

Interreg



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Slovenia – Croatia



OPEN CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR STANDARD PROJECTS



On the basis of Article 106. i of the Public Finance Act of the Republic of Slovenia the Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development, Kotnikova 5, 1000 Ljubljana, represented by the Interreg and Financial Mechanisms Office, Cross-Border Programme Management Division issues the following

OPEN CALL FOR PROPOSALS for standard projects

in the frame of the Interreg Programme Slovenia-Croatia 2021-2027
(Reference number: 4300-84/2024-1630)

1. Managing Authority

The Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development, Kotnikova 5, 1000 Ljubljana, represented by the Interreg and Financial Mechanisms Office, Cross-Border Programme Management Division acts as the Managing Authority.

The Managing Authority is the contracting authority for the European Regional Development Fund (hereinafter ERDF).

2. Legal basis

- Public Finance Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 11/11 – official consolidated text, 14/13 – revised, 101/13, 55/15 – ZFisP, 96/15 – ZIPRS1617, 13/18 and 195/20 US Dept.);
- Rules on the procedures for implementing the budget of the Republic of Slovenia (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 50/07, 61/08, 99/09 – ZIPRS1011, 3/13, 81/16, 11/22, 96/22 and 105/22 – ZZNŠPP);
- Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021, laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy (Common Provisions Regulation) with all amendments;
- Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund (ERDF Regulation) with all amendments;
- Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on specific provisions for the European territorial cooperation goal (Interreg) supported



- by the European Regional Development Fund and external financing instruments (Interreg Regulation) with all amendments;
- Implementing acts and delegated acts adopted in accordance with the aforementioned regulations;
 - Decree on the implementation of regulations (EU) and (Euratom) on the use of funds for the "European territorial cooperation" (Interreg) goal in the Republic of Slovenia in the programming period 2021-2027 (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 69/23 and 13/24);
 - Decree of bodies in the Management and Control System for implementing programs supporting the "European Territorial Cooperation" goal in the Republic of Croatia in the programming period 2021-2027 (Official Gazette of the Republic of Croatia, NN 96/2022);
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 - Other legal acts applicable to the implementation of projects co-funded by the ERDF including those published at the programme webpage www.si-hr.eu;
 - Interreg Programme Slovenia-Croatia 2021-2027 No CCI2021TC16RFCB028, approved by the European Commission Decision, No C (2024) 228 final as of 9 January 2024 with all amendments.

The pronouns used in the masculine gender form in this document shall be considered as including the feminine gender form in line with the principles of gender-neutral language.

3. Open Call for Proposals

Open Call for Proposals for standard projects (hereinafter Open Call for Proposals) is issued by the Managing Authority.

The Application Pack, consisting of the Manual for Beneficiaries for standard projects, the Project Statement for standard projects and the Project Partner Statement templates, the Subsidy Contract sample for standard projects (hereinafter the Subsidy Contract), the Partnership Agreement sample for standard projects, the Interreg Programme Slovenia-Croatia 2021-2027 (hereinafter IP SI-HR) and Methodological paper on indicators is available for download on the website www.si-hr.eu. The offline template of the Application Form can be downloaded from the website www.si-hr.eu (this document is not part of the official Application Pack).

The Interreg Programme Slovenia-Croatia for the programme period 2021-2027 invites potential beneficiaries to submit project applications in the frame of this Open Call for Proposals.



4. Subject of the Open Call for Proposals

The IP SI-HR is funded by ERDF under the European Territorial Cooperation objective. The subject of this Open Call for Proposals is co-financing of projects that contribute efficiently to the **overall objective of the programme which is:**

to achieve a preserved, resilient, and connected cross-border region where sustainable development is recognised and used as a main tool in reaching economic viability, safety, biodiversity protection, and social well-being of all inhabitants.

The subject of this Open Call for Proposals is co-financing of projects that correspond to the following priorities and related specific objectives:

Priority 1: A green and adaptive region

- ✓ *Specific objective 2.4: Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention and resilience, taking into account ecosystem-based approaches*

Priority 2: Resilient and sustainable region

- ✓ *Specific objective 4.6: Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion, and social innovation*

Priority 3: An accessible and connected region

- ✓ *Specific objective 6.2: Enhance efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens, civil society actors, and institutions, in particular with view toward resolving legal and other obstacles in border regions*

The projects shall have to apply a result-oriented approach. **The coherence of the project intervention logic** (i.e. the project specific objectives, activities, outputs and expected results) **with the targeted specific objective and the indicators of the programme shall be clearly demonstrated.**

For a detailed description of the content of each priority and programme specific objectives, including the actions and target groups, please refer to section 2 of the IP SI-HR. In order to make your project compliant with the programme, it is compulsory to read and take into account the description under each priority and corresponding specific objective.

