

Interreg



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IPA Bulgaria – Serbia

(INTERREG VI-A) IPA BULGARIASERBIA PROGRAMME

CCI 2021TC16IPCB007 GUIDELINES FOR PRE-DEFINED APPLICANTS

Call for proposals

No 2021TC16IPCB007 – 2022 – 1

Restricted Call for Strategic Project Proposal

under Priority 3 - Specific Objective 3.1. Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, and resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches.

Deadline for submission of project proposal: 5th April 2023

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Preface

These Guidelines for Applicants serve as an essential reference document for the pre-defined applicant applying for funding under the Call for Project Proposal within the framework of the (INTERREG VI-A) IPA Bulgaria Serbia Programme. The Guidelines for Applicants include the following integral parts, which must be considered in their entirety by the Applicant:

- Attachments:
 - Attachment 1 "State Aid and De Minimis Provisions" – contains important information about the rules for financing of state aid relevant activities (applicable for Bulgarian project partners only);
 - Attachment 2 "Complaint Procedure" – contains important information about the stages, requirements, steps and deadlines which the applicant must observe in case it decides to launch a complaint against the decisions of the Monitoring Committee regarding project' selection and financing;
 - Attachment 3 "Instruction for submission of project proposals" - contains important information about access to the electronic system and submission of project proposal;
 - Attachment 4 "Definitions of indicators" – contains important information about output and result indicators.
- Application Form – to be filled in by the project partnership;
- Annexes (A1-A4) to the Application form – contain templates of all declarations that must be submitted by the project partners together with the project proposal;

Subsidy contract – draft version (for information purposes only).

It is recommended that the pre-defined applicant submitting the proposal under the current call examine carefully, besides the present Guidelines for Applicants, the Programme Document, which is available on the website of the Programme: <http://www.ipacbc-bgrs.eu/>

Explanation of text-box

Across the following pages, you will find a highlighted text boxes – marked "**Important**":

!IMPORTANT - highlights the most important elements to be taken into account when preparing a project.

Legal Basis

In the elaboration of these Guidelines for Applicants the following legal provisions have been observed:

Basic EU legal acts:

- Regulation (EU) 2021/1529 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 September 2021 establishing the Instrument for Pre-Accession assistance (IPA III);
- 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;
- 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;
- 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, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012;
- 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.

Basic programme documents:

- (INTERREG VI-A) IPA Bulgaria Serbia Programme approved by European Commission of 23.11.2022 by Decision C(2022) 8660, with programme reference number CCI 2021TC16IPCB007, including Appendix 3;

National legislation

Besides EU rules and rules of the Programme, national legislation in force ruling specific fields such as environmental interventions, natural and cultural heritage, construction, human resources, public procurements, etc. shall be respected.

Please note that all these legal provisions must be observed by the applicant during both project preparation and implementation phases.

1 General Information

These Guidelines for Applicants aim at providing practical information under (INTERREG VI-A) IPA Bulgaria Serbia 2021-2027.

It is the most practical level of information needed for the successful submission of a project proposal under this programme. These Guidelines for Applicants provide information on how to development of a project idea/proposal, to fill in the application form, budget and related forms, the application procedure, the project selection criteria, the decision procedure and other practical

advices.

🚫 IMPORTANT

Please read carefully these Guidelines for Applicants in order to avoid confusion!

The present version of the document is only relevant in connection to the Call for Strategic Proposal under the INTERREG VI-A) IPA Bulgaria Serbia 2021-2027. Please bear in mind that this Call for proposal only concerns Priority 3, Specific objective 3.1.

The possible modifications in the Application package will be communicated via the Programme website.

1.1 Overview of (INTERREG VI-A) IPA Bulgaria Serbia Programme

The Programme is co-financed by the EU through the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance III (IPA III) and co-financed by Bulgaria and Serbia. The Bulgarian co-financing is provided from the state budget. The Serbian while at the project level it is to be ensured by the beneficiaries.

The programme document drafted jointly drafted by the two countries through a large partnership with national, regional and local stakeholders was approved by European Commission on 23.11.2022 (DecisionC(2022) 8660). It sets out the general framework of intervention of IPA III in the Programme cross-border area. The programme document is available on the following websites:

<http://www.ipacbc-bgrs.eu/>

<http://www.mrrb.bg/>

<https://www.mei.gov.rs/>

The (INTERREG –A) IPA Bulgaria Serbia Programme (the Programme) is designed in the framework of the European Union (EU) policies such as green and digital transition, Territorial Agenda 2030, EU enlargement with the Western Balkans and the relevant national strategic documents.

The Programme contributes to and interacts with the European Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) and the European Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUAIRS) devised for the countries and regions that share common needs and objectives in the region.

1.1.1 Programme area

The Programme area is determined in accordance with the Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/75 of 17 January 2022 setting out the list of Interreg programme areas to receive support from the European Regional Development Fund and external financing instruments of the Union, broken down by strand and Interreg programme under the European territorial cooperation goal.

The Programme area includes 13 administrative units: **6 districts in Bulgaria**, which correspond to NUTS level III, and the equivalent NUTS III – **7 districts in Serbia**.

Table 1: NUTS III of the Programme area

Bulgaria – NUTS III level	Serbia – NUTS III equivalent
Vidin District: 11 municipalities: Belogradchik, Boynitsa, Bregovo, Vidin, Gramada, Dimovo, Kula, Makresh, Novo Selo, Ruzhintsi, Chuprene	Bor District: 4 municipalities: Bor, Kladovo, Majdanpek, Negotin
Montana District: 11 municipalities: Berkovitsa, Boychinovtsi, Brusartsi, Valchedram, Varshets, Georgi Damyanovo, Lom, Medkovets, Montana, Chiprovtsi, Yakimovo	Zaječar District: 4 municipalities: Boljevac, Zaječar, Knjaževac, Sokobanja
Vratsa District: 10 municipalities: Borovan, Byala Slatina, Vratsa, Kozloduy, Krivodol, Mezdra, Mizia, Oryahovo, Roman, Hayredin	Toplica district: 4 municipalities: Prokuplje, Blace, Žitorađa, Kuršumlija
Sofia District 22 municipalities: Anton, Bojurishte, Botevgrad, Chavdar, Chelopech, Dolna banya, Dragoman, Elin Pelin, Etropole, Godech, Gorna Malina, Ihtiman, Koprivshtitsa, Kostenets, Kostinbrod, Mirkovo, Pirdop, Pravets, Samokov, Slivnitsa, Svoге, Zlatitsa	Nišava District: 11 municipalities: City of Niš (Municipalities: Pantelej, Medijana, Crveni Krst, Palilula and Niška Banja), Aleksinac, Gadžin Han, Doljevac, Merošina, Ražani, Svrlijig
Pernik District: 6 municipalities: Breznik, Zemen, Kovachevtsi, Pernik, Radomir, Tran	Pirot District: 4 municipalities: Babušnica, Bela Palanka, Dimitrovgrad, Pirot
Kyustendil District: 9 municipalities: Bobovdol, Boboshevo, Dupnitsa, Kocherinovo, Kyustendil, Nevestino, Rila, Sapareva Banya, Trekliano	Jablanica District: 6 municipalities: Bojnik, Vlasotince, Lebane, Leskovac, Medveđa, Crna Trava
	Pčinja District: 7 municipalities: Bosilegrad, Bujanovac, Vladičin Han, Vranje, Preševo, Surdulica, Trgovište

1.1.2 Programme Strategy

The strategic and thematic scope of the (INTERREG VI-A) IPA Bulgaria Serbia fully corresponds with the IPA III programming framework. The programme is expected to contribute to the EU accession process and at the same time to the strengthening of the territorial cohesion. The policy

and strategic framework of the programme is a result of a three-year long elaboration process. The identified tendencies and challenges are related to continuing and still unresolved territorial challenges (such as lack of diverse possibilities for work, high unemployment, low income, uneven economic and year-round tourism development across the CB area, etc.); sharp sectoral disparities in the CB area due to the number of opposite demographic and economic trends across the region; the need to provide equal access for the SMEs to programme resources and perceive the enterprises as change boosters addressing their specific needs, particularly in the field of competitiveness and internationalization and the prospective of establishing cross-border added value chains in certain sectors. The improvement of risk prevention and rapid response management in case of natural disaster is among identified challenges due to its importance, capitalization potential and contribution to solving joint challenges.

1.1.3 The programme overall objective

The strategy, set out to address the specific needs of the border area both in the short and long term, supports the following **overall objective**:

To strengthen the territorial cohesion of the Bulgaria-Serbia cross-border region

Based on the experience of the previous two programming periods 2007-2013 and 2014-2020, as well as on various analyses of the Programme area, the following three out of the five proposed by European Commission Policy Objectives (Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060) were chosen to be the basis for selection of the Priorities of the Programme:

- ✓ ***Policy Objective 1: A more competitive and smarter Europe by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation and regional ICT connectivity***
- ✓ ***Policy Objective 2: A greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, risk prevention and management, and sustainable urban mobility***
- ✓ ***Policy Objective 5: A Europe closer to citizens by fostering the sustainable and integrated development of all types of territories and local initiatives***

⚠ IMPORTANT

For further details on programme strategy, please refer to the programme document available at: <http://www.ipacbc-bgrs.eu/>

1.1.4 Programme Priorities

In order to achieve the objectives set out in the programme document, the partnering countries have jointly agreed upon the main "Priorities" on which the project under this programme should

focus – “Competitive border region”, “Integrated development of border region” and “A more resilient border region”.

The current call for proposal is focused on Priority 3 “A more resilient border region”, Specific Objective 3.1. Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, and resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches.

1.1.5 Restricted call for strategic project justification

The concept of disaster preparedness is embedded into a number of international commitments, including the UN’s Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Agenda 2030, the New Urban Agenda, and the Grand Bargain commitments. The European Commission’s Action Plan on the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 proposes new “all-of-society and all-hazards risk approach across economic, social, and environmental policy areas, with a view to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience”¹. The EC’s Action plan also foresees a strong role for regional organisations in supporting the efforts of countries in reducing disaster risks. The above-mentioned, as well as the outcomes of the regional consultation process on programming the (INTERREG VI-A) IPA Bulgaria Serbia 2021-2027 programme paved the way to the evolvement of a cross-border strategic project in the field of disaster preparedness with the aim to make the emergency response as local as possible – a streamlined approach in the EC’s Action plan on Sendai Framework.

The territorial analysis of the Programme shows a vulnerability of the cross-border area to natural disasters, mainly forest fires. In the last five years, an increasing share of the CBC fires has been observed. Having in mind the already established good cooperation between the responsible bodies in Bulgaria and Serbia, being also institutionalised in a bilateral agreement on cooperation in the field of protection from natural and other disasters signed in 2019, and the recognized need for integrated and coordinated measures to reduce the risk of natural disasters, a strategic approach on risk prevention and rapid response management in case of different emergencies (wildfires, disasters, earthquakes, collapses etc.) has been considered most appropriate. A strategic project in the field is expected to have a greater impact on the targeted area and in national context as well, as it shall involve key authorities playing diverse roles on various levels in the entire system of disaster management – from public bodies through academia to NGOs. It is expected that a strategic project could streamline the interface between science and policy to build up a stronger knowledge base for decision-making in the field.

1.1.6 Programme Indicators

For the 2021-2027 period, a set of common indicators was defined in the ERDF Regulation, allowing easier and more consistent reporting across programmes. Among these are Interreg specific indicators, which are tailored to the types of outputs and results that Interreg projects

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/1_en_document_travail_service_part1_v2.pdf

typically produce, broad enough to capture most project actions, and allowing a good comparison and aggregation with other programmes.

The indicators are used as a basis to provide information to the European Parliament and to the Council on performance of programmes.

The output indicators measure the specific deliverables from the action chosen for support, while the result indicators measure the outcomes (the effects of the interventions supported, with particular reference to the direct addressees, population targeted or users of infrastructure).

For Priority 3 “A more resilient border region”, Specific Objective 3.1. Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, and resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches of the (INTERREG VI-A) IPA Bulgaria Serbia Programme the Interreg specific indicators were chosen.

