

Interreg  
Mediterranean



PROGRAMME MANUAL

# APPRAISAL OF PROJECT PROPOSALS (ELIGIBILITY AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA)

Programme cofinancé par le Fonds Européen  
de Développement Régional (FEDER)

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After submission, each Interreg MED proposal is subject to a three-step assessment procedure safeguarding the principles of transparency and equal treatment as described below.

- **Administrative and eligibility check** of the Application Form and the compulsory annexes
- **First quality assessment phase** of the Application Form
- **Second quality assessment** phase of the Application Form

Each of the three phases can lead to the permanent elimination of the proposal. The Steering Committee of the Interreg MED Programme is responsible for the decision on the evaluation of each single step.

## Administrative and eligibility criteria

The administrative and eligibility assessment is carried out to verify whether an application complies with the administrative and eligibility criteria established by the Interreg MED Programme for the projects of the call.

The following administrative and eligibility criteria are to be observed when submitting the proposal:

**FIGURE 32: ADMINISTRATIVE AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA LIST**

Nº	Criteria	
<b>A</b>	<b>Administrative check</b>	
A.1	The Application Form has been submitted via the online monitoring tool of the Interreg MED Programme, SYNERGIE CTE, respecting the deadline	
A.2	The compulsory annexes per each partner have been duly signed and uploaded to the online monitoring tool of the Interreg MED Programme, SYNERGIE ETC	
A.3	The partnership has used the Interreg MED Programme templates, without making any alterations or amendments	
A.4	The Application Form confirmation page has been duly signed	

Nº	Criteria	
<b>B</b>	<b>Eligibility check</b>	
B.1	The project fulfils minimum partnership requirements: 4 partners representing 4 different countries from the Interreg MED Programme area of which at least 3 from the Union part of the Interreg MED Programme area	
B.2	The Lead Partner is a public body or a body governed by public law (according to the definition of the Directive 2014/24/UE) and it is physically based in the Union part of the Interreg MED Programme area	
B.3	The amounts of national co-financing indicated in the “partner declarations” are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) equal</li> <li>b) superior</li> </ul>	

	c) inferior, up to 0,99 € of negative difference with reference to the amounts of national co-financing corresponding to the ERDF/IPA requested in the application form	
<b>The following eligibility criteria are to be checked by the on line monitoring tool SYNERGIE CTE</b> (if the criterion is not respected, the system prevents the submission of the proposal)		
B.4	Time limits are respected: start and end dates of the project respect the call and Interreg MED Programme requirements	
B.5	No partner concentrates more than 30% of the total eligible budget (ERDF+IPA+national co-financing)	
B.6	No country concentrates more than 40% of the total eligible budget (ERDF+IPA+national co-financing)	
B.7	Preparation costs do not exceed the lump sum of EUR 30 000 set by the Interreg MED Programme	

**Proposals failing in any of the above requirements will be regarded as non-eligible and will not be further processed.** Lead Partners of non-eligible proposals will be informed.

Since all Application Forms and compulsory annexes are submitted via the online monitoring tool SYNERGIE CTE, some of the above requirements will be automatically checked by the system during the submission of the application in order to help applicants avoiding mistakes. However, the check of the compliance of each proposal with the above requirements, including the correctness of the submitted annexes, will be carried out during this step of the procedure of assessment of the proposal. For more information about the submission procedure and the use of the online monitoring tool SYNERGIE CTE please refer to the factsheets "Application procedures" and Synergie CTE guide.

On the other hand, during this phase Participating States will check the eligibility of partners from their territory and their capacity of involvement in the proposals submitted. This information will be considered in the assessment phase.

## Quality assessment criteria (2-step-evaluation)

The quality assessment is carried out based on a quality assessment grid, included below, that identifies strategic and operational criteria. For each one of the criterion, a main assessment question with several sub-questions has been identified. The score of each main question is the average of the score of the concerned sub-questions.