In line with the terms of this Open Call, a project proposal shall address only **one** of the mentioned **priorities** and **one programme specific objective**, even if certain activities of a project also fall under another priority.



5. Available funding, co-financing rate and project size

The amount of **EUR 20,415,291.02** of ERDF funding shall be made available for co-financing of projects in the frame of the current Open Call for Proposals.

In case that, during the implementation of the Open Call in question, it turns out that the interest of the applicants and the quality of the submitted project applications exceed the tendered funds for the co-financing of projects, the Managing Authority based on the decision of the Monitoring Committee (hereinafter MC) reserves the right, within the budgetary possibilities of the programme, to increase the funds in the Open Call and to publish the amendment to the Open Call on the programme website www.si-hr.eu and in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia. The Managing Authority based on the decision of the MC reserves the right to publish the amendment of the Open Call in the part of the increase in the available funds for the implementation of the Open Call at any time during the implementation of the Open Call, but before the issuance of notifications on the selection of projects within the last deadline for submission of project applications (Point 16 of the Open Call). In case the increase in funds for the implementation of the Open Call is carried out after the expiry of the deadline for submission of project applications, the increase shall be carried out either:

- in proportion to the priorities or
- in such a way as to ensure, for each of the priorities, at least the difference between the existing amount of funds published and the amount of funds necessary for the co-financing of the first of the applications that would be placed on the reserve list in terms of the number of points received or
- in such a way that, taking into account the criteria set in Chapter 2.1.3 of Part 3 of the Manual for Beneficiaries, an economical use of funds is ensured, given the value of the gap and the value of the project from the reserve list.

The funds shall be broken down by priorities as follows:

Priority	ERDF funding in EUR
1 A green and adaptive region (specific objective 2.4)	8,048,469.97
2 Resilient and sustainable region	10,868,754.78
3 An accessible and connected region (specific objective 6.2)	1,498,066.27
Total	20,415,291.02

Only eligible expenditure (see point 11 of this document) shall be co-financed by the programme. Co-financing from the ERDF shall amount to a maximum of 80% of the total eligible costs, and at least 20% shall be provided by the Project Partners' own contribution and/or other sources¹.

¹ For detailed information see the Manual for Beneficiaries for standard projects.



The projects eligible for participation in the programme have to apply **from EUR 250.000 of ERDF to EUR 2.5 million ERDF funds for Priority 1 (specific objective 2.4) and Priority 2 and from EUR 200.000 of ERDF funds to EUR 1 million EFRD funds for Priority 3 (specific objective 6.2).**

6. Programme area

The programme area comprises nine Slovenian (Podravska, Pomurska, Savinjska, Zasavska, Posavska, Jugovzhodna Slovenija, Obalno-kraška, Osrednjeslovenska, and Primorsko-notranjska statistical regions) and eight Croatian (Primorsko-goranska, Istarska, Zagrebačka, Krapinsko-zagorska, Varaždinska, Međimurska, and Karlovačka counties and the City of Zagreb) NUTS-3 regions.

7. Eligible Beneficiaries

In the frame of the IP SI-HR eligible beneficiaries are:

7.1 Priority 1: A green and adaptive region

7.1.1 Specific Objective 2.4: Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention and resilience, taking into account ecosystem-based approaches

- National, regional, and local public authorities and bodies established and governed by national, regional or local public authorities (national, regional and local government, ministries, national and sectoral agencies, etc.),
- Non-profit organisations established by public or private law - legal persons (e.g. health centres, NGOs, associations, regional or local development agencies, emergency and rescue service, civil protection organisations, relief organizations, higher education and research institutions, institutions for spatial planning, etc.).

7.2 Priority 2: Resilient and sustainable region

7.2.1 Specific Objective 4.6: Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion, and social innovation

- National, regional, and local public authorities and bodies established and governed by national, regional or local public authorities (national, regional and local government, ministries, national agencies, public institutions/agencies for nature and/or cultural heritage protection, tourist boards, etc.),
- Non-profit organisations established by public or private law - legal persons acting in the field of cultural or natural heritage, sustainable tourism development or related services (e.g. museums, nature parks, regional or local development agencies, tourism destination



- management organisations, NGOs, associations, higher education and research institutions, sectoral agencies and institutions, business support organisations/associations, etc.),
- SME's, including micro-organisations (e.g. creative industries, etc.).

