

Project Application Guidelines

2nd Call for Proposals

INTERREG V-A COOPERATION PROGRAMME:

GREECE – BULGARIA 2014-2020

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Abbreviations

AA	Audit Authority
CA	Certifying Authority
CBIP	Cross Border Info Point
CP	Co-operation Programme
CP GR-BG 2014-2020	Cooperation Programme Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
EU	European Union
FLC	First Level Control
GoA	Group of Auditors
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
JS	Joint Secretariat
LB	Lead Beneficiary
MA	Managing Authority
MC	Monitoring Committee
MCS	Management and Control System
MEDT	Ministry of Economy, Development and Tourism
MRDPW	Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works
NGO	Non-governmental Organizations
PA	Paying Authority
PA	Priority Axis
PB	Project Beneficiary (beneficiary)
R&D	Research and Development
SME	Small & Medium Sized Enterprises
TEN	Trans-European Network

Glossary

Amount unduly paid – Any expenditure not corresponding to delivered products or services of equal value, according to the expenditure terms of the Subsidy Contract, that has been paid by EU and national contributions provided to the beneficiary.

Audit Authority (AA) – The institution responsible for verifying the effective functioning of the management and control system of the co-operation programme. In this context, the AA shall be responsible for carrying out the functions envisaged in articles 25 of Regulation 1299/2013 and 127 of Regulation 1303/2013 and will be assisted by a Group of Auditors (GoA) comprised by a representative from each member state in the CP.

Beneficiary – means a public or private body responsible for initiating or initiating and implementing operations. The project participant, who takes the overall responsibility for the application and the implementation of the entire project, is called **Lead Beneficiary (LB)** and corresponds to the term "lead beneficiary" used in article 13 par.1 of Regulation 1299/2013.

Certifying Authority (CA) – National, regional or local public authority or body, designated by the Member States, for certifying statements of expenditure and applications for payment before being sent to the Commission. In this context, the CA shall carry out the functions envisaged in article 127, of Reg. 1303/2013 and article 25 of Reg. 1299/2013.

Controllers – bodies or persons responsible for verifying the legality and regularity of the expenditure declared by each beneficiary participating in the project, according to Article 23 of Reg. 1299/2013.

EU contribution - The amount of the eligible expenditure of a project that is financed by the European Union.

Financial Correction – The cancellation of the entire or part of the National and Community contribution to an operation, in the context of its co-financing by the CP, which is reciprocal to the detected irregularity.

Irregularity - means any breach of Union law, or of national law relating to its application, resulting from an act or omission by an economic operator involved in the implementation of the ESI Funds, which has or would have the effect of prejudicing the budget of the Union by charging an unjustified item of expenditure to the budget of the Union.

Monitoring Committee (MC) - The Member States set up the Monitoring Committee for every Operational Programme, in accordance to the Regulations. The Monitoring Committee performs the duties that are defined in article 49 of Regulation 1303/2013.

Joint Secretariat (JS) – The body set up by the MA after consultation with the Member States represented in the Programme area, according to Article 23 par.2, Regulation 1299/2013, to assist the Programme bodies (MA, CA, AA) in carrying out their respective duties.

Management Information System – The management system for recording and saving, in computerised Form, accounting records for each project under the Operational Programme.

Managing Authority (MA) – National, regional or local public authority or public or private body designated by the Member States responsible for managing and implementing the operational Programme, in accordance to the principle of sound financial management, carrying out the functions set out in Article 72 and 125 of Regulation 1303/2013 and article 23 of Regulation 1299/2013.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) - Additional agreement between programme bodies covering specific demands and harmonizing general programme procedures with particular national requirements.

National Authority (NA) - The institution supporting the activity of the MA in implementing the Programme in the participating countries.

National Co-financing - The non-EU contribution to the projects' budget provided either by the State budget of each participating country or provided as Own Contribution by the Project Beneficiaries.

Operational Programme (OP) – Document submitted by the Member States and adopted by the Commission, setting out a development strategy with a coherent set of priorities, to be carried out with the aid of a Fund, or, in the case of the INTERREG V-A 'Greece-Bulgaria' 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme, with the aid of the ERDF.

Operation - A project, contract, action or group of projects selected by the managing authorities of the programmes concerned, or under their responsibility, that contributes to the objectives of a priority or priorities.

Project Beneficiaries (PBs) - Beneficiaries participating in an operation as beneficiaries.

Recovery – The refunding by the beneficiary of the unduly paid amounts as a result of controls and audits.

1. Introduction

These are the Project Application Guidelines for the **2nd Call for proposals**, which will serve as an essential reference document for all bodies interested in applying for funding under the Calls for Project Proposals within the framework of the INTERREG V-A ‘Greece-Bulgaria’ 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme (hereinafter the Programme) Priority axes 2 and 4.

The Project Application Guidelines include information about:

1. The development of a project idea/proposal;
2. The submission procedure;
3. Project Partnership eligibility;
4. Project Budget – Eligibility of Expenditure
5. Project Duration;
6. Filling in the Application Form;
7. The Evaluation procedure;

It is recommended that those interested in submitting a proposal under the Programme should examine carefully, besides the present manual, the Cooperation Programme Document, which is available on the website of the Programme www.greece-bulgaria.eu and of the Managing Authority of European Territorial Cooperation Programmes in Greece (hereinafter the Managing Authority) at www.interreg.gr.

Moreover, interested parties may contact the Joint Secretariat (hereinafter JS) to receive support in planning their proposals in accordance to the strategic aims of the Programme. The Cross-Border Info Point in Smolyan shall also be providing information to interested parties.

The **2nd Call “Project Application Guidelines”** document is part of the Applicant’s Package of the Call for Proposals launched by the INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 programme.

The Applicants' Package contains the following documents:

1. Call for Proposals
2. Project Application Guidelines
3. Application Form,
4. Partnership Declaration,
5. Declaration of not generating revenues,
6. Declaration of non distribution of profits
7. State Aid Declaration
8. Justification of budget and Guidelines,
9. Programme and Project Implementation Manual

The original Applicants' Package is provided only in electronic format and can be found on the Programme's and Managing Authority's websites as mentioned above.

Suspension clause

Please note that this Call for proposals is subject to the signing of the Ministerial Decision on Management and Control System (for Greek beneficiaries).

2. Project idea/proposal Development

The following chapter provides the potential applicants with the essential information that they need, in order to start developing partnerships, as well as with the fundamental requirements, which have to form the basis of each project application.

2.1 Do you have an idea for a cross border project?

Project development is the phase during which **an idea** is transformed into specific objectives and activities and is presented as a proposal. The starting point in defining a project idea is to identify the **need**. At the idea stage, every project developer needs to combine the Programme's priorities with what regions on both sides really need.

In this sense,

- **Programme documents:** The Cooperation Programme includes a detailed analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the Programme area, as well as the sorts of actions that the Programme is willing to finance. Try to assess how the project idea fits into the Programme context through careful studying of its priorities and main indicative actions by thematic objectives, indicative target groups and the Programme target / output and result indicators by priority axis. Therefore, a careful study of the Programme document as well as other strategic documents (national and/or regional development plans, regional smart specialisation strategy, specific local policies, other field-specific strategies or guidelines etc) is crucial for the applicants in developing good project ideas.
- **Needs assessment.** A background assessment of needs with particular focus on the target groups, addressing specific problems, will definitely support project design. In this capacity any current situation analysis should offer important insights.
- **Stakeholders.** Involve key stakeholders. Their views, as end users, may contribute to further developing the project idea, given that they have a crucial role in exploiting the results of the project.

Over time and with the input of beneficiaries the idea will be developed to include activities and objectives.

2.2 What makes a “good partner”?

Finding beneficiaries is not the difficult part in developing a partnership. Finding the **right** beneficiaries is the main challenge. With the right ones involved in a cross-border partnership, a project idea, documented in a clear and simple way, can be turned into a unified set of actions well targeted to the identified needs.

The development of a partnership is not an easy task as, before it becomes solid and efficient, it involves a number of stages such as:

1. **Networking actions:** The initial stage is identifying the beneficiaries, meeting them and learning about their interests, needs and skills. Make a choice based on their experience, their knowledge and specialisation of the chosen field, their experience in developing and implementing relevant project ideas, their complementarities, which will support and guarantee exchange of knowhow, their shared needs, their knowledge of the Programme area, their financial capacity (they must also have the capacity to ensure the temporary availability of funds until they are reimbursed by the Programme, as well as the capacity to ensure their financing for non-eligible expenditures of the project), their relevant institutional status and their commitment even from the very first steps of project generation and development. Face to face meetings prove to be of great benefit. A relevant procedure will be presented during the Info Days for the calls.
2. **Communicating the project idea:** Give a structured presentation to potential beneficiaries and to key stakeholders to help them understand the purpose, objectives, activities and context. Let them assess and decide whether they want to get involved.
3. **Joint project development:** Challenging them by letting them shape the objectives and the expected results, so as to reflect their own needs. Consultation with beneficiaries is

crucial, given that their early involvement in the design of the project will ensure that it will be based on joint/common needs, skills and interests.

