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GUIDE FOR IDENTIFIED APPLICANTS TO DEVELOP AND SUBMIT FULL PROJECT PROPOSALS (Call 1) *(Contracting Guide)*

Programme Priority 3
'Integrated Development of the Cross-
Border Region'

*Interreg (VI-A) IPA Bulgaria North Macedonia
Programme 2021-2027*

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DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF THE FULL PROJECT PROPOSALS IN JEMS
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Introduction

This guide is exclusively intended for organizations that have received invitations to develop and submit full project proposals (FPP) within the framework of Programme Priority 3, ‘Integrated Development of the Cross-Border Region’. Each FPP originates from a corresponding concept note, which the Strategy Board (SB) of the Programme has identified as a project idea to compile into a list (please, see the table below). This list is annexed to the Programme’s Territorial Strategy (TS). The TS and its annexes, including the list of identified project ideas (main and reserve projects), have been approved by the Monitoring Committee (MC) of the Programme with MC Decision from 27.03.2024 and have been posted on the programme's website. For additional information, please visit <https://ipa-bgmk.mrrb.bg/>

The identified project ideas are categorized into *main project ideas/concept notes*, ranked until the disposable call’s budget is exhausted, and *reserve project ideas/concept notes*, which fall below the disposable call’s budget. Applicants with reserve concept notes are encouraged to submit FPPs under equal conditions with the main concept notes. However, a reserve FPP may proceed to the contracting stage if a FPP from the main list is not submitted, drops out or it does not meet all eligibility criteria for contracting. In this case, the respective reserve FPP proceeds to contracting stage, and it must adhere to all subsequent steps and meet all conditions to secure a contract. The order of proceeding is according to the ranking established in the list of operations, approved by the SB.

One project idea/concept note can be further developed in only one full project proposal!

List of identified project ideas/concept notes whose applicants are invited to develop and submit full project proposals:

Concept ID	note	Name of the project idea	Lead Partner	Requested grand amount
Main project ideas/concept notes				
BGMK0200046		Integrated development of distinctive cultural and close-to-nature tourism in	Centre for development of East planning region	999 987,18

	East planning and Blagoevgrad region		
BGMK0200039	Low-carbon InFinity Trail	Municipality of Petrich	999 050,00
BGMK0200030	Integration of Creative, Digit, Green and Eco Tourism for sustainable development of territories and communities in Kresna, Strumyani and Vasilevo	Municipality of Kresna	999 680,00
BGMK0200019	Balkan alternative mobility routes for sustainable all-season tourism	Municipality of Razlog	999 960,00
BGMK0200028	Cross-border attractiveness - smart tourism in region Kyustendil - Kriva palanka – Nevestino	Municipality of Kyustendil	999 550,00
BGMK0200047	From better utilization of natural and historical heritage to increased tourist attractiveness of the cross-border area	Municipality of Belitsa	988 200,00
BGMK0200012	Integrated crossborder tourism actions in Blagoevgrad-Delchevo region	Municipality of Blagoevgrad	999 900,00
BGMK0200027	Cultural area - Cultural heritage community and AttRactive all-sEAson tourism	Regional Historical Museum – Kyustendil	999 725,00
Reserve project ideas/concept notes			
BGMK0200009	Connecting different regional potentials for improving regional tourism offer	Municipality of Probishtip	903 000,00
BGMK0200014	Sustainable tourism in the experience economy	Municipality of Sapareva banya	997 340,00



BGMK0200044	A journey without borders - from rich history to technological future	Archaeological Museum – Sandanski	944 340,00
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The total budget available for contracting FPP is 8 143 233 Euro of which 6 921 748 Euro EU financial contribution (ERDF+IPA funds) and 1 221 485 Euro national contributions from national budgets of the partnering countries.

While contributions from partners' own resources are not mandatory, applicants have the option to provide their own co-financing, which should be explicitly outlined in the project budget and will undergo verification.

The intensity support to full project proposals is 100%.

The concept note needs to be further elaborated in the FPP with regard to the operational aspects of the project, particularly its work plan and budget. Therefore, this Guide complements the Guide for application with concept notes by providing crucial specifications and additional details covering the stages from FPP development to contracting.

The primary objective of this Guide is to facilitate invited applicants to develop and submit FPPs that meet programme requirements. The FPP Guide is structured into three primary sections:

Part A provides guidance to applicants on how to further develop their concept notes into FPPs. It emphasizes compliance with the program's contracting requirements, encompassing also the submission of supporting documents to substantiate stated or desired conditions.

Part B focuses on the submission and screening process of the received FPPs, outlining the steps and checks towards contracting. Received FPPs will not undergo a separate assessment. Instead, they will be screened against the contracting criteria outlined in section **2.2 Screening process of full project proposals**. FPPs originate from the identified project ideas previously approved by the Strategy Board for full development. As a result, the FPP stage is designed to avoid redundant identification and assessment, with a primary focus on evaluating whether FPPs meet programme requirements for contracting. It's important to note that the FPP screening is not a scoring (quality assessment) process. Its outcome is expressed as either 'yes' or 'no,' indicating whether a FPP is eligible to obtain a subsidy contract.



Part C describes the contractual process with roles and responsibilities of all actors involved. It also includes a provisional timeline for the implementation of this process.

1. Part A – From concept note to full project proposal

Applicants should note that there are elements of the project proposals which cannot be altered between the concept note and FPP stages and therefore they remain unchanged. Please, refer to section 1.1. Eligibility and content elements of the concept note that cannot be changed in the full project proposal for further information on this matter.

However, it is important to acknowledge that during the transition period from the concept note to the FPP, certain modifications to the concept notes may be necessary. This is due to the evolution of the project idea while elaborating its intervention logic (links between needs, activities, results and contribution to programme indicators), work plan and detailed budget. The programme bodies are open to considering these modifications in a positive manner, but within certain limits. The programme bodies are fully committed to ensuring the application of fundamental assessment and funding principles, such as providing fair and equal treatment to all candidates and avoiding redundant reassessment of project features in different submission stages. Therefore, applicants are strongly advised to avoid making significant changes, specifically those related to project modifications that could jeopardize the eligibility of the proposal.

1.1. Eligibility and content elements of the concept note that cannot be changed in the full project proposal

- Objective of the concept note
- Scope of the project activities:
 - Mandatory combination of investment (works only or works and supply) and soft type of actions (e.g. services);
 - Each FPP must contribute to the achievement of the targets of the mandatory indicators (RCO84+RCO116/RCR104 + RCO74), including the targets of at least one of the two pairs of ERDF indicators (RCO58/RCR64 + RCO77/RCR77). Please, ensure that you are familiar with Attachment 5 ‘Programme’s Indicators’.
 - Investment component/s of the concept note – scope, location, responsible partner/s.



If the project involves investment activities such as building new or rehabilitating existing infrastructure, these activities should be exclusively carried out on state-owned or municipal property. Only the owner of the respective property rights, or the legal body that has already acquired the management rights¹ for that specific property, is entitled to contract the implementation of those activities, i.e. it should be a project partner. The legal authority to manage the property must be in force for a duration that aligns with or exceeds the specified 5-year durability period, specified in Art.65 of the CPR Regulation, following the project's completion.

Interventions on elements of the planned infrastructure, situated at/passing through private properties, are eligible only in cases where there is no alternative technical solution and it has been regulated in accordance with the applicable national legislation, as a part of the approved documentation for construction (Working design and Building permit). In this case, a notarised declaration (including a copy of the respective property act and excerpts from the cadastral map) from the owner of the private property(ies) must be provided to ensure free access to and unhindered use of the public infrastructure for a period project implementation and at least 5 years after the completion of the project.

- The full project proposal contains the mandatory pair/s of indicators including at least one of the two pairs of ERDF indicators (investment indicators). Please, ensure that you are familiar with Attachment 5 ‘Programme indicators’.
- Mandatory contribution to the protection of the environment and/or provision of green and digital solutions to boost cross-border territorial potentials. Project actions must be in full accord with the DNSH principle².

¹The period of the contract which stipulates the management rights over the conveyed property should be no less than the sustainability period of the funded project, as set out in [Common Provisions Regulation \(EU\) 2021/1060](#), art. 65 (1).

² Please see the [Taxonomy Regulation](#), the [Technical guidance on the application of DNSH principle](#)) and the ‘climate resilience’ pillar of the climate proofing of infrastructure ([Technical guidance on the climate proofing of infrastructure](#)). Climate proofing is a process that integrates climate change mitigation and adaptation measures into the development of infrastructure projects. It enables European institutional and private investors to make informed decisions on projects that qualify as compatible with the Paris Agreement



- The implementation of the project activities should take place in the Programme area. Activities outside the Programme area can be implemented in duly justified cases.
 - Project activities of an economic nature, irrespective of their implementer, should not fall under the scope of the ineligible sectors for EU funding. These sectors are outlined in Regulation (EU) 2023/2831, Regulation(EU) 2023/2832, Directive 2003/87/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, Annex 1 and Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013, Annex 1.
 - The budgetary parameters of the concept note, reflecting mandatory criteria the minimum and maximum budget of the concept note, a minimum of 60% budget share allocated to the investment component cannot be altered.
- Eligibility of project partners:
- Local/regional bodies and authorities (incl. regional structures of central public authorities and statutory bodies);
 - SMEs – stands for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises as defined in European Union law (EU recommendation 2003/361);
 - NGOs and other socio-economic partners;
 - Academic, research, training and cultural institutions
 - The Lead partner and the project partner/s responsible for the project investment/s cannot be altered.

The FPP must include **at least one partner from each side of the border region.**

Lead partners and project partners are required to be registered and operational within the programme area for a minimum of 3 years preceding the submission of the concept note. In cases where new partner/s become project partner/s to the FPP, this rule applies to them proportionally. Therefore, the new project partners are required to be registered and operational in the programme area for a minimum of 3 years before the date of submission of the respective concept note. In instances where a local/regional/national authority structure is unable to act as a legal entity, its legally established central organisation, shall serve as the project partner.



Project partners situated outside the programme area but within Bulgaria and Republic of North Macedonia may be eligible, provided they bring a clear benefit to the programme area and meet all eligibility criteria. However, their involvement is considered exceptional and must be duly justified.

Each applicant may participate as **a Lead partner or a project partner in only one FPP.**

The implementation of the project activities should take place in the Programme area. By exception (however excluding activities related to works and supply), activities outside the Programme area can be implemented in duly justified cases.

All partners are directly responsible for project implementation and are prohibited from acting as intermediaries or engaging in any form of contracting among themselves.

Not meeting all requirements outlined in this section, along with the references it makes, will result in the FPP being ineligible for funding.

1.2 Developing a full project proposal

The applicants will be guided in the process of developing FPP by training/s and Q&A sessions. The purpose of this guidance is to ensure that all FPPs adhere to the rules and requirements of the programme for contracting. During the FPP screening process the necessary adjustments will be made through formal exchange of communication. The applicants may submit questions of substance in writing up to 14 calendar days before the deadline for submission of proposal. The JS will reply no later than 7 calendar days before the deadline for the submission of proposals.