7.3 Priority 3: An accessible and connected region

7.3.1 Specific Objective 6.2: Enhance efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens, civil society actors, and institutions, in particular with view toward resolving legal and other obstacles in border regions

- National, regional, and local public authorities and bodies established and governed by national, regional or local public authorities (national, regional and local government, ministries, national agencies, public institutions, sectoral agencies, etc.),
- Non-profit organisations established by public or private law - legal persons (e.g. health centres, social care organisations, NGOs, elderly centres, regional development agencies, social enterprises, higher education and research institutions, etc.),
- Organisations providing services in public interest (public transport service providers, health care and social care institutions, communal institutions, etc.).

Definition of non-profit organisation is:

- (i) its primary objective is to provide services of wider social interest, and
- (ii) it uses the profits or excess of revenues over expenditures solely to achieve its purpose or objectives, its assets are not divided among its founders, members or other persons and, in the event of dissolution, after settling all liabilities, it transfers its assets to another organization with the same or similar purpose.

8. Partnership requirements

In line with the minimum requirement the partnership shall have **at least one Project Partner from Slovenia and one from Croatia** or an European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (hereinafter EGTC) registered in one of the participating countries consisting of members from both Member States.

Natural persons, crafts, sole entrepreneurs and political parties shall be excluded from participation. All other legal entities stated as eligible beneficiaries in point 7 shall be able to participate provided they are not acting as external service providers and have the **financial, administrative and legal capacity** to participate in the programme.



The Lead Partners shall be **located within the programme area**. Institutions located outside the programme area but on the territory of a Member State involved in the programme can only act as Project Partners.

Project Partners located outside the programme area but in the European Union can be Project Partners only in duly justified cases. Please note that in case of project approval the effective participation of partners from European Union regions outside the programme area is subject to the condition that the Member States in which they are located accept all implementing provisions regarding management, control and audit.

9. Eligible period of co-financing

The earliest possible start of the project shall be the **date of the approval of the project by the MC (except for preparation costs)**.

The project end date shall be the date defined in the Subsidy Contract but not later than **30 November 2028**.

10. Project duration

The projects eligible for participation are those with the duration **up to 30 months for Priority 1 (specific objective 2.4) and Priority 2 and up to 24 months for Priority 3 (specific objective 6.2)**.

11. Eligible costs

1. Staff costs
2. Office and administrative costs
3. Travel and accommodation costs
4. External expertise and services costs
5. Equipment costs
6. Costs for infrastructure and works

A detailed description of eligible costs is included in the Manual for Beneficiaries for standard projects (Part 4).

Expenditures shall be considered eligible at the earliest as from the day of the approval of the project by the MC (except for preparation costs).



12. Project development support

Before submitting their project proposals, the applicants should read the documents related to the respective Open Call for Proposals published on the website www.si-hr.eu. Any inquiries and requests for additional information during the Call should be sent by e-mail to the Joint Secretariat (hereinafter JS) at si-hr.mkrr@gov.si.

The following **information and support** related to project development and preparation of applications shall be **provided by the JS**:

- information about the programme and the Open Call for Proposals;
- information about the preparation and submission of applications;
- organisation of information workshops;
- publication of frequently asked questions and answers;
- publication of information about approved projects.

Support concerning specific project content related topics, including information on State aid and Project Partners shall be **provided by the representatives of both Member States** (National Authorities).

Contacts are listed in Part 2, chapter 2.6 of the Manual for Beneficiaries for standard projects and on the dedicated programme website.

The information about the planned information workshops, most frequently asked questions and approved projects shall be available on the programme website www.si-hr.eu.

13. Submission of project applications

Project applications can be submitted at any time between the launch date and the closing date of the Open Call for Proposals or as long as the funding is available. The applicants can submit project applications continuously after the Open Call is launched.

The first deadline for the submission of project applications shall be 19 February 2025 (at 12.00 CET). All subsequent deadlines for the submission of project applications shall be published on the programme website www.si-hr.eu at least two months before the set deadline. Applications received in due time before each Monitoring Committee and fulfilling all requirements shall be subject to MC decision.

The project application shall be submitted by the Lead Partner through Joint Electronic Monitoring System (Jems). The submitted application shall contain all the required data and shall be accompanied by signed and scanned documents annexed to the Application Form as stated in the Manual for Beneficiaries for standard projects.



The Application Pack is available on the dedicated programme website at www.si-hr.eu.

14. Project selection

The projects shall have **cross-border impacts on the programme area**. At least three of the cross-border cooperation criteria shall have to be fulfilled, as defined in Chapter 1.5 of the Part 2 of the Manual for Beneficiaries for Standard Projects. The Project Partners shall cooperate in project development, joint implementation and joint financing. In addition, they may cooperate in joint staffing.

The selection of projects shall be based on the assessment of the received applications following a standard procedure, which shall ensure the respect of the principles of transparency and equal treatment. The project application submitted through Jems shall be the only one considered valid.

