signed by each financing PP
- **State aid declaration** - filled in and signed by each financing PP
- **Declaration for international organisations** - filled in and signed by each respective financing PP (if applicable)
- **Declaration of interest for ASP** - filled in and signed by each ASP (if applicable)

- Templates can be downloaded from DTP website - DRP 1<sup>st</sup> Call webpage
- Time-consuming process, **start it as soon as possible**
- Only scans have to be uploaded to Jems – no originals needed at this stage
- Avoid high resolution when scanning annexes into “.pdf”
- Pack (convert) all files and upload in one single “.zip” file





**Thank you for your attention!**



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# Preparing the application form in Jems

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**9/10 May 2023, Budapest**

*Lead applicant seminar*





# Guidelines for filling in the application form

[https://www.interreg-  
danube.eu/uploads/media/default/0001/56/2ea5206d05916dfd0d7  
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## Jems Technical requirements

- Jems is a web application and can be used with any up-to-date web browsers. Recommended browsers are Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge, Mozilla Firefox.
- Access Jems using the same email address and password as in case of the EoI submission.
- The LA can add further users that can edit the application but these users cannot submit the AF.
- In case you forgot your user name (e-mail address with which you registered), please contact us at [jemshelpdesk@interreg-europe.eu](mailto:jemshelpdesk@interreg-europe.eu).
- 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 DRP MA/JS recommendations.

**Important:** main characteristics of the project's intervention logic as outlined in the EoI **must not be modified in the AF.**

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# Completion and submission of the AF



- Do not change the acronym!
- Project duration does not exceed **30 months!**

### **Project partners**

- Can be improved, modified – considering the eligibility rules
- Consider **recommendations** received in the invitation letter (if relevant)

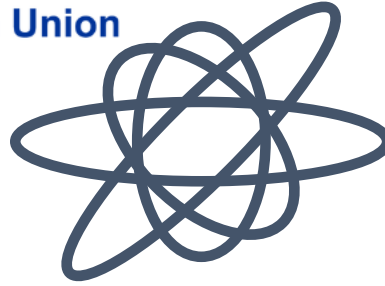
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# Project intervention logic



## Output indicator

## Result indicator


 RCO82 Participations in joint actions promoting gender equality, equal opportunities and social inclusion



 RCR85 Participations in joint actions across borders after project completion


 RCO 83 Strategies and action plans jointly developed



 RCR 79 Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations

 RCO 84 Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects



 ISI: Organisations with increased institutional capacity due to their participation in cooperation activities across borders, other than organisations counted under RCO 87 Organisations cooperating across borders (PPs, etc.) – e.g. organisations external to the partnership




 RCO 116 Jointly developed solutions



 RCR 104 Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations

 RCO 87 Organisations cooperating across borders



 ISI: Organisations with increased institutional capacity due to their participation in cooperation activities across borders

 RCO120 Projects supporting cooperation across borders to develop urban-rural linkages





**Intervention logic can be modified only in case it is recommended** in the invitation letter, or if it brings improvement, but not altering the original project (of EoI)



# Definitions

- **Project main objective** - describes the strategic and long term change that the project seeks to achieve for the benefit of the target groups.
- **Project specific objective** - describes the specific and immediate effects of the project and it can be realistically achieved within the implementation period.
- **Project output** - tells what has actually been produced for the money given to the project. It can be captured by a programme output indicator, and directly contributes to the achievement of the project results.
- **Project result** - constitutes the immediate advantage of carrying out the project, telling us about the benefit of using the project main outputs. It can be captured by a programme result indicator.
- **Project activity** - describes a specific task performed in order to achieve the specific objectives that contribute to the development of the project outputs, for which resources are used.
- **Project deliverable** - is a side-product or service of the project that contributes to the development of a project's main output.



# Project outputs and results

- Project outputs are defined in the work plan and linked to each specific objective;
- A project output is one of the main products of project activities, which can be captured by a programme output indicator and that directly contributes to the achievement of the project result.
- Project output and programme output indicator need to have **the same measurement unit** to be able to aggregate them (the same applies for the projects results and programme result indicators);



## Some typical mistakes in project intervention logic

### RCO 87 Organisations cooperating across borders

- **Project partners** are the institutions included in the application form who receive financial support from the programme (Interreg funds).
- **Associated strategic partners** are organisations which are essential for the successful development of meaningful and useful outputs. These are the associated strategic partners defined in the project application form as well as such organisations, which are not directly involved in the project partnership, but the partnership plans to sign cooperation agreements with them. Their involvement in the development and assessment of outputs ensures that the end product is one that meets their expectations and is relevant to their needs and situations. They provide insight and information that would be difficult to obtain without their participation. Sustaining the outputs by, for example, adopting tools and strategies developed by the project, is also a primary role of the ASPs in ensuring the project has long-lasting legacy.
- **Formal cooperation** is cooperation between independent entities which is based on written contracts.