The table below summarizes the Programme output and result indicators relevant for this Call:

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Target Value
Output indicator				
A more resilient border region	3.1 Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, and resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches	RCO85	Participations in joint training schemes	310
A more resilient border region	3.1 Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, and resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches	RCO81	Participations in joint actions across borders	110
A more resilient border region	3.1 Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, and resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches	RCO83	Strategies and action plans jointly developed	3

A more resilient border region	3.1 Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, and resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches	RCO24	Investments in new or upgraded disaster monitoring, preparedness, warning and response systems against natural disasters	7 127 766
Result indicator				
A more resilient border region	3.1 Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, and resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches	RCR81	Completion of joint training schemes	310
A more resilient border region	3.1 Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, and resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches	RCR85	Participations in joint actions across borders after project completion	25
A more resilient border region	3.1 Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, and resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches	RCR79	Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations	3
A more resilient border region	3.1 Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, and resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches	RCR36	Population benefiting from wildfire protection measures	24 500

When preparing the Application Form, the applicant should provide quantification of programme's output and result indicators, relevant to the Call.

📌 IMPORTANT

The project must ensure as a minimum achievement the target values of the programme output and result indicators under Specific objective 3.1. "Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, and resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches".

More information is available in Attachment 4 "Definitions of indicators".

1.2 Programme Implementation Structures

According to the Interreg Regulations 2021/1059 from 24 June 2021, the two partnering countries have established the following main management and implementation bodies:

Managing Authority (MA) – Territorial Cooperation Management Directorate at Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works of the Republic of Bulgaria is designated to perform the functions of Managing Authority under (INTERREG-VI-A) IPA Bulgaria Serbia Programme (CCI 2021TC16IPCB007) as laid down in Articles 72, 74 and 75 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060. The Managing Authority is responsible for managing and implementing the cross-border cooperation programme in accordance with the principle of sound financial management.

National Authority (NA) – Ministry of European Integration of Republic of Serbia is the counterpart for the Managing Authority and is in charge of the coordination of programme in Serbia. The National Authority supports the Managing Authority in the process of management and overall implementation of the programme.

Monitoring Committee (MC) is formed of representatives of MA, NA, the European Commission, as well as other relevant national, regional and local authorities and stakeholders. The MC shall supervise the overall effectiveness, quality and coherence of the implementation of all actions towards meeting the objectives set out in the Programme and the relevant strategy papers.

Joint Secretariat (JS) is a common structure that assists the programme management bodies in carrying out their respective functions and it is the main contact point between the programme and the potential beneficiaries/project partners. JS-main office is based in Sofia (Republic of Bulgaria), and JS-branch office is based in Nis (Republic of Serbia).

1.3 Programme Financial Allocation for the Restricted Call for Strategic Project Proposal

The total budget available for the present call is 7 291 834 Euro of which 6 198 058 Euro EU financial contribution (ERDF+IPA funds) and 1 093 776 Euro national contributions from the partnering countries.

2 Rules of the Call for Proposals

2.1 Cross-border impact

The Strategic Project Proposal must be effective and efficient in order to tackle common challenges identified jointly in the border region and to match the territory`s needs as envisaged by the Programme`s objectives and results. The project must deliver direct cross-border impact and benefits for the project partners, the main target groups and the population of the Programme area. The partners should clearly demonstrate that the cross-border approach has been respected in the project proposal.

A clear cross-border impact could be found in these cases where the implementation of the projects ensures tangible results in the cross-border area (in both countries); otherwise the effect would be at regional level.

Through implementation of the planned activities (which are designed for facing certain specific needs of the cross-border area, partners and the main target groups), the project shall contribute to achievement of the overall Programme objective to strengthen the territorial cohesion of the cross-border region. This means that when formulating the project idea, all partners should think about the impact of the project not only for their own organisations and the target groups, but also for the Programme area. Establishment of a partnership among organizations from the two countries by definition brings a cross-border character to the project, but only by itself this is not enough to ensure the direct cross-border impact and added value to the Programme area – rather, it is necessary that the combination of all project activities demonstrate achievement of distinct results in the cross-border area.

2.1.1 Cooperation criteria

Direct cross-border impact is understood in terms of respecting the following cooperation criteria:

Joint development means that the project must be designed in close cooperation of the partners from both sides of the border. This means that project proposals must clearly integrate the ideas, needs, priorities and contributions of stakeholders on both sides of the border. The Lead Partner is the coordinator of this process but should include other partners from the beginning of the development process;

Joint implementation means that activities must be carried out and coordinated among partners from both sides of the border. It is not enough that activities run in parallel. There must be clear content-based links between what is happening on either side of the border and regular contact between the two sides. The Lead Partner is responsible for ensuring that activities are properly coordinated, that schedules are kept and that the right quality levels are achieved;

Joint staffing means that there will be a single project team within the project. The project staff should not have duplicate functions on either side of the border and project team members should work together on the project. The partners should not merely carry out activities in parallel without mutual coordination and exchange of information, but the project team will be responsible for project activities on both sides of the border.

Joint financing means that there will be only one contract per project and there must therefore be one joint project budget. The budget should be divided between partners according to the activities carried out. There is also only one project bank account for the EU contribution (held by the Lead Beneficiary) and payments representing EU support are made from the programme to this account. The Lead Beneficiary is responsible for administration and distribution of these funds and for reporting on their use. Funding should come from both sides of the border and illustrates the commitment by each partner to the joint project. The distribution of financial resources should reflect tasks and responsibilities of the partners. The rights and obligations of each partner in view of project implementation (including transfer of funds and payments) are included in the Partnership agreement.

IMPORTANT

The importance of the cross-border approach to the topic addressed should be clearly demonstrated. In this matter the project partners from the two participating countries have to cooperate mandatory in both joint development and joint implementation and, additionally, one or both of the other two cooperation criteria: joint financing or joint staffing (as described above).

2.2 Horizontal principles

The (INTERREG VI-A) IPA Bulgaria Serbia Programme places an important role to the inclusion of horizontal principles in the planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the project activities. During the whole life cycle of the projects, beneficiaries are requested to consider transversal actions to the projects' activities, taking into account the horizontal principles of the EU².

More precisely, actions should be planned, implemented and reported considering the following horizontal principles:

² Horizontal Principles as per Article 9 of the REGULATION (EU) 2021/1060 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 24 June 2021

1. Sustainable development as set out in Article 11 TFEU, taking into account the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, the "Do No Significant Harm" principle; Green public procurement and New Bauhaus Initiative;
2. Equal opportunities and non-discrimination based on gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation;
3. Equality between men and women, gender mainstreaming and the integration of a gender perspective.

Full respect of the Union environmental acquis should be ensured by the projects. Project partners shall describe in their applications how they particularly consider and promote the abovementioned horizontal principles in their activities and which specific actions are implemented in reference to them. Furthermore, project partners are advised to include measures in their proposals that will contribute to the diminishing of the environmental impact of their actions. During the assessment of applications, consideration is given to the project's adherence to the horizontal principles and the quality of the planned specific actions. Approved projects will report regularly to the Programme their achievements. The measures planned in the beginning of the projects and consequently developed by the end of the projects considering the horizontal principles will be further monitored by the Programme. Finally, the contribution and consideration of horizontal principles in projects will be examined in the Programme's evaluation.

2.3 Applicable law and public procurement

The beneficiaries have the possibility to award service, supply and works contracts to contractors. Contractors are neither partners nor associates. The award of contracts to them is subject to the procurement rules in accordance with Article 58 of 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.

When the project partners are located in Bulgaria and is a contracting authority or a contracting entity within the meaning of the Union law applicable to public procurement procedures, it shall apply national laws, regulations and administrative provisions - Public procurement act (Закон за обществените поръчки) and Government decree No. 160/2016 (Постановление ПМС №160/01.07.2016 г. за определяне правилата за разглеждане и оценяване на оферти и сключването на договорите в процедурата за избор с публична покана от бенефициери на безвъзмездна финансова помощ от европейските структурни и инвестиционни фондове).

When the beneficiary is a public authority of Serbia, national laws, regulations and administrative provisions may be applied to the co-financing transferred to the managing authority, provided that the financing agreement allows it and that the contract is awarded to the tender offering best value for money, or as appropriate, to the tender offering the lowest price, while avoiding any conflict of interests. For the award of goods, works or services in all cases other than those described above, the procurement procedures provided for in Articles 178 and 179 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 and points 36 to 41 of Chapter 3 of Annex I to Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 shall apply. **In this case the beneficiaries must refer to and use the guidelines and templates of the “Procurement and Grants for European Union External Actions – a Practical Guide” document (PRAG). For awarding service, supply and works contracts with the value less than 20.000 EUR, the tender procedure can be conducted using simplified tender package prepared and approved by the Programme authorities.**

To this end, the following provisions shall be fulfilled by the project beneficiaries:

- When sub-contracting the activities in order to achieve the project objectives, the contracting must be done by a transparent tendering procedure, following the above rules.
- The project or any sub-contracting procedures must not create an economic advantage to an economic operator.
- All studies or other project results shall be made available free to all interested individual or legal persons, in a non-discriminatory way. Making the studies available only for certain individual or legal persons is strictly forbidden.

2.4 Communication and Visibility

The communication and publicity measures for the interventions of the Strategic Importance Project are designed to raise the awareness of the positive impact of the EU funding, to ensure the visibility of the EU funding opportunities, to provide information on thematic activities and to contribute to the capitalization of achieved project outputs and results. Communication activities have to be integrated throughout the project application form in order to support the achievement and capitalization of project outputs and results. The general approach to communication should explain which instruments will be used in which way for what reason and how they will address audiences and target groups. There should be an emphasis on environmentally friendly activities and introducing carbon offsetting in events, physical or digital.

Different types of communication and visibility activities could be applied in the Strategic Importance Project:

Digital communication channels and instruments:

- Website - new website or dedicated sections, part of the websites of the organizations;
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) - dedicated to the project;
- E-events - meetings, workshops, conferences, seminars, trainings;
- Short videos.

Standard communication channels and instruments:

- Photos;

- PR activities - press releases, publications, interviews, communication strategy;
- Signaling - plates with the obligatory visibility elements at the building entrance of the applicant, flying the EU flag, banners/posters on public events);
- Promotional materials – banners, small gifts, gadgets.

Public events:

- Awareness campaign, meetings, workshops, conferences, seminars, trainings, press events.

In order to maximize the impact of the communication efforts, the project partners should consider the following recommendations:

- Communication activities need to be closely linked to thematic project activities;
- Communication activities should ensure that relevant groups are aware of the available outputs and deliverables to be used;
- Communication activities need to be timely and appropriate in terms of resources spent and expected impact, and be suitable to the target group;
- Communication and visibility activities should be embedded in the thematic work packages;
- Even if the Programme official language is English, all communication activities towards the public and the target groups should be carried out in the language of the participants;
- Investment activities related to infrastructure/works, supply of equipment and vehicles, as well as major project results, must acknowledge the EU support and display the European emblem and funding statement.

2.5 Eligibility Criteria

The present call for proposal is open for Priority 3 “A more resilient border region”, Specific Objective 3.1. Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, and resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches.

In order to be eligible for funding under the programme, a project should meet three sets of eligibility criteria:

- Eligibility of applicants (see section 2.5.1),
- Eligibility of activities (see section 2.5.2) and
- Eligibility of expenditures (see section 2.5.3).

2.5.1 Eligibility of Applicants (Lead Partner and Partners)

⚠ IMPORTANT

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

If the project does not comply with this requirement will be eliminated during the assessment.

All partners are directly responsible for the project implementation and cannot act as an intermediary.

2.5.1.1 Criteria for Eligibility of Applicants (Lead Partner and Partners)

1) Lead Partner and its partners must comply with all of the following general eligibility criteria:

- **be legally established organizations (legal persons) according to the national legislation of the state on whose territory they are located;**

Exception is made for subsidiary structures of local/regional/national authorities. In case a structure of local/regional/national authority is not and cannot act as a legal entity, its legally established central organization, if such exists, shall be the project partner.

and

- **be registered in the Programme area;**

Exception is made for national/regional public authorities whose area of competence, established by legal acts, extends to the Programme area, or structures of central public authorities located in the Programme area which cannot be registered as legal entities – in this case the central authority is a project partner

and

- **be non-profit making organizations;**

and

- **be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action, not acting as an intermediary.**

⚠ IMPORTANT

All the above criteria must be fulfilled together.