The project selection procedure shall be conducted in two phases:

Administrative compliance and eligibility check

The set administrative and eligibility criteria shall have to be fulfilled by each project application. The project applications that fully comply with the administrative and eligibility criteria shall be further subject to quality assessment.

If there are some discrepancies or some certain documents are missing according to the administrative check, the Lead Partner shall be asked for supplements. The supplements may refer to the compliance with criteria **A.2** and criteria **A.3**. **The Lead Partner shall be able to supplement the project application within (7) seven calendar days** after the request for supplements was sent. In case the project application fully complies with the set administrative and eligibility criteria after the requested supplements have been provided and is approved by the MC, all supplements shall be entered in the Application Form (in the Jems) before signing the Subsidy Contract. If the project, after receipt of the supplements or passed seven (7) calendar days, still does not fulfil the administrative and eligibility criteria, the project shall be rejected in Jems.

Quality Assessment

The project applications that pass the administrative compliance and eligibility check shall be further assessed for quality against the following assessment criteria:

- Strategic assessment criteria
- Operational assessment criteria

The total number of points for a project application in the scope of quality assessment shall be 100 (100%). Each project application shall have to achieve at least 70% or 70 points to be further



considered. Project applications not reaching 70 points shall be rejected. Project applications reaching 70 points or more shall be discussed at the MC meeting with the possibility of being **approved for funding, approved under condition, not approved for funding, or put on the reserve list.**

For IP SI-HR, it is crucial that **horizontal principles** are integrated in the planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the project activities. During the whole life cycle of the projects, partners are requested to consider actions cross-cutting project activities, taking into account the horizontal principles of the EU. More precisely, actions should be planned, implemented and reported considering the horizontal **principles of equal opportunity, non-discrimination, gender equality and sustainable development**. In line with the Strategic Environmental Assessment (hereinafter SEA) recommendations, Project Partners applying to Priority 1, specific objective 2.4 have to pay special attention to increase the resilience to climate-change effects in the programme area and to nature and biodiversity protection goals in parallel to protection of society while Project Partners applying to Priority 2, specific objective 4.6 have to pay special attention to the potentially increased number of visitors in protected areas and take into consideration the carrying capacity of specific protected area(s) or site(s) and provide related sustainable solutions for visitor management. These two SEA recommendations will be checked in the frame of **horizontal principles assessment (sustainable development and »Do No Significant Harm« principle).**

Project Partners shall indicate the contribution of the project to horizontal principles as positive, neutral or negative and provide a short justification. **Negative assessment in one of the horizontal principles will lead to rejection of the project.**

The detailed description of the scoring applied in the scope of the assessment is provided in Part 3, Chapter 2.1.2 of the Manual for Beneficiaries for standard projects, which is part of the Application Pack published on www.si-hr.eu.

15. Project Approval

The **final decision** on the project shall be made by the MC of the programme. The MC shall formally decide whether to approve or not approve the project application for funding and shall set the corresponding ERDF contribution by taking into consideration the quality of each project application and its contribution to the programme objectives.

16. Notification regarding project selection

The MAJS shall inform the Lead Partner whether its project proposal was approved for funding/not approved for funding/put on the reserve list within 30 calendar days from the decision of the MC.



17. Amendments to the Open Call for Proposals

The Managing Authority based on the decision of the Monitoring Committee reserves the right to amend or cancel the Open Call at any time until the issuance of notifications on the selection of projects within the last deadline for submission of project applications (point 16 of the call for proposals), and to publish it on the programme website www.si-hr.eu and in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia. Changes of the part of the Application pack that are not a part of the publication in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia are published on the programme website of the www.si-hr.eu. Any changes to the Open Call published after the announcement of each deadline for the submission of project applications should provide applicants with adequate time to adapt their applications.

Amendments to this Open Call for Proposals shall be published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia. Applicants are obliged to respect potential amendments to the Open Call for Proposals and its Application Pack published in the manner as described above.

18. Language

The Open Call for Proposals and the Application Pack shall be **published in the Slovene, Croatian and English language**. In case of discrepancies between the Slovene and the Croatian text of the Open Call for Proposals and the Application Pack, harmonized English version shall prevail and shall be used as a tool for common understanding.

The project application shall be bilingual, written in both the **Slovene and Croatian language**, except for **the project summary which shall be written in the Slovene, Croatian and English language**. In case of discrepancies, the language of the Lead Partner shall prevail.

19. Other provisions

The results of the Open Call for Proposals are considered information of public nature and shall be published on the website www.si-hr.eu after signature of ERDF Subsidy Contracts with the selected Lead Partners.

Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development