#### Quantification issues

The indicator **counts** the organisations cooperating formally in supported projects. The organisations counted in this indicator are the legal entities including project **partners and associated strategic partners, as mentioned in the application form** and subsidy contract.



## Some typical mistakes in project intervention logic

### Programme indicator RCO 83

#### Strategies and action plans jointly developed

- A joint strategy/action plan is to be counted if it is developed by the project, while revision or **update of existing strategies/action plans cannot be counted** under this indicator.
- Each developed **strategy/action plan** of the project shall be **counted only once** under the respective output indicator.
- In case a **strategy** is developed by the project and based on that also **action plan(s)** are developed within the same project, these are to be **counted separately** for this indicator.
- **Project management and communication-related strategies** such as e.g. the project communication strategy, **should not be considered** under this output indicator.
- **Guidelines, policy recommendations** and other similar documents of strategic relevance, but not being strategy/action plan **shall not be counted** under this output indicator.

**Jointly developed strategy** did not reflect the **common vision of the Danube Region** in the specific field. Strategies did not **aim at policy integration** in the Danube area in the targeted fields and did not aim to act as **policy drivers below EU level but above national level.**



## Some typical mistakes in project intervention logic

### Programme indicator RCO 84 Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects

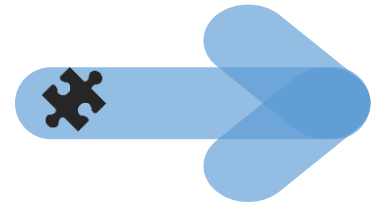
Jointly developed **pilot action** has an experimental nature either **testing of innovative products, methodologies, tools etc.** or demonstrating the **application of existing products, methodologies, tools to a certain territory/sector**; the feasibility and effectiveness of procedures, new instruments, tools, experimentation or the transfer of practices.

Jointly developed pilot action implies the involvement of organisations from the partnership in its implementation. The concept and implementation details of the pilot actions have to be jointly developed by the partnership, even though its implementation can be individual in certain partner regions.

In order to be counted by this indicator, the **pilot action** needs **not only** to be **developed**, but also **implemented within the project** and the implementation of the pilot action should be finalised by the end of the project.

### Pilot actions did not result in solutions.

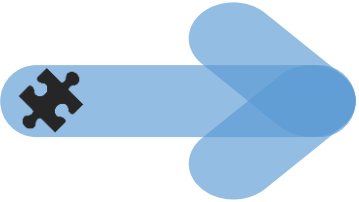
Carrying out project activities in a certain “pilot area” **without testing, or demonstrating a solution is not considered as pilot action** and not to be counted under this indicator.





## Some typical mistakes in project intervention logic

### Programme indicator RCO 116 Jointly developed solutions

A blue arrow pointing to the right, with a puzzle piece icon on its tail.

Jointly developed solution contributes to solve a common problem, challenge addressed by the project. The joint **solution shall be pilot tested** (RCO84) to prove whether the solution meets the needs of the target groups.

**The forms of solutions** can be very diverse, **tools** (e.g. analytical, monitoring, management, decision making tools, instruments), **technologies** (software, ICT solutions, platforms), **methodologies, concepts, guidelines, processes, agreements, services** etc.



## Some typical mistakes in project intervention logic

In order to be counted in the indicator, an identified solution should include indications of the actions needed for it to be taken up by the target group or to be up scaled.

- Each developed **solution** of the project **shall be counted only once** under the respective output indicator.
- In case a **solution** (e.g. a methodology) is jointly developed by the project, but **not pilot tested** and validated within the project to be feasible and applicable (see RCO84), then that product of the project **shall not be counted** under this output indicator.
- **Project management-related tools**, like internal communication platforms, templates **should not be considered** under this output indicator.