For the present call the eligible Lead partner and Project Partners are as follows:

Priority Axis/Specific objective	Beneficiaries
Priority 3 "A more resilient border region", Specific Objective 3.1. Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lead Partner: Directorate General Fire Safety and Civil Protection –Ministry of the Interior (DGFSCP-MoI), Republic of Bulgaria ○ Project Partner 2: Sector for Emergency

<p>prevention, and resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches.</p>	<p>Management - Ministry of Interior (SEM MoI), Republic of Serbia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project Partner 3: The Academy of the Ministry of Interior, Republic of Bulgaria ○ Project Partner 4: National Association of Volunteers in the Republic of Bulgaria (NAVRB)
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In addition to the Lead Partner and Project partners, up to three organizations may be invited by the Lead partner for project partners under the project. The eligible potential project partners which may be invited by the Lead partner are given below:

- All levels of local/regional authorities;
- Associations of Local/Regional authorities and of other organisations;
- Central and regional offices and structures of central government institutions/ administrations;
- Youth organizations.

⚡ IMPORTANT

All project partners should sign a "Project Partners declaration" (Annex A3). They have to declare that they do not fall into any of the categories specified in the Declaration.

2.5.1.2 Lead Partner Principle

The Lead Partner, as the applicant of the project proposal, will be responsible for the preparation and submission of the project proposal as well as for implementation of the project. The Lead Partner must have the capacity to start the implementation of the project as quickly as possible, to maintain and further specify in detail the strategic character of the intervention, to exploit the immediate results of the intervention and to concentrate all available managerial, financing and know-how resources and focus them on the project.

The lead partner shall carry out the following tasks:

- lay down the arrangements with other partners in an agreement comprising provisions that, inter alia, guarantee the sound financial management of the respective funds allocated to the operation, including the arrangements for recovering amounts unduly paid;
- sign the contract for implementation of the operation with MA and further addenda to the contract (if any);
- assume responsibility for ensuring implementation of the entire operation;

- transfer the relevant budget amounts to the partners participating in the operation according to the Project Partnership Agreement and verified costs;
- ensure that expenditures presented by all partners has been paid in implementing the operation and corresponds to the activities agreed between all the partners;
- ensure that the expenditures presented by the partners participating in the operation have been verified by controller(s);
- collect and check the information from the project partners and submit reports on progress of the project to the JS;
- informing MA/JS about necessity of project modifications

More information about the role and tasks of the Lead Partner is provided in the contract and in the Project Partnership Agreement template (Annex A1).

⚠ IMPORTANT

A partner can never be a contractor and vice versa!

Please note that a "partner" involved in the project implementation as "Lead Partner" or "project partner" is excluded from any forms of contracting to other partners within the project.

2.5.1.3 Rules concerning partnership

The maximum number of partners in a project shall not exceed **seven (7) including the Lead Partner**.

The project partners must have clear roles in project preparation and implementation.

All partners must sign a Project Partnership Agreement that stipulates their rights and duties. The signatures of the partners should be on the same page at the end of the agreement. The Project Partnership Agreement should be enclosed to the application form. A Project Partnership Agreement template is annexed to the present Guidelines (Annex A1). The partners may decide to add additional provisions to the Project Partnership Agreement.

⚠ IMPORTANT

Project Partnership Agreement is a legal and binding document which should be signed by all partners with utmost awareness. All partners should ensure to comply with the Project Partnership Agreement requirements.

2.5.2 Eligibility of Activities

2.5.2.1 Project duration and grant amount

The eligible grant amounts for the project is 7 291 834 Euro and maximum project duration 30 months.

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In addition, the grant is distributed as follows:

- a) for Bulgarian bodies: 85% EU contribution + 15% national public co-financing

AND

- b) for Serbian bodies: 85% EU contribution + 15% national own co-financing

Note: Further to the aforementioned obligatory amount of the activities, each project partner (Bulgarian or Serbian) may choose to provide ADDITIONAL own co-financing for the needs of the project. For Serbian bodies, this additional own co-financing shall come as a supplement to the OBLIGATORY own co-financing of 15% of the activities. There are no limits for the amount of the additional own co-financing.

However, the applicants may provide own co-financing which should be reflected in the project budget and it will be a subject of verification.

2.5.2.2 Activities' location

The implementation of project activities under Priority 3 will cover the entire Programme area employing the provisions of the integrated territorial development as stated in art. 28 (c) of the CPR Regulation.

IMPORTANT

In accordance with Article 22 of 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 "When all or part of an operation is implemented outside the programme area inside or outside the Union, the selection of that operation shall require the explicit approval by the managing authority in the monitoring committee".

2.5.2.3 Eligible Activities

This is a Restricted Call aiming to support a project with a strong strategic character, proving a significant impact on the Programme area. In this sense, the project will have to demonstrate that:

- is based on a strong and balanced partnership on the two sides of the border, extended to a substantial part of the Programme territory and demonstrate significant impact on target groups;
- produce a long lasting effect, creating permanent structures and services. The projects must provide added-value on activities already finished in the field or represents the beginning of activities that will be undertaken on a long term.

The types of activities financed under the present call for proposals are under Priority 3 "A more resilient border region", Specific Objective 3.1. Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, and resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches. The activities must demonstrate a clear cross-border effect to the programme area. Programme requirements and project ideas have to be aligned. The project needs to collaborate on cross border activities

that directly relate to addressing the priority and objective, as set out in the Programme.

🚫 IMPORTANT

The project proposal should be submitted for financing under only Specific objective 3.1 which must be clearly indicated in the application form. This is obligatory condition.

Detailed description of the eligible activities under this call for proposals are given below. Please note that list of below activities is not exhaustive.

Priority 3 – A more resilient border region

This Priority aims at an increase in interventions in the field of risk prevention and management and an improved capacity and sustainable use of common natural resources through joint initiatives for nature protection.

Specific objective 3.1. “Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, and resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches”

- Optimizing the educational process in regards to the development and the implementation of a disaster response framework aiming to enhance the interface between science and policy for a stronger joint knowledge base for decision-making;
- Actions aimed at strengthening the institutional cooperation in the cross-border region through development of guiding and strategic documentation; exchange of information, knowledge and skills; implementation of joint field trainings, etc.;
- Development and implementation of a specific preparedness programme for border communities to adequately response to natural disasters, including in-situ joint trainings, joint awareness campaigns, etc.;
- Small-scale investments in public training infrastructure and investments in specialised equipment;
- Joint development of protocols, procedures and approaches on risk prevention and rapid response management to many potential emergencies.

🚫 IMPORTANT

The project should demonstrate relevance and interaction with as a minimum requirements of the listed strategic documents and policies described in section 2.6, Part C Project Description, point C 2.5.).

In the scope of this Call for proposal “investment” activities should be understand as work and/or immovable supply. Please consider the following requirements for all “investment” activities:

All works activities should be implemented on a municipal or state-owned property. The property should be:

- free of any encumbrances;
- not the object of a pending litigation;
- not the object of a claim according to the relevant national legislation.

The envisaged works activities have to be supported with approved/certified detailed technical or works design (where applicable according to the relevant legislation of the country (Bulgaria or Serbia), where the works activities will be implemented) and detailed bill of quantities. In case of construction works, for which the relevant legislation does not require approval of a technical or work design, the applicant has to present a statement by the relevant institution/s for this exception of the rule for works design's approval. During the application stage, the project partner/s should be provided valid Building permits (if applicable).

In case of infrastructural activities, land acquisition has to be finalized and respective documents to be presented (if applicable).

All supplies have to be supported by detailed technical specification, relevant unit prices and total price and at least three offers from different providers.

All prices concerning investment activities have to be in Euro.

In case the project proposal includes investment activities, it should have positive environmental impact assessment (EIA), if for such kind of activities an EIA is required by the national legislation.

When the relevant legislation does not require an environmental impact assessment, the applicant has to present a statement by the relevant institution/s for exception of the rule for environmental impact assessment.

In case the project proposal includes investment activities, it should provide document from the relevant body clearly stating that the project proposal is eligible according to the current River Basin Management Plans and Flood risk management plans (for Bulgarian partners) and relevant documents related to Water management (for Serbian partners).

2.5.3 Eligibility of Expenditures

2.5.3.1 General principles

The hierarchy of rules applicable to (INTERREG VI-A) IPA Bulgaria Serbia Programme projects is as follows³:

- European level - EU regulations;
- Programme level - specific rules decided for the (INTERREG VI-A) IPA Bulgaria Serbia Programme;

³ See in the part „Legal basis“

- National/regional level - rules applicable in each Member State;
- Partner institutional level - internal rules applicable to each partner organization.

The partners should first consider EU regulations when budgeting/incurred expenditure. Where EU rules do not stipulate provisions, Programme rules apply. If neither the EU nor the Programme has a set rule, then national/regional legislation applies. Finally, the partner's internal rules should be followed if specific issues have not been covered by previous levels.

Only "eligible costs" can be taken into account for financial support. The budget is therefore both a cost estimate and a maximum ceiling for "eligible costs". Note that the eligible costs must be based on real costs based on supporting documents with some exceptions for which the flat rates, unit costs and lump sum will be applied. The eligibility of expenditure applies to EU and national co-financing as well as beneficiaries' own contributions. The expenditures are generally eligible if they comply with the principles of sound financial management and with the relevant rules for public procurement stated in point 2.3.

To be eligible for financial support under the call for proposals, expenditures must:

- be necessary for carrying out the project and must comply with the principles of sound financial management, in particular value for money and cost-effectiveness;
- be essential for the achievement of the agreed activities and would not be incurred if the project is not carried out (additionality principle);
- have been stipulated in the project budget;
- have actually been incurred and paid by the Lead partner or its partners during the implementing period for the project and in accordance with the provisions stipulated in the subsidy contract (with the exception of flat rates, unit costs and lump sums);
- be registered in the project partner's accounts through a separate accounting system or an adequate accounting code set in place specifically for the project (with the exception of flat rates, unit costs and lump sums);
- be verified as eligible by the controllers designated by the Managing Authority and the National Authority respectively;
- be in line with the provisions of the subsidy contract, European and national legislation, programme rules, including relevant procurement rules stated in point 2.3
- have not been subject to financing from any other public funds;
- comply with the principles of efficiency, effectiveness and economy

2.5.3.2 Non-eligible costs

The list of non-eligible expenditure for the current call for proposal is as follows:

- Interest on debt;
 - The purchase of land and existing buildings;
 - Second hand equipment;
 - Fines, financial penalties and expenditure on legal disputes and litigation;
 - Costs of gifts;
 - Costs related to fluctuation of foreign exchange rate.
 - In-kind contributions (including unpaid voluntary work);
 - Shared costs;
 - Subcontracting between partners and/or associated partners of the same project 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;
- VAT in cases described in point 2.5.3.6.

2.5.3.3 Forms of reimbursement

In order to minimize the administrative burden and to concentrate the efforts in quality implementation of the project activities and achieving the objective and indicators the Simplified Cost Options (SCO) shall be used for reimbursement/budgeting of some of categories of expenditures. Using SCO means also that the human resources and administrative efforts involved in collecting documents and reporting expenditures can be focused more on the achievement of objectives instead of being concentrated on collecting and verifying financial documents. SCO which shall be used in the current call for proposal are:

- Flat rates – % of the defined base costs;
- Lump sums – amounts defined for certain activity;

2.5.3.4 List and description of Eligible Expenditures per categories of costs

The following section provides an overview of the eligibility principles for the different cost categories:

- BC⁴ 1 Staff costs;
- BC 2 Office and administrative costs;

⁴ BC – budget category

- BC 3 Travel and accommodation costs;
- BC 4 External expertise and services costs
- BC 5 Equipment costs;
- BC 6 Costs for infrastructure and works;
- BC 7 Project preparation costs

For each category of expenditures, a definition is provided as well as guidance for budgeting and reporting. Project partners are invited to review this information carefully when planning their budgets.

1. Staff costs

Staff costs include costs related to the organisation's own staff to be involved in project management (project team) and/or tasks related to the project content.

Staff costs must relate to activities which the partner organization would not carry out if the project was not undertaken.

The staff costs shall be limited to the following:

- Salary payments fixed in the employment document (contract, an appointment decision), or by law, relating to the responsibilities specified in the job description of the staff member concerned.
- Any other costs directly linked to the salary such as taxes and social security payments including pensions as long as they are fixed in the employment document or by law and they are in accordance with the legislation and standard practices in the country and/or organization and are not recoverable by the employer.

The appointment of the staff by the beneficiaries has to be made in accordance with the European and national legislation.

- Staff employed by the beneficiary for management of the project (project team)

The members of the project staff employed by the beneficiary for the management of the project for example are project manager, coordinator, accountant, assistant, and etc. The project team members perform periodically repetitive actions related to the organization, coordination, management and reporting of the activities, expenditures and results related to the project during the project period.