4. **Ensure beneficiaries' commitment:** A beneficiary that is not committed to the project creates a serious risk of project failure, not only during the development phase, but also during the implementation phase, in case it is approved. It is important to define actions and allocate responsibilities to meet joint objectives. Beneficiaries should be flexible to negotiate with the other member of the partnership about their roles and responsibilities, in order to achieve common understanding, ownership and commitment. A realistic and achievable project plan increases beneficiaries' commitment. Identify what each beneficiary brings to the project and what expects to get from it.

The right time to involve potential beneficiaries to the development of a project idea is as **soon as possible**, given that the project should be a combination of needs and contributions of all the beneficiaries involved. Participating in a cross border cooperation project implies that the project idea reflects the needs of all beneficiaries.

Attention!

Check the rules on participation and eligibility.

2.3 How to define the content?

Do not forget that Programme requirements and project ideas have to be **aligned**. There is no point in developing a project if it does not fit in the Programme. Projects need to collaborate on cross border activities that directly relate to addressing the priorities and objectives, as set out in the Programme.

The present Call for proposals is open for specific Programme Priority Axes as follows:

Table 1: Priority Axes, Investment priorities, Synergies

PRIORITY AXIS	THEMATIC OBJECTIVE	INVESTMENT PRIORITY	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	INDICATIVE TYPES OF ACTIONS
Priority Axis 2: A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border area	06 - Preserving And Protecting The Environment And Promoting Resource Efficiency	(6c)Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage.	SO 4: To valorize cross border area cultural and natural heritage for tourist purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity-building actions • Rehabilitation/protection of cultural assets of cross-border significance • Actions that support the better interpretation of natural and cultural heritage • Cross border area-wide cultural initiatives
		(6d)Protecting and restoring biodiversity, soil protection and restoration and promoting ecosystem services including NATURA 2000 and green infrastructures	SO 5: To enhance the effectiveness of biodiversity protection activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of cross border frameworks and platforms for the interoperability of existing databases and the integration of management approaches • Development of joint strategies & procedures (and pilot applications of such) for sustainable management of resources, for the development of green infrastructure, for

PRIORITY AXIS	THEMATIC OBJECTIVE	INVESTMENT PRIORITY	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	INDICATIVE TYPES OF ACTIONS
				<p>biodiversity protection, for landscape management and for the establishment of green corridors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development (and pilot application) of joint negotiation, mediation, participation and conflict resolution models in the context of land use • management with a view to protecting biodiversity • Design risk assessment & management models and strategies for CB protected areas
		<p>6f) Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector, soil protection or to reduce air pollution.</p>	<p>SO 6: To enhance water management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant cross border frameworks • Cross border eco-innovation partnerships • Pilot applications or promotion/ mainstreaming of existing innovative methods/technologies • Promoting “green behavior” campaigns in the areas of water

PRIORITY AXIS	THEMATIC OBJECTIVE	INVESTMENT PRIORITY	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	INDICATIVE TYPES OF ACTIONS
				management.
Priority Axis 4: A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area	09 - Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination	(9a) Investing in health and social infrastructure which contribute to national, regional and local development, reducing inequalities in terms of health status, promoting social inclusion through improved access to social, cultural and recreational services and the transition from institutional to community-based services.	SO 8: To improve access to primary and emergency health care (at isolated and deprived communities) in the cross border area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support centers of reference for health issues • Promote cooperation between healthcare authorities • Support for renovation and equipping of existing and new primary health care practices • Support for Cross Border technology-oriented health care provision methods
		(9c) Providing support for social enterprises	SO 9: To expand social entrepreneurship in the cross border area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for the establishment and provision of development support to Social Enterprises • Support for social franchising • Activities consistent with the Action Plans for

PRIORITY AXIS	THEMATIC OBJECTIVE	INVESTMENT PRIORITY	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	INDICATIVE TYPES OF ACTIONS
				Social Economy promulgated by both countries

Further details about the above mentioned elements of the table including a full list of types of actions per Specific Objective can be found at the Operational Programme.

Further steps to follow:

1. The project needs to strongly demonstrate its cross border focus and show the true spirit of collaboration and according to Art.12 par 4 in Reg.1299/2013 *“Beneficiaries shall cooperate in the development and implementation of operations. In addition, they shall cooperate in the staffing or the financing of operations, or in both”*. In addition, keep in mind that the aim of cross border cooperation is to integrate areas divided by national borders that face common problems that require common solutions.
2. The project should take into account one or more horizontal issues of the Programme: sustainable development, equal opportunities and non discrimination, equality between men and women.
3. If the project proposal includes infrastructure, it should take into account the Member state’s risk assessments made in compliance with EU Civil protection legislation (Decision 1313/2013/EC on the Union civil protection mechanism) for the evaluation of the project’s vulnerability to disaster risks, including longer-term expected effects from climate change.
4. All project proposals should meet the requirements of the General Regulation (Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down common provisions on the ERDF, the ESF, the Cohesion Fund, the EAFRD and the, article 7 concerning the implementation of the principles of non discrimination and accessibility to persons with disabilities.

5. The project proposal should comply with Article 65, par.6 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 stating: “Operations shall not be selected for support by the ESI Funds where they have been physically completed or fully implemented before the application for funding under the Programme is submitted by the beneficiary to the managing authority, irrespective of whether all related payments have been made by the beneficiary”. A project proposal can include activities that have started before the signature of the Subsidy Contract.
6. The project should complement and not duplicate other projects being carried out in the Programme area. Follow on projects financed from past INTERREG Programmes is not enough. Projects need to show how they build on past experiences by bringing in something new.
7. The project has to be realistic rather than attractive. Set the objectives as concrete, as quantifiable and as realistic as they could be.
8. Map out how objectives could be realized through a detailed action plan. The more precisely the goals are formulated the more effectively the project runs.
9. Demonstrate common added value. In practice, this means that the issue addressed is of such nature that it cannot be satisfactorily tackled within one member-state only and that cooperation improves the quality of results compared to the possible achievements of a beneficiary working alone. Results can also be of relevance to the wider cooperation area and can potentially be transferred to other parts of the region.
10. Have a regular contact with Programme management structures – Managing Authority and/or Joint Secretariat and/or Cross Border Info Point for clarifications on Programme priorities/objectives/activities.

Keep in mind that a cross-border partnership is not enough: ideas and activities must be cross-border too.

There is no obligation to submit your idea for commenting / preapproval to the JS. However, for certain projects due to specific reasons (content, strategic nature, budget, etc), the Lead

Beneficiary could consult with the JS for input without this implying under any circumstances, the financing of the proposed application.

Attention!

Applicants must pay particular attention to the characteristics of each Investment Priority and Specific Objectives taken into consideration in the formulation of the guiding principles for the selection of operations of the Programme. The project proposals should fulfill completely the obligatory requirements set in the evaluation criteria of the Call for Proposals in order to be ranked for funding.

In the following pages, two (2) **indicative** projects are presented, being broken down into **Work Packages and Deliverables**. The first one concerns an “Investment project” and the second one a “Soft project”.

Table 2: Indicative structure of an Investment project

<u>Lead Beneficiary</u>	Deliverable title
WP1	Management and Coordination
Deliverable 1.1.1	Preparation activities
Deliverable 1.1.2	Project Management (Coordination, reporting, meetings)
Deliverable 1.1.3	Audits
WP2	Information and Publicity
Deliverable 2.1.1	Production of communication material and tools
Deliverable 2.1.2	Publicity events and conferences
Deliverable 2.1.3	Promotional campaigns
WP3	Renovation and equipping of health care units
Deliverable 3.1.1	Emergency Care section renovation in Kavala

WP4	Provision of Health care services
Deliverable 4.1.1	Provision of health care services in Greece
Deliverable 4.1.2	Impact assessment and sustainability plan for the LB
<i>Project Beneficiary 2</i>	Deliverable title
WP1	Management and Coordination
Deliverable 1.2.2	Project management (reporting to LB, meetings)
WP2	Information and Publicity
Deliverable 2.2.1	Production of communication material and tools
Deliverable 2.2.2	Design and operation of an Info desk
WP3	Renovation and equipping of health care units
Deliverable 3.2.1	Building renovation and supervision in Blagoevgrad
Deliverable 3.2.2	Supply of laboratory equipment
WP4	Provision of Health care services
Deliverable 4.2.1	Provision of health care services in Bulgaria
Deliverable 4.2.2	Impact assessment and sustainability plan for the PB2
WP5	Activities outside the Programme area
Deliverable 5.2.1	Scientific events and Networking outside the programme area