It is important to note that the programme bodies cannot be held responsible for any failure on the part of the applicants to develop, submit, and ultimately secure a contract for their FPPs.

The application process of a FPP is conducted exclusively in [JEMS](#). The application form (AF) of a concept note and the one for FPP is technically and functionally aligned. A template of application form for FPP is provided as Attachment 1. Therefore, applicants with FPP should use the **same account profile as the one when they submitted the concept note**. In case there are needs to



change user settings in JEMS, please follow section 3 ‘User Management’ of the JEMS Manual, which can be found here <https://jems.interact-eu.net/manual/>.

All the information provided in the sections of the concept note in JEMS will automatically transfer to the FPP application. Therefore, applicants do not need to rewrite the entire project proposal in the FPP AF. Instead, they only need to fill in the sections of the FPP AF that were not part of the concept note application. However, since the application form for the concept note was offline (in Word format) and attached to the JEMS application, applicants must now transfer the content of the offline concept idea’s application form to the JEMS application form of the FPP. During this process, project partners can further elaborate on their project idea, consolidate their partnerships, and develop a detailed work plan in line with the recommendations provided in notification letter with the outcomes of the concept note stage.

The summary of the project proposal (section ‘A.2 Project summary’ of the FPP form) needs to be updated to reflect any modifications made at the FPP stage.

1.2.1 Section ‘Project partners’ from the application form

The strategic concept of the partnership is introduced at concept note stage. At FPP stage, applicants are required to provide a description of the final partnership composition, partners’ roles, and the manner in which they will interact and cooperate. They should explain how the composition of the partnership is conducive to achieving the project’s objectives and results, and how the partners’ relevance addresses the identified territorial challenges. Additionally, they must specify the mechanisms through which partners will collaborate in cross-border settings.

In general, it is preferable for the partnership composition described in the concept note to remain unchanged in the FPP stage. However, in justifiable cases, a change in partners between concept note and FPP is permitted. It is crucial to note that any such change should not impact the investment activities of the project. **This means that partner/s responsible for the project investment/s cannot be altered. Neither can the Lead partner.** Modifications in the partnership are allowed for partners involved in activities that contribute to the Interreg indicators RCO84 ‘Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects’, RCO116 ‘Jointly developed



solutions' and RCR104 'Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations'. In such cases, there are two options for a change in partners:

Option 1: Withdrawal of a partner whose original functions are taken over by other partner within the partnership;

Option 2: Withdrawal of a partner whose original functions are taken over by a new partner.

Automatic withdrawal of project activities is not allowed when the partner responsible for those activities is also withdrawing from the project. In this scenario, either the new project partner assumes the responsibilities initially assigned to the withdrawn partner, or an existing partner takes on these tasks.

Applicants are encouraged to provide additional details and expand upon the activities outlined in the concept note, creating a comprehensive project work plan to enhance the attainment of project targets and results. If the activities outlined in the concept note do not facilitate the incorporation of environmental mitigation measures and indicators as outlined in the Programme's SEA report (Please refer to Attachment 4 Measures for monitoring and control environmental impacts), applicants are required to introduce new activities to address this aspect.

During the guidance/screening process for FPP development, certain project activities and their associated costs may be excluded from the EU grant if they are deemed ineligible. In such cases, additional own co-financing may be considered if necessary to achieve project goals.

If option 2 is chosen, the new partner has to meet all eligibility requirements outlined in section 1.1. Eligibility and content elements of the concept note that cannot be changed in the full project proposal in this Guide. Failure to meet these requirements, along with the conditions of the current section, will result in the FPP being ineligible for funding.

At the concept note stage, project applicants were required to provide brief descriptions of the project partners. At the FPP stage, these sections must be elaborated and/or updated, regardless of



the selection of option 1 or 2 or if no partner change has been initiated. How partners intend to cooperate must be updated to reflect the final composition of the partnership and to fill in the 'cooperation criteria' section in the AF.

1.2.2 Section 'Budget and co-financing' from the application form

A detailed, economically justifiable, and consistent budget that aligns with the project activities is a critical component of the FPP. An ideal way of starting to develop a detail project budget is to look at the project activities. Although the project development process requires applicants to go back and forth from goals, objectives to strategies and activities and back again, once the activities are ready it is easier to achieve a great level of budget clarity.

During the concept note stage, only an overall budget estimation of expenditures per cost category and project partner was requested, and thus the project idea's budget was partially evaluated to ensure it aligns with eligibility criteria. Therefore, the budget will undergo a thorough review during the screening process of the FPP before it can be approved for contracting. The final approval is granted by the Monitoring Committee of the Programme.

Eligibility of expenditures

When detailing the budget, applicants may find the need to modify certain budget costs from their original values in the concept note due to various reasons. In this case, applicants should justify any proposed budget changes in a free written format. This justification should be included as part of the FPP submission package. However, changes in budget parameters between the concept note and FPP are only allowed in duly justifiable cases, provided that the following conditions are cumulatively met:

1. The maximum percentage for Budget categories (BC) 1, 2 and 3 and the minimum percentage for investment component (BC 5 and BC 6) should be respected, namely:
 - BC 1 Staff costs – up to 20% of the eligible costs under BC 4, BC 5 and BC 6 of the total project budget of the respective project partner;
 - BC 2 Office and administrative costs – up to 15 % of staff costs;
 - BC 3 Travel and accommodation costs – up to 15 % of the staff costs;
 - BC 5 and BC 6 (cumulative) – minimum 60% of the total eligible costs.



2. The programme's methodology for determining expenditures for project events using the unit costs approach should remain unchanged (please, see below);
3. The budget changes should not result in non-compliance with the minimum budget of €500,000 and the maximum budget of €1,000,000 for a project proposal.
4. Any potential budget change should not impact and diminish the scope of the project investment(s), the target groups, or the values of the indicators. Instead, it should either result in an increase in these parameters or maintain the original scope and targets as outlined in the concept note.
5. Any potential budget change should not lead to exceeding the overall budget of the concept note. The eligible and ineligible costs are set out in the Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of 18 July 2018 ([Financial Regulation](#)), the Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 of 24 June 2021 ([ERDF Regulation](#)), the CPR Regulation and the Interreg Regulation.

To ensure that project costs are considered eligible, the following criteria must be met:

1. All project costs should be budgeted rationally and based on market prices. Relevant supporting documents (listed in section **1.2.4 Additional documents supporting the full project proposals**) are requested at application stage. However, it's important to note that expenditures associated with flat rates, unit costs, and lump sums, where final costs are automatically derived or represent a fixed amount for a specific activity, are exempt from this requirement.
2. All expenditure relate to activities that have not been financed from other financial instruments. Double funding is strictly prohibited. It is going to be checked during screening and contracting procedures.
3. Project costs must align with the FPP work plan, ensuring that expenditures are explicitly linked to the planned activities, deliverables, and outputs.

The following costs are ineligible and therefore cannot be reimbursed:

- Interest on debt
- Fines, financial penalties and expenditure on legal disputes and litigation
- Costs of gifts
- Costs related to fluctuation of foreign exchange rate



- Second hand equipment
- 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”)
- Costs resulting from subcontracting between project partners for services, expertise, equipment and works carried out within the project.
- Charges for national financial transactions;
- Consultant fees between partners for services and work carried out within the project;
- Contracting of employees of the partner organizations as external experts, e.g. as freelancers;
- Other non-eligible expenditures according to EU and national legislation;

The budget approach to Simplified Cost Options (SCOs)

It is important for all project partners to get acquainted with the Programme’s approach to financial management. It refers to the application of a methodology named Simplified Cost Options (SCOs). SCOs are an EU innovative way to reimburse grants and repay assistance. Instead of reimbursing “real costs”, SCOs allow the reimbursement of expenditures according to predefined methods based on process, outputs or results. SCOs allow the tracing of financed expenditures without the need to provide individual supporting documents. Furthermore, SCOs allow administrations to shift the focus from collecting and verifying financial documents to achieving policy objectives (i.e. concentrating on achieving concrete outputs and results instead of verifying actually incurred costs).

SCOs may take the form of:

- **Flat rate** – specific categories of eligible costs which are expressed as a percentage of other eligible costs;
- **Lump sums** – fixed amount for certain activity;
- **Unit Costs** – cover certain specific categories of eligible costs which are expressed in maximum amounts per unit (e.g. maximum prices of certain goods, items, etc).



Sub-contracting

The acquisition by means of a public contract of works, supplies or services from economic operators is subject to rules on public procurement. For the award of service, supply and work contracts by the project partners, acting as contracting bodies, the procurement procedures shall follow:

- the provisions of Article 58 of Interreg Regulation;
- the provisions of Articles 178 and 179 (and points 36 to 41 of Chapter 3 of Annex I) of the Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union;
- National procurement rules (for the Bulgarian partners) - Public procurement act (Закон за обществените поръчки) and Government decree No. 4/2024 (Постановление на Министерски съвет ПМС №4/11.01.2024 г. за определяне правилата за разглеждане и оценяване на оферти и сключването на договорите в процедурата за избор с публична покана от бенефициенти на безвъзмездна финансова помощ от Европейските фондове при споделено управление
- Annex II ‘Public procurement’ of the Financing Agreement between the Republic of North Macedonia and the European Commission along with PRAG templates to practically assist project partners in the implementation of tendering procedures, ensuring compliance with the provisions outlined in Annex II (for all partners from the Republic of North Macedonia).

The budget template and types of costs

The budget template of FPP consists of 7 budget categories (BC), as follows:

BC 1 Staff costs – these costs relate to remuneration of people involved in the management of the project implementation, such as the project team (manager, coordinator, accountant, assistant, etc.) and permanent staff of project partners engaged in soft project activities (e.g., trainings, studies, research, etc.). These costs can be reimbursed on the basis of flat rate of up to 20% of the eligible costs under BC 4, BC 5, and BC 6 from the respective partner's total project budget. Please refer to Article 39 of the [Interreg Regulation](#) for more information.



Project partners must comply with national legislation in appointment of the project team members (project staff).

Project partners are not required to provide documentation demonstrating that staff costs for project management purposes have been incurred and paid. However, if the project has been contracted, project partners must provide an official document (e.g. order) proving that a project team has been appointed and is operational. More comprehensive information on this requirement will be provided in the Project Implementation Manual.

Example for the calculation of staff costs:

Reported eligible direct costs:	
<i>External expertise and service costs:</i>	20.000 EUR
<i>Equipment costs:</i>	30.000 EUR
<i>Costs for infrastructure and works:</i>	50.000 EUR
	Total: 100.000 EUR
Eligible Staff costs = 100.000 EUR * 20% = 20.000 EUR	

- **BC 2 Office and administrative costs** – All eligible types of office and administrative costs are set out in Art. 40 of the [Interreg Regulation](#). These costs will be reimbursed as a flat rate of up to 15 % of staff costs. No further justification or supporting document is needed from the project partners.