The grid below is an example.  
It may be modified by the Programme Authorities depending on the nature of the open call.  
Any updated grid will be part of the specific documents to each call and published on the Interreg MED website.

Answers to key issues written elsewhere than expected (out of section) will not be assessed.

This quality assessment will consist of two phases, **the first phase being eliminatory**.

The score per each assessment question will be calculated on a scale of 10 points. The maximum score will be of 100 points (8 main questions have been identified in the evaluation grid composed of strategic and operational issues) for the full assessment (with a weight of 1.5 for the operational questions in second phase equivalent to 60 points as maximum), and 40 points (4 main questions have been identified as “strategic” in the first phase evaluation grid) for the first assessment phase (no weight is applied).

The total final score is showed in percentage figures (100 points being the maximum total score reachable) with a minimum threshold of 75% in order to be proposed to the selection.

#### FIRST ASSESMENT PHASE:

The first assessment phase will only be carried out on part of the Application Form and more specifically on answers provided by each proposal to key issues previously identified in the form and in the evaluation grid. All questions needed for the first assessment are concentrated under the strategic assessment criteria. That is done in order to ensure the quality of the most important principles for an Interreg project: context, transnationality, logical framework and partnership.

The following sections of the Application Form are evaluated in the first phase:

- B. on partnership and general budget,
- C. 1.2, 1.3., 1.4. on project relevance (project approach, transnationality, cooperation criteria)
- C.2.1.. on project focus (intervention logic) and D. on overall budget per partner
- C. 3.1., 3.2, 3.3. on project context (synergies and complementarities)

Only the contents of the form corresponding to the sections above will be assessed at this stage. It is therefore essential to target the sections and contents in relation with the key issues without scattering the answers. Kindly remember that in each section a maximum number of character to be respected has been established.

The **minimum score required** in the first assessment phase is **24** out of 40 points (representing 60% of the maximum score). **Each main question must reach an average score of 5 out of 10 points in order to go to the next phase.**

All applications that have reached the minimum score requested will be admitted to the second phase of assessment. Projects admitted to the second phase will keep their scores in the subsections already evaluated in the 1<sup>st</sup> evaluation phase (as identified hereinafter: subsections evaluated in the first phase won't be evaluated anymore). Each sub-section not evaluated in the 1<sup>st</sup> phase will be assessed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage. The average score of all sub-sections will compose the final score of the main question (only section 2 –cooperation character- will be fully assessed during the first phase).

## SECOND ASSESSMENT PHASE:

The second assessment phase for the final proposal to the selection will cover all applications having obtained the minimum score requested in the first evaluation phase (24 points at least, at least 5 out of 10 points per question).

It will incorporate the questions of the first phase to the remaining questions of the evaluation grid and it will be mainly focused on “operational criteria”

The following sections of the Application Form are evaluated in the second phase:

- B. on partnership (regarding balance of the partnership, role and competencies of partners)
- C. 1.1
- C.4.1., C.4.2.
- C.5 Working plan
- C.6, 7, 8
- D. on detailed budget

**The threshold** for projects to be recommended for approval to the Steering Committee by the JS is of **75** out of 100 points in the second assessment (representing 75% of the maximum score). **Each section must reach an average score of 5 out of 10 points in order to be proposed for the selection.**

A final decision on project approval or rejection is taken by the Monitoring Committee. Projects will be selected, taking into consideration their score (in descending order), positions of each national delegation, and budget availability by specific objective and type of project.

## QUALITY ASSESSMENT GRID

As indicated in the table below, in the first column you can find the assessment main questions. Each main question is supported by specific sub questions (Guiding principles for the assessment).

Each main question score is the average of its sub questions scores: for instance, in the first question below (project's context), you have 4 sub questions.

Let us suppose that in the first sub question you have a score of 7, in the second a score of 9, in the third a score of 4 and in the fourth a score of 5, you will have a final average score of  $(7+9+4+5)/4=6.25$  points for the first main question.