Table 3: Indicative structure of a Soft project

<i>Lead Beneficiary</i>	Deliverable title
WP1	Management and Coordination
Deliverable 1.1.1	Preparation Activities
Deliverable 1.1.2	Project Management and meetings
Deliverable 1.1.3	IT platform for administration of the project

WP2	Information and Publicity
Deliverable 2.1.1	Production of communication material and tools
Deliverable 2.1.2	Open international conference in the Programme area and supporting workshops
Deliverable 2.1.3	Joint campaign for the increase of tourist traffic at the archaeological sites
WP3	Archaeological sites and joint actions development plan
Deliverable 3.1.1	Catalogue of monuments in the regions of Haskovo and Kardzhali. Visitor capacity and current situation of tourists' visits
Deliverable 3.1.2	Joint services development plan for Bulgarian and Greek sites.
WP4	Valorisation and Strategy Implementation
Deliverable 4.1.1	Supportive actions and small scale restoration activities in the regions of Haskovo and Kardzhali.
Deliverable 4.1.2	Impact assessment report for fulfilment of Project output indicators and Sustainability plan
<i>Project Beneficiary 2</i>	Deliverable title
WP1	Management and Coordination
Deliverable 1.2.2	Project Management and meetings
WP2	Information and Publicity
Deliverable 2.2.1	Contribution to the production of communication material and tools
Deliverable 2.2.2	Organization of 4 workshops in the Programme area in Greece
Deliverable 2.2.3	Participation in the joint campaign for the increase of tourist traffic at the archaeological sites
WP3	Archaeological sites and joint actions development plan
Deliverable 3.2.1	Catalogue of monuments in the Region of Eastern Macedonia. Visitors' capacity and tourist traffic assessment.

WP4	Valorisation and Strategy Implementation
Deliverable 4.2.1	Supportive actions and small scale restoration activities in the region of Eastern Macedonia and Greece.
Deliverable 4.2.2	Impact assessment report for fulfilment of Project output indicators and Sustainability plan

Attention!

All beneficiaries need to more elaborate the content of each deliverable and be more precise about the actions that will take place (e.g. material to be produced, content of the studies, etc) in the Justification of the Budget.

If necessary, the beneficiaries are free to submit any additional supporting descriptions, pictures, studies, or other material for better defining the content and scope of the deliverables.

3. Submission Procedure

In order to submit a project proposal, Applicants must refer to the Applicant's Package and to all relevant documents. Project Proposals should be submitted according to the guidelines provided in the Project Application Guidelines and the Call for Proposals.

A Project Proposal consists of:

1. the Application Form (standard excel form provided)
2. Annex 1: "Scope of the Project and Sustainability" (A maximum 3-page document, officially signed and stamped by the Legal representative of the Lead Beneficiary, to be submitted, in order to demonstrate the synergies with other OP, policies, as well as to indicate how the financial and operational sustainability of the project outcomes are ensured after the end of the financing period). Feasibility, marketing and research studies or any other supporting document can also be included in this Annex.
3. the Partnership Declaration signed and stamped by all beneficiaries (standard form)
4. Declaration of not generating revenues signed and stamped by every beneficiary
or,
a Cost-benefit analysis, signed and stamped by the Beneficiary concerned, in case of revenue generating projects¹
5. Declaration of non distribution of profits (standard form provided) signed and stamped (applies for the specific beneficiaries only, according to the call)
6. State Aid Declaration

¹ "Guide to Cost-benefit Analysis of Investment Projects - Economic appraisal tool for Cohesion Policy 2014-2020" at http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/cba_guide.pdf

7. Decision of the designated body of each Project Beneficiary (e.g. Municipal Council, Board of Directors, etc) stating its agreement for submitting the particular project proposal, according to the internal rules/statute of each Beneficiary or the national legislation.²
8. A Justification of budget costs, officially signed and stamped by the Legal representative of the Lead Beneficiary (standard excel form provided)³
9. Beneficiaries' related documents:
 - a. For bodies governed by public law (Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1), official documents proving that requirements of the paragraph 4.1 of this call are met. In case the nature of the public body does not clearly derive from the submitted documents, the Joint Secretariat may request additional documentation for clarification.
 - b. For private organisations:
 - i. Documents for establishing the applicant's entity and its operation at least 1 year before the launch of the specific Call for Proposals⁴ (Hard copy of the establishment act and the actual legal status/ statute in force, accompanied by a list of all statute modifications signed and stamped by the legal representative of the beneficiary). In case such a document is not applicable, an establishment act should be submitted by the beneficiary. Explicitly for branches the required documents are:
 - a) ***For Greek Beneficiaries both:***
 1. Registration of the branch in the responsible local Tax Office and

² Documents in points 7 and 9 9a, 9bi, 9bii and 10 can be submitted in the original languages of the partners.

³ The Bill of Cost and Quantities, for infrastructure projects, shall be considered as a part of Justification of the Budget.

⁴ This requirement is not valid for Investment Priority 9c

2. Either a) Copy of the lease contract of the branch certified by the local tax office or b) pay sheets certified by the Labour Inspectorate.

b) **For Bulgarian Beneficiaries:** For Bulgarian Partners:

1. Court registration
and,
 2. Document for the most recent legal status – not older than six months prior to the date of submission of the application.
- ii. Official document indicating the sources of the body's revenues, for the past 2 years (for the available period in case the organizations/branches are registered 1 year before the call's launch) of operation, preceding the presentation of the project proposal (e.g. Annual Balance Sheets, The Annual Incomes statement)
 - iii. Declaration for the non distribution of profits (standard form provided).

10. For infrastructure works in projects, beneficiaries have to include the relevant accompanying documents including: construction permits (if available at application stage), any other required approvals according to the national legislation, a compliance assessment report, preliminary studies, technical designs or any other relevant technical documentation approved according to the national legislation (for Bulgarian beneficiaries at least approved preliminary design), actual/updated Bill of Quantities and Cost signed by the respective body, a document certifying the land/building ownership or documentation of transferring the operation rights for the period of minimum 5 years after the end of the project, environmental impact assessments etc. The land and/or building, which are subject of the application for financial support for infrastructure, must: a) Be free of any encumbrances; b) Not be the object of a pending litigation c) Not be the object of a legal claim according to the relevant national legislation. Relevant documents for proving the above must be also submitted.

All submitted documents have to be in compliance with the National legislation of each Programme country.

The submission of all the accompanying documents for point 10 will be considered for the assessment of the maturity of the proposal. In particular and in relation to the submission of the necessary licenses/approvals these can be provided at a later stage at the request of the JS, and preferably before the signing of the subsidy contract.

The JS may also request additional documentation for clarification of the above issues, during the evaluation procedure.

Attention!

The non submission of the Bill of Quantities and Costs for each investment in a project proposal will deem the proposal ineligible following its rejection.

Projects with infrastructure works will be rejected in case the documents certifying the right of property/concession/administration/rent/loan on the land and/or building are not included in the initial package of the Application Form.

Documents **1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8** must be submitted officially signed and stamped, but can also **be accepted in a scanned version⁵. In this case, the originals can be submitted upon request at a later stage.**

The hard copy of the project proposal must be submitted in 1 original copy. A CD/DVD-ROM must also be submitted including the electronic versions of:

⁵ Documents 9 and 10 are also acceptable in a scanned version

1. the Application Form in the excel format required,
2. Annex 1: "Scope of the Project and Sustainability" in a word or PDF format and
3. The Justification of the Budget in the excel format required

The non-submission in hard-copy of the above documentation (points 1-10) and of the CD/DVD ROM with all the necessary files shall **result to a project proposal rejection**.

The Project Proposal must be submitted to the Programme's Joint Secretariat in the following way:

by post or by **private courier service** or **hand-delivery** in the following address:

Joint Secretariat

ETCP "GREECE – BULGARIA 2014 – 2020"

Balkan Center, Building D, Elevator 2, 3rd floor

9th Km Thessaloniki - Thermi Road

570 01, Thessaloniki, Greece

The proposal **must arrive no later than the last day of the submission period** (from **14/12/2015** until **31/03/2016 until 16.30**) in a single sealed envelope / package. **No proposal received afterwards will be accepted.**

A dated certificate of receipt with the register number of the JS will be handed to the deliverer, as proof of timely submission. Proposals delivered after this date will not be considered as eligible.

ATTENTION: The envelope/package with the application documents must bear the following indications in English:

2nd Call for Proposals

INTERREG V-A "GREECE – BULGARIA 2014-2020

Priority Axis:

Investment Priority/Specific objective

Project Acronym:

Lead Beneficiary /address/

Envelope shall not be opened before the evaluation session.

Attention!

The deadline for asking questions or requesting information is 20 days before the deadline of the present call.

The answers shall be given on the Operational Programme's website, but no later than 10 days before the deadline of the present call.