- **BC 3 Travel and accommodation costs** – This budget category covers expenses related to travel and accommodation exclusively for project staff engaged in project management and implementation. The eligible types of travel and accommodation costs are outlined in Article 41 of the [Interreg Regulation](#). These costs will be reimbursed as a flat rate of up to 15% of the staff costs. No further justification or supporting document is needed from the project partners. When using flat rate, it is not necessary for the applicants to set a detailed budget for travel and accommodation as the calculation is done automatically by JEMS.

When developing your FPP, it is important to ensure that you adhere to the following additional eligibility principles:



- The duration of the travel shall be clearly linked to the concerned event/meeting and shall not be longer than from the day before to the day after the concerned meeting, unless it is clearly justified and documented;
- The maximum accommodation costs and daily allowances must be respected, in accordance with national eligibility rules;
- Travel and accommodation expenses of external experts and service providers shall be declared under the BC 4 External expertise and services costs;
- Generally, the most economical way of transport should be used. In principle, business or first class tickets are not eligible. Furthermore, it is recommended to use environmentally friendly means of transport (e.g. train over flight, green public transport vehicles over taxi/car etc.);
- Taxi costs are eligible, e.g. for travelling to/from the airport/train station, to/from the venue of the event/hotel, in case they are well justified (e.g. the only effective travel solution if public transportation is not available);
- Car rental is eligible in exceptional cases and in justified circumstances, e.g. the location of the event is not accessible by public transport;
- Cancellation fees of travel costs are eligible in case of force majeure;
- In case travel and accommodation costs are not eligible for financing for the given project partner (e.g. no staff employed), travel costs shall not be declared on flat rate basis to the project (i.e. the eligibility of expenditure does not depend on the form of reimbursement).

- **BC 4 External expertise and services costs** –This category includes costs for expertise and services provided by entities or individuals, other than the project partners, that are directly linked to the project and are crucial for its successful implementation. The extent of external support required may vary depending on the project's specific needs and objectives. All eligible cost types are specified in Article 42 of the [Interreg Regulation](#).

Costs associated with external expertise will be reimbursed by the Programme based on real costs supported by relevant documentation. These costs undergo verification before reimbursement.

For event organization services, costs can be reimbursed based on either unit costs or real costs. The choice between these two options is made by the applicants.



In case of real costs the Market analysis for the planned costs have to be provided - done either by asking for offers from at least three providers or by print screen (and indicating the websites) out the price offers for the specific items from the web pages of at least three providers or prints from national systems on public procurements, or an independent evaluation of the cost

The unit costs are determined based on the event's duration and the number of participants. The unit costs for event organisation are as follows:

- 14,00 EURO unit cost for one-day events;
- 72,00 EURO unit cost for multi-day events;

The unit costs include the following types of expenditures:

- ✓ Rental expenses for meeting halls, training venues, conference facilities, etc.
- ✓ Rental expenses for equipment such as translation equipment, audio equipment, etc.
- ✓ Vehicle rental expenses for event participants (car, van, minibus, bus, etc.)
- ✓ Expenses for coffee breaks, refreshments, lunches and dinners for participants in the events;
- ✓ Accommodation costs;
- ✓ Expenses for purchasing consumables and materials for event participants, such as paper, files, folders, cases, CDs, as well as printing costs for invitations, agendas, presentations, etc.

Examples for using unit cost approach:

**** Example for calculation of the amount for 1-day event per 20 participants:***

1 day x 20 participants = 20 units

20 units x unit costs EUR 14 = total costs EUR 280

**** Example for calculation of the amount for 2-day event per 20 participants:***

2 days x 20 participants = 40 units

40 units x unit costs EUR 72 = total costs EUR 2 880

- **BC 5 Equipment costs** – The [Interreg Regulation](#), specifically Article 43, outlines all eligible types of equipment costs. It is essential that the equipment is directly and strictly linked to achieving



the project objectives. The procurement of equipment must adhere to the respective national public (Bulgarian partners) or PRAG (partners from the Republic of North Macedonia) procurement rules. The Programme will reimburse the costs associated with equipment purchases based on real costs supported by relevant documentation. These costs will undergo verification before reimbursement.

Market analysis for the planned supply is required. The recommended approach for conducting this analysis is for the Lead or project partner to provide a minimum of three extracts from national/EU public procurements systems of a similar supply with identical technical specifications. In instances where evidence from a national/EU procurement system is unattainable (verifiable circumstances apply), the Lead or project partner is required to present soliciting offers (along with website references) from at least three independent providers. These offers should be comparable in terms of requested technical characteristics, and as such, they must be accompanied by a uniform request for offer. Expenditures included in the project budget derived from the market analysis should reflect an average of the price offers received or an average of the extracts from national/EU public procurement systems. In order to overcome the impact of future inflation and price instability, the expenditures included in the budget based on the above market analysis could be increased with the average rate of the national inflation of the last 3 years before the application submission, but not more than 10%.

Upon exhaustion of the first two possibilities, when there is a requirement to procure highly specialized equipment (with insufficient evidence in national procurement systems) from a limited pool of suppliers, and conducting market research for the equipment cost is not feasible, historical data for concluded contracts from previous similar deliveries must be provided by applicants. This data serves to verify that the budgeted equipment costs are reasonable.

To ensure fair and equitable treatment of all potential bidders during the actual procurement of specialized equipment, the project partners (acting as contractors) are committed to transparent practices. To achieve this, the project partners shall publicly disclose all information exchanged during the market consultation and historical data gathering (only for highly specialized equipment) phases on their official website. This



disclosed information is integral to the tender dossier, fostering openness and fairness in the procurement process.

In cases where subcontracting activities are necessary to achieve project objectives, including those related to project preparation, the contracting must adhere to the procurement provisions outlined above. Subcontracting procedures, if implemented, should not create an economic advantage to any economic operator.

- **BC 6 Costs for infrastructure and works** - The [Interreg Regulation](#), Article 44, specifies all eligible types of costs for infrastructure and works. It is important to note that the **purchase of land and buildings is not eligible**. The Programme will reimburse costs related to infrastructure and works based on real costs supported by relevant documentation. These costs will also undergo verification before reimbursement.

- **BC 7 Project Preparation costs (PPC)** – projects approved by the Programme’s Monitoring Committee and contracted by the MA are entitled to receive the reimbursement of the preparation costs in a form of a lump sum, except for projects that have already received financial support for project preparation from other EU funding sources. Costs related to project preparation are eligible if they are incurred after the date of 1st of January 2021.

For FPP, the PPC is capped at EUR 12,000 per project proposal. The total amount shall be included in the Lead partner’s budget at the application stage. This lump sum must be distributed among all project partners in proportion to their involvement in the preparation and contracting of the proposal. It should be included in their Partnership Agreement, which is a mandatory annex attached to the FPP application.

PPC is limited to the following services:

- ✓ Consultancy and development of technical documentation (including feasibility studies, detailed design, technical (or working design stage drawings), etc.);
- ✓ Elaboration of the project proposal and application form, translation of documents, taxes, and other charges;
- ✓ other costs necessary for submitting a valid application form and contracting;



The Lead partner must declare the amount in the first Project Progress Report and first interim payment request.

During the implementation of the screening process (please refer to section 2.2 Screening process of full project proposals), all project costs will be scrutinized and may be reviewed and optimized where necessary by the screening working group. This review will occur if the proposed costs are deemed ineligible, not fully aligned with the project content, not conducive to achieving project objectives and programme indicators/targets or not justified in terms of volume and prices.

VAT

The expenditure for VAT is eligible for operations the total cost of which is below EUR 5 000 000 (including VAT). Each project partner must take the respective national VAT legislation into consideration when budgeting project costs.

For Bulgarian partners: In the implementation phase of the project the project partners should be requested to provide the necessary documentation proving the VAT requested for reimbursement is non-recoverable under national VAT legislation.

No-profit principle: NOT APPLICABLE FOR NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS (Article 192, par. 3, c) of Regulation 2018/1046)

The meaning of a no-profit principle is in accordance with Article 192 of Regulation 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union.

The compliance with the no-profit principle shall be applied as follows:

The grant amount representing the EU funds and national co-financing funds may not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit for the project partners. Profit is defined as a surplus of the grant amount received and the revenue generated by the operation over the total amount of eligible expenditures incurred by the project partner and paid by the Managing authority. If this calculation



results in a profit for the project partner, the Managing authority will reduce the final amount of the grant with the profit generated.

The revenues may be but not only: cash in-flows directly paid by users for the goods or services provided by the operation, such as charges borne directly by users for the use of infrastructure, sale or rent of land or buildings, or payments for services, payment received by the project partner arising from contractual penalties as a result of a breach of contract between the partner and a sub-contractor, interests accrued on the received pre-financing payment into the bank account using for the operation, etc.

For the purpose of respecting the no-profit principle and for the proper calculation of the revenues generated each project partner should keep detailed, timely, adequate and traceable information and accounts concerning the generated revenues during the implementation period of the operation. A declaration for revenues generated with the relevant supporting documents shall be requested by each project partner at the stage of the last reporting of expenditures.

State Aid

For project partners - SMEs

Public support provided within the programme to undertakings³ will adhere to the de minimis rule. For more information, please refer to [REGULATION \(EU\) 2023/2831](#) of 13 December 2023 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty to de minimis aid and [REGULATION \(EU\) 2023/2832](#) of 13 December 2023 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty to de minimis aid granted to undertakings providing services of general economic interest, as well as to Annex 2 –De minimis FactSheet

According to REGULATION (EU) 2023/2831, undertakings falling within the scope of the regulation will be eligible for grants under the program only if they have not received public assistance exceeding EUR 300,000 over any period of 3 years, prior to the date of grant.

³ The term ‘undertaking’ is in this context used in a wide sense as any entity has an activity of an economic nature and which offers goods and services on the market, regardless the legal form and the way of financing of this entity. Also, if an entity is not profit-oriented state aid rules will apply as long as it competes with companies that are profit-oriented. Therefore, not only private companies are subject to state aid rules but also public authorities or other organisations if they carry out an economic activity on the market.



For undertakings providing services of general economic interest, the total amount of de minimis aid should not exceed 750,000 EUR over any period of 3 years, prior to the date of grant, in accordance with the provisions set forth in [REGULATION \(EU\) 2023/2832](#). The de minimis ceiling considers all aids granted by national, regional, or local authorities, irrespective of whether the resources come from domestic sources or are partially financed. Undertakings that do not meet the de minimis rule are not eligible for grants under the Programme.

For applicants falling under other categories:

All project activities will be subject to examination to ensure compliance with state aid regulations. This check of compliance is conducted on a case-by case basis, meaning that the presence or absence of activities relevant to state aid depends on the specific details of the project. For further information, please refer to Attachment 2 De minimis FactSheet .

Activities of economic nature may only be financed under the de minimis rule. In this case the provisions of REGULATION (EU) 2023/2831 of 13 December 2023 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty to de minimis aid and REGULATION (EU) 2023/2832 of 13 December 2023 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty to de minimis aid granted to undertakings providing services of general economic interest, must be followed

Project partners registered in North Macedonia should follow the applicable provisions set out in REGULATION (EU) 2023/2831 and REGULATION (EU) 2023/2832, as well as national regulations regarding State aid.