**Read carefully Annex 1 of Applicants Manual on output & result indicator definitions and their linkages:**

<https://www.interreg-danube.eu/uploads/media/default/0001/56/acec178a2352fd44f38f7207acf9fbbe44fb6808.pdf>

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# Financial Management of the project -budget planning

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**9/10 May 2023, Budapest**

*Lead applicant seminar*



## Financial management of the project-budget planning

- The major goal of any budget proposal is to estimate the costs of a project and if those costs are in line with program rules.
- The proposed budget must accurately assess all items and amounts necessary to successfully implement planned cost categories of the project activities.
- A good budget makes the execution of the budget easier and avoids errors as well as spending during the cost reporting.



## Cost categories

1. Staff costs (real cost/flat rate)
2. Office and administrative expenditure (flat-rate)
3. Travel and accommodation costs (real cost/flat rate)
4. External expertise and service costs
5. Equipment expenditure
6. Infrastructure and works

Preparation cost -18,500 EUR per project represents the total budget for the preparation costs (Interreg Funds and national co-financing) and the EU contribution part of this. Using the preparation cost from another programme on DRP is not allowed.

***While planning project costs please take into account the internal policy of your institution, national and EU laws.***



## Criteria of eligibility for the expenditure

- All expenditures must comply with the principle of efficiency, effectiveness and economy
- All expenditures must comply with the principle of real costs, with the exception of the costs calculated as flat rates and lump sums
- For all expenditures related to activities that have not been financed from other financial instruments, the DRP shall not finance the same costs which have been previously covered by any other EU funds.
- All expenditures shall be indicated in the Application Form if the project has received other EU financial support for the project preparation.



## Financial management-link between activities and expenditure

All expenditures reported to the programme must correspond to activities implemented in the framework of the project.

Only expenditures planned in the application form are eligible.

Expenditure linked to the project should be indicated in AF/JEMS under the relevant cost category and following the calculation rules proposed in the latest version of the Manual on the eligibility of expenditure (version 1.1. from 24.04.2023).



## Particular attention during the process of budget planning and implementation

### ***Sources of funding:***

80% INTERREG Funds

20% own contribution/state contribution (where applicable) – national level information, NCP support