- Staff employed by the beneficiary for implementation of activities under the project content

The project staff employed by the beneficiary for implementation of activities under the project for example are experts which perform actions directly related to the project activities, requiring specific expertise which the project partner possesses.

It is the sole right and responsibility of the project partner to: determine the positions and persons needed for the proper functioning of the project team and needed for implementation of the

project activities; conclude/establish the type of contract or any other legal relationship with the team members/staff for project activities and to implement changes in this regard during the project implementation.

At the beginning of the project implementation each beneficiary will be requested to present document (internal order, a letter, etc.) for nomination of the project team members, necessary for the successful implementation of the project activities.

Form of reimbursement:

Within the current call for proposal, staff costs shall be reimbursed as a flat rate of up to 5 % of the eligible costs under BC 4, BC 5 and BC 6 of that operation. The exact percentage of the flat rate should be indicated in the Application form (PART B, partner budget) by each project partner and will remain **unchanged** for the entire project implementation period.

In the verification process the beneficiaries do not need to present supporting documents that the expenditures for staff have been incurred and paid. List of staff members working on the project and any other employment document shall be provided to the programme bodies on request. The project partner has to prove that project team have been established. The proper appointment of the project team in line with the respective legislation is on the responsibility of the beneficiaries themselves.

2. Office and administrative costs

Office and administrative costs cover expenditures related indirectly to the implementation of the project activities.

Office and administrative costs are limited to the following elements:

- a) office rent;
- b) insurance and taxes related to the buildings where the staff is located and to the equipment of the office (e.g. fire, theft insurances);
- c) utilities (e.g. electricity, heating, water);
- d) office supplies;
- e) accounting;
- f) archives;
- g) maintenance, cleaning and repairs;
- h) security;
- i) IT systems;
- j) communication (e.g. telephone, fax, internet, postal services, business cards);
- k) bank charges for opening and administering the account or accounts where the implementation of an operation requires a separate account to be opened;
- l) charges for transnational financial transactions.

Form of reimbursement:

Within the current call for proposal, Office and administrative costs shall be reimbursed as a flat rate of up to 15 % of staff costs. The exact percentage of the flat rate should be indicated in the

Application form (PART B, partner budget) by each project partner and will remain unchanged for the entire project implementation period.

The above list is exhaustive and all listed items are to be considered as covered by the flat rate and cannot be reported under any other budget line or category of costs. If no staff costs are foreseen and reported, no office and administrative costs can be charged.

Please note that the flat rate is directly linked to the staff costs and will always be calculated based on the staff costs.

No supporting documents need to be presented at the reporting stage.

3. Travel and accommodation costs

The category of expenditures covers travel and accommodation costs of project staff and shall be limited to the following cost elements:

- a) travel costs (e.g. tickets, travel and car insurance, fuel, car mileage, toll, and parking fees);
- b) the costs of meals;
- c) accommodation costs;
- d) visa costs;
- e) daily allowances.

Form of reimbursement:

Within the current call for proposal, Travel and accommodation costs shall be reimbursed as a flat rate of up to 15 % of staff costs. The exact percentage of the flat rate should be indicated in the Application form (PART B, partner budget) by each project partner and will remain unchanged for the entire project implementation period.

The project partners should present a justification proving that the amount for the costs for travel and accommodation calculated by the indicated percentage respect the principles of economy, efficiency, effectiveness and are necessary especially for implementation of the project activities.

The above list is exhaustive and all listed items are to be considered as covered by the flat rate and cannot be reported under any other budget line or category of costs. If no staff costs are foreseen and reported, no travel and accommodation costs can be charged.

Please note that the flat rate is directly linked to the staff costs and will always be calculated based on eligible staff costs.

No supporting documents need to be presented at the reporting stage.

🚨 IMPORTANT

Partners cannot report costs covered by the flat rates in BC 1, BC 2 and BC 3 in any other cost category.

4. External expertise and services costs

External expertise and services costs correspond to external expertise and services, provided by a public or private law body or a natural person other than the beneficiaries of the project, which is strictly linked to the project and be essential for its effective implementation. Project Partners and their employees shall not be contracted by another project partner within the same project as an external expert or a subcontractor. Public procurement rules stated in point 2.3 must be respected in selection of the service providers. All costs must comply with other applicable EU and programme information and publicity rules. The costs of external expertise and services shall be paid on the basis of contracts or written agreements of equivalent value, supported by tangible and documented invoices or claims issued by the providers of goods/services.

Eligible expenditure under this category shall be limited to the following:

- Studies or surveys (e.g. evaluations, strategies, concept notes, design plans, handbooks);
- Translations;
- Development, modifications and updates to IT systems and website;
- Promotion, communication, publicity, promotional items and activities or information related to the project;
- Services related to the organization and implementation of events (including rent of hall; rent of translation, audio and etc. equipment; expenses for coffee breaks, refreshments, lunches and dinners for participants in the events)
- Intellectual property rights;
- Expenditures for external experts, lecturers, trainers, moderators, interpreters;
- Travel and accommodation for participants in the events, external experts, lecturers, trainers, moderators, interpreters , chairpersons of meetings and service providers;
- Expenses for purchase of consumables and materials for the participants in the events - paper, files, folders, cases, CDs etc. and printing of invitations, agenda, presentations;
- Other specific expertise and services needed for the project.

⚠ IMPORTANT

All unit rates must be according to the market prices at the time of submission of the project proposals

Form of reimbursement:

Costs related to external expertise and services shall be reimbursed by the Programme on the basis of real costs and supporting documents proving the expenditures need to be presented at the verification stage.

5. Equipment costs

Expenditures for equipment includes costs on equipment purchased, rented, or leased by a partner and which is necessary to achieving the project's objectives.

Equipment costs is limited to the following items:

- office equipment;
- IT hardware and software;
- furniture and fittings;
- laboratory equipment;
- machines and instruments;
- tools or devices;
- vehicles;
- other specific equipment needed for operations.

Equipment should be clearly and strictly linked to the project and exclusively used for the project implementation;

Equipment must be purchased in compliance with public procurement rules, described in point 2.3.

Depreciation costs - for equipment that will not be used by the project partners or the project target group after the project completion and if the economic lifetime of the equipment (respectively – the period of depreciation) is longer than the project duration, only the depreciation costs for the period of project duration are eligible. The depreciation rate has to be in line with national rules. Depreciation is charged proportionally for each relevant period for which a periodical report is required and prepared. The full value of depreciated costs on equipment in relation to the total project duration cannot be charged as total amount for one particular period. Only the proportionate sum of the depreciations costs according to the use of equipment for the project is eligible. The amount percentage used and time duration) has to be properly clarified (auditable). The depreciation costs of equipment can never exceed the purchase price of the equipment.

⚠ IMPORTANT

For equipment rented or leased for certain period during the project lifetime rental or leasing costs for the respective period are eligible.

Form of reimbursement:

Costs related to this budget category shall be reimbursed by the Programme on the basis of real costs and supporting documents proving the expenditures need to be presented at the verification stage.

6. Costs for infrastructure and works

The costs in this category relate to the investment in infrastructure and works, necessary to achieve the objectives of the project.

The expenditures for infrastructure and works shall be limited to the following elements:

- building permits;
- building material;
- labour;
- specialised interventions (such as soil remediation, mine-clearing).
- works;
- supervision of works;
- authors supervision;

⚠ IMPORTANT

Costs of purchase of land and buildings are not eligible

Form of reimbursement:

Costs related to this budget category shall be reimbursed by the Programme on the basis of real costs and supporting documents proving the expenditures need to be presented at the verification stage.

7. Project Preparation costs

Preparation costs shall be limited to the following:

- consultancy, elaboration of technical documentation (incl. feasibility studies, detailed design, technical drawings, etc.);
- elaboration of project proposal and application form, translation of documents, taxes and other charges);
- other costs necessary to submit a valid application form.

Form of reimbursement:

Projects approved for financing by the Monitoring Committee and have concluded Subsidy contract with the Managing Authority are entitled to receive the reimbursement of the preparation costs in a form of a lump sum of EUR 12.000 (project preparation expenditures for projects which concern the construction or modernization of infrastructure; or supplies of specialized non-standardized equipment (off-road vehicles, trash deposit trucks for mountainous areas, etc.)).

The amount shall be included in the lead partner's budget at the application stage. With the first report, the lump sum for preparation costs shall be added to the lead partner's reported expenditure, and shall be verified and reimbursed to the lead partner. The lump sum for

preparation costs is allocated to the lead partner's budget. Nevertheless, to reflect the partners' involvement in the preparation of the application form in a fair and transparent way the partnership should share the preparation costs. The details of how preparation costs will be shared need to be included in the project partnership agreement.

⚡ IMPORTANT

The activities which have already been covered by any other EU funds are not eligible.

The currency to be used to fill the budget tables is EUR.

2.5.3.5 Currency exchange at the verification stage

Expenditure incurred by project partners in a currency other than the EUR shall be converted into Euro by using the monthly accounting rate of the European Commission (http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro_en.cfm) in the month during which expenditure was submitted for verification.

2.5.3.6 Eligible expenditures for VAT

The expenditures for VAT is eligible for operations the total cost of which is below EUR 5 000 000 (including VAT).

The expenditures for VAT is eligible for operation the total cost of which is at least EUR 5 000 000 (including VAT) and where the VAT is non-recoverable under national VAT legislation. 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.

For Serbian partners: The prices stated in the budget should not include VAT. Note that based on the current procedures applied in the Republic of Serbia, Serbian project partners cannot claim VAT recovery even if they are not exempted from VAT, in case the expenditure is incurred prior to signature of the Subsidy contract (e.g. costs for project preparation). The project budget should be planned accordingly.

2.6 How to get the Applicants' Package and fill in the Application Form

Application Form and Annexes must be submitted using the forms included in the Applicants' Package.

Prior to preparation of the project proposal and electronic submission of the project, the potential applicant must carefully review the content of the Application Package, available on the following websites:

- Programme website: <http://www.ipacbc-bgrs.eu/>
- MA website: <https://www.mrrb.bg/>
- NA website: <https://www.mei.gov.rs/eng/>
- EU Structural Funds in Bulgaria website: www.eufunds.bg

The applicant 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 proposal.

Questions may be sent by e-mail to the address listed below, indicating clearly the reference of the Call for Proposals - No 2021TC16IPCB007 – 2022 – 1:

E-mail: ma_ipacbc@mrrb.government.bg

The Application Form and Annexes must be filled in English. The supporting documents issued by national/local authorities or other bodies shall be attached in the original language accompanied by a translation in English.

Please complete the application form and its annexes carefully and as clearly as possible so that it can be assessed properly.

Please complete the Application form and its Annexes carefully and as clearly as possible in order for your Application to be assessed properly.

The electronic version of all documents (file types) must be in line with the mentioned formats as in the table on Section 4 How to submit the Application. Please note that scanned version of the Application Form must be signed on each page by the Lead Partner/signed with electronic signature version of the Application Form must be signed by qualified electronic signature by the Lead partner.

Application Form

PART A – PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

A.1 Project identification

On the Part A.1. of the Application form you should fill the project title, project acronym and project duration. The Programme priority and Programme specific objective are filled in automatically. The Project ID is automatically created. The name of the Lead partner organization (original language or English language) are filled in automatically after filling Part B of the AF.

A.2 Project summary

Here the Project partners must give short overview of the project and described in English the following:

- the common challenge of the programme area you are jointly tackling in your project;
- the overall objective of the project and the expected change your project will make to the current situation;
- the main outputs you will produce and those who will benefit from them;

- the approach you plan to take and why a cross-border approach is needed;
- what is new/original about the project.

A.3 Project budget overview

The information is filled in automatically after filling parts B and E of the AF.

A.4 Project outputs and results overview

The Programme output indicators, Measurement unit, Aggregated value per programme output indicator, Project output number, Project output (Output title), Output target value, Programme result indicator, Result indicator baseline, Measurement unit and Result indicator target value are filled in automatically after filling parts C.4 and C.5 of the AF.

PART B – PROJECT PARTNERS

Partner overview

The organization abbreviation, Partner role in the project, NUTS and Partner total eligible budget are filled in automatically after filling part B and E of the AF.

⚠ IMPORTANT

Please fill the information below for every project partner starting with B.1 for Lead partner / beneficiary

B.1. Project partner 1

- **B.1.1. Project identity**

Select the partner role in the project from the menu.

Indicate the abbreviated name of organisation.

State the official and *full name* of the organization in original language.

State the official and full name of the organization in English.

Indicate the department/unit/division of organisation (if applicable).