4. Project Partnership - Eligibility of Beneficiaries

4.1 General

A project should include at least one beneficiary from each country (Greece and Bulgaria) and according to Art.12 par 4 in Reg.1299/2013 *“Beneficiaries shall cooperate in the development and implementation of operations. In addition, they shall cooperate in the staffing or the financing of operations, or in both”*.

The total number of beneficiaries must not exceed ten (10) including the Lead Beneficiary. All beneficiaries must have **clear roles** in the development and implementation of the project.

In order to be eligible for co-funding, the Lead Beneficiary and beneficiaries **must be**:

- a. national, regional or local **public authorities** legally established according to the national legislation of the state on whose territory they are located;
- b. **bodies governed by public law**⁶, or according to the national legislations, having legal personality, other than legal entities defined under paragraph a, established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest (needs not having an industrial or commercial character) and which fulfil at least one of the following conditions:
 - a. be financed, for the most part, by national, regional or local authorities, or other bodies governed by public law or
 - b. be subject to management supervision by those bodies or

⁶ Bodies governed by public law as defined in Article 1(9) of Directive 2004/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 March 2004 on the coordination of procedures for the award of public works contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2004:134:0114:0240:EN:PDF>) and in compliance with the national legislation of each participating country

- c. have an administrative, managerial or supervisory board, where more than half of its members are appointed by the national, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law;
- c. **private organizations:** non-profit organizations, founded according to private law, are eligible under the following conditions as a whole,
- not established with the goal to obtain profit⁷
 - they do not distribute profits to the stakeholders, according to their constitutional framework
 - have their headquarters in the eligible cross border area

or

whose headquarters are not situated in the eligible Programme area, but are located in Greece or Bulgaria and have local/regional branch offices that are independent legal entities⁸, established in the eligible area and they operate for at least 1 year before the launch of the specific Call for Proposals. This rule is applicable for the branches as well.⁹

It should be noted that **private companies, not falling under the above categories b. and c. are not eligible.**

Moreover all applicants shall be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the project with their beneficiaries, not acting as an intermediary.

⁷ Greek potential beneficiaries should not have commercial or industrial character

⁸ Branches which are not legal entities can participate in the Call through their mother organization using the 20% rule only (see chapter 4.3.2)

⁹ This requirement is not valid for Investment Priority 9c

In order to be considered for funding, all the above actors should ensure that they are entitled to public co-financing. The managerial adequacy of beneficiaries will be examined through the Project Selection Criteria.

4.2 Indicative Potential beneficiaries

Eligible Beneficiaries per Priority Axis/Investment Priority are described in the Operational Programme and are provided also in the following table.

Table 4: Potential beneficiaries per Investment priority

PRIORITY AXIS	Investment priority	Potential beneficiaries
Priority Axis 2: A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border area	(6c) Conserving, Protecting, Promoting And Developing Natural And Cultural Heritage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities and their institutions dealing with regional development planning • Protected area management bodies • NGOs, Non-Profit-Organizations, social enterprises, and other civil society associations dealing with natural resources, and cultural issues • Institutions specialized in research, education, training and capacity building
	(6d) Protecting and restoring biodiversity, soil protection and restoration and promoting ecosystem services including NATURA 2000 and green infrastructures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities and their departments responsible for environmental protection, biodiversity protection, agriculture, forestry, and spatial planning • Protected area management bodies • Environmental NGOs, Non-Profit-Organizations, social enterprises, cross border networks and other civil society associations dealing with biodiversity, nature protection, agriculture, forestry, and spatial planning

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universities and research institutes dealing with biodiversity, nature protection, agriculture, forestry, and spatial planning
	6f) Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector, soil protection or to reduce air pollution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities and their departments in charge of subjects related to water and soil management • Universities and research institutes dealing with subjects related to water and soil management • Chambers, collective organizations and associations representing businesses and other professionals, and social enterprises in areas relevant to water • Related NGOs
Priority Axis 4: A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area	(9a) Investing in health and social infrastructure which contribute to national, regional and local development, reducing inequalities in terms of health status, promoting social inclusion through improved access to social, cultural and recreational services and the transition from institutional to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community-based and Primary health care providers (only public sector stakeholders), Municipalities, and social enterprises engaged in health care provision • Hospitals • Medical Faculties of Universities • Related NGOs

	community-based services.	
	(9c) Providing support for social enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social economy organizations (cooperatives/social enterprises, mutual societies, associations, foundations) • NGOs; Non-Profit Organizations • Collective institutions and public bodies active in the area of social economy

For each proposal, a **Lead Beneficiary** shall be designated, with the capacity to start the implementation of the project as quickly as possible, to maintain and further specify in detail the strategic, holistic and interdisciplinary, synthetic and synergy creating, character of the intervention, to exploit the immediate results of the intervention [in a way that this can (a) act as a demonstration project for future mainstreaming, (b) acquire a wider sectoral scope or territorial coverage], and to concentrate all available managerial, financing and know-how resources and focus them on the project.

Attention!

Each applicant can participate as Lead beneficiary or as beneficiary in no more than one project proposal per Investment Priority. If an applicant does not conform to the previous rule as explicitly stated above, all of its project applications will be rejected. In particular for Tertiary Education and Research Institutions, the previous rule applies to each Department.

4.3 Beneficiaries' Location and Location of activities

4.3.1 Beneficiaries' within the programme area

Project beneficiaries located within the eligible programme area as indicated in the table below and the project activities need to take place in these regions for the benefit of the programme area.

Table 5: Eligible Programme Area

REGIONS/NUTS I	NUTS II	NUTS III
GREECE	Region of Eastern Macedonia-Thrace	Regional Unit of Evros (former Prefecture)
		Regional Unit of Xanthi (former Prefecture)
		Regional Unit of Rodopi (former Prefecture)
		Regional Unit of Drama (former Prefecture)
		Regional Unit of Kavala (former Prefecture)
	Region of Central Macedonia	Regional Unit of Thessaloniki (former Prefecture)
		Regional Unit of Serres (former Prefecture)
BULGARIA	Region of South-Central	District of Haskovo
		District of Smolyan
		District of Kardjali
	Region of South-West	District of Blagoevgrad

4.3.2 Beneficiaries' outside the programme area

Institutions located in regions outside the Programme area, but **inside the two Programme participating countries, Greece and Bulgaria**, can become project beneficiaries (co-financed by the ERDF) only in duly justified cases. This category of project beneficiaries need to be nationally represented and should have consistent competences (established by legal acts) with the Investment Priority they apply for and the content of the proposal. This means that their participation needs to bring clear added value and expertise to the implementation of a project and for activities within or for the direct benefit for the Programme area.

The total budget of all the beneficiaries participating in a project and located outside the Programme area cannot exceed the 20%¹⁰ of the support from the ERDF of the project and their proposed activities must be implemented within the eligible area.

Attention!

The 20% budget limit does not apply for:

- 1. Eligible National Public Authorities that may be located outside the programme area**
- 2. Eligible Private Organisations with headquarters outside the programme area but with registered branches (legal entities) within the programme area as proven according to the rules of Chapter 4.1.**

In all cases, the Beneficiaries located outside the programme area must follow the eligibility rules of the Beneficiaries set by the Call.

4.4 Beneficiaries' Role

4.4.1 The Lead beneficiary

The Lead Beneficiary shall:

- (a) lay down the arrangements with other beneficiaries in an agreement comprising provisions that, inter alia, guarantee the sound financial management of the funds allocated to the operation, including the arrangements for recovering amounts unduly paid;
- (b) assume responsibility for ensuring implementation of the entire operation;

¹⁰ For the calculation of the 20% the activities to be implemented outside the eligible area must be also taken into account according to the provisions of Chapter 5.7.3. of the Project Application Guidelines.

(c) ensure that expenditure presented by all beneficiaries has been incurred in implementing the operation and corresponds to the activities agreed between all the beneficiaries, and is in accordance with the document provided by the managing authority pursuant to Article 12(5);

(d) ensure that the expenditure presented by other beneficiaries has been verified by a controller or controllers where this verification is not carried out by the managing authority pursuant to Article 23(3).

If not otherwise specified in the arrangements laid down in accordance to point (a) of paragraph 2 the lead beneficiary shall ensure that the other beneficiaries receive the total amount of the contribution from the funds as quickly as possible and in full. No amount shall be deducted or withheld and no specific charge or other charge with equivalent effect shall be levied that would reduce that amount for the other beneficiaries.

4.4.2 The beneficiaries

All beneficiaries participate in designing and implementing the project by carrying out the activities assigned to them in the approved application. The expenses generated are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the Lead Beneficiary. They must therefore, satisfy the same eligibility criteria as the ones applicable for the Lead Beneficiary.