### ***Control costs*** (only in case of AT, DE and MD PPs):

To be planned under external experts and services cost category

Information to be provided by NCP

### ***Use of the EURO***

Project budget (and partner budget) to be planned in Euro

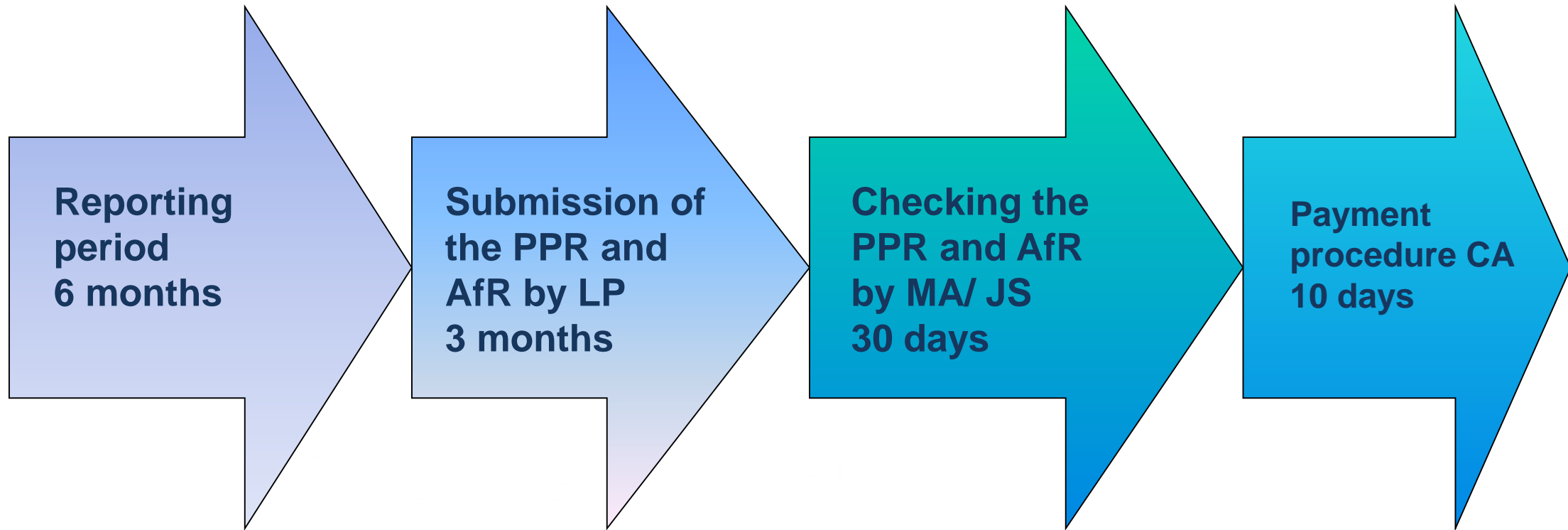
All expenditure to be reported in Euro

EU contribution will be transferred to the LP in Euro





## Timeframe of reimbursement





## Hints for sound financial management

- Expenditures should be clearly connected to project activities and traceable in the approved application form.
- Incurred, recorded into the project electronic system (JEMS) and paid by all parties during the project period.
- Invoicing between partners shall be avoided.
- Ensuring accurate and appropriate supporting documents in line with the expenditures to avoid irregular amounts.



# Eligibility of the expenditure

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**Hierarchy of rules**

**Non-eligible costs**

**Eligibility in time**

**Eligibility of expenditure by cost categories**



## Hierarchy of rules

1. EU Regulations
2. Programme rules

**Manual on Eligibility of Expenditure (Version 1.1 - date: 24th April 2023)**

3. National (including specific institutional) rules

The eligibility rules laid down in the Manual on eligibility of expenditure shall not be overruled by national or institutional legislation



## Non-eligible costs

- Interest on debt
- Value added tax ('VAT'), **except:**
  - **for operations the total cost of which is below EUR 5 000 000 (including VAT);**
  - for operations the total cost of which is at least EUR 5 000 000 (including VAT)  
where it is non-recoverable under national VAT legislation
- Fines, financial penalties and expenditure on legal disputes and litigation
- Costs of **gifts**
- Costs related to fluctuation of foreign exchange rate
- Purchase of land and existing buildings
- In-kind contribution (including unpaid voluntary work)
- Project expenditure split among project partners (i.e. sharing of „common costs”)



## Eligibility in time

Eligible project expenditure has to be actually **incurred and paid between the starting date of the project and the project end date** as defined in approved Application form

### Exceptions

- **Preparation costs**
- **Control costs** related to the last progress report and application for reimbursement
- Expenditure incurred in the last reporting period

to be paid within 60 calendar days from the end date of the project

**The deadline for payments is defined in Article 3(1) to the Subsidy Contract**



## **Eligibility of expenditure by cost categories**

- 1) Staff costs
- 2) Office and administrative expenditure
- 3) Travel and accommodation costs
- 4) External expertise and service costs
- 5) Equipment expenditure
- 6) Infrastructure and works





## Methods of reimbursement:

1. Real cost basis
2. As a flat rate of 20% of direct costs other than staff costs

**Each project partner** must choose one of these reimbursement options in the final application form; the selected method **has to remain unchanged through the entire project period.**



## **Staff cost reimbursed on real costs basis:**

Justification and supporting documents necessary

- a) **Full-time working** on the project
- b) Part-time work on the project
  - **Part-time with a fixed percentage** of time worked per month on the operation (no timesheets)



## Staff cost reimbursed on flat rate basis:

- The 20% flat rate defined in the approved Application Form shall be automatically applied by Jems for reporting staff costs in each reporting period
- No justification and supporting documents is needed
- In case of **staff costs planned on flat rate basis, no further staff costs incurred on real costs basis can be reported under this cost category or under other cost categories**
- Eligibility of staff costs does not depend on the form of reimbursement



## Office and administrative cost

- **Flat rate basis of 15% of the eligible staff costs**
- In order to use Office and administrative flat rate, the project partner has to select this method in the application form
- No further justification or supporting document is needed
- If the staff costs are not eligible, office and administrative costs cannot be declared
- If the staff costs are declared on flat rate basis, office and administrative costs are eligible
- **Office and administrative costs cannot be claimed as direct cost under other cost categories**



## **The following types of expenditure are included under this cost category (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. General accounting provided inside the beneficiary organisation
- f. Archives
- g. Maintenance, cleaning and repairs
- h. Security
- i. IT systems
- 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 an operation requires a separate account to be opened
- l. Charges for transnational financial transactions