Legal and financial information

Select from the drop down menu the type of partner.

Select from the drop down menu the legal status of the partner.

Indicate the VAT number of the partner.

- **B.1.2. Partner address**

Partner main address

State the official address of the partner.

Address of department / unit / division (if applicable)

State the official address of the department / unit / division.

- **B.1.4 Legal representative**

State title, the first and the last name of the legal representative of the organisation

- **B.1.5 Contact person**

State title, the first and the last name of the contact person of the organisation, e-mail and telephone. For project partner 1/ Lead partner - the e-mail of the organization should be the same as in Annex A4, as far as the Programme bodies will use it for official communication with the Lead partner throughout the whole assessment process.

- **B.1.6 Partner motivation and contribution**

Describe the role (contribution and main activities) of your organisation in the project, paying attention to the organisation's thematic competences and experiences relevant for the project. Please indicate the capacity of the partner to implement the project activities (financial, human resources, etc.).

Describe the organisation's experience in participating in and/or managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects.

B.1.7 Partner budget

⚠ IMPORTANT

The partner budget should only be filled in once the project duration in "A.1 Project identification", "B.1.1 Partner identity" and "C.4 Project work plan" are completed. This will help to ensure consistency between financial figures and the planned activities

In the "Partner Budget Options" select the three flat rate options (Staff costs flat rate, Office and administrative costs flat rate and Travel and accommodation flat rate) and fulfil the percentage in accordance with the data in p. 2.5.3 of the current guidelines. After filling the exact flat rate percentages the amount of the respective Budget lines shall be calculated automatically.

For all other categories/budget lines, click on the + Add button to add a new cost item.

For each cost category item, the following details have to be provided:

- Description of the expense
- Comments
- Unit type (e.g. per contract, per item, per day, per participant, etc.)
- Number of units
- Price per unit

Select "+" to add other rows in the cost category.

The cost categories 6 "Equipment" and 7 "Infrastructure and works" have to be filled in by clicking on "+ add". For each type of equipment or infrastructure and works, a clear description of the required item or works needs to be included. Different items or works have to be listed separately, i.e. a new row has to be created and filled in by clicking on "+" for each.

In addition, if the equipment or infrastructure and works form part of an investment that has been included in section “C.4 Project work plan” and are estimated to be equal to or greater than the thresholds described in p. 2.5.3, the respective investment number has to be indicated in Jems by selecting it from the drop-down menu provided under the field “Investment”.

For Serbian partners, the prices stated in the budget should not include VAT.

Co-financing

This table can only be filled in once the partner budget options were selected and the partner budget was completed.

This table displays the co-financing received by the programme and the partner contribution.

The source of funding to be selected from the drop-down menu in the respective field. The ERDF+IPA funds co-financing rate is 85% for all partners and this has to be indicated in the percentage field. The fields in partner contribution and the partner total eligible budget are then automatically calculated.

PART C – PROJECT DESCRIPTION

C.1 Project overall objective

The Programme priority specific objective will be filled automatically.

Project partners should explain clearly how the project overall objective will contribute to the achievement of the Programme priority specific objective and what is the aim to be achieved by the end of the project. The project objective should be realistic and achievable by the end of the project, or shortly after. It should specify who needs project results and in which territory, and to be measurable – please indicate the change you are aiming for.

C.2 Project relevance and context

- **C.2.1 What are the common territorial challenge(s) that will be tackled by the project?**

Please describe why your project is needed in the programme area and the relevance of your project for the programme area, in terms of common challenges and opportunities addressed.

- **C.2.2 How does the project tackle identified common challenges and/or opportunities and what is new about the approach the project takes?**

Please describe new solutions that will be developed during the project and/or existing solutions that will be adopted and implemented during the project lifetime. Describe also in what way the approach goes beyond existing practice in the sector/programme area/participating countries.

- **C.2.3 Why is cross-border cooperation needed to achieve the project’s objectives and result?**

Please describe what the impact of the project on the cross-border area will be. You should

explain why the project objectives cannot be efficiently reached acting only on a national/regional/local level and/or describe what benefits the project partners/target groups/project area/programme area gain in taking a cross-border approach.

- **C.2.4 Who will benefit from your project outputs?**

In the first column of each row, please select one of the pre-defined target groups from the drop-down list. In the second column explain in more detail exactly who will benefit from your project. Please have in mind that you should also quantified realistically the selected target groups.

For example, if you choose the category education, you need to explain which specific schools or groups of schools and in which territory and to provide number of schools.

- **C.2.5 How does the project contribute to wider strategies and policies?**

Please select from the drop down menu to which strategies and policies your project will contribute. Then describe in what way you will contribute.

As a minimum requirement, the project should contribute to:

- European Union Civil Protection Mechanism;
- European Union Strategy for Danube;
- Strategy for Western Balkans;
- Strategic Aim 2 of National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy "Capacity building for disaster risk management at all administrative levels of government";
- Law on disaster risk reduction and emergency management, Serbia;
- National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (2018-2030 r.), Bulgaria;
- National Programme for Disaster Risk Reduction (2021-2025), Bulgaria;
- Disaster Protection Act (issued 2006, last amended and add. from July 7, 2020), Bulgaria.

The project shall contribute to the to the Green public procurement and may also contribute to the New Bauhaus Initiative.

- **C.2.6 Which synergies with past or current EU and other projects or initiatives will the project make use of?**

Please indicate the synergies of the project with past or current EU and other projects or initiatives.

- **C.2.7 How does the project build on available knowledge?**

Please describe the experiences/lessons learned that the project draws on, and other available knowledge the project capitalises on.

C.3 Project partnership

Describe the structure of your partnership and explain why these partners are needed to implement the project and to achieve project objectives. What is the contribution of each partner to the project?

C.4 Project work plan

Each project specific objective has a work plan (work package). Applicant can define more than one specific objective. This means that the project will have as many work packages as it will have specific objectives defined. It is recommended to have up to 3 work packages, but in some cases up to 5 should also be acceptable.

Only thematic work packages will be used. WP Project management is not a work package – instead, questions about how the project will be managed are in C.7. Communication activities also don't have a separate WP – instead, they are embedded in the thematic work packages.

There are also no separate investment work packages. The applicant will need to provide additional information about investments that will be included in the thematic work packages.

- **C.4.1 Work package 1 – Repeat of the whole section C.4.1 for each work package**

Objectives

- Indicate the work package title.
- Define one project specific objective that will be achieved when all activities in this work package are implemented and outputs delivered.

Please have in mind that your objectives should be:

- realistic and achievable by the end of the project;
 - specific (who needs project outputs delivered in this work package, and in which territory);
 - measurable – indicate the change you are aiming for.
- Please indicate the communication objective that will contribute to the achievement of the specific objective. Communication objectives aim at changes in a target audience's behavior, knowledge or belief.

Investments

- The investment number is filled in automatically.
- Please indicate the investment title and the expected delivery period.
- In section Justification you should include the following information:
 - Explain why this investment is needed;
 - Clearly describe the cross-border relevance of the investment;
 - Describe who is benefiting (e.g., partners, regions, target groups, etc.) from this investment, and in what way.
- Location of the physical investment - please describe a specific address where the investment will be located (select the country from the drop down menu and enter the city name).
- Risks associated with the investment - describe the risk associated with the investment, go/no-go decisions, etc. (if any).
- Investment documentation
 - Please list all technical requirements and permissions (e.g., building permits) required for

the investment according to the respective national legislation. Please attach them to this application form.

- Ownership – please answer to the following questions:
 - Who owns the site where the investment is located?
 - Who will retain ownership of the investment at the end of the project?
 - Who will take care of the maintenance of the investment? How will this be done?

Activities

Please describe the activities in this work package by which the project achieves the project specific objective and related communication objective(s).

List of activities

Activity 1.1 (repeat for each activity, using the button "Add activity")

State the title of activity.

Select from the drop down menu the period of implementation of the activity.

Please describe the activity.

Select from the drop down menu the partner/s involved in implementation of the activity.

- Deliverables

Please add deliverables to your activity (repeat for each deliverable)

- Specify the deliverable title;
- Include short description of deliverable;
- Select from the drop down menu the delivery period.

Outputs

List of outputs

Based on the activities you need to implement to achieve the specific objective in this work package, please list below the outputs that will be delivered during the implementation. Please have in mind that the outputs should contribute directly to programme output indicators; i.e., have the same measurement unit and can be aggregated on project and programme level.

Output 1.1 (repeat for each output, using the button "Add output")

Please state the output title.

Select from the drop down menu the Programme output indicator related to the output.

The measurement unit will be filled automatically.

Write down the target value of the output (number).

Select from the drop down menu the delivery period of the output.

Describe in more detail what will be delivered.

C.5 Project Results

Please describe what do you expect to change because of the activities you plan to implement and the outputs you plan to deliver? Please take a look at the programme result indicators and select those that you will contribute to.

Result 1 (repeat for each result, using the button “Add result”)

Please select from the drop down menu the Programme result indicator to which the project contributes.

The measurement unit will be filled automatically.

The baseline of the selected result indicator is prefilled.

Fill the target value of the result indicator.

Select from the drop down menu the delivery period of the result.

Result description - describe in more detail the change expected.

C.6 Project Time Plan

The overview table is automatically generated from thematic work packages. It display activities (length), deliverables (delivery period), outputs (delivery period) and results (delivery period).

The time plan shows only periods, not months. The length of periods is 3 months.

C.7 Project management

In addition to the thematic work you will do in your project, you will need time and resources for coordination and internal communication. Please describe below how you plan to organise yourself to ensure the project work runs smoothly.

- **C.7.1 How will you coordinate your project?**

Please describe who will be responsible for coordination? Will you have any other management structures (e.g., thematic groups, WP managers)? How will the internal communication work?

- **C.7.2 Which measures will you take to ensure quality in your project?**

Describe specific approaches and processes and responsible partners to ensure quality in your project. If you plan to have any type of project evaluation, please describe its purpose and scope here.

- **C.7.3 What will be the general approach you will follow to communicate about your project?**

Who will coordinate project communication and how will he/she ensure the involvement of all partners? How will the communication function contribute to transfer your project results? Please note that all communication activities should be included in the work packages, as an integral part of your project. There is no need to repeat this information here.

- **C.7.4 How do you foresee the financial management of the project and reporting procedures for activities and budget (within the partnership and towards the programme)?**

Please define responsibilities, deadlines in financial flows, reporting flows, project related transfers, reclaims, etc.

- **C.7.5 Cooperation criteria**

The proposal must demonstrate the importance of the cross-border approach to the topic addressed and must respect the principles of Joint Development and Joint Implementation. In addition, the partners should choose at least one of the following criteria as well: Joint staffing or Joint financing. Please check the cooperation criteria and fill the column Description, when you should explain how the project meets each of the cooperation criteria. You have to describe what the exact role of each partner organization is for each cooperation criteria.

- **C.7.6 Horizontal principles**

Please indicate which type of contribution to following horizontal principles applies to the project (positive effect, neutral or negative effect):

- Sustainable development as set out in Article 11 TFEU, taking into account the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, the "Do No Significant Harm" principle;
- Equal opportunities and non-discrimination based on gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation;
- Equality between men and women, gender mainstreaming and the integration of a gender perspective.

Please describe and justify your choice. Please note that the coherence with the horizontal principles should be evident from the description of the project activities as well.

C.8 Long-term plans

The programme will support project that have a long-lasting effect in the territory and those who will benefit from it. Please describe below what you will do to ensure this.

- **C.8.1 Ownership**

Please describe who will ensure the financial and institutional support for the outputs/deliverables developed by the project (e.g., tools), and explain how these outputs/deliverables will be integrated in the work of the institutions.

- **C.8.2 Durability**

Some outputs/deliverables should be used by relevant groups (project partners or others) after the project's lifetime, in order to have a lasting effect on the territory and the population. For example, new practices in urban transport need to be used by local authorities to have cleaner air

in the city, and the whole population will benefit from this. Please describe how your outputs/deliverables will be used after the project ends and by whom.

- **C.8.3 Transferability**

Some outputs/deliverables that you will deliver could be adapted or further developed to be used by other target groups or in other territories. What will you do to make sure that relevant groups are aware of your outputs/deliverables and are able to use them?

PART D - PROJECT BUDGET

D.1 Project budget per co-financing source (fund) - breakdown per partner

The table is filled automatically.

D.2 Project budget - overview per partner / per cost category

The table is filled automatically.

PART E - PROJECT LUMP SUMS AND UNIT COSTS

E.1 Project lump sums

Project lump sums table.