All project partners must fill in and submit Annex 6 ‘State Aid Declaration’



1.2.3 Section 'Project description' from the application form

It is important to emphasize that FPPs must be developed in full accordance with the [Territorial Strategy](#) (TS), particularly with its Specific Objective 1.2: Development of an attractive, all-season tourism product by means of smart solutions that ensure universal access and participation. Project partners are strongly encouraged to reference the TS specific objective and justify their projects contribution to it wherever possible in the full application form.

C.1 Project overall objective

Applicants are required to transfer the content from Section C.1, 'Project Overall Objective,' in their Concept Note's application form to the corresponding section in the AF of the FPP. It is essential to ensure that the narrative remains the same as it is in the concept note with slight rewording possible to ensure consistency with the FPP.

C.2 Project relevance and context

When developing FPP, project applicants must review and further refine the project relevance and context, as initially provided in the concept note stage. This should be done in accordance with the evaluators' recommendations provided in the notification letter from the concept note stage. Applicants must ensure that the information reflects the latest state of play and is consistent with the work plan and final partnership.

Applicants are strongly advised to devote careful attention to Section *C.2.7. How does the project build on available knowledge?* of the FPP. This section is specifically related to the concept of capitalisation of results, an integral aspect of every project. Capitalisation is the process of collecting, analysing, exchanging experience, and transferring / adapting good practices gained in a specific field of regional development policy. It is a priority and a challenge for all Interreg programmes, given the extensive work already conducted in the targeted territorial, policy, and community areas.

When building a project, and implementing activities, partners should therefore consider the results and outputs already achieved by the Programme, as well as in other CBC programmes or European schemes. The aim is to benefit from past experiences and to give continuity to the cooperation efforts in the targeted territories, focusing on addressing shared challenges. This initiative aims to



produce tangible outcomes, including databases, reports, booklets, etc., that will serve as valuable resources for future endeavours beyond the completion of the project.

Applicants might also consider the KEEP database⁴, and more broadly the EU funded regional policy projects⁵.

C.3 Project partnership

Applicants are granted certain degree of flexibility to reconsider the proposed partnership, as outlined in their concept notes. Please, see **1.2.1 Section ‘Project partners’ from the application form** of this Guide for further details.

While the level of involvement of partners may differ according to their role in the project and their organizational capacities, all partners should be meaningfully involved in the project and their expertise valorized as much as possible in the design of an effective work plan.

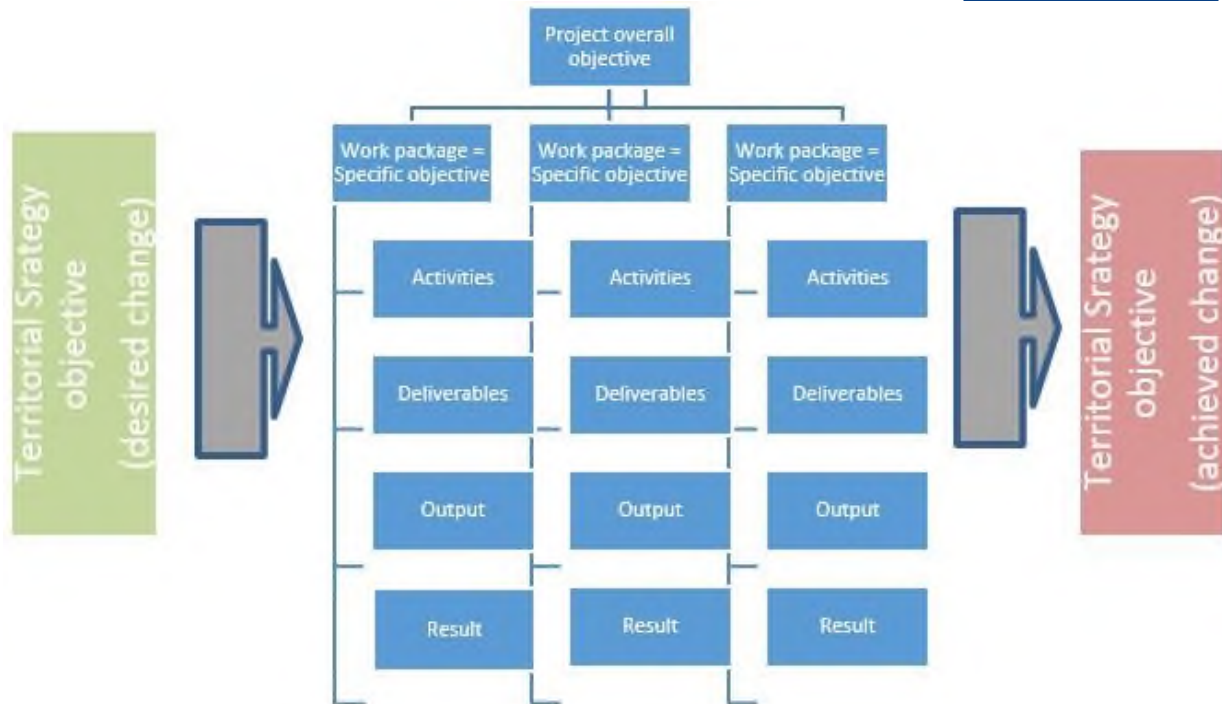
C.4. Project work plan

C.4.1 Project intervention logic

To prepare a good and coherent work plan, the project intervention logic must be considered. The following graphic visualizes the project's intervention logic and its connection to the Territorial Strategy.

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/projects/

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/index_en.htm



In the above graphic, the keywords should be understood as follows:

- **Territorial Strategy objective** - > thematic area which reflects the most relevant needs and potentials of the Strategy area;
- **Project overall objective** - > what the proposal wants to change for the communities in this thematic area;
- **Project specific objective (work package)** - > specific objectives detail *what* the project is trying to achieve during its lifespan, while the work plan (structured in packages) explains *how* it is going to do that. A work package is a group of related activities for which work is estimated, scheduled, monitored, and controlled. Work packages are not predefined by the Programme. Therefore, applicants are free to structure their work packages according to specific objectives of their projects. Normally, one specific objective is linked with one work package. Project management and communication activities are directly integrated in the work packages.
- **Project activities** - > each work package is divided into activities to achieve its corresponding project specific objective. To keep consistency with the delivery of limited outputs, please, limit the number of activities per work package. Each activity delivers one or more deliverables.



- **Project deliverables** - > physical evidence of what has been produced through an activity. Deliverables are the documentation that capture the implementation of project activities. They can be reports, studies, action plans, digital tools, training modules, permits, tender dossier, etc. Deliverables contribute to project outputs. It is recommended to limit the number of project deliverables and design them as efficiently as possible.
- **Project outputs** -> the direct products of the activities, which will contribute to the desired change. Outputs are defined on work package level. Project main outputs are those that can be captured by the Programme output indicators. Project output/s directly contribute to the achievement of the project result/s. Not every work package must have one or several main outputs (in fact, a project may have only one main output). Outputs of the project remain in use by the partners and/or target groups after completion of the project.
- **Project results** -> describe the achieved desired change the project partners aim to accomplish in their target territories by the end of the project. Project results are the societal benefit brought about by project implementation. The project result must be coherent with the project objective and quantifies the degree to which the objective will be achieved in the project timeframe.
- **Project budget** - project costs must align with the FPP work plan, ensuring that expenditures are explicitly linked to the planned activities, deliverables, and outputs.

We recall the very important horizontal principle that shape the implementation of the Programme. It is imperative that each supported intervention includes a component contributing to the protection of the environment and biodiversity or provides green and digital solutions. Thus, the green and digital policy becomes integral part of the integrated territorial development of the cross-border region.

All outputs and results need to contribute to the Programme's output and result indicators that applicants have selected in their concept notes. The indicators in the FPP should not differ from those in the respective concept note. When such deviation occurs reasonable justification shall be presented.



The applicants are encouraged to develop FPP in a way to avoid local actions that are vaguely linked through a common topic. Stand-alone activities or investments serving local aims are not a good fit for this Programme. The emphasis is on fostering collaboration and addressing shared challenges in a cohesive and integrated manner.

C.4.2 List of investments

Applicants need to list and describe in more details project investments that will be delivered within each work package.

It is important to emphasize that investment activities, such as building new or rehabilitating existing infrastructure, are eligible only when conducted exclusively on state-owned or municipal property.

In this regard, public authorities are mandated to uphold the Green Public Procurement (GPP) principle. GPP is defined as "*a process whereby public authorities seek to procure goods, services and works with a reduced environmental impact throughout their life cycle when compared to goods, services and works with the same primary function that would otherwise be procured*"⁶. Additionally, investment activities must comply with the New European Bauhaus⁷ principle.

Additionally, the investment activities must align entirely with the environmental mitigation measures and indicators provided by the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA Report) of the Programme (please, refer to Attachment 4 ‘Measures for monitoring and control of the environmental impact’). Project partners are mandated to integrate these measures and indicators into their FPP work plans.

Modifying the object of the investment as outlined in the concept note (please, refer to section 1.1. Eligibility and content elements of the concept note that cannot be changed in the full project proposal) is not allowed, as it alters the essence of the project idea and affects its assessment outcomes.

⁶ https://green-business.ec.europa.eu/green-public-procurement_en

⁷ https://europa.eu/new-european-bauhaus/index_en



In the context of Interreg programmes, ‘investment’ is anticipated to produce tangible and measurable outcomes, fostering positive changes within the targeted sectors or regions. This involves **investments in equipment** (defined as ‘supply’ within the framework of the current Call 1) and/or **investments in infrastructure** (defined as ‘works’ within the framework of the current Call 1).

Ensure that your FPP includes a mandatory investment component, comprising either works only or a combination of works and supply, constituting no less than 60% of the total project eligible costs.

Depending on the nature of the investments, they may be categorized as **productive investments**⁸. Within the framework of the Programme, only SMEs are eligible to make productive investments. SMEs acting as project partners must adhere to *De minimis* rules, as explained in the **State Aid** subsection of the present Guide and in the *FactSheet: De minimis support* (Attachment 2).

The investment description in your FPP should encompass a title, expected delivery period, justification (explaining the need for the investment, its cross-border relevance, who is benefiting from that investment and in what way), location of the physical investment, and investment documentation (including all technical requirements and permissions required according to respective national legislation).

Furthermore, applicants need to identify and describe in their FPP risks associated with the investment and suggest risks mitigation measures.

Additional detailed information regarding the documents that justify and support the investments in the FPP is provided below (see section **1.2.4 Additional documents supporting the full project proposals**).