## **Travel and accommodation costs**

**Project related travel costs** of the project staff employed and Associated Strategic Partner(s) financed by the beneficiary

### **Methods of reimbursement:**

A. as a flat rate of 15% of staff costs ; or

B. on a real cost basis

**Each project partner** must choose one of these reimbursement options in the final application form; the selected method has to **remain unchanged through the entire project period**

**In the interest of the simplification, project partners are strongly advised to choose option A (flat rate)**



## A. Travel and accommodation costs reimbursed on flat rate basis:

- The 15% flat rate defined in the approved Application Form shall be automatically applied by Jems for reporting travel and accommodation costs in each reporting period
- No justification and supporting documents is needed
- In case travel and accommodation costs are planned on flat rate basis, further travel costs of the **project staff and ASP(s) incurred on real cost bases** cannot be planned under this or under other cost categories
- travel and accommodation costs of the ASP are covered by the flat rate of the “sponsoring” PP- no need to provide justification or supporting documents
- Eligibility of travel and accommodation costs does not depend on the form of reimbursement



## **B. Travel and accommodation costs reimbursed on real cost basis:**

- Travel costs
- Costs of meals
- Accommodation costs
- Visa costs
- Daily allowances

### **Attention:**

Travel and accommodation costs of the ASPs **shall be planned** in the sponsoring PP budget under Travel and accommodation cost category (and not CC External expertise)

**Travels outside the programme area** are subject of approval from JS: if possible to be included already in the AF!





## **External expertise and services costs**

- a. Studies or surveys (e.g. evaluations, strategies, concept notes, design plans, handbooks)
- b. Training
- c. Translations
- d. IT systems and website, development, modifications and updates
- e. Promotion, communication, publicity or information linked to the project
- 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. Verifications: Externalised control activities for the verification of the project expenditure by authorised national controllers where it is relevant for the control system of the concerned Partner State
- l. The provision of guarantees by a bank or other financial institution where required by Union or national law or in a programming document adopted by the monitoring committee
- m. Travel and accommodation for external experts, speakers, chairpersons of meetings and service providers
- n. Other specific expertise and services needed for the given project



## **Attention!**

- **Registration fees for participation in events** to be planned under CC External expertise and services costs (and not under BL Travel and accommodation)
- **Stakeholders' travel and accommodation costs** to be planned under CC External expertise (and not under CC Travel and accommodation)
- **Costs of website and project logo** created by PP as a simple communication tool are **not eligible**



# Equipment costs

- 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 operations



## Equipment costs

- Only equipment **listed in the approved AF** are eligible
- **Full costs** of the equipment should be allocated to the project, **if in line with national and institutional regulations**
- **If not**, only depreciation costs shall be allocated to the project
- Rental or leasing costs for a certain period during the project lifetime are eligible



## Equipment costs

In justified cases, costs for the purchase of **specific thematic second-hand equipment** may be eligible subject to the following conditions:

- (a) no other assistance has been received for it from the Interreg funds or from the funds listed in point (a) of Article 1(1) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060;
- (b) its price does not exceed the generally accepted price on the market in question; and
- (c) it has the technical characteristics necessary for the operation and complies with applicable norms and standards.



## Costs for Infrastructure and works

- a) Building permits;
  - b) Building material;
  - c) Labour;
  - d) Specialised interventions (e.g. soil remediation, mine-clearing)
- Only small-scale infrastructure is eligible; the **transnational character** of the investment has to be demonstrated; the activity is approved in the Application Form
  - This cost category should include execution or both design and execution of works as well as site preparation, delivery, handling installation, renovation

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**Thank you for your attention!**





# Quality Assessment

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*Lead Applicants' seminar*



# Applicant's Manual 2021—2027





## How is the AF assessed?

- Assessment procedure, assessment matrix and quality criteria are included in the:



### **Applicants' Manual**

- Please download it from the website - updated for the 2nd step:
- <https://www.interreg-danube.eu/uploads/media/default/0001/56/681d87f62ead00c2ca6a7d0c3caf4e4ba0e14c51.pdf>
- Please read the assessment sections thoroughly in order to prepare a high quality proposal!



## Quality criteria

- are linked to the specific objectives and results of the Danube Region Programme document
- are common to all Priorities
- assessment will be carried out by the MA/JS



## Quality criteria groups:


- **Strategic assessment criteria:** contribution to the programme's objectives and to the programme's result
- **Operational assessment criteria:** viability and feasibility, value for money in terms of resources used against delivered outputs and results

Each criteria group is assessed on basis of different criteria with each being scored from 0 to 5.