In this table you can define your project lump sums. Please choose the applicable lump sums from the dropdown and allocate the lump sum cost to project partner(s).

3 Annexes

⚠ IMPORTANT

The Application Form, all Annexes (A) and Supporting Documents (B) must be presented in scanned version (or signed with qualified electronic signatures) using the Electronic System (Jems).

Each document from the lists below must be signed and dated (or dated and signed with qualified electronic signature) according to the requirements, and then scanned (or presented) and titled as a separate file.

In case of signed with electronic signature documents, the qualified electronic signature should be issued to the legal representative of the respective project partner as such and not as individuals.

In case a project proposal is selected for contracting, the Managing Authority shall request from the Applicant to present the online submitted documents in original paper version as well. Failure to do so on the part of the Applicant, or in case

discrepancies are found between the scanned and paper versions of the documents, shall result in decline of signature of Subsidy contract.

Regardless of the above, throughout the whole assessment and selection process the Managing Authority reserves its right to ask the Applicant to submit the already presented scanned documents in hard copies as well, in order to verify their correctness.

3.1 Annexes (A)

The following Annexes should be filled in according to the template and submitted together with the Application form:

- A1. Project Partnership Agreement – signed and dated by each partners**
- A2. Partnership and co-financing statement – signed, dated and provided by each partner**
- A3. Project partner declaration - signed and dated by each partners**
- A4. Declaration of e-mail address of the Lead Partner – signed and dated by the Lead partner**

⚡ IMPORTANT

All the annexes may be signed electronically with qualified electronic signatures. In case the Annexes are signed with qualified electronic signatures, it should be dated, but the stamps of the respective organizations are not required.

In case of signed with electronic signature Annexes, the qualified electronic signature should be issued to the legal representative of the respective project partner as such and not as individuals.

⚡ IMPORTANT

Please note that the e-mail address, provided by the Lead partner in Annex A4, shall be used by the Programme bodies as the only official communication channel with the Applicant during the entire assessment, selection and budget optimization and projects' content modifications in terms of requests for additional clarifications, notification for selection results, etc.

The e-mail address should be functional and must be regularly used and checked by the Lead partner, as the Managing Authority shall bear NO responsibility in cases when the Applicant does not respond to a clarification request within the set deadline or fails to meet other deadlines!

Furthermore, any requests for clarifications and notifications shall be deemed to have been received on the date upon which the Managing Authority has sent them to the Lead partner at the e-mail address.

3.2 Supporting Documents (B)

The following Supporting documents should be provided and submitted together with the Application form:

B1. Document indicating legal status: Documentary and other evidence (issued in the original language and English translation signed / signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization as true copy) on the most recent legal status of all partners (issued not later than 6 months prior to the submission deadline of the current call). In the cases when the applicable document does not show the legal representative of the organization, additional document should be provided (the act of appointment/nomination, decision of municipal election commission, etc.) showing clearly the name of the person with representative authority.

The document on the recent legal status should indicate also the date of establishment of the organization, the place of establishment (registration) and scope of territory competence (if applicable), and it should prove the eligibility of the organization in accordance to all criteria stated above in section 2.5.1. In case the issued document does not justify all of the above circumstances, other documents could be provided, like the act of establishment or certificates from superior authorities (Ministries, Agencies, District governments, Inspectorates).

B2. Decision of Local Council/ Board of Directors/ any similar body or managing person (for 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 – issued in the original language and English translation **signed /signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization as true copy**. This decision will indicate the legal representative of the partner.

Decision for project development, implementation and ensuring the sustainability of the project results has to be provided in all cases, no matter whether sole or collective managing authority takes the decisions in the organization.

In the cases where the executive authority is different from the collective managing body, the decision has to be taken by the second one.

⚡ IMPORTANT

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.

B3. Legalized mandates of delegation from the legal representatives of partners (in case the application form and/or annexed declarations partnership agreement are not signed by the legal representatives of the Lead Partner/partners) – **issued in the original language** and English

translation **signed /signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization as true copy.**

In case the signatures are of a deputy by rights, the act certifying the substitution by rights has to be presented together with the act for nomination of the person at the position of a deputy. When giving a mandate of delegation the legal representative has to present evidences that his/her rights for delegation are not limited by any means.

B4. 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. 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;
- any other additional information the applicant may find appropriate for justification of the proposed cost.

⚠ IMPORTANT

In addition to all annexes (A1-A4) and supporting documents (B1-B4), the following supporting documents must be presented for the investment activities:

B5. Supporting documents concerning INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES ONLY

B5.1. All investment activities have to be performed on **municipal or state-owned** property:

- Ownership act or certificate (or other legal document according national legislation) for municipal or state ownership of the tangible assets, which will be subject of works activities together with recent outline/design of the property – issued in the original language and English translation **signed/ signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization as true copy.** In the case the project envisages the purchase of supplies, which need to be permanently installed, it is necessary to submit an ownership act for municipal or state-owned property as well;
- Consent of the owner (Decision of the Council, Board, etc.), clearly stating that the assets are given for free right of use for the purpose of the project at least for 5 years after end of the project – issued in the original language and English translation **signed/signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization as true copy.**

The consent should be signed by the person/body with the decision-taking authority (e.g. the Municipal Council, not the Mayor).

Consent of the owner is necessary in all cases even when the partner is the owner of the

assets. In case the assets are owned by a partner the consent can be given in the same act (document) as the one containing the Decision for project development and implementation described in section B2.

In the case of permanent installation of supplies or equipment on municipal or state-owned property (immovable supply/ equipment items like outdoor equipment, kiosks, permanent video walls etc.), consent of the owner clearly stating that the assets are given for free right of use for the purpose of the project at least for 5 years after the end of the project should be presented as well.

B5.2. In case of investment activities required passing through private territories the consent of the owners must be obtained and presented in a due legal form and copy of the ownership act – issued in the original language and English translation **signed/ signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization as true copy.**

B5.3. In case of investment activities within territories/objects with special status (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 - issued in the original language and English translation **signed/ signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization as true copy.**

B5.4. Copy of letter issued by the relevant body clearly stated that Environmental Impact Assessment is not necessary - issued in the original language and English translation **signed / signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization as true copy.**

- **OR**

Copy of positive Environmental Impact Assessment (positive opinion from the relevant body), required by the national legislation - issued in the original language and English translation **stamped and signed / signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization as true copy.**

B5.5. Copy of letter issued by the relevant body clearly stating that the project proposal is eligible according to the current River Basin Management Plans and Flood risk management plans (issued in original language and English translation **signed/ signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization as true copy) for Bulgarian Partners and copy of relevant documents related to Water management (for Serbian partners).**

B5.6. Explanatory note for the envisaged prevention measures for avoiding pollution of water bodies in emergency situations by respective organization (issued in English, **signed/ signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization) is presented – if applicable.**

B5.7. Approved Detailed Works Design (if applicable according to the relevant legislation), issued in the original language and English translation **signed/ signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization as true copy.** English translation should be provided at least of the Explanatory Notes of each of the project design parts, Bill of

Quantities, Cover sheets of technical drawings and any other parts of the investment project designs that the applicant thinks might contribute to better assessment.

A) In case of investment activities which according to national legislation **require approval** of works design applicants should present:

- Approved Detailed technical or Works Design;

For Bulgarian partners

The works design (in the means of Chapter 8, section 1 from Bulgarian Spatial Law) should be elaborated according to Ordinance 4/21.05.2001 for the volume and the content of investment projects. The works design should be approved by the relevant authority, which should be certified with the seal of the authority placed on the investment project designs.

For Bulgarian partners the authority responsible for the approval of the investment project designs is defined in article 145 (1) from Bulgarian Spatial Law.

For Serbian partners

Project for Works Design (Projekat za gradjevinsku dozvolu), elaborated in accordance to the Law on Planning and Construction of Republic Serbia. In case that Project for works design is not mandatory for the planned construction works according to the Serbian legislation - **Preliminary Design** (Idejni projekat), elaborated in accordance to the Law on Planning and Construction of Republic Serbia, valid on the date of deadline for submission of project proposals under the current call;

All construction activities (for both Bulgarian and Serbian partners) should be supported by:

- Explanatory note;
- Bill of quantities and prices (referred to here and afterwards as Bill of quantities) including all parts of the investment project designs;

The Bill of Quantities should be presented in the form of a table with indicated at least type of the construction works, unit, estimated quantity, unit price, amount of the type of the construction works, total amount of the bill of the quantity. Where possible the Bill of Quantities should be supported with a breakdown per investment sites or per parts of the investment project designs. Calculations for the unit prices of the types of construction/repair works may also be presented.

The Bill of Quantity may be presented in the local currency of the project partner. In these case the table of the Bill of quantity should mandatory 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.

The Serbian partners should convert the local currency into EUR using the monthly exchange rate of the European Commission for the month of the submission of the project proposal.

B) In case of investment activities which according to national legislation **do not require**

approval of works design applicants should present:

- Scheme/ plan of the object/s of intervention;
- Explanatory note, describing the envisaged construction/repair works;
- Bill of quantity (as described under point A) above);
- Statement by the competent authority, which declares that the envisaged construction/repair works do not require approval of works design.

B5.8. Valid Construction permit for each partner envisaging construction works (if applicable according to the relevant legislation) (issued in original language and English translation **signed/ signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization as true copy**).

Serbian partner should present Valid decision on construction permit (Rešenje o građevinskoj dozvoli) issued according article 135 of the Law on Planning and Construction of Republic Serbia in force, **or valid decision on approval of construction works** (Rešenje o odobrenju izvođenja radova) issued according article 145 of the Law on Planning and Construction of Republic Serbia in force. In the case of construction works for which issuing of the Decision on construction permit or the Decision on approval of construction works design is not mandatory, the applicants have to present a **statement by the relevant institutions** for the exception of necessity to obtain an Act/Permit/Decision, issued in the original language and to present situation drawings, supported with the following documents, translated in English: Explanatory note and detailed Bill of Quantities.

B5.9 In case of Supply of equipment the applicants should present:

- **Technical specification for supplies** (in English, signed/signed with qualified electronic signatures by the respective partner) – the detailed specification should be clear enough for determination of the seeking deliverables (if applicable);
- At least 3 official offers from different providers for the envisaged supply (signed by respective provider) [OR market research on the basis of company catalogues OR historical data for concluded contracts from previous similar deliveries](#) - issued in the original language and English translation signed by respective organization as true copy.

⚠ IMPORTANT

Please note that in the technical specifications for supplies the trademarks and models must not be indicated!

Any other documents/permissions/authorizations/etc. concerning the project should be provided as Annexes.

⚠ IMPORTANT

In addition project partners may present separate documents with justification of expenditures planned in the budget for implementation of different activities. These

documents will be taken into account during the assessment and budget optimization and projects' content modifications procedures.

⚠ IMPORTANT

Supporting documents must be supplied also in English translation (signed by respective organization as true copy or signed with qualified electronic signature by the legal representative of the respective organization) or at least the relevant parts of these documents, proving the partners' eligibility must be translated in English. The translated version will prevail for the purposes of evaluation of the application.

3.3 Documents for information (C)

The following documents are provided for information only:

C. Subsidy contract - draft version (for information purposes only).

⚠ IMPORTANT

The Assessment Working Group/Evaluation Committee may request additional documents or corrections at any stage of the assessment.

4 How to Submit the Application

⚠ IMPORTANT















The project proposal must be submitted entirely in electronic form using the Jems System. No paper submission of documentation is required. Detailed instructions for access to the electronic system and submission of project proposal are provided in Attachment 3 "Instruction for electronic submission of project proposal" to these Guidelines for Applicant. In case of signing of documents with detached electronic signature, the files should be uploaded in the Jems as single archived document.






















The Annexes must be submitted using the forms included in the Application Package. Modifying the standard Annexes will result in the rejection of the Application.

















The Application Form must be filled in English. The Supporting documents issued by national/ local authorities or other bodies shall be attached in the original language accompanied by a translation into English (as described in Section 3.2).