C.4.3 Communication objectives and target audience

Communication is an integral part of every Interreg project and a key element for a project to achieve its objectives and changes in a target audience's awareness and behavior. Please

⁸ Productive investment: investment in fixed capital or immaterial assets of enterprises, with a view to producing goods and services. In this way the investment contributes to gross capital formation and employment. (ERDF Regulation 2021/1058 – recital 38)



note that there is no specific communication work package in the Application Form. Communication activities and objectives must therefore be directly integrated in the work packages precisely to allow the communication strategy to be fully embedded in the project overall strategy. Given the importance of communication, project partners are required to describe their communication approach in the FPP (Section C.7 of the Application Form). Applicants are strongly encouraged to reconsider their communication approaches and embrace a more open and modern mindset by leveraging the abundant digital opportunities available in the present era. It is advisable to relinquish outdated communication practices generating digital content for the project and amplifying its territorial and social visibility. Develop a communication strategy that empowers project partners to craft a compelling story showcasing European cooperation through their project. For inspiration, applicants may consider referring to the following resources:

<https://www.interact-eu.net/communication-and-visibility/communication/harmonised-branding>

C.5 Project results

In this section, applicants are required to articulate the anticipated changes that their projects are expected to bring about. These changes should be directly linked with the program results indicators previously selected in the concept note. The quantification and justification of the results indicators must be elaborated further in the FPP.

C.6 Project time plan

The overview table is automatically generated from thematic work packages. It displays activities (length), deliverables (delivery period), outputs (delivery period) and results (delivery period). The time plan shows only periods, not months. The length of the periods is 3 months.

C.7 Project management

In addition to the activities outlined in the work plan, applicants are required to incorporate adequate provisions for project management, coordination, and internal communication. While the standardized and repetitive nature of management and coordination activities may not be explicitly indicated in the project work plan, project partners are expected to accurately plan and budget for them.

Applicants should describe how project management at both strategic and operational levels will be executed, including the establishment of management structures, delineation of responsibilities



and procedures, as well as risk management strategies. Additionally, provide an explanation of how internal communication within the partnership will be organised.

Furthermore, explain how the quality of deliverables and outputs will be monitored and ensured, and indicate the responsible partner(s). If you plan to conduct any type of project evaluation, please describe its purpose and scope as well.

Applicants must detail how the project's communication objectives, as outlined in the work plan, contribute to achieving the project's main result(s). Emphasize the importance of communication, outline common tactics, channels, and tools to engage target audiences, and elucidate how the project communication coordinator will ensure the involvement and contribution of all project partners to communication efforts. One effective approach to conceptualize the project's outreach strategy and action plan is to devise a project communication plan. This plan should include a detailed outline of how information about the project's implementation and achievement of targets will be publicly disclosed, including the frequency of such disclosures. This ensures a structured and transparent communication process throughout the project's lifecycle. Additionally, it aids the MA and the NA in leveraging projects contributions to achieve programme indicators effectively.

Cooperation criteria

According to the [Interreg regulation](#) (Art. 23) “partners shall cooperate in the development and implementation of Interreg operations, as well as in the staffing or financing, or both, thereof.” Project partners from the two participating countries have to cooperate mandatory in at least both **joint development** and **joint implementation** and, additionally, one or both of the other two cooperation criteria: **joint financing** and/or **joint staffing** (as described below):

➤ **Joint Development:**

- FPP development requires close cooperation with all project partners.
- Applicants must describe this collaborative effort in the AF.

➤ **Joint Implementation:**

- All project partners actively participate in implementing the project, with clearly defined tasks and functions outlined in the AF and Partnership agreement.
- Activities must be interconnected, not merely running in parallel, and there should be regular contact between partners on both sides of the border.

**➤ Joint Staffing (optional):**

- A dedicated project team is appointed for the project.
- Team members should not have duplicate functions on either side of the border.
- Contingency measures should be planned to ensure project work continuity in case of team member absence.
- Mutual coordination and constant exchange of information among team members are crucial for successful project implementation.

➤ Joint Financing (optional):

- Only one contract per project is established.
- A single joint project budget is created, allocating funds based on the activities carried out by each partner.
- A unified project bank account for the EU contribution is held by the Lead partner.
- Payments from the MA are made to this account.
- The Lead partner administers and distributes funds among project partners, with all payment commitments outlined in the Partnership agreement.

Horizontal principles

Horizontal principles, as outlined in Regulation (EU) No 2021/1060, are core values of importance that cut across and have relevance to all areas of the work of EU funded projects, thus reinforcing the integrity of the EU. The FPP must explicitly address these principles, supported by relevant explanation. There are three key horizontal principles:

(1) Sustainable Development: Aligned with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals⁹, the Paris Agreement and the DNSH¹⁰ principle. The environmental and social dimension of sustainability should be integral to every project activity, from conception to closure. Partners are required to assess potential harmful effects on the environment, climate, or citizens' well-being, and actively

⁹ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

¹⁰ EU Taxonomy Regulation, <https://eu-taxonomy.info/info/eu-taxonomy-overview> and <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX%3A52021XC0218%2801%29&from=EN>



promote contributions to nature-based solutions, climate mitigation, neutrality, and social solidarity (please, fill in Annex 8).

Another important horizontal principle of the programme is the New European Bauhaus (NEB) principle which is highly relevant and appropriate for projects envisaging infrastructural activities. NEB is an initiative that promotes a new lifestyle where sustainability matches style, thus accelerating the green transition in various sectors of the economy such as construction as well as other areas of our daily life. The aim is to provide all citizens with access to goods that are circular and less carbon-intensive, that support the regeneration of nature and protect biodiversity.

Three core inseparable values guide the New European Bauhaus:

- sustainability, from climate goals, to circularity, zero pollution, and biodiversity,
- aesthetics, quality of experience and style, beyond functionality,
- inclusion, valorising diversity, equality for all, accessibility and affordability

Applicants need to become familiar with the NEB and ensure its application in all relevant project activities. For information, please visit:

- https://europa.eu/new-european-bauhaus/index_en

= <https://2023.prizes.new-european-bauhaus.eu/>

- <https://prizes.new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/>

(2) Equal Opportunities and Non-Discrimination: Ensuring fairness and non-discrimination¹¹ in all project aspects.

(3) Equality between Men and Women: Promoting gender equality. Projects can consult the ERNACT publication ‘Women in European Cooperation projects’¹² which contains recommendations on actions that project leaders, programme management and organisations involved in EU projects can take to improve the experience of women working in this field.

Applicants must define the impact of the project on each of these principles by choosing ‘neutral’, ‘negative effects’ or ‘positive effects’. Projects are not expected to have a negative effect on any of the principles. If there are some specific measures planned to make a positive contribution, then

¹¹ EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:12012P/TXT>

¹² <https://www.ernact.eu/DocumentDetail.aspx?AttId=8228>



‘positive impact’ must be chosen, and an explanation provided. An explanation must also be provided when a contribution is indicated to be ‘neutral’ or ‘negative’.

Please note that paying attention to the issues in general, or following the existing rules and regulations is considered ‘neutral’, and a positive impact would be realised only by developing and implementing things beyond the current standard procedures.

C.8 Long-term plans

The programme aims to support projects that have a long-lasting effect on the cross-border region and its communities. After the closure of the project, certain requirements regarding ownership and durability of investments must be fulfilled, and specific rules apply for partners declaring costs related to productive investments and investments in infrastructure. Thus, within five years of the final payment to project partners, it must not make:

- (a) a cessation or transfer of a productive activity¹³ outside the NUTS level 2 region in which it received support;
- (b) a change in ownership of an item of infrastructure which gives to a firm or a public body an undue advantage;
- (c) a substantial change affecting the investment’s nature, objectives or implementation conditions which would result in undermining its original objectives.

In the event of non-compliance with this rule, the Programme Authorities will request reimbursement of the grant in proportion to the period of non-compliance. Partners are required to inform the Programme Authorities of any non-compliance with this rule.

In more practical terms, the projects’ lasting impact is viewed through three perspectives:

C.8.1 Ownership

Applicants are encouraged to describe who will ensure the financial and institutional support for the outputs/deliverables developed by the project after the project has ended. Additionally, explain how these outputs/deliverables will be integrated in the work of the partner institutions.

C.8.2 Durability

¹³ This rule does not apply to a project partner which undergoes cessation of a productive activity due to a non-fraudulent bankruptcy.



The long-term durability of project outputs and results is of great importance for the programme. All projects are expected to plan and implement activities that will ensure the replication and roll-out of their outputs and results. Activities to ensure long-term effects must be inherently tied in with other project activities. In this section of the AF applicants need to describe the concrete measures (including institutional structures, financial resources, etc.) who will take during and after project implementation to ensure and/or strengthen the durability of the project outputs and results, including possible continuation of activities.

C.8.3 Transferability

All outputs and deliverables of supported projects must be transferable, replicable and adaptable within the Programme cooperation area enabling their use by other target groups or in different territories. The availability of raw data is fundamental, and the format of all productions should maximize their potential for reuse. An open data approach must be considered when compiling or delivering information.

Applicants are required to outline their actions to ensure that relevant groups are informed about the projects' outputs/deliverables and have the capability to utilize them.

It is important to highlight the need for the applicants to view their FPPs as tools for creating a meaningful impact in the targeted territory by capitalizing on project results. Capitalization has emerged as a prominent trend within the Interreg community. Interact defines capitalization as “as a building process, capitalization is aimed at consolidating the capital built by Interreg projects and programmes, with the objectives of:

- Making the knowledge and results generated by projects more accessible, thus improving transfer of knowledge;
- Obtaining additional results through benchmarking and detailed content analysis, building on existing knowledge and experience;
- Promoting the re-use and/or transfer of this knowledge and these results, in order to boost performance and delivery;
- Raising awareness and improving communication of results in specific fields of regional policy

Hence, it is imperative for project partners to strategically develop their projects and yield results in a manner that ensures their effective capitalization and transferability. This approach maximizes



the impact of the projects by facilitating the broader dissemination and utilization of their outcomes beyond the immediate project context.

1.2.4 Additional documents supporting the full project proposals

As a general rule – all documents must be submitted in English. In cases where a document is translated into English from the original language, the true original copy should also be presented.

Valid electronic signatures are acceptable if accompanied by the respective signature certificate. The electronic signatures must pertain to the legal representative of the project partner, ensuring they are not attributed to an individual without legal affiliations with the project partner.

The following annexes, which indicate the responsible party for completion and signature within brackets, are integral parts of the Guide:

Annexes for mandatory completion and submission:

Annex 1 – Project Partnership Agreement

Annex 2 – Project Partner Declaration (all project partners)

Annex 3 – Partnership and co-financing statement (all project partners)

Annex 4 - Declaration of e-mail address of the Lead Partner (only the Lead partner)

Annex 5 – SME Declaration (only SMEs)

Annex 6 – State Aid Declaration (all partners)

Annex 7 - Statement of Capacity and Compliance with the Principles for Investment (all partners foreseeing investments /works only or works and supply/)

Annex 8 – Climate proofing assessment (all partners foreseeing investments)

Annex A7 – Justification for expenditures planned as a total amount under Budget category 4 (all project partners with envisaged expenditures in BC4)



Attachments for information and consideration:

Attachment 1 – Template of the application from

Attachment 2 – FactSheet: De minimis support

Attachment 3 - Draft Subsidy Contract (for information only)

Attachment 4 – Measures to monitoring and control environmental impacts (mandated to integrate these measures and indicators into their FPPs).