Indicatively, the beneficiaries' responsibilities entail that they:

1. Ensure the implementation of the project activities under their responsibility according to the project plan and the contract signed with the Beneficiary;
2. Cooperate with the other project beneficiaries in the implementation of the project, the reporting and the monitoring, as deemed necessary. Key project conclusions, changes to project strategy and other important decisions should be made jointly;

3. Prepare and submit to the Lead Beneficiary financial and progress reports, including all supporting documentation, to be used for the verification of expenses per each of the reporting periods established for the project, and ensure full cooperation and assistance, for the timely and accurate performance of verification;
4. Assume responsibility in the event of any irregularity in the expenditure they have declared, and repay the Lead Beneficiary the amounts unduly received.

The specifics pertaining to the cooperation between the lead beneficiary and the beneficiaries are defined in the Partnership Declaration (at the stage of the submission of the project proposal) and, in detail, in the Partnership Agreement (at the stage of implementation when a project is selected for funding)¹¹, signed by all parties involved in the partnership.

4.5 State Aid

According to Article 107 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, State aid is defined as ***any aid granted by a Member State or through State resources in any form whatsoever which distorts or threatens to distort competition by favoring certain undertakings or the production of certain goods therefore affecting trade between Member States.***

Based on this definition, it can be concluded that there is State aid only if **all** the following 5 are cumulatively fulfilled:

- *The recipient of the aid is an “undertaking”.*
- *The aid comes from the State (always the case for Interreg programmes).*

¹¹For more details on the Partnership Declaration, please see Applicant’s Package. For more details on the Partnership Agreement, please see Annex II. Partnership Agreement

- *The aid gives an economic advantage (a benefit) which an undertaking would not have obtained under normal market conditions.*

-*The aid is selectively favouring certain undertakings or the production of certain goods.*

-*The grant affects trade between Member States.*

It is not the legal status (public or private) but the nature of the activities that the applicant intends to implement that determines whether the State aid has to be respected or not.

An undertaking is an entity engaged in an economic activity in the context of the proposed project. Any project beneficiary that offers goods and/or services to the market in the context of the proposed project is thus considered as an undertaking, regardless of its legal status, ownership, financial sources or scope of actions (profit or non-profit making).

The main element to be assessed for state aid is the nature of the activities that the beneficiary and the project intend to implement through the public funding.

The MA/JS, in consultation with NA, will perform checks on development of state aid activities from the projects' beneficiaries. In cases of state aid activities, the Managing Authority will decrease the funding accordingly, acting in compliance with the application of de minimis Regulation¹².

The public aid considered for the applicable de minimis ceiling comprises all aids granted by the national, regional or local authorities, regardless of whether the resources are provided from domestic sources or are partly financed by the European Union.

¹² Commission Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid

Any market oriented activities of economic nature are not eligible for funding under this Call for proposals of the Programme Interreg V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020.

5. Project Budget - Eligibility of expenditure

5.1 Introduction

The projects' permissible budget range is specified in each Call for Proposals and the contracting of the projects per Priority Axis is related to the maximum budget allowed by the Call for Proposals.

For the 2nd Call for Proposals the total budget available for the present call is 35,20 M€ (of which 29,92 M€ ERDF) and is indicatively allocated as follows:

Table 6: Available budget per Priority Axis in the 2nd Call

INDICATIVE BUDGET ALLOCATION			
PRIORITY AXIS	BUDGET (€)	ERDF (€)	NATIONAL CO-FINANCING (€)
2. A sustainable and climate-adaptable cross-border area	19.500.000,00 €	16.575.000,00 €	2.925.000,00 €
4. A socially inclusive cross-border area	15.700.000,00 €	13.345.000,00 €	2.355.000,00 €
Total	35.200.000,00 €	29.920.000,00 €	5.280.000,00 €

5.2 Project size for the 2nd Call for Proposals

The budget threshold for each one of the investment priorities is provided on the following table:

Table 7: Budget Limit per Investment priority

Priority Axis	Investment Priority	Minimum Project budget	Projects Budget Limits (€)
2	6c	250.000,00€	1.500.000,00€
	6d		1.500.000,00€
	6f		900.000,00€
4	9a		1.500.000,00€
	9c		650.000,00€

5.3 General Eligibility Criteria

The Regulations defining the eligibility rules of the expenditures are the following:

- Regulation 1299/2013 (European Territorial Cooperation) as in force (with Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 481/2014)
- Regulation 1301/2013 (European Development Fund) as in force
- Regulation 1303/2013 (Common Provisions) as in force

All applicants are strongly recommended to consult these documents before submitting a proposal and start building their projects.

Other Legal Framework documents the general rules of eligibility are the following:

- Greek national legislation, as in force
- Ministerial Decision for the Management and Control Systems of the European Territorial Cooperation Objective Operational Programmes, as in force (concerns Greek beneficiaries)
- Bulgarian national legislation, as in force

As a general rule, ERDF costs shall be eligible for funding if:

- they have been incurred and paid out within the time frame in which expenditure can take place. Under no circumstances can the final date of eligibility of expenditure exceed the 31st of December 2023
- they are directly related to the project either for the development or implementation of the project and they are planned in the approved project budget;
- they follow the “real cost” or “flat rate” principle; costs which have been actually incurred and paid by the project beneficiaries and they can be supported by original invoices or other accounting documents of equivalent probative value;
- they have been incurred in the programme area of the European Territorial Cooperation Programme “Greece – Bulgaria 2014-2020”;
- they are in line with national, EU and programme level rules;
- they are in compliance with the principles of efficiency, economy and expediency of all actions. Especially the cost/benefit ratio has to be ensured.

All the details about the eligibility and ineligibility of expenditures, per budget line will be defined in the Guidance on Management Verification document when available.

Ineligible expenditure

- fines, financial penalties and expenditure on legal disputes and litigation;
- costs of gifts, except those not exceeding EUR 50 per gift where related to promotion, communication, publicity or information;
- costs related to fluctuation of foreign exchange rate.

5.4 Period of eligibility of expenditure

The starting date for eligible expenditure is **1/1/2014**. The closing date of the eligibility period of the expenditure should be the end date of the subsidy contract in force. Under no circumstances the final date of eligibility of expenditure can exceed the **31st of December 2023**.

5.5 Reserve list of projects

After drawing up a list with the proposed projects per Priority Axis, a reserve list of alternate projects may be drawn up per Priority Axis. The remaining available budget per Priority Axis of the Programme can be used to finance the proposed alternate projects. The alternate projects could be financed by the Programme in case of budget savings, either due to approved projects' de-commitment/withdrawal, or due to uncommitted budget or due to the non-contracting of projects under future calls (including non publication of future calls), etc. The selection of a project from the reserve list of alternate projects will be made on the basis of its ranking and the grading it received under the specific Priority Axis.

5.6 Project Budget Lines

The project expenditures under the Programme are divided into six Budget Lines. These Budget Lines are:

- A. Staff;
- B. Office and administration;
- C. Travel and accommodation;
- D. External expertise and services;
- E. Equipment;
- F. Infrastructure and Works.

For each Budget Line, a description of the expenditure that falls under the Budget Line is provided. **More concrete guidance about the eligibility of the expenditures, verification process and the audit trail to verify these expenditures (necessary documents, invoices etc) for each Budget Line will be provided in the Guidance on Management Verification document when available.**

5.6.1 Staff costs

Staff costs consist of costs for staff members employed by the beneficiary organisation, as listed in the application form and who are working full time or part time on the implementation of the project.

The following options for calculating staff costs are available in this Programme for the 2nd Call:

- Staff costs calculated as **flat rate of (up to) 20 %** of direct costs other than staff costs on a project level.
- Staff costs calculated on a **real cost basis**.

Attention!

The option selected applies on a project level for the entire project period. (i.e. All beneficiaries of the same project should follow either the flat rate or the real costs calculation option which will remain unchanged through the entire project period. In case of different method selected within the same project, the project will be rejected.

- **Option 1: Staff costs calculated as 20 % flat rate of direct costs**

For this option the calculation of staff costs is based on a flat rate of **up to 20%** of the direct costs other than the staff costs. **According to the project beneficiaries' estimations regarding the needs for staff costs the percentage can be lower.** Each beneficiary will have to provide the rationale of the staff costs estimations in the Justification of the Budget document even when the flat rate option is selected. **The participation of the beneficiaries' staff must be linked to specific project deliverables according to their role and expertise.**

Example: Project X – calculated staff costs using the 20% flat rate option:

Table 8: Staff costs: Example of flat rate calculation

	Travel and accommodation	10.000€
	External expertise and services	200.000€
	Equipment	300.000€
A	Total Direct Costs of the project	510.000€
B	Flat rate for calculation of Staff Cost	20%
C	Maximum Eligible Staff Costs of the entire project (A*B)	102.000€
D	Total Project budget (A+C)	612.000€

The eligible amount for staff cost is up to 20% of the total eligible amount under all budget lines **excluding office and administration** expenditure.

Attention!

When the 20% flat rate option is applied, it has to be proved that the project beneficiary has at least one permanent employee (e.g. by providing a registration at the social insurance agency or other related documents) to be appointed for the project.