The documents issued by public authorities or other bodies should be scanned (when are issued on paper) or presented signed with qualified electronic signature of the respective authority/other bodies issued the document (in case are signed with electronic signature). The documents for the project partners should be uploaded in Jems, section Application annexes, in respective section for each project partner. The documents related to investments, described in Work packages, should be uploaded to the respective number of investment in section Application annexes,

Investment documentation. The signed/ signed with qualified electronic signature final version of the AF should be uploaded in section Application annexes, Application attachments. The file formats of the appendixes (.doc, .pdf, .jpg, etc.) has to be as stated in the pattern:

File	Names and Formats of the Documents	Explanations
	AF_ipacbcgrs_name.pdf	This should be a scanned document - signed by Lead partner on each page or signed with qualified electronic signature
	Annex_A.1_Project Partnership agreement.pdf	This should be a scanned document or signed with qualified electronic signatures
	Annex_A.2_Partnership and co-financing statement_PP1.pdf	This should be a scanned document or signed with qualified electronic signature
	Annex_A.2_Partnership and co-financing statement_PP2.pdf	This should be a scanned document or signed with qualified electronic signature
pdf	And so on for all partners
	Annex_A.3_Partners declaration_PP1.pdf	This should be a scanned document or signed with qualified electronic signature
	Annex_A.3_Partners declaration_PP2.pdf	This should be a scanned document or signed with qualified electronic signature
pdf	And so on for all partners
	Annex_A.4_Declaration of E-mail address of the Lead Partner.pdf	This should be a scanned document or signed with qualified electronic signature
	B1_Legal status PP....._en.pdf	The legal status of PP... in English (only for Serbian project partners)
	B1_Legal status PP....._rs.pdf	The legal status of PP.. in original – in Serbian language (only for Serbian project partners)
pdf	And so on for all Serbian partners
	B2_Decision PP1_en.pdf	The Decision of Local Council/Board of Directors of PP1 in English
	B2_Decision PP1_bg/rs.pdf	The Decision of Local Council/Board of Directors of PP1 in original
pdf	And so on for all partners
	B3_PP1_en.pdf	The Legalized mandates of delegation of PP1 in English
	B3_PP1_bg/rs.pdf	The Legalized mandates of delegation of PP1 in original
pdf	And so on for all partners
	B4_PP1_en.pdf	Justification of lump sum costs for PP1 in English
	B4_PP2_en.pdf	Justification of lump sum costs for PP2 in English
pdf	And so on for all partners
	B5.1_PP1_Ownership_en.pdf	The Ownership act or certificate for municipal or state-owned property of PP1 in English
	B5.1_PP1_Ownership_bg/rs.pdf	Ownership act or certificate for municipal or state-owned property of PP1 in original
	B5.1_PP1_Agreement_en.pdf	The Agreement with the owner of PP1 in English
	B5.1_PP1_Agreement_bg/rs.pdf	The Agreement with the owner of PP1 in original
pdf	And so on for all partners
	B5.2_PP1_ Consent_en.pdf	The Consent of the Owners concerning private territories of PP1 in English
	B5.2_PP1_ Consent_bg/rs.pdf	The Consent of the Owners concerning private territories of PP1 in original

pdf	And so on for all partners
	B5.2_PP1_Ownership _en.pdf	Ownership act concerning private territories of PP1 in English
	B5.2_PP1_Ownership _bg/rs.pdf	Ownership act concerning private territories of PP1 in original
pdf	And so on for all partners
	B5.3_PP1Special territories_en.pdf	Documentation (permits, approvals, certificates, statements, etc.) for construction in special territories of PP1 in English
	B5.3_PP1Special territories_bg/rs.pdf	Documentation (permits, approvals, certificates, statements, etc.) for construction in special territories of PP1 in original
pdf	And so on for all partners
	B5.4_EIA_PP1_en.pdf	Positive Environment Impact Assessment or letter that it is not necessary of PP1 in English
	B5.4_EIA_PP1_bg/rs.pdf	Positive Environment Impact Assessment or letter that it is not necessary of PP1 in original.
pdf	And so on for all partners
	B5.5_PP...._en.pdf	Letter that the project proposal is eligible according to the current River Basin Management Plans and Flood risk management plans in English (for Bulgarian partners) and relevant documents related to Water management (for Serbian partners) in English
	B5.5_PP..._bg/rs.pdf	Letter that the project proposal is eligible according to the current River Basin Management Plans and Flood risk management plans in Bulgarian (for Bulgarian partners) and relevant documents related to Water management (for Serbian partners) in original language.
pdf	And so on for all Bulgarian partners
	B5.6_PP1_en.pdf	Explanatory note for the envisaged prevention measures for avoiding pollution of water bodies in emergency situations in English for PP1
	B5.6_PP2_en.pdf	Explanatory note for the envisaged prevention measures for avoiding pollution of water bodies in emergency situations in English for PP2
pdf	And so on for all partners
	B5.7_PP1_works design_en.pdf	Approved detailed works design or statement that the envisaged construction/repair works do not require approval of works design of PP1 in English In case of investment activities which according to national legislation do not require approval of works design - Scheme/ plan of the object/s of intervention of PP1 in English.
	B5.7_PP1_works design_bg/rs.pdf	Approved detailed works design or statement that the envisaged construction/repair works do not require approval of works design of PP1 in original. In case of investment activities which according to national legislation do not require approval of works design - all available construction documentation for the site, Scheme/ plan of the object/s of intervention of PP1 in original.
pdf	And so on for all partners
	B5.7_PP1_Explanatory note_en.pdf	Explanatory note from the Approved detailed works design/Explanatory note, describing the envisaged construction/repair works of PP1 in English
	B5.7_PP1_Explanatory note_bg/rs.pdf	Explanatory note from the Approved detailed works design/Explanatory note, describing the envisaged construction/repair works of PP1 in original

pdf	And so on for all partners
	B5.7_PP1_Explanatory note_en.doc	Explanatory note from the Approved detailed works design/Explanatory note, describing the envisaged construction/repair works of PP1 in English
	B5.7_PP1_Explanatory note_bg/rs.doc	Explanatory note from the Approved detailed works design/Explanatory note, describing the envisaged construction/repair works of PP1 in original
doc	And so on for all partners
	B5.7_PP1_Bill of Quantities_en.pdf	Bill of Quantities from the Approved detailed works design/Bill of quantity of PP1 in English
	B5.7_PP1_Bill of Quantities_bg/rs.pdf	Bill of Quantities from the Approved detailed works design/ Bill of quantity of PP1 in original
pdf	And so on for all partners
	B5.7_PP1_Bill of Quantities_en.xls	Bill of Quantities from the Approved detailed works design/Bill of quantity of PP1 in English
	B5.7_PP1_Bill of Quantities_bg/rs.xls	Bill of Quantities from the Approved detailed works design/ Bill of quantity of PP1 in original
xls	And so on for all partners
	B5.8_PP1_Construction permit_en.pdf	Valid Construction permit for PP1 in English
	B5.8_PP1_Construction permit_bg/rs.pdf	Valid Construction permit for PP1 in original
pdf	And so on for all partners
	B5.9_PP1_en.pdf	Detailed technical specification for supplies of PP1 in English. Offers for the supplies OR market research on the basis of company catalogues OR historical data for concluded contracts from previous similar deliveries of PP1 in English
	B5.9_PP1_bg/rs.pdf	Detailed technical specification for supplies of PP1 in original. Offers for the supplies OR market research on the basis of company catalogues OR historical data for concluded contracts from previous similar deliveries of PP1 in original
pdf	And so on for all partners

5 Deadline for Receipt of Applications

⚡ IMPORTANT

The deadline for submission of the Project proposal in Jems system is 5th April 2023, 17:00 h Bulgarian local time.

The application registered **after the deadline** will automatically **be rejected**.

6 Assessment and selection of applications

The project assessment and selection criteria prepared by the Managing Authority together with the National Authority and the Joint Secretariat are approved by the Monitoring Committee (MC). The assessment of the project proposal is performed by Assessment Working Group (AWG), consisting of Chairperson, Secretary and voting members, all from the Managing Authority (MA), the National Authority (NA) and the Joint Secretariat (JS-main office and JS-Branch), and consists the following parts:

- Preparatory activities and verification of the submitted proposal – performed by the AWG;
- Administrative compliance and eligibility check – performed by the AWG;
- Technical and quality assessment – performed by representatives of MA and NA, supported by the AWG.

⚠ IMPORTANT

The application registered after the deadline will automatically be rejected and will not be subject of assessment.

In order to be proposed for financing, the project must be submitted within the deadline, must fulfil all the administrative, eligibility and technical and quality criteria.

The results of the assessment step will be summarized in the form of report by the AWG and presented to the MC for approval.

The Lead partner will be informed with an official letter, signed by the MA on behalf of MC, about the decision of the MC on the approval/rejection of the project.

Potential applicant may find below the project assessment and selection criteria.

Before the assessment of the project proposal begins, a preparatory meeting of the AWG is organized. The purpose of the meeting is that all members of the AWG get familiar with the Guidelines for Applicants and Application Package, as well as the rules to be observed during the entire evaluation process.

At the conclusion of the preparatory meeting the Chairperson of the AWG verifies the electronic submission of project proposal through the Jems.

Only the proposal having met the submission deadline is subject to assessment.

The administrative compliance and eligibility check will be carried out by voting members of the AWG under the supervision of the Chairperson. The proposal will be examined by representatives of each country, filling in "yes" or "no" answer in the administrative compliance and eligibility check part of the grid, as published below.

If the project proposal has received "No" on a specific criterion/a, the AWG could request additional documentation or corrections of the already submitted documents or project proposal.

The Assessment Working Group may request submission of additional documents / corrections of already submitted proposal / certified translation in English of any Supporting Document (in case the presented translation is considered as not convincing) during entire evaluation process.

All requests for additional documentation/corrections shall be sent to the email address, provided by the Lead partner in Annex A4, which shall be used as the only official communication channel with the Applicant during the entire assessment process, and will contain clear instruction concerning the deadline for submission of the information and any other instruction if necessary. The deadline for submission of the information by the Applicant will to be defined, depending on the type of the requested information/correction/supporting document/s but shall be not less than

5 working days. The Managing Authority shall bear NO responsibility in cases when the Applicant does not respond to a clarification request within the set deadline. Furthermore, any requests for clarifications and notifications shall be deemed to have been received on the date upon which the Managing Authority has sent them to the Lead partner at the e-mail address, provided in Annex A4.

The aim of the quality assessment is the project proposal to be evaluated in relation to the set objectives and priorities, and ensures that the selected operation comply with the specific objective 3.1 and which will guarantee the visibility of the Community funding.

The technical and quality assessment of the project proposal is carried out taking into account the submitted project proposal, annexes and supporting documents, including the additionally requested documents and corrections.

The technical and quality part of the assessment will be performed on the basis of specific selection criteria, grouped in four general sections in the technical and quality assessment grid, as published below:

- **Section 1: Partnership Relevance** – the assessment should check the ability of the project partners to perform functions effectively, efficiently and sustainably. The project partners should be capable of ensuring quality of the final product or service, and efficient, transparent allocation of resources;
- **Section 2: Project Relevance and Cooperation Character** – the assessment should check whether the project has clearly contributing to priority 3, specific objective, 3.1 , and whether the content of the proposal properly fits the selected priority and specific objective or not. The assessment should also verify the coherence of the project with wider strategies and its value added, providing coherence with the following horizontal principles: sustainable development, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, equality between men and women. The assessment should also check the cross-border impact of the project and if the output and result indicators are quantified and relevant;
- **Section 3: Project Intervention Logic** – the proposed project work packages should be assessed according their logic consistency objectives-outputs. The assessment should verify if the activities of the work packages are realistic, well defined and justified and if the project outputs and results are realistic and contribute to programme indicators. The strategic project should has clear and justified potential for durability and transferability of the project results;
- **Section 4: Operational Assessment** – the assessment should check the envisaged project time plan, the proposed activities and deliverables – if are relevant and lead to planned outputs and results, as well as distribution of tasks among partners. The assessment should verify if the communication and visibility activities appropriate and efficient, if the project budget is realistic, logically planned and is in accordance with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

The proposal shall be assessed by two different external assessors representatives of MA and NA (one from each participating country) working separately and producing their own independent

assessment for each question, in accordance with the provided grid. The project proposal will receive for each sub criterion included in the core selection criteria a “yes” and “no” answer and comments. The Assessors have to justify their assessment with clear, objective and relevant comments for each section under the supervision of the Chairperson and the voting members of the AWG.

The assessors will also make final conclusion/recommendation on the application, which will consist of a short critical analysis of the proposal, followed by a list of the main strong and weak points for each section of the evaluation grid.

In case the proposal does not fulfill some criteria, the proposal will be returned for modification and/or additional clarification and a deadline for its re-submission will be set.