- **Strategic** assessment is carried out **first** and independently from the operational assessment
- Only projects successfully passing the strategic assessment are assessed operationally
- The knock-out threshold is set at 60%:
  - If a proposal receives a lower score than 60% in the strategic assessment, it will not be assessed operationally and it fails the overall assessment.
  - If a proposal receives at least 60% in the strategic assessment, then it will be assessed also from an operational point of view.
  - The final score (%) of the proposal will be given by the weighed sum of the strategic and operational assessment scores (%)
  - Strategic = 60% of the total score
  - Operational = 40% of the total score



What is assessed?	Criteria	Weight
Strategic	18	60%
<b>Threshold at 60%</b> 		
Operational	9	40%



## Strategic relevance:

### Territorial needs and challenges

- Territorial needs and challenges are clearly and coherently described
- Territorial needs and challenges are clearly addressed
- Capitalisation of relevant previous projects and synergies with on-going projects **AND** bringing added value to them are demonstrated



## Common shortcomings:

- General needs of the entire region are presented, without any specific project related information focusing on the targeted area by the project
- There is a mismatch between the described needs/ challenges and planned activities.
- There is no (clear) information about the status quo (past initiatives, relevant results of previous projects, added value).





## Strategic relevance:

### Intervention logic

- Coherent with the programme's one
- Coherent in terms of
  - the definition of the objectives, expected outputs and results
  - the link between the objectives expected outputs and results
  - the link between the needs of the target groups and the proposed outputs and results
- Envisaged activities can realistically reach the planned outputs and results



## Common shortcomings

- IL lacks internal coherence.
- Described activities cannot logically lead to the achievement of the project objective.
- Described outputs cannot logically contribute to the achievement of the envisaged results.



## Strategic relevance:

### Intervention logic

- Project's **main objective** is in line with the selected programme SO, clearly defined and supported by appropriate activities
- Project's **specific objectives** contribute to the achievement of the main objective and they are linked to the project outputs
- Project's **main result** captures the advantage of carrying out the project. There is a clear link between the **activities** and the result; appropriate partners are involved in the different SOs proving that the planned result can actually be reached
- Proposed **outputs** are achievable within the project lifetime and as a result of the proposed activities; there is a clear connection between the outputs and the needs of the target group



## Common shortcomings

- Project's **main objective** is too briefly defined and/or using DRP CfP wording.
- Instead of the **main objective**, project activities are described.
- Project activities are mentioned instead of project **specific objectives**.
- Project **specific objectives** are not (entirely) coherent with the project activities.



- **Project results** are not described in connection to the result indicators, but rather outputs are merely listed.
- **Project result** does not indicate the advantage of carrying out the project or it is not coherent with planned activities/ outputs.
- **Project outputs** are not sufficiently or clearly described.
- **Project outputs** do not seem achievable as a result of the planned activities.



- Project **activities** are not clearly and comprehensively described (the context in which they are implemented or their benefits/ importance are described instead).
- **Role of individual partners** is not clear (“all partners contribute”)



## **Strategic relevance:**

### **Contributions to EU strategies and policies**

- Relevant EU strategies/policies (other than EUSDR) of the thematic field - addressed and contributed to
- Relevant EUSDR Priority Area(s), targets – identified and contributed to
- EUSDR is embedded in the proposal (needs and challenges, synergy/capitalisation, work plan, durability and transferability)



## Common shortcomings

- Unrelated **strategies** are mentioned or project's contribution thereto does not seem realistic.
- Inappropriate **EUSDR targets** are listed or project's contribution thereto does not seem realistic.
- There are no specific actions proving the **EUSDR embedding** in the proposal.





## **Strategic relevance:**

### **Partnership composition**

- Right mix of countries and competences for the project topic and its geographic focus, if relevant
- Role of partners is balanced and relevant for achieving the main objective
- Non-EU countries are involved



## Common shortcomings

- Geographical coverage is limited even though the addressed topic is relevant for a wider area.
- Partners do not have the (most) appropriate competences to implement the planned activities.
- Some relevant sectors / levels of governance are missing.
- The partnership composition favours one/ two countries.
- Benefits of the involved countries vary to a significant extent.
- Partners' involvement is not coherent with their expertise.