Attachment 5 – Programme’s indicators

Attachment 6 – Complaint procedure

Additional documents on the basis of which eligibility screening of the FPP is carried out:

A1. Document indicating the legal status (for partners from the Republic of North Macedonia)

Documentary and other evidence on the most recent legal status of all partners from the Republic of North Macedonia. The documents should be issued not later than 6 months prior to the submission of the FPP. In cases where the applicable document does not show the legal representative of the organization, an additional document (such as the act of appointment/nomination, order, decision, etc.) must be provided, clearly indicating the name of the person with representative authority. The document detailing the recent legal status should include information on the organization's date of establishment, place of establishment (registration), and the scope of territorial competence if applicable. If the issued document does not sufficiently justify all the mentioned circumstances, supplementary documents such as the act of establishment or certificates from superior authorities (Ministries, Agencies, Regional Administration, and Inspectorates) may be provided.

A2. Decision/Letter of Acknowledgement/Letter of Support of the Managing Authority/Municipal Council/Board of Directors of each project partner

The required document type depends on the legal status of the project partner. Regardless, this document should indicate the consent of the decision-making body of each partner to execute the proposed project and ensure sustainability for the project results for a period of five years following the completion of the implementation phase.



When local governments act as project partners, this document should be issued by the respective Municipal Council.

If the official representative of the project partner also holds decision-making authority within the organization, this document must be signed by another authorized representative from the same organization.

The Bulgarian partners that are second-level budget administrators should present a Letter of Support for implementation of the project issued by the respective first level administrator. The letter should clearly state the support of the first level administrator for project development, implementation and ensuring the sustainability of the project results for five years after completion of the implementation period.

A2.1 Legalized mandates of delegation from the legal representatives of partners

Legalized mandates of delegation from the legal representatives of partners are required (if applicable), particularly when the application form, annexed declarations, or project partnership agreement are not signed by the legal representatives of the Lead Partner or project partners. If the signatures are from a deputy by rights, the document certifying the substitution by rights must be presented along with the act of nomination for the person holding the deputy position. When granting a mandate of delegation, the legal representative must present evidence that their rights for delegation are unrestricted.

A3. NACE code (for SMEs only)

Certificate issued by the responsible authority in each country, verifying the business's start date, the main economic activity according to NACE rev. 2 (clearly indicating the principal NACE activity and any complementary NACE activities).

A4. Annual Financial Statement (for SMEs only)

Annual Financial Statements for the two most recent years preceding the application, as per national legislation, must be submitted for each SME acting as project partner. In the case of linked enterprises, all the required financial statements mentioned above must be provided for each linked enterprise.

A5. Annual work unit (for SMEs only)

Certificates for annual work unit headcount for the two most recent years preceding the submission, issued by a competent authority (it is the NSI for Bulgarian partners), must be submitted for each



SME acting as project partner. In the case of linked enterprises, the required certificates mentioned above must be provided for each linked enterprise.

A6. Documents verifying the legality and the programme eligibility of the proposed project investments

A6.1 Ownership act or equivalent

Submission of the ownership act, certificate, or legal document for municipal or state-owned property, in accordance with national legislation, is required for tangible assets intended for works activities. This documentation should encompass a cadastral map of the property. If the project entails the acquisition of supplies necessitating permanent installation, it is imperative to provide an ownership act for municipal or state-owned property. This documentation should be accompanied by an excerpt from the cadastral map and the cadastral registers corresponding to the relevant property.

The provided document should demonstrate that the project partner responsible for implementing the investment activities is the rightful owner or possessor of the acquired management rights for the respective property. The legal authority to manage the property must be in force for a duration that aligns with or exceeds the specified 5-year durability period, specified in Art.65 of the CPR Regulation, following the project's completion.

Interventions on elements of the planned infrastructure, situated at/passing through private properties, are eligible only in cases where there is no alternative technical solution and it has been regulated in accordance with the applicable national legislation, as a part of the approved documentation for construction (Working design and Building permit). In this case, a notarised declaration (including a copy of the respective property act and excerpts from the cadastral map) from the owner of the private property(ies) must be provided to ensure free access to and unhindered use of the public infrastructure for a period project implementation and at least 5 years after the completion of the project.

A6.2 Permits

- In the case of investment activities within **territories or sites with special status** (such as national parks, environmental and architectural reserves, cultural monuments, protected areas,



areas included in Nature 2000, etc.), relevant documentation (permits, approvals, certificates, statements, etc.) required by the respective national applicable law should also be provided.

- Applicants must submit a copy of a letter issued by the relevant competent body clearly stating that an **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)** for the project investment is not necessary. Alternatively, if the competent authority confirms the need for an EIA, a copy of a positive EIA is required.
- Bulgarian partners are required to provide a copy of a letter issued by the relevant competent body, clearly stating that the project proposal aligns with the current **River Basin Management Plans and Flood Risk Management Plans**. Partners from the Republic of North Macedonia, likewise, should submit a copy of a letter serving the equivalent purpose in accordance with the applicable provisions of the National Water protection legislation.
- If deemed necessary by the competent body, Bulgarian partners should also submit an **explanatory note detailing the envisaged prevention measures** for avoiding pollution of water bodies in emergency situations.
- **Building permit** validated as 'entered into force' and issued not earlier than two years prior to FPP submission in case is required under national legislation. It can be provided after FPP submission but no later than 45 calendar days from the receipt of the notification about the Decision of the Monitoring Committee for financing the project. Positively screened valid building permit is a precondition for contracting.

Or

A **Statement** issued by the competent authority declaring that according to the national legislation the envisaged construction/repair works do not require the building permit, is provided.

- Alternatively, for works exempted from the need for a building permit according to national legislation, applicants should provide a document issued by the competent authority declaring that the envisaged construction/repair works do not require the issuance of a building permit.

Building permit validated as 'entered into force' and issued not earlier than two years prior to FPP submission for working investment design.

For Bulgarian partners



The investment activities which do not require the issuance of a building permit are defined in Article 151 (1) of the Bulgarian Spatial Development Act.

Submission of the project documentation for the planned investment activities is mandatory, regardless of whether the project is subject to approval in accordance with the Spatial Planning Act. The working design has to include the necessary volume and content for a detailed clarification of the specific investment, including a summary explanatory note, specialized explanatory notes, schemes, drawings and bill of quantities.

A6.3 Working Design (Проект за изпълнение на строителството, включващ задължителните проектни фаза ТП/РП на съответните проектни части, Основен проект)

An approved Works Design by the competent authority, as required by the relevant national legislation, must be provided. The documentation should include at least the Summarised Explanatory Note, Explanatory Notes of each of the works design parts, a detailed Bill of quantities, drawings. The provided textual documentation should be provided also in English translation.

For Bulgarian partners

For all Bulgarian partners undertaking project works, the submission of an working design is mandatory, regardless the specific requirements of Spatial Development Act of working design approval (stamped and signed by the certified designers of the relevant parts of the working investment designs) and issuance of building permit.

Features of the required working investment design are defined in Chapter 8, Section 1 of the Bulgarian Spatial Development Act and must be strictly followed. The working investment design should be developed in accordance with Ordinance 4/21.05.2001 on the scope and content of investment projects.

Approval of the working investment design should involve a Compliance assessment (Art. 142, para. 5, para. 6 p. 2) by the architect/engineer/technical staff, their supervisor, and the head of the related department for construction or development in the municipality or the local government, in accordance with the relevant regulations. Failure to comply with all legal requirements and the absence of a date on the documentation will result in FPP being ineligible for funding.



For partners of the Republic of North Macedonia

The working investment designs must be elaborated, taking into consideration all related national legislation, particularly in accordance with the Law on Construction and other relevant legislation. However, applicants are responsible for checking and implementing any amendments in the related regulations. This list is not exhaustive, and applicants must conform to both the legislation specific to their type of design and region, as well as the general legislation.

The working investment design should receive approval from the relevant authority, and this approval should be certified with the seal of the authority placed on the investment project designs. Approval should involve a comprehensive assessment by the architect/engineer/technical staff, their supervisor, and the head of the related department for construction or development in the municipality or the local government, in accordance with the relevant regulations.

For all project partners

The detailed Bill of quantities should be presented in the form of a table, indicating at least the type of construction works, unit, estimated quantity, unit price, amount of the type of construction works, and the total amount of the Bill of quantities. Where possible, the Bill of quantities should be supported with a breakdown per investment site or per parts of the works designs. Calculations for the unit prices of the types of construction/repair works may also be presented. Applicants will also need to specify if VAT is included in the Bill of quantities or not.

The Bill of quantities may be presented in the local currency of the project partner. In this case, the table of the Bill of quantities should mandatorily include a column with the unit price in EUR for each type of construction/repair work and a column for the amount in EUR of that type of construction/repair work.

Partners from the Republic of North Macedonia should convert the local currency into EUR using the monthly exchange rate of the European Commission ([Info Euro](#)) for the month of the submission of the project proposal.



Additionally, Bills of quantities have to be presented as scanned originals in PDF file format and English translation signed by the respective partner as a true copy, and also in an editable EXCEL file format. Bill of quantities should be stamped and signed by the certified designers of the relevant parts of the working investment designs.

- In case of investment activities, which according to national legislation, do not require approval of working design, applicants should present:
 - Statement by the competent authority, which declares that the envisaged construction/repair works do not require approval of working design;
 - Explanatory Notes of each of the working design parts, technical (or working design stage drawings) drawings and Bill of quantities (as described above) for the project investment/s. All these documents must be signed by the legal representative of the respective project partner, as well as by the certified designers of the relevant parts of the working investment designs, where applicable. Bills of quantities are presented as scanned originals in PDF file format and English translation signed by the respective partner as a true copy, and also in an editable EXCEL file format.

For Bulgarian partners

The investment activities which do not require approval of working designs are defined in Article 147 (1) of the Bulgarian Spatial Development Act.

Other supporting documents, where deemed necessary (e.g. justification of project costs), may be requested at any time during the screening process.

A6.4 Supply of equipment

- Each project partner intending to supply equipment is required to submit a technical specification for the supplies. The detailed specification should be sufficiently clear for the identification of the desired deliverables.
- Detailed plans/schemes for positioning the delivered equipment, both outdoors in public spaces and indoors, must be submitted. These plans/schemes should be approved by the competent authority in accordance with national legislation, where applicable.



- A valid permit for installation, whose validity period is not expired at the time of FPP submission as per national/sub-national legislation, is required. Alternatively, a statement from the competent authority confirming that the intended installation does not necessitate a permit must be provided.
- Market analysis for the planned supply is required. The recommended approach for conducting this analysis is for the Lead or project partner to provide a minimum of three extracts from national/EU public procurements systems of a similar supply with identical technical specifications. In instances where evidence from a national/EU procurement system is unattainable (verifiable circumstances apply), the Lead or project partner is required to present soliciting offers (along with website references) from at least three independent providers. These offers should be comparable in terms of requested technical characteristics, and as such, they must be accompanied by a uniform request for offer. Expenditures included in the project budget derived from the market analysis should reflect an average of the price offers received or an average of the extracts from national public procurement systems. In the event that the latter documentation is dated beyond two years, project supply costs may be adjusted for inflation using the most recent available official national data. In order to overcome the impact of future inflation and price instability, the expenditures included in the budget based on the above market analysis could be increased with the average of the national inflation of the last 3 years before the application submission, but not more than 10%.
- When there is a requirement to procure highly specialized equipment (with insufficient evidence in national procurement systems) from a limited pool of suppliers, and conducting market research for the equipment cost is not feasible, an historical data for concluded contracts from previous similar deliveries must be provided by applicants. This data serves to verify that the budgeted equipment costs are reasonable.