In order to be funded the project should fulfill all the conditions mentioned in the evaluation sheet.

PART ADMINISTRATIVE AND ELIGIBILITY COMPLIANCE CHECK

ADMINISTRATIVE PART (to be filled by Assessment Working Group member)	
Project No	
Lead Partner	
Partner/s	
Project title	

No	CRITERIA FOR ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLIANCE	YES	NO	Not applicable	COMMENTS
1	The Application Form is duly completed. The version of the Application Form in Jems is fully identical to the pdf/signed with qualified electronic signature version of the Application Form. The pdf version of the Application Form is signed on each page by Lead partner / signed with qualified electronic signature version of the Application Form is signed by the Lead partner				
2	All sections of the Application Form are typed in English.				
3	Project Partnership Agreement signed and dated /signed with qualified electronic signatures by all partners is provided (Annex A1).				
4	Partnership and co-financing statement is provided (Annex A2) by each partner – signed and dated in pdf or with qualified electronic signature.				
5	Project partner declaration by each partner is provided (Annex A3) – signed and dated for pdf /signed and dated for signed with qualified electronic signature.				

6	Declaration of the e-mail address of the Lead partner is provided –signed and dated in pdf or signed with qualified electronic signature (Annex A4)				
No	SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS	YES	NO	Not applicable	COMMENTS
7	Documentary and other evidence (issued in original language and English translation signed/signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization as true copy) on the most recent legal status of Serbian partners is provided (issued not later than 6 months prior the date of application) it contains all the attributes described in section 3.2 of the Guidelines for Applicants. In case of Subsidiary structure(s) of local/regional/national authorities situated in the programme area acting as partner(s) – the respective act with assignment of the functioning of the unit in the definite territory is attached.				
8	Decision of the managing authority of the each project partner: Local Council /Board of Directors / any similar body or managing person regarding the project development, implementation and ensuring the sustainability of the project results for five years after completion of the implementation period is provided (issued in original language and English translation signed/signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization as true copy). Letter of Support for implementation of the project, issued by the respective first level administrator is provided for the Bulgarian partners that are second-level budget administrators. The letter clearly stating 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.				
9	Legalized mandates of delegation from the legal representatives of partners (in case the application form and/or annexed declarations and/or partnership agreement are not signed by the legal representatives of the Lead Partner/partners) – issued in original language and English translation is/are presented				
10	Justification for expenditures planned as a total amount – provided by each partner with expenditure planned as a total amount under Budget category 4 "External expertise and				

	services” (in English, signed/signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization as true copy).				
11	All investment activities will be performed on municipal or state-owned property				
12	Ownership act or certificate for municipal or state-owned property of the tangible assets, which will be subject of works activities (issued in original language and English translation signed by respective organization as true copy), together with recent outline/design of the property (certified by the partner that is a true copy)				
13	In the case the project envisages the purchase of supplies which need to be permanently installed - an ownership act on municipal or state-owned property activities (issued in original language and English translation signed/signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization as true copy).				
14	Consent of the owner clearly stating that the assets are given for free right of use for the purpose of the project at least for 5 years after end of the project (issued in original language and English translation signed/signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization as true copy). The consent should be signed by the person/body with the decision-making authority (e.g. the Municipal Council, not the Mayor). In the case of permanent installation of supplies or equipment on municipal or state-owned property (immovable supply/equipment items like outdoor equipment, etc.) - consent of the owner clearly stating that the assets are given for free right of use for the purpose of the project at least for 5 years after end of the project is presented.				
15	In case of investment activities required passing through private territories the consent of the owners is obtained and presented in a due legal form and copy of the ownership act (issued in original language and English translation signed/signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization as true copy).				
16	In case of investment activities within territories/objects with special status (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 is/are presented (issued in original language and English translation signed/signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization as true copy).				
17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of letter issued by the relevant body clearly stating that Environmental Impact Assessment is not necessary (issued in original language and English translation signed/ signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization as true copy) <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of positive Environmental Impact Assessment (positive opinion from the relevant body), required by the national legislation (issued in original language and English translation signed/ signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization as true copy) is presented. 				
18	<p>For Bulgarian project partners</p> <p>Copy of letter issued by the relevant body clearly stating that the project proposal is eligible according to the current River Basin Management Plans and Flood risk management plans (issued in original language and English translation signed/ signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization as true copy).</p> <p>For Serbian partners</p> <p>Copy of relevant documents related to Water management (issued in original language and English translation signed/ signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization as true copy).</p>				
19	Explanatory note for the envisaged prevention measures for avoiding pollution of water bodies in emergency situations by respective organization (issued in English, signed/ signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization) is presented – if applicable.				
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved detailed works design (if applicable according to the relevant legislation), or Statement by the competent authority, which declares that the envisaged construction/repair works do not require approval of works design and scheme/ plan of the object/s of intervention are presented (issued in original language and English translation signed/signed with qualified electronic signature by 				

	<p>respective organization as true copy).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanatory note as a part of the works design is presented (issued in original language and English translation signed/signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization as true copy). • Bill of quantities and prices for the works and supplies are presented and they contain all the attributes required in the Guidelines for Applicants (issued in original language and English translation and signed/signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization as true copy). • Valid Construction permit for each partner envisaging construction works (if applicable according to the relevant legislation; issued in original language and English translation signed/signed with qualified electronic signature by respective organization as true copy). 				
21	<p>Detailed technical specifications (for supplies) with unit and total prices in Euro is presented (technical specification is not required for equipment, which will be used for management of the project). At least 3 official offers from different providers OR market research on the basis of company catalogues OR historical data for concluded contracts from previous similar deliveries for the envisaged supply are presented.</p>				
CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY COMPLIANCE					
22	<p>All partners meet eligibility criteria defined in Section 2.5.1 of the Guidelines for Applicants.</p>				
23	<p>At least one partner from each side of the cross-border region is involved.</p>				
24	<p>The implementation period does not exceed the maximum project duration indicated in the Guidelines for Applicants. (AF Part A, sections A.1).</p>				
25	<p>At least 3 of the cooperation criteria are clearly fulfilled (mandatory cooperation in joint development and implementation of the project + one by choice from joint staffing or financing) (AF Part C, section C.7.5).</p>				
26	<p>The value of the financial support requested is in line with the limit indicated in Guidelines for Applicants. (AF Part A, section A.4)</p>				

27	The maximum amount for Project preparation costs in Budget category 4 is observed (12 000 EUR).				
COMMENTS		YES	NO	Not applicable	
Project proposal satisfies all criteria for administrative and eligibility compliance					
Assessor's name:		Assessor's signature:		Date of evaluation:	

PART TECHNICAL AND QUALITY EVALUATION

TECHNICAL AND QUALITY EVALUATION PART (to be filled by external assessors)			
Project No			
Lead Partner			
Partner/s			
Project title			
PARTNERSHIP RELEVANCE			
No	SELECTION CRITERIA	Analysis	Reference/ comments
1	Does the Lead partner demonstrate the capacity to coordinate, manage, control and monitor the overall implementation of the project?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Part B B.1.6 Part C C.7
2	Do project partners have competence, as well as the necessary capacity to implement the project activities (financial, human resources, etc.)?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Part B B.1.6
3	Is the composition of partnership relevant to the proposed project?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Part C C.3
4	Are the project partners experienced in participating in and/or managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Part B B.1.6
PROJECT RELEVANCE AND COOPERATION CHARACTER			
No	SELECTION CRITERIA	Analysis	Reference/ comments
5	Does the project overall objective clearly contributes to the achievement of the programme priority specific objective 3.1?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Part C C.1

6	Are the project addresses common challenges of the programme relevant to the particular needs and constraints of the border region?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Part C C.2.1 C.2.2
7	Does the strategic project bring real and strong Cross-border impact and longterm results in respect of the Programme's objectives?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Part C C.2.3 C.4.1 Whole AF
8	Does the strategic project contribute to the achievement of programme's objectives, output and result indicators, and the contribution is realistic and sufficient?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Part C C.4 C.5
9	Does the proposal demonstrate clearly contribution to a wider strategy on one or more policy levels (EU / national / regional)?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Part C C.2.5
10	Does the project demonstrate synergies with past or current EU projects or initiatives?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Part C C.2.6
11	Does the project build on available knowledge, experiences and lesson learned from the past and is it capitalised?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Part C C.2.7
12	Are the target groups relevant to project activities, clearly defined and quantified, and clearly benefiting from cooperation?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Part C C.2.3 C.2.4
13	Does the project proposal make a positive contribution to the horizontal principles, in particular sustainable development, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, and equality between men and women?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Part C C.7.6 Whole AF

PROJECT INTERVENTION LOGIC

No	SELECTION CRITERIA	Analysis	Reference/ comments
14	Are the strategic project work packages defined, realistic, achievable and necessary for achievement of the objectives?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Part C C.4
15	Is the relation between project specific objectives of the work packages and proposed project outputs ensured?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Part C C.4
16	Are the project outputs and results realistic and contribute to programme indicators (it is possible to achieve them with given resources – i.e., time, partners, budget - and they are realistic based on the quantification provided)?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Part C C.4 C.5 C.6 Part D
17	Does the strategic project have clear and justified potential for durability and transferability of the project results?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Part C C.8.2 C.8.3 C 4.1

No	SELECTION CRITERIA	Analysis	Reference/ comments
18	Is the project time plan realistic and activities, deliverables and outputs are in a logical time-sequence?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Part C C.6
19	Does the proposed activities and deliverables relevant and lead to planned outputs and results?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Part C C.4 C.5
20	Is distribution of tasks among partners appropriate (e.g., sharing of tasks is clear, logical, in line with partners' role in the project, etc.)?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Part C C.4
21	Are the communication and visibility activities appropriate and efficient?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Part C C.4
22	Is the project budget used in accordance with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness, and complies with the eligibility rules of expenditure?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Part D D.2 Part E E.3
23	Is the project budget logically planned and proportionate to the proposed work packages, project outputs and project's contribution to the selected programme indicators?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Part D D.2 Part E E.3
24	Are the estimated expenditures necessary for the implementation of the project and the prices are realistic and market based?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Part D D.2 Part E E.3
COMMENTS			
Assessor's name:		Assessor's signature:	Date of evaluation:

If the project proposal has received "No" on a specific criterion/a, the AWG could request additional documentation or corrections of the already submitted documents or project proposal.

During the assessment of the project proposals the procedure for budget optimization and projects' content modifications will be conducted by the AWG members - final review of the budget of the project proposal, making revisions of unit rates, based on both the recommendations of the external assessors and the good practices of the MA and NA in terms of transparent and market-oriented financial allocations.

Prior to finalizing the evaluation process and submission the evaluation report to the MC, the Programme Managing bodies shall conduct the following procedures:

1. 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;

2. Check for compliance with the State Aid rules – applicable for Bulgarian project partners only. Detailed information about State Aid rules is provided in Attachment 1 “State Aid and De Minimis Provisions” to this Guidelines for Applicants;
3. Performance of on-the-spot visit in case the project proposals envisage 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.

Following the evaluation and conducted procedures described above, the proposal will be presented to the Joint Monitoring Committee for final decision.

Complaint procedure

In case of disagreement with the outcome of the selection procedure, the Lead partner may lodge a complaint towards the decision of the MC, following the standard complaint procedure described in **Attachment 2 “Complaint Procedure”** to these Guidelines for Applicants.

7 Contracting

Contracting is the procedure carried out in order to conclude a Subsidy contract between the Lead Partner and the MA for the implementation of a project, approved for financing by decision of the MC. This means that the Lead partner is responsible for implementation of the whole project.

⚡ IMPORTANT

The Lead partner shall sign a Subsidy contract for the whole amount of the approved budget (including the total IPA funds) with the Managing Authority.

The implementation of the project may start only after the Subsidy contract is signed by both the MA and the Lead partner and is registered in the Registry system of the MA.

Draft Subsidy contract is presented in Annex C to these Guidelines for Applicants.

Please, note that the MA maintains register for the subsidy granted under the de minimis rule.

INDICATIVE SCHEDULE FOR SELECTION AND CONTRACTING OF THE PROJECT PROPOSALS	
Type of procedure	Term for implementation*
Assessment (Administrative compliance and eligibility check, Technical and Quality assessment and budget optimization and projects’ content modifications)	Up to 3 months after the deadline for submission of project proposals

Contracting	Up to 1 months after approval of the project proposal by the MC
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** Please, note that the term for implementation of the respective procedure is indicative.*