Attention!

The flat rate is linked to the eligibility and verification of other direct costs. Should financial corrections be necessary (e.g. due to deficiencies in procurements) or in case of discounts in tenders leading to smaller eligible direct costs **on a project level**, the basis for calculation of the flat rate will reduce correspondingly and this will result in a lower amount of staff costs that can be **verified and co-funded**.

(i.e. in the previous calculation example if the total direct costs of the project verified at the end of the subsidy contract is 400.000€ due to financial corrections in one beneficiary, the total staff costs that can be verified by a project is reduced to $400.000 \times 20\% = 80.000\text{€}$ in total for all beneficiaries instead of 102.000€..

- **Option 2: Staff costs calculated on a real cost basis**

Using this method the beneficiary will claim the actual costs they have incurred from employing staff who work on the project. According to Article 3 Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 481/2014, expenditure on staff costs shall consist of gross employment costs of staff employed by the beneficiary in one of the following ways:

- a. full time; (i.e. Person employed by the Beneficiary organisation, and working fully on the project;)
- b. part-time with a fixed percentage of time worked per month; (i.e. Person employed by the Beneficiary organisation, working partly for the project on a fixed percentage;)
- c. part-time with a flexible number of hours¹³ worked per month (i.e. Person employed by the Beneficiary organisation, working partly for the project on a number of hours per month) or
- d. on an hourly basis (i.e. Person employed by the Beneficiary organisation, who does not have a fixed number of hours per month and is paid at an hourly rate).

Attention!

1. Staff costs do not cover the expenses of externals; externals should be budgeted under

¹³ The Hourly rate shall be calculated by dividing the latest documented Gross Annual Employment costs by 1720 hours.

the “External Expertise and services” category.

2. Overheads and any other office and administration related to staff costs are included in the Office and administration (O&A) expenditure.
3. Daily allowances and any other travel and accommodation are included in the “Travel and Accommodation” budget line.

Attention!

Project proposals not respecting the budget limits for staff costs will be deemed ineligible.

If selected, the Real Costs method requires a clear definition of tasks and activities per staff member as well as a well-founded calculation basis. These will have to be reported in the Justification of the Budget document and supported by accompanying documents where applicable or when requested by the JS.

5.6.2 Office and administration (O&A) expenditure

They cover operating and administrative expenses of the beneficiary organisation that support delivery of project activities. According to regulation 481/2014 the office and administration expenditure shall be 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) general accounting provided inside the beneficiary organisation
- f) archives
- g) maintenance, cleaning and repairs

- h) security
- i) IT systems
- j) communication (e.g. telephone, fax, internet, postal services, business cards)
- k) bank charges for opening and administering the account or accounts where the implementation of an operation requires a separate account to be opened
- l) charges for transnational financial transactions

The following options for calculating O&A are available in this **Programme for the 2nd Call**:

1. Real costs, or
2. Office and administration (O&A) expenditure calculated as flat rate of **up to 15% of staff costs**.

In case the Flat rate calculation method is adopted, the following example provides an overview on the approach.

Example: Project X – Beneficiary Y calculates O&A costs using the 15% flat rate of staff costs option:

Table 9: Office and administration Costs: Example of flat rate calculation

A	Travel and accommodation External expertise and services Equipment	10.000€ 20.000€ 30.000€
B	Staff Cost (either on Real Costs basis or Flat Rate)	12.000€
C	Eligible O&A Costs (B*15%)	12.000€*0,15=1.800€
D	Total Project budget (A+C)	73.800€

The office and administration expenditure costs for each Beneficiary cannot exceed 4% of the total Beneficiary's Budget, regardless of the calculation option selected. The office and administration expenditure shall be eligible if they are based on real costs, which relate to the implementation of the project and if they are charged to the project proportionately, based on a fair and duly justified distribution method.

Attention!

The option selected applies on a beneficiary level for the entire project period. (I.e. Each beneficiary should follow either the flat rate or the real costs calculation option which will remain unchanged through the entire project period. This must be declared in the Application form in the **Partnership Section.**

5.6.3 *Travel and Accommodation* ¹⁴

This budget category includes all the expenses for each of the project's beneficiary for the travel and accommodation costs of the personnel involved in the project with the condition that they are directly related to the activities of the project. Travel and Accommodation costs involve:

- (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 up to national rules
- (d) daily allowances up to national rules

Attention!

Travel and accommodation expenses related to individuals other than staff directly employed by the beneficiaries of the project (members of the stakeholder groups but also consultants, experts), have to be included in the **“External expertise and services costs”**

¹⁴ All specifications will be defined in the National Guidelines on Verification

5.6.4 *External Expertise and services*

Costs paid on the basis of contracts and against invoices to external service providers, who are sub-contracted to carry out certain tasks of the project.

Pursuant to the Regulation (EU) No 481/2014 Article 6, expenditure on external expertise and service are limited to the following services and expertise provided by an organisation other than the project partner:

- studies or surveys (e.g. evaluations, strategies, concept notes, design plans, handbooks);
- training;
- translations;
- IT systems and website development, modifications and updates;
- promotion, communication, publicity or information linked to a project or to a cooperation programme as such;
- financial management;
- services related to the organisation and implementation of events or meetings (including rent, catering or interpretation);
- participation in events (e.g. registration fees);
- the provision of guarantees by a bank or other financial institution where required by Union or national law or in a programming document adopted by the monitoring committee;
- travel and accommodation for external experts, speakers, chairpersons of meetings and service providers;
- other specific expertise and services needed for operations

These costs must correspond to current market prices and must be adequately justified.

5.6.5 *Equipment expenditure*

Expenditure for the financing of equipment purchased, rented or leased by the beneficiary of the operation other than those covered by Article 4 shall be limited to the following:

- a) office equipment;
- b) IT hardware and software;
- c) furniture and fittings;
- d) laboratory equipment;
- e) machines and instruments,
- f) tools or devices;
- g) vehicles;
- h) other specific equipment needed for operations.

In principle, costs for the purchasing of equipment with the condition that:

- Equipment is necessary for the project implementation and is foreseen in the approved Application Form.
- Suppliers should be selected according to the rules of the relevant National Public Procurement Law of the respective country.

There should be an analytical description of the technical specifications and a costing in the Justification of the Budget or in a separate document with all the items to be purchased.

5.6.6 *Infrastructure and Works*

Expenditure for Infrastructure and Works are eligible with the condition that the cross- border impact of the investment is demonstrated and the activity is approved in the Application Form. The contractors of investments should be selected according to the rules of the National Public Procurement Law in force. The contractor cannot be a beneficiary in the project. The

description of the works expenditure should be provided by Bill of Quantities and Cost, submitted together with the Justification of the budget.

Detailed information about the eligibility of expenditure per country and per Budget Line will be available in the Programme Eligibility Rules and the Guidance on Management Verification when available.

5.7 Special Categories of costs and budget limits for the 2nd Call

5.7.1 Preparation Costs

Costs within the Budget Lines **“staff costs, travel and accommodation costs and external expertise and services”**, which have been incurred for the preparation of the project, are eligible for funding in accordance to the following conditions:

- If the services or activities were implemented between 1st January 2014 and the date of submission of the Application. **The related payments should have been actually made preferably before the first request for verification.**
- If they show direct connection to the approved project and are included in the application form.;
- If they do not exceed the **5% of the total project budget** up to the limit of **40.000 € per project and will be reviewed upon project evaluation.**

The following preparation costs are eligible:

- external expertise costs and/ or staff costs for the preparation of the application documents
- joint meetings for the preparation of the project
- travelling expenses directly related to joint meetings,

- travelling expenses directly related the Call's publicity events,
- cost analysis and preparatory research reports for the project activities
- external expertise costs for the preparation of technical design studies
- other costs regarding licenses and permits fees, environmental impact assessment studies, technical assessment reports

Attention!

Office and administration, equipment and infrastructure works expenditures are not eligible under preparation costs.

5.7.2 *Management Costs*

Management Deliverables and thus the management costs should be included **only in WP1** of the Application form and concern the cost related to the technical and administrative activities to be implemented for the efficient management and coordination of the project.

Attention!

The management costs **of each project beneficiary** (Work Package 1) **should not exceed 10% of the total beneficiary's budget. The following WP1 costs (if applicable) are not calculated in the 10% limit:**

- **Deliverable 1.X.1 "Preparation Activities"** (where X is the number of the partner)
- **Any potential costs for external auditors**

5.7.3 *Activities located outside the Programme area and Financing*

In principle, all activities of a project should take place within the eligible Programme area. If a project plans to finance activities or events outside the eligible Programme area, this is possible in the context of cooperation Programmes and in duly justified cases, provided that Article 20

of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 is respected and the total amount allocated to activities located outside the Programme area shall **not exceed 20% of the support from the ERDF at Programme level**. The 20% threshold of ERDF at Programme level will be brought down to the project level. If activities (including travel and accommodation) and/ or events are planned outside the Programme area, the following conditions need to be satisfied:

- a. the activity and/ or event are for the benefit of the Programme area;
- b. the activity and/ or event are essential for the implementation of the project;
- c. the implementation and/ or the relevance of the activity and/ or the event have been approved by the Programme beforehand.