For more information, please, refer to sub-section '*The budget template and types of costs*', and more specifically 'BC 6 Equipment costs'.



The submission of a valid permit for installation (described in A6.4) and/or building permit (described in A6.3) at the application stage is optional. They can be provided after FPP submission no later than 45 calendar days from the receipt of the notification about the Decision of the Monitoring Committee for financing the project.

A7. Justification for expenditures planned as a total amount under Budget category 4. Each project partner should provide justification for calculation of the amount in English, signed by the legal representative or the authorized person (Annex A6). This justification should contain at least:

- detailed description of the proposed activity;
- calculation of the envisaged experts' input, including number and type of experts needed, days/months of involvement and remuneration unit rate;
- detailed description of the expected outcomes from the activity, including information about any printed materials (type, number of copies, number of pages) and calculation of the price;

A8. Justification for the proposed budget changes or changes in indicators value from Concept note to FPP in a free written format (if applicable)

- Budget change: The document should be presented by each project partner, which find the need to modify certain budget costs from their original values in the concept note to the FPP. In this case, applicants should justify any proposed budget changes in a free written format. This justification should be included as part of the FPP submission package.
- Changes in indicators value: The values of the indicators in the FPP should not be lower than those in the respective concept note. When such deviation occurs reasonable justification shall be presented

2. Part B - Submission and screening process of full project proposals

2.1 Submission of Full Project Proposals in JEMS

The submission process for FPP and all accompanying documents, both mandatory and optional as outlined in section **1.2.4 Additional documents supporting the full project proposals**), occurs through JEMS. Applicants are required to transfer their concept notes to the FPP application form



in their JEMS accounts, created during the application with project ideas. The deadline for submission is **30th of July 2024 17:00 EEST**

All sections of the application form must be completed, and it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure compliance.

Detailed instructions for completing and submitting the entire package of the FPP can be found here <https://JEMS.interact-eu.net/manual/>.

Furthermore, all annexes and attachments attached to the AF must be submitted in English. In cases where a document is translated into English from the original language, the true original copy should also be provided. Translated versions take precedence and are the ones considered for assessment or review of the entire FPP. The attached documents may be scanned signed versions or electronically signed (acknowledged only if accompanied by the respective signature certificate and the e-signature pertains to the legal representative of the project partner).

Applicants should attach in JEMS:

Annex 1 – Project Partnership Agreement;

Annex 2 – Project Partner Declaration (all project partners)

Annex 3 – Partnership and co-financing statement (all project partners)

Annex 4 - Declaration of e-mail address of the Lead Partner (only the Lead partner)

Annex 5 – SME Declaration (only SMEs)

Annex 6 – State Aide Declaration (all partners)

Annex 7 - Statement of Capacity and Compliance with the Principles for Investment (all partners foreseeing investments /works only or works and supply/)

Annex 8 – Climate proofing assessment (partners foreseeing investments)

Annex A7 Justification for expenditures planned as a total amount under Budget category 4 (all project partners with envisaged expenditures in BC4)

- any relevant attachment, enabling the eligibility screening and the pre-contracting process. The list of these attachments is presented in sub-section **Additional documents on the basis of which**



eligibility screening of the FPP is carried out in section 1.2.4 Additional documents supporting the full project proposals.

Applicants should be aware that automatic pre-submission checks in JEMS do not guarantee that a submitted application form is complete and declared eligible. The lead partner remains responsible for checking that all eligibility criteria are met before final submission.

2.2 Screening process of full project proposals

The screening of FPP is an integral part of the identification process of project proposals that most contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Territorial Strategy. This process commences after the FPP submission deadline expires and concludes in 90 calendar days. Its primary objective is to ascertain the eligibility of submitted FPPs for contracting. For a FPP to proceed to contract approval, it must successfully meet all eligibility and contracting criteria, as detailed in this Guide.

FPPs that do not meet eligibility and contracting conditions will not be excluded from the contracting process! Instead, they will proceed to the contracting stage once all criteria are fulfilled within the 90-day period of the screening process, provided there is still available budget. If an applicant continues to be incapable of meeting all contracting criteria within the 90-day screening period, it will be replaced by the next applicant from the ranking list.

The entire screening is a ‘yes or no’ process without assigning scores to FPP. Therefore, it is important for the applicants to know that once they have been included in the list of identified PO5 project ideas, their project proposals will not undergo additional assessment.

The screening process involves three key actions as described below. It is the main process that guides the applicants to the contracting stage.

First, FPPs are screened against eligibility criteria to ascertain their formal readiness for contracting. Secondly, there is a project content screening, which examines strategic and operational aspects, aimed at verifying that the proposal's content demonstrates a strong intervention logic and aligns with programme specifics and targets. And lastly, members of the



screening working groups will conduct on-the-spot visits to the investment sites the FPP and, if deemed necessary, undertake optional project budget optimization.

The purpose of conducting **on-the-spot visits** to all project investment sites is to verify the stated circumstances as provided by the respective project partners regarding the envisaged investments.

Budget review and optimization may occur if the proposed project costs are deemed ineligible, not fully aligned with the project content, not conducive to achieving project objectives and programme indicators/targets or not justified in terms of volume and prices. This review and optimization will be carried out by the screening working group.

To maintain consistency with the concept note stage, the majority of screening criteria mirror those used in the eligibility checks and assessment in stage 1. However, these criteria are slightly expanded to encompass more detailed and/or new aspects introduced in the FPP.

2.2.1 Administrative and Eligibility screening

№	ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONS	YES	NO	Comments
1	Documents in original language are accompanied with their English translation. In this case, the true original copy is also presented.			
2	If the provided documents are signed with e-signature, it must pertain to the legal representative of the respective project partner, ensuring that the e-signature is not attributed to an individual without legal affiliations with the project partner. The e-signature is accompanied by the respective signature certificate.			
3	All sections of the full application are filled out in English			
4	All mandatory annexes ((Annex 1 – Project Partnership Agreement; Annex 2 – Project Partner Declaration; Annex 3 – Partnership and co-financing statement; Annex 4 - Declaration of e-mail address of the Lead Partner; Annex 5 – SME Declaration; Annex 6 – State Aide Declaration; Annex 7 - Statement of Capacity and Compliance with the Principles			



	for Investment; Annex 8 – Climate proofing assessment)) are submitted and signed by the respective legal representative.			
5	Documentary and other evidence on the most recent legal status of all project partners from North Macedonia are presented and it contains all the attributes described in p. 1.2.4 (Additional documents A1)			
6	Decision/Letter of Acknowledgement/Letter of Support of the Managing Authority/Municipal Council/Board of Directors of each project partner regarding the project development, implementation and ensuring the sustainability of the project results for five years after completion of the implementation period is provided. For the Bulgarian partners that are second-level budget administrators: letter of Support for implementation of the project, issued by the respective first level administrator is provided. (Additional documents A2)			
7	Legalized mandates of delegation from the legal representatives of partners is provided (if applicable) . (Additional documents A2.1)			
8	For SMEs only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NACE code – certificate issued by the responsible authority in each country, verifying the business's start date, the main economic activity according to NACE rev. 2 (Additional documents A3) - Annual Financial Statements for the two most recent years preceding the application, as per national legislation (Additional documents A4) Certificates for annual work unit headcount for the two most recent years preceding the submission, issued by a competent authority (Additional documents A5)			
9	Justification for the proposed budget changes from Concept note to FPP in a free written format (if applicable) is presented. Justification for the proposed changes in indicators value (if applicable) is presented. (Additional documents A6)			



10	Justification for expenditures planned as a total amount under Budget category 4 (Additional documents A7)			
	<i>Investment documents</i>			
11	Ownership act or its legal equivalent validating the municipal or state-owned status of tangible assets designated for works activities. This documentation encompasses excerpts from the cadastral map and cadastral registers of the property. If the project involves purchasing supplies requiring permanent installation, an ownership act for municipal or state-owned property and excerpts from the cadastral map and cadastral registers, if applicable, are also provided. The provided document demonstrates that the project partner responsible for implementing the investment activity is the rightful owner or possessor of the acquired management rights for the respective property for a minimum period of 5 years following the project completion. (Additional documents A6.1)			
12	The planned infrastructure is not situated at/ does not pass through private properties. Or There are project interventions on elements of the planned infrastructure situated at/passing through private properties. A notarised declaration (including a copy of the respective property act and excerpts from the cadastral map) from the owner of the private property(ies) are provided to ensure free access to and unhindered use of the public infrastructure for a period project implementation and of at least 5 years after the completion of the project. (Additional documents A6.1)			
13	None of the project investment activity falls within territories or sites with special status. Or At least one of the project investment activities falls within territories or sites with special status. In this case, relevant documentation (permits, approvals, certificates, statements, etc.) required by the respective national applicable law is provided. (Additional documents A6.1)			



14	<p>The applicant has provided a copy of a letter issued by the relevant competent body clearly stating that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the project investment is not necessary. Alternatively, if the competent authority confirms the need for an EIA, a copy of a positive EIA is provided. (Additional documents A6.2)</p>			
15	<p>For Bulgarian partner/s: a copy of a letter issued by the relevant competent body, clearly stating that the project proposal aligns with the respective River Basin Management Plans and Flood Risk Management Plans. If deemed necessary by the competent body, the Bulgarian partner has also submitted an explanatory note detailing the envisaged project prevention measures for avoiding pollution of water bodies in emergency situations.</p> <p>Partner/s from North Macedonia had submitted a copy of a letter serving the equivalent purpose copy of a letter serving the equivalent purpose in accordance with the applicable provisions of the National Water protection legislation. (Additional documents A6.2)</p>			
16	<p>All Bulgarian partners who undertake project works, an approved working design (проект за изпълнение на строителството в проектни фази ТП/ПП) is submitted, regardless of specific requirements under the SDA. The provided working design meets all relevant requirements of the current Contracting Guide, and national legislation, the Ordinance 4/21.05.2001 included.</p> <p>For partners from Republic of North Macedonia, a legally approved working investment design (снoвeн проект) is submitted.</p> <p>For all project partners - the submitted documentation is dated and demonstrates that the working investment design (stamped and signed by the certified designers of the relevant parts of the working investment designs) complies with all legal requirements and includes at least the following documents presented as described in section 1.2.4 Additional documents supporting the full project proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summary explanatory note; 			