For the horizontal projects, the assessment grids, scores and conditions for both phases are the same as those applied to the modular projects. Nevertheless, for horizontal projects, the first assessment will be carried out on the information requested in the pre-application form, whilst the second phase will consider the full application form submitted in the second phase of the submission process (see the factsheet “Application procedure for Horizontal projects” of the Programme manual).

FIGURE: STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Only sub-questions 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.1 and 4.3. will be scored for the first phase of the assessment.

Assessment questions (Main questions)	Sub-question number	Guiding principles for the assessment – To what extent does the project ... (Sub questions)	Concerned sections in the Application Form
<b>1. Project's context (relevance and strategy)</b>  <i>How well is a need for the project justified?</i>	1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project addresses common territorial challenges of the programme or a joint asset of the programme area- there is a real demand for the project</li> </ul>	C.1.1
	1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project clearly contributes to a wider strategy on one or more policy levels (EU / national / regional)</li> </ul>	C.3.1
	1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project makes use of available knowledge and builds on existing results and practices</li> </ul>	C.3.2 C.3.3
	1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project makes a positive or a neutral contribution to the programme horizontal principles: equal opportunities and non-discrimination, equality between men and women, sustainable development</li> </ul>	C.4.1
<b>2. Cooperation character</b>  <i>What added value does the transnational cooperation bring?</i>	2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The importance of the transnational approach to the topic addressed is clearly demonstrated:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the results cannot (or only to some extent) be achieved without cooperation and/or the cooperation has a significant added value for the partners</li> <li>- there is a clear benefit from cooperating for the project partners / target groups / project area / programme area</li> </ul> </li> </ul> (Please, take note that the evaluator will pay special attention to the fulfilment of at least 3 of the following cooperation criteria: joint development (mandatory), joint implementation (mandatory), and joint staffing or joint financing).	B.1 C.1.3 C.1.4
	2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project demonstrates new solutions that go beyond the existing practice in the sector/programme area/participating countries or adapts and implements already developed solutions</li> </ul>	C.1.2

Assessment questions (Main questions)	Sub-question number	Guiding principles for the assessment – To what extent does the project ... (Sub questions)	Concerned sections in the Application Form
<b>3. Project's contribution to programme's objectives, expected results and outputs</b>  <i>To what extent will the project contribute to the achievement of programme's objectives according to the MED CP and more particularly to the ToR of the specific objective?</i>	3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project's results and main outputs clearly link to programme priority and its indicators               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The project overall objective clearly links to a programme priority specific objective</li> <li>- The project results clearly link to a programme result indicator</li> <li>- The project specific objectives clearly link to the project overall objective</li> <li>- The project main outputs clearly link to the project specific objectives</li> <li>- The project main outputs clearly link to programme output indicators</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	C.2.1
	3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results and main outputs:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- are in accordance with the selected target groups needs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	C.2.1
	3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- are specific</li> </ul>	C.2.1
	3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- are realistic (is it possible to achieve them with given resources – i.e. time, partners, budget- and they are realistic based on the quantification provided)</li> </ul>	C.2.1, D
	3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project main outputs are durable (the proposal is expected to provide a significant and durable contribution to solving the challenges targeted) – if not, it is justified</li> </ul>	C.5
	3.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project main outputs are applicable and replicable by other organisations/regions/countries outside of the current partnership (transferability) – if not, it is justified</li> </ul>	C.5
<b>4. Partnership relevance</b>  <i>To what extent is the partnership composition relevant for the proposed project?</i>	4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project involves the relevant actors needed to address the territorial challenge/joint asset and the objectives specified.</li> </ul>	B
	4.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With respect to the project's objectives the project partnership:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- is balanced with respect to the levels, sectors, territory</li> <li>- consists of partners that complement each other</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	B, C.5
	4.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner organisations have proven experience and competence in the thematic field concerned, as well as the necessary capacity to implement the project (financial, human resources, etc.)</li> </ul>	B
	4.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All partners play a defined role in the partnership and get a real benefit from it</li> </ul>	B, C.5

**OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

Assessment questions		Guiding principles for the assessment – To what extent does the project ...	Concerned sections in the Application Form
<p><b>5. Management</b></p> <p><i>To what extent are management structures and procedures in line with the project size, duration and needs?</i></p>	5.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management structures (e.g. project steering committee) are proportionate to the project size and needs and allow partners' involvement in decision-making</li> <li>• Management procedures (such as reporting and evaluation procedures in the area of finance, project content, communication) are clear, transparent, efficient and effective</li> <li>• Project management includes regular contact between project partners and ensures transfer of expertise across the partnership (internal communication within the partnership)</li> <li>• Necessary provisions quality management are in place (self and/or external evaluation)</li> </ul>	<p>C.5 WP 1 (Management)</p> <p>C.4.2</p>
	5.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Lead Partner demonstrates competency in managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects or can ensure adequate measures for management support</li> </ul>	<p>B.1</p>
<p><b>6. Communication and Capitalisation</b></p> <p><i>To what extent are communication and capitalisation activities appropriate and forceful to reach the relevant target groups and stakeholders?</i></p>	6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The communication and capitalisation (when relevant) objectives clearly link to the project specific objectives</li> <li>• The approach/tactics chosen are appropriate to reach communication and capitalisation (when relevant) objectives</li> <li>• Communication and capitalisation (when relevant) activities and deliverables are appropriate to reach the relevant target groups and stakeholders</li> </ul>	<p>C.5 WP 2 (Communication)</p>



Assessment questions		Guiding principles for the assessment – To what extent does the project ...	Concerned sections in the Application Form
<b>7. Work plan</b>  <i>To what extent is the work plan realistic, consistent and coherent?</i>	7.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed activities and deliverables are relevant and lead to the planned main outputs and results</li> <li>• Distribution of tasks among partners is appropriate (e.g. sharing of tasks is clear, logical, in line with partners' role in the project, etc.)</li> <li>• Time plan is realistic (contingency included)</li> <li>• Activities, deliverables and outputs are in a logical time-sequence</li> </ul>	<p>C.5</p> <p>C.7</p>
	7.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities outside (the Union part of) the programme area clearly benefit the programme area (if applicable)</li> </ul>	C.6
	7.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The added value of investments and their transnational relevance is demonstrated to reach the project objectives (if applicable)</li> </ul>	C.8
<b>8. Budget</b>  <i>To what extent is the budget coherent, proportionate, realistic and valuable?</i>	8.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sufficient and reasonable resources are planned to ensure project implementation</li> <li>• Project budget appears proportionate to the proposed work plan and the main outputs and results aimed for</li> <li>• Total partner budgets reflect real partners' involvement (are balanced and realistic)</li> </ul>	B.1, C.5, C.8, D
	8.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial allocation per budget line is in line with the work plan</li> <li>• Distribution of the budget per period is in line with the work plan</li> <li>• Distribution of the budget per WP is in line with the work plan</li> <li>• The need for engaging external expertise is justified and the costs are realistic</li> <li>• The need for equipment purchases is justified and the costs are realistic</li> <li>• The budget is clear and realistic and in line with the Programme financial recommendations</li> </ul>	B.1, C.5, C.8, D
<b>9. Final overview</b>	9.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project globally answer to the expectations and needs of the Programme. It's coherent in the implementation of all its sections? (no score, only an appreciation)</li> </ul>	Full project

# Communication of results to the Lead Partner

Decisions on funding of projects will be made by the Steering Committee of the Interreg MED Programme based on the results of the assessment described above and on the call budget availability.

After its decision, the Lead Partners of the submitted proposals will receive a communication from the Managing Authority indicating if the proposal is accepted without modification, accepted under conditions or rejected. The communication will contain the reasons for approval (and if this will be the case necessary requirements to be fulfilled within a set timeframe) or for rejection.