Attention!

All activities implemented outside the Programme area should be described in a single dedicated WP in the Application form.

For the cases of beneficiaries and activities outside the Programme area the Rules applying are summarised in the following table:

Table 10: Beneficiaries and activities outside the Programme area

		Location of Activities	
		Inside Programme Area	Outside Programme Area
Location of Beneficiaries	Inside Programme area	No limit	Maximum limit 20% of the ERDF of the total project budget
	Outside Programme area (only within Bulgaria and Greece)	Maximum limit 20% of the ERDF of the total project budget	Not Applicable

Attention!

The ERDF allocated to a single project for beneficiaries outside the Programme area together with the ERDF spent outside the Programme area cannot exceed 20 % of the total ERDF contribution to this project.

5.8 Budget limit tables for the 2nd Call for Proposals

The following tables provide the summary of the budget limits for the **2nd Call for proposal** that the Applicants need to take into consideration. **The projects not respecting the budget limits will be deemed ineligible and will be rejected.**

Table 11: Project Budget Limit per Investment priority

Priority Axis	Investment Priority	Minimum Project budget	Projects Budget Limits (€)
2	6c	250.000,00€	1.500.000,00€
	6d		1.500.000,00€
	6f		900.000,00€
4	9a		1.500.000,00€
	9c		650.000,00€

Table 12: Budget Limits for the 2nd Call

	Project budget level limit	Beneficiary budget level limit
Staff Costs (<i>Flat Rate basis Calculation</i>)	Maximum 20% of the total directs costs of the project other than staff costs and O&A.	
Office and administration		Maximum 15% of the total

	Project budget level limit	Beneficiary budget level limit
expenditure Budget Line (<i>Flat Rate basis calculation</i>)		beneficiary's staff up to 4% of the total beneficiary's budget
Office and administration expenditure Budget Line (<i>Real Costs basis calculation</i>)		Maximum 4% of the total beneficiary's budget
WP1: Management costs		Maximum 10% of the total beneficiary's budget without including Preparation activities and Audit Costs.
Preparation Costs (D1.X.1)	Maximum 5% of total project budget up to 40.000€	
<u>Cumulative:</u> i. WPX: Activities outside the programme area and ii. total budget of all Beneficiaries located outside the programme area	Maximum 20% of the total project budget.	

6. Project Duration - Eligible Duration of Projects

Projects should be concluded in a period of maximum **two years** after the signing of the Subsidy Contract.

7. How to fill in the Application Form

7.1 Introduction-General Information

The present chapter aims at providing the Lead Beneficiaries with all the information needed in order to fill in the Application Form.

The requirement of submitting an Application Form duly filled in, according to the instructions provided, is one of the formal criteria used for project evaluation, therefore applicants are strongly advised to carefully read and follow these instructions.

In addition, applicants are **requested NOT to remove the protection of the Application Form** or change its structure, since that could result in damaging it.

Attention!

- Please fill in the Application Form electronically, correctly and completely by using the template included in Project's Applicant package.
- The Application Form must be filled in English.
- The Application Form must be duly signed and stamped by the legal representative of the Lead Beneficiary

When you open the "Application Form" you will be informed that **it contains macros, which you must activate**, in order to obtain the data properly.

The Application form must be properly filled in and signed and stamped by the Lead Beneficiary. The application form consists of a cover page and seven sections describing in detail the project proposal. Information about the proposed project must be accurate and correct.



White Fields are those that must be completed by the Applicant



Fields marked in grey are those filled in by the Managing Authority or fields in which data are automatically transferred or calculated based on the input provided in other fields.

While filling in the application form, the applicants should take into account the set limits in the number of characters. If further instructions or clarifications concerning the Application Form are needed, the applicant may contact the Programme's Joint Secretariat or the Managing Authority.

In case a project proposal is approved, the Application Form submitted consists part of the contract between the Managing Authority and the Lead Beneficiary. It is pointed out that compliance with the provisions of the contract is the responsibility of the Lead Beneficiary and non compliance with such provisions may lead to the withdrawal of financing.

7.2 Application Form Sections

1. COVER PAGE

This section provides general information, such as details on the Programme in the frame of which the Application Form is submitted and general information identifying a proposal. Information per part and field is provided as follows:

Version of Application Form: This will be the version of the Application form to be filled in by the JS. Version 1 of the Application form will be the one attached to the Subsidy Contract.

Date of submission: The date of submission to the JS either in the context of a Call for Proposals, the subsidy Contract signature or regarding a modification.

Date of Approval: The date of approval of the Application form by the responsible Programme body (Joint Secretariat, Managing Authority, Monitoring Committee). To be filled in by the JS

MIS Code: The unique identification Number of the Project as generated by the MIS when approved. To be filled in by the JS.

Project title: Please insert the title of the proposed project

Project acronym: Please insert the acronym of the proposed project

2. SECTION A - PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

This section provides general information concerning project identification. Information per part and field is provided below.

Project title: Title of the proposed project. This field is automatically filled in with the relevant information provided in the Cover Page Section.

Project acronym: Acronym of the proposed project. This field is automatically filled in with the relevant information provided in the Cover Page Section.

Project duration

- **Start:** This field is automatically filled in with the relevant date, as a start of the project, which is provided in the Work Packages Table (excluding the Action 1.1. preparation activities). Projects should be ready to start their implementation as soon as possible after the decision of the Monitoring Committee. Decisions on projects are expected to be taken within six months after the end date of each call.
- **End:** This field is automatically filled in with the relevant date, as an end of the project, which is provided in the Work Packages Table.
- **Total Months:** This field is automatically calculated given the values inserted in the two previous fields. For the recommended **duration** of projects, please refer to the Call for Proposals.

Priority Axis: Please insert the title of the priority axis of the Programme in the frame of which the project is proposed. The priority Axis must be selected from the drop-down list.

Thematic Objective: Please insert the title of Thematic Objective of the Programme in the frame of which the project is proposed. The Thematic Objective must be selected from the drop-down list. For more information about the Thematic Objective please consult the Programme Document.

Investment Priority: Please insert the title of Investment Priority of the Programme in the frame of which the project is proposed. The Investment Priority must be selected from the drop-down list. For more information about the Investment Priority please consult the Operational Programme Document.

Specific Objective: Please insert the title of Specific Objective of the Programme in the frame of which the project is proposed. The Specific Objective must be selected from the drop-down list. For more information about the Specific Objective please consult the Operational Programme Document.

Brief Summary of the Project:

Please give a short overview of the project (in the style of a press release) and describe:

- *the common challenge 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 who will benefit from them*
- *the approach you plan to take and why is Cross-Border approach needed*
- *what is new/original about it*
- *what is the added value of the project*

It is strongly advised that this field is filled in after the entire Application Form has been completed. Should the project is approved, this summary will be published on the Programme's website. Thus, it should be clear, self-explanatory and without references to other parts of the

Application Form or to other documents. This field should not exceed 3.000 characters. Due to Excel limitations, the relevant text box is split into three parts. Each part must not exceed 1.000 characters.

Attention!

The total number of characters is automatically calculated in order to facilitate the applicants in filling this field. Any text exceeding the word limit cannot be seen or printed and thus cannot be taken into consideration. Please note that spaces are also counted as characters.

Beneficiary Information: This part provides an overview of project partnership. The fields, which are automatically filled in, are the following:

- **Beneficiary No:** The field is automatically filled in based on the information provided in Section C of the Application Form (Partnership).
- **Beneficiary Institution (Full Name):** The field is automatically filled in based on the information provided in Section C of the Application Form (Partnership).
- **Country:** The field is automatically filled in based on the information provided in Section C of the Application Form (Partnership).
- **NUTS III:** The field is automatically filled in based on the information provided in Section C of the Application Form (Partnership).
- **Legal Status:** The field is automatically filled in based on the information provided in Section C of the Application Form (Partnership).
- **Staff Cost Calculation Method:** The field is automatically filled in based on the information provided in Section C of the Application Form (Partnership).
- **Office and Administration Calculation method:** The field is automatically filled in based on the information provided in Section C of the Application Form (Partnership).

Project title: Title of the proposed project. This field is automatically filled in with the relevant information provided in the Cover Page Section.