## **Strategic relevance:**

### **Transnational cooperation**

- Project's transnational dimension and impact - demonstrated through geographical coverage, planned activities and outputs
- Added value of the transnational cooperation - clearly demonstrated in comparison to a national/ cross-border approach



## Common shortcomings

- Project activities are not jointly implemented or they are not harmonised.
- Project's transnational impact is limited due to a restricted geographical area covered by the partnership.
- Project outputs do not have a transnational impact (local/ national relevance).
- The added value of the transnational cooperation is not clearly demonstrated.



## **Strategic relevance:**

### **Target groups/durability&transferability / horizontal principles**

- Relevant target groups – clearly identified, listed and involved
- Integration and use of project outputs by the target group
- Concrete measures to ensure durability and transferability of project outputs
- Contribution to the programme's horizontal principles – coherent with the overall territorial needs and with the programme's and project's objectives



## Common shortcomings

- Inappropriate target groups are mentioned.
- It is not clear how the target groups will adopt/ use the project outputs.
- Durability and transferability of project outputs is too generally explained without references to concrete measures.
- Project's contribution to the horizontal principles is not presented in the light of actual activities.



## Operational relevance:

### Work plan

- Timetable and spending forecast – realistic and coherent
  - Clear link between the activities/outputs
  - Achievable activities and outputs
  - Readiness to be implemented
  
- Activities – described in detail (how, where, when and by whom) and balanced in terms of geographical implementation



## Common shortcomings

- Time plan is not realistic (act. too short/ long) or not coherent (sequence is illogical).
- Work plan is not coherent
- The project does not seem to be ready for the implementation.





## Operational relevance:

### Project management

- Management structure – clear, transparent, efficient and effective
  
- Lead Applicant's capacity (knowledge and resources) to manage EU co-financed projects demonstrated

Or

- Adequate measures for management support ensured



## Common shortcomings

- Managing structures are not proportionate to the needs of the project or tasks are not clear.
- Effective internal communication is not apparent.
- Quality management structure is missing or procedures are not clear.
- LA is less experienced in implementing/ coordinating EU projects (esp. ETC) or lacks necessary capacities to manage the project.



## Operational relevance:

### Communication

- Communication objectives are clearly linked to the project specific objectives
- Communication activities and deliverables are appropriate to reach the relevant target groups and stakeholders



## Common shortcomings

- Communication activities (incl. strategies, communication channels) are not well tailored to project objectives, activities, outputs, type of addressed stakeholders or target groups
- Not all PPs are involved in communication activities



## Operational relevance:

### Project budget

- Budget allocated to each activity is justified and quantified
- Budget of each cost category (based on real costs) is coherent with the planned activities and involved partners
- Partners' budget is consistent with their involvement in the activities



## Common shortcomings

- Budget is inappropriately distributed per PP/ Act. / SO/cost category/reporting period
- Amount allocated to External Expertise is too high - raising the question of the relevance of the respective partner in the project
- Requested amounts for equipment or infrastructure and works are not justified by planned activities.



## Final scores:

- Proposals scoring less than 60% will be recommended by the MA/JS for rejection.
- Proposals scoring overall between 60% and 74% will be subject to further discussions and a final decision will be taken by the MC.
- Proposals scoring overall 75% or more will be recommended by the MA/JS for immediate selection.
- Final decision on financing the proposals will be taken by the MC based on the results of the technical assessment and the ranking list.

Interreg Programme

**Danube Region**



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the European Union

**Thank you for your attention!**





# Communication requirements

**Michal**  
*Senior Communication Manager*

**9/10 May 2023, Budapest**

*Lead applicant seminar*



## Guidelines for filling in the AF

1st Call for Proposals



Interreg Programme

**Danube Region**



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If your project received EU grant support from the Interreg Danube Region Programme, you must comply with our branding and communication requirements.

By ensuring that all communication and materials produced as part of the project are consistent with the Interreg Danube Region Programme's visual identity you increase visibility and awareness of EU funding in the Danube Region.



**Funded by  
the European Union**



## Checklist

- Use the project logo in all your project communication to highlight EU and Interreg Danube Region Programme support.
- Set up the project website and social media, update it regularly with news about project implementation, milestones and results.
- Make sure that each project partner puts up a project poster at their premises and informs about the project at their websites.
- Put up a plaque or billboard on the project site when investments or purchased equipment exceed EUR 500 000.