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explanatory notes of each of the works design parts; - Detailed Bill of quantities; - Drawings and Schemes (the graphic materials of the investment project for construction). - Compliance assessment.(Additional documents A6.3) 			
17	<p>Building permit validated as 'entered into force' and issued not earlier than two years prior to FPP submission for working investment designs, in case is required under national legislation, is provided.</p> <p>If the result of the initial screening check is 'no' this cannot be subject for contract refusal, because the applicant has an opportunity to provide valid Building permit/Statement within 45 calendar days from the receipt of the notification about the Decision of the Monitoring Committee for financing the project</p> <p>Or</p> <p>A Statement issued by the competent authority declaring that according to the national legislation the envisaged construction/repair works do not require the issuance of a building permit (Additional documents A6.2)</p>			
18	<p>The FPP envisages supply and the relevant project partners have provided technical specification for the supplies. The detailed specifications are sufficiently clear for the identification of the desired deliverables.</p> <p>Detailed plans/schemes for positioning the delivered equipment, both outdoors in public spaces and indoors, are also submitted. These plans/schemes are approved by the competent authority in accordance with the national legislation (if applicable).</p> <p>Or</p> <p>The FPP does not envisage supply. (Additional documents A6.4.)</p>			
19	<p>A valid permit for installation of the purchased equipment, issued not later than two years prior to FPP submission, as applicable according to national legislation, is provided. If the result of the initial screening check is 'no' this cannot be subject for contract refusal, because the applicant has an opportunity to provide valid building permit within 45</p>			



	<p>calendar days from the receipt of the notification about the Decision of the Monitoring Committee for financing the project</p> <p>Or</p> <p>A statement by the competent authority, declaring that the envisaged permit for installation is not required, is provided. (Additional documents A6.4.)</p>			
20	<p>Market analysis for the supply costs is provided. The analysis complies with the requirements outline in p. A6.4 Supply of equipment.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>In case of highly specialized equipment from a limited pool of suppliers - an historical data for concluded contracts from previous similar deliveries is provided. (Additional documents A6.4)</p>			
ELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS				
21	<p>The duration of the FPP is between 12 months and 24 months. (AF Part A, section A.1)</p>			
22	<p>Mandatory cooperation criteria (joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing, joint financing) are fulfilled, i.e. ‘partners shall cooperate in the development and implementation of Interreg operations, as well as in the staffing or financing, or both, thereof.’ (AF Part C, section C.7.5)</p>			
23	<p>Objective of the concept note is not changed in the full project proposal (AF, Part C, C.1)</p>			
24	<p>The project partnership consists of at least one partner from each side of the border region. (AF Part B)</p>			
25	<p>There are no project partners who participate in more than one full project proposal submitted under this Call</p>			
26	<p>There is no change to the composition of partners between the concept note and the FPP. If this is the case, please skip checking criteria from 26.2 to 26.4. However, criterion 26.1</p>			



	<p>must be checked irrespective of any changes in the partnership composition.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>There is a change to the composition of partners between the concept note and the FPP. A project partner from concept note withdraws whose original functions are taken over either by other partner within the partnership or by a new partner (AF Part B, part C)</p>			
26.1	The withdrawal of project partner/s did not result in the withdrawal of project activities (AF Part B, part C).			
26.2	The Lead partner is not changed between the concept note and the FPP (AF Part B)			
26.3	There have been no changes to the partners responsible for implementing project investments (AF Part B, part C).			
26.4.	A change to the composition of partners contributing to Interreg indicators RCO84, RCO116 and RCR104 is suggested. If yes, new partners meet all eligibility criteria outlined in section 1.2.1 Section ‘Project partners’ from the application form (AF Part B, part C, part D).			
27	The budget of the FPP is between EUR 500 000 and EUR 1 000 000 (AF part D)			
28	The FPP contains compulsory combination of investment (works only or works and supply) and soft type of actions (e.g. services). The investment component is minimum 60% of the project total eligible costs. (AF part D)			
29	The maximum amount (12 000 EUR) for Project preparation cost is respected. (AF part D).			
30	The budget of the FPP does not exceed the budget of the concept note. (AF part D, Annex 1.1 to the Concept note)			
31	The implementation of the full project proposal takes place in the Programme area. (AF part C)			



32	The full project proposal contains the mandatory pair/s of indicators (RCO84, RCO116, RCR104 and RCO74), including at least one of the two pairs of ERDF indicators (RCO58/RCR64 and/or RCO77/RCR77). The targets for these indicators should meet or exceed the levels specified in the Concept Note or the proposed changes are justified. (AF part C, C.4, Additional documents A6)			
33	The project makes a positive or neutral contribution to the Programme’s horizontal principles: equal opportunities and non-discrimination, equality between men and women, sustainable development. (AF Part C, C.7.6, whole AF)			

2.2.2 Project content screening

No	Conditions for contracting related to the content of the full project proposal	Yes	No	Comment
1	<i>Section 1 - Project Relevance of the programme</i>			
1	The need for the FPP is well justified and address common challenges and opportunities for the programme area (AF Part C.2.1, C.2.2)			
2	The FPP objective is compliant with the programme specific objective under Priority 3 (AF Part C.1)			
3	The FPP brings added value to the CBC area, i.e. project outputs have an impact beyond project lifetime (AF Part C.2.3, C.2.4, C.4.1)			
	<i>Section 2 - Partnership relevance</i>			
4	The partnership of the FPP contributes to the achievement of projects objectives (AF Part C.3)			
5	Only for FPPs that have changed partners between the concept note and FPP stages All partner organisations have proven experience and competence (incl. legal rights to act in the proposed way) in the addressed intervention field/s (AF Part B, C.3)			



6	<p>Only for FPPs that have changed partners between the concept note and FPP stages</p> <p>The proposed partnership is balanced and reflects the addressed issue in terms of target groups, sectors, territory (AF Part B, C.3)</p>			
7	<p>Only for FPPs that have changed partners between the concept note and FPP stages</p> <p>Partner organizations complement each other in their efforts to propose integrated solutions in the addressed intervention field/s (AF Part B, C.3)</p>			
Section 3 - Project work plan				
8	<p>The intervention logic of the project is clear and it facilitates the achievement of the project objectives and the programme indicators. Project indicators values are realistic and align with the values set forth by the Programme. (AF part C, C.4, C.5, C.6, D)</p>			
9	<p>The relation “project objective – specific objectives of the work packages – activities – deliverables – expenditures” is clear and justified. (AF Part C, Part D)</p>			
10	<p>The project work plan is realistic, consistent, and coherent (AF Part C).</p>			
11	<p>The project work plan aligns with the environmental mitigation measures and indicators provided in Attachment 4 ‘Measures for monitoring and control of the environmental impact’. Additionally, it includes component/s contributing to the protection of the environment and biodiversity or provides green and digital solutions</p>			
12	<p>Time plan is realistic (AF Part C, C.6)</p>			
Section 4 -Communication				
13	<p>Communication activities are appropriate to reach the relevant target groups and stakeholders and to contribute to the achievement of project objectives (AF Part C, C.4)</p>			
Section 5 - Budget				
14	<p>Project costs are eligible, realistic and logically connected to project activities, and prices are realistic and market based (AF Part B, Part D.2, Part E, provided additional documents)</p>			



15	The budget is proportionate according to partners roles and responsibilities(AF Part C, Part D, D2, Part E) In case of changes budget changes from Concept note to FPP, the amendments are justified. (AF Part C, Part D, D2, Part E, Additional documents A8)			
16	The Bill of quantities of each project investment (works only or works and supply) is supported with a breakdown per investment site or per parts of the works designs where applicable. It is specified if VAT is included in the Bill of quantities or not. The cause-effect linkages between project investment and its objectives is clear. (Additional documents A6.3)			

During the screening process of the FPP the following procedures will be conducted:

- Procedure for budget optimization and projects’ content modifications - final review of the budget of the project proposal, making revisions of unit rates, based on both the recommendations of the assessors and the good practices of the MA and NA in terms of transparent and market-oriented financial allocations. In addition the following procedures are implemented;
- Documentary check of presence/lack of double financing – assessment of whether or not the proposed action/s has not already been financed under other EU funded Programmes;
- Check for compliance with the State Aid rules;
- Performance of on-the-spot visit for project partners with investment component – assessment of whether or not the object, subject to the proposed investment, really exists and is in a physical condition as described in the project proposal and/or has not already been developed or is currently under development.

The MA, the NA and the JS composes a Screening Working Group (SWG) to perform the screening on the contracting conditions.

If the overall outcome of the screening check contains ‘No’ on one or more of the contracting criteria provided above, the proposal will be returned until it meets all conditions to secure subsidy contract. The applicant needs to demonstrate it meets all the conditions in a maximum period of 90 calendar days from the closure of the FPP submission deadline. Failure to do so will result in the



applicant being replaced in the ranking list, with the next applicant taking its place. The only exception is for the building permit which may be presented up to 45 calendar days from the receipt of the notification about the Decision of the Monitoring Committee for financing the project.

The Monitoring Committee of the Programme decides on granting funding to those FPPs who meet all contracting conditions. Subsequently, the MA informs the Lead applicant in writing about the MC decision and the contracting process starts for those FPP proposed for funding. For FPPs not proposed for funding, the reasons are detailed in the notification. If there is disagreement with the MC decision, upon receipt of the notification letter from the MA, the Lead partner may issue a complaint before the MA against the MC decision. The complaint procedure is attached to this Guide as Attachment 6.

The indicative duration of the screening process is estimated to be 90 calendar days.

3. Part C- Contracting process

The contracting process starts with the MA notification letter, following the MC decision, and ends with signing a subsidy contract between the MA and the Lead Partner. This process is expected to take approximately one month after the MA sends the notification letter.

Before the contract is finalized, all project partners of the FPP will be required to submit updated State Aid declaration (Annex 6) for the MA/NA/SWG to conduct the most recent state aid assessment (please, see Attachment 2. In parallel to that assessment, the MA/NA/SWG will also conduct updated assessment for the lack of double funding.

After consolidating the information from the Application Form in JEMS, a Subsidy Contract will be prepared and signed. This contract delineates the rights and responsibilities of the Lead Partner and the MA, outlines the main activities, and establishes general financing conditions. The Subsidy Contract is issued and signed in a paper version.

The Lead Partner is required to retain an original version of the Subsidy Contract, signed by both parties, as part of the project's audit trail. This document is registered in JEMS and made accessible to all project partners, along with any applicable amendments.



All project partners will be required to submit a declaration during the contracting stage in accordance with Article 51 of Council Regulation (EU) No 2022/576 dated April 8, 2022. The Regulation explicitly prohibits the provision of direct or indirect support, including financing, financial assistance, or any other benefit under Union, Euratom, or Member State national programs and contracts, as defined in Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046, to any legal person, entity, or body established in Russia with **over 50% public** ownership or public control.

Subsidy contracts will not be awarded to any project proposal which includes entity falling under the circumstances outlined in Article 51 of Council Regulation (EU) No 2022/576.

3.1. Indicative timeline for application, screening and contracting of FPP

Step	Description	Indicative date of period
1	Invitation of identified applicants to develop and submit FPP	30 th of April 2024
2	Deadline for submission of FPP	30 th of July 2024
3	Screening of submitted FPP	31 st of July – 31 th of October 2024
4	(1) Funding decisions of the Monitoring committee (MC) for positively screened FPP; (2) MA contracts FPP with MC funding decisions	Up to 30 th of November 2024