## Project branding

- Project branding consists of the EU emblem and funding statement, which are used to identify and promote all EU-funded projects, a programme's name together with the reference to Interreg and your project acronym in the colour of the thematic objective made into one single logo.
- It must be placed in a visible top position of all project documents and communication materials (first/main page) and without the need for scrolling on digital outputs (websites or mobile applications, etc.) in compliance with all requirements in Annex IX of the Common Provisions Regulation (EU 2021/1060).

Note: Projects can also develop their own logo or visual in addition to the official project logo, as well as to use other logos, such as partners' logos, in project communication materials.

Interreg Programme

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**Project Name**



## Project branding – size

- When coexisting with other logos or visual elements, the minimum height of the EU emblem in the official logo must be 1 cm and should never be smaller in height or width, as the biggest of the other logos included in the same material, except for specific items (pens, etc.) Also, it should be always displayed in top position and never below the additional project logo and partners logos.



**Project Name**



Smallest logo width 90 mm



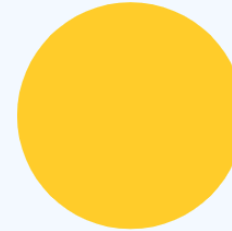
## Project branding – colour

- The logo colours are the Reflex Blue and Yellow, which are derived from the EU main corporate colours. Project names acronym in the logo uses the colour of the matching thematic objective. The standard logo is the full colour version and should be used on white or light colour background only.



**Reflex blue**

CMYK: 100-80-0-0  
RGB: 0-51-153  
HEX: #003399



**Yellow**

CMYK: 0-0-100-0  
RGB: 255-204-00  
HEX: #FFCC00



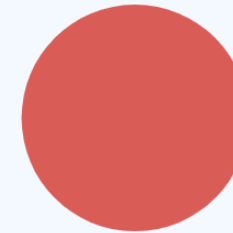
**A smarter  
Danube Region**

CMYK: 72-0-43-0  
RGB: 24-186-168  
HEX: #18BAA8



**A greener  
Danube Region**

CMYK: 48-0-89-0  
RGB: 154-202-60  
HEX: #9ACA3C



**A more social  
Danube Region**

CMYK: 10-75-60-1  
RGB: 218-92-87  
HEX: #DA5C57



**A better  
cooperation  
governance**

CMYK: 87-51-0-0  
RGB: 14-110-192  
HEX: #0E6EB6



## Poster

- All project beneficiaries must place a poster or equivalent electronic display with information about the project at a location visible to the public.
- The poster must include the project logo, short description text with the project aims, partners, duration, as well as financial support from the Interreg Danube Region Programme, at minimum. The design (minimum size A3) should use the colour of the matching colour of thematic objective.





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## Billboard and plaques

- Projects with operations (investment or purchased equipment) the total cost of which exceeds EUR 500 000 need to put up durable plaque or billboard on the operation site, as soon as it starts or purchased equipment is installed.
- The plaques and billboards shall stay in place permanently and must include at least the project name, the name of the project beneficiary, the project logo and the project website/QR code, if available.



## Project website

- Each project has to set up a project website, which is embedded in the Danube Region Programme website. You are required to regularly update its content, including news and events, activities and results, during the whole period of project implementation.
- Also, each partner in an Interreg Danube Region Programme project must present the project on their official website, including the project logo in full colour, the description of the project's aims, partners and duration at minimum. It should also highlight the financial support from the Interreg Danube Region Programme.

Note: In exceptional cases, if it is an eligible cost, projects can develop an extra site for tools or products with a life reaching beyond the project, but it must display the project logo in full colour at the top of the homepage.



## **Social media**

- Using social media is optional but recommended as engaging with stakeholders and disseminating information about a project on social media can be an effective way to increase its impact. By regularly updating social media accounts with progress, results, and relevant messages, the project can reach a wider audience and build a community of interested individuals.

**Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Youtube**



## **Acknowledging our support in public, media & publications**

- When officially communicating about your project to the public, media, or citing your project in academic publications, you must acknowledge the support with reference to the co-funding by the European Union and the Interreg Danube Region Programme. Below is an example of a citation which is in line with these requirements:

*This paper was supported as part of [PROJECT ACRONYM], an Interreg Danube Region Programme project co-funded by the European Union. The content of this paper reflects the opinion of their authors and does not in any way represent opinions of the European Union.*