Budget per beneficiary: This table provides an overview of beneficiaries' financial contribution to the project and is automatically filled in based on the information provided in Section C of the Application Form (Partnership). The fields automatically filled in are the following:

- **Beneficiary No:** The number identifying the specific partner
- **Country:** The country of origin of the partner
- **Union Support:** The community contribution corresponding to the specific partner
- **Percentage:** Percentage of community contribution to the total budget (fixed to 85%)
- **National co-financing:** National co-financing corresponding to the specific partner
- **Percentage:** Percentage of National co-financing to the total budget (fixed to 15%)
- **National Public Funding (a):** National Public co-financing corresponding to the specific partner
- **National Private Funding (b):** Not Applicable for the Programme
- **Total:** The sum of community contribution plus the national co-financing resulting to the total budget of the specific partner

Budget & beneficiaries per country: This part provides an overview of the number of beneficiaries and the budget per country and is automatically filled in based on the data contained in the previous table. The fields automatically filled in are the following:

- **Country:** The country of origin of beneficiaries
- **Co-financing source:** ERDF for the case of the Programme
- **Union Support:** The community contribution corresponding to the specific country
- **National Counterpart:** National co-financing corresponding to the specific country
- **National Public Funding (a):** National Public co-financing corresponding to the specific country
- **National Private Funding (b):** Not Applicable for the Programme

- **Total:** the sum of community contribution plus the national co-financing resulting to the total budget corresponding to the specific country

Project Budget: This table provides a summary of the projects budget and is automatically filled in. The fields contained in this table are the following:

- **Union Support:** The community contribution of the project
- **National Counterpart:** National co-financing of the project
- **National Public Funding (a):** National Public co-financing corresponding to the specific project
- **National Private Funding (b):** Not Applicable for the Programme
- **Total:** the sum of community contribution plus the national co-financing resulting to the total project budget.

Lead Beneficiary confirmation: In this part the Lead Beneficiary confirms, by officially signing and stamping the Application Form, that:

- the project has not or will not receive any other complementary EU funding during the whole duration of the project
- the project is in line with the relevant EU and national legislation and policies
- beneficiaries participating in the project are eligible (as defined in the Programme)
- beneficiaries are committed to take part in the project's activities
- the project budget and costs are in line with the limits set in the Call for proposals
- all information provided in the application form is accurate and true

All data (Name, Title, Institution and date of signature) must be completed by the signatory (normally the Legal Representative of the Lead Beneficiary's Institution).

3. SECTION B – DETAILED DESCRIPTION

This section provides a detailed description of the project idea, specific problems of the target groups to be addressed and objectives, its structure (activities, deliverables etc), the role of beneficiaries, the management of the project etc. This section is divided into eight sub-sections:

- B1 – Project Identification,
- B2 – Methodological Approach,
- B3 – Management,
- B4 - Information and publicity,
- B5 - Maturity of the project,
- B6 - Sustainability of results,
- B7 - Cross-border cooperation & Added value and
- B8 - Compatibility with EU and national policies) presented below.

B1. PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

This section describes how the project idea was developed and what are its objectives and expected results. This section contains the following fields:

B.1.1 Background and history of the project (problems/ challenges to be addressed/ target groups)

In this section the Applicant needs to describe:

- How the project idea and the partnership were developed
- What are the common Cross-border problems and challenges that will be tackled by the project? Please describe the relevance of your project for the programme area in terms of common challenges and/or joint assets addressed.
- What is the project's approach in addressing these common challenges and/or joint assets and what is new about the approach that 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 and in what way the approach goes beyond existing practice in the sector/programme area/participating countries.

- Which are the main target groups? Please describe who is benefiting (e.g. beneficiaries, regions, end-users etc.) from the project and in what way.

In this section please provide a brief description on how the project idea and partnership were developed, if the partnership has relevance with the achievement of project objectives and results, and how the beneficiaries were involved in developing the project proposal. In addition please describe the reasons for which the proposed project is necessary, as well as the specific problem(s) of target groups, and/or opportunities not currently meet that the project will address and challenges that will face. In this section the applicants must describe the target groups and provide clear evidence that there is a sufficient demand for the proposed project to be implemented. This will demonstrate that the project idea is based on the understanding of what the real benefits for the local population and the real impact on the area are. The applicants may refer to the Programme SWOT analysis and Objectives, as well as to the relevant chapters of the Manual, in order to better describe the project's background. The maximum number of characters allowed in this field is 4500.

B.1.2 Objectives of the Project:

In this section the Applicant must describe what the overall objective of the project is and how it is linked to the specific objectives of the Programme. Please describe also the overall objective and sub-objectives of the project. The maximum number of characters allowed in this field is 2000.

B.1.3 Expected outputs of the project (tangible and visible outputs or products relating to project activities)

In this section the Applicant must describe the project's main outputs that will be delivered based on the activities carried out in the project. A short explanation needs to be provided on the defined specific objectives and their link with the project main outputs. The project main outputs and its contribution to Programme's specific objectives need to be provided.

It must be noted that the outputs are tangible and visible results or products relating to the project activities and objectives. **Expected project outputs are the means to achieve the Project's (as well as the Programme's) objectives.** These results should include the description of the output indicators that will be described and quantified in Section F – Output Indicators. Examples include: networks set up between cities, studies, databases etc. The outputs described here should also be logically connected (be either a logical combination or be identical with) the basic project deliverables listed in Section D of the Application Form, in a way that it gets obvious to the reader what are the expected outputs through which the project meets its objectives. The maximum number of characters allowed in this field is 2000.

B.1.4 Expected results (direct and immediate effects resulting from the project)

In this section the Applicant must describe which the project results are. Their contribution and link (if applicable) to the result indicators of the Programme as provided in the Cooperation Programme Document must be described. The direct and immediate effects resulting from the project must also be clearly stated, highlighting the importance of the project for the cross border area. Additionally, the applicant may describe the innovative character of the expected results or clarify the added-value of the results compared to the achievements of previous experience (in case of a project follow-up). The maximum number of characters allowed in this field is 2000.

Note: The project should have identifiable and measurable targets, so that its progress can be monitored and evaluated in a way that ongoing consistency with the objectives of the Programme may be achieved. In case of failure in meeting the objectives, financing may be

suspended; therefore targets presented should be specific, measurable, achievable and time based. A clear link between planned outputs, results and objectives to achieve must be demonstrated.

B.2 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This section provides an analytical overview of the project's implementation methodology (activities, their combination and sequence, responsibilities etc.). The methodology must clearly show a common and team-oriented manner of work between beneficiaries. This section contains the following fields:

B.2.1 Project methodology/Roles - Tasks of Beneficiaries

In this section the Applicant must:

- Describe the project approach and provide summary description of all work packages of the project and identify activities' interlinks (sequence, combination, interrelation between activities-deliverables). The methodology must include information about the project implementation stages and how these will contribute towards the attainment of the targets sought; identification of the tools proposed and their suitability towards the attainment of the proposed targets etc. This field includes an explanation of how beneficiaries will be involved in the project (who will do what) and the division of roles and tasks among the beneficiaries (e.g. beneficiaries' responsibilities for administrative and / or financial tasks, participation in the implementation of activities and deliverables, degree of involvement given the competences and strengths of each beneficiary etc.).

The description should not exceed 5000 characters.

B.2.2. Work Packages / Actions:

In this section the Applicant must break down the proposed project into **Work Packages**. Having defined the objectives of the project, a more detailed plan of work packages has to be developed to map out how objectives will be achieved. Well defined objectives should make decisions on appropriate work packages relatively easy. The work packages (WPs) identified should follow the logical phases of the implementation of the project and include management and communication activities. The number of work packages used must be relevant to the complexity of the work and objectives of the proposed project.

1. Each project must have at least three Work Packages. The two of the three compulsory WPs are the following: **“WP1 Management and Coordination”**, describing the sequence of Actions to be analysed in Section D. Budget in order for the project to be coordinated and financially managed (including for example the necessary meetings between the beneficiaries in order to coordinate the project’s implementation, or the activities of the Lead Beneficiary concerning the financial monitoring - reporting of the project etc.)
2. **“WP2 Information & Publicity”**, describing the Actions for carrying out the external communication of project efforts and outputs, dissemination of results etc.
3. The third compulsory WP is the one of the actual technical implementation of the Project. The Projects can have a maximum of 4 Technical WPs from **WP3 to WP6**.

Attention!

All activities implemented outside the Programme area should be described in a single dedicated WP in the Application form. **(i.e. WP6: “Activities Outside the Programme Area”)**

Each Work Package contains the following fields:

- **Title:** Please insert the title of the Work Package
- **Start:** Please insert the Start Date of each WP
- **End:** Please insert the End Date of each WP

- **Cost:** The Cost of Work Packages is automatically filled in based on the information inserted in Section D – Budget

Attention!

The “Start Date” and “End Date” included in each action will automatically calculate the overall Project duration in Section “Project identification” and Section “Timetable”.

The macros need to be enabled.

B.2.3 Location of Activities:

Please provide a description of the area targeted by the project, the location of beneficiaries and activities as well as the geographical scope of the longer term effects (outputs and results). In case of activities outside the programme area, these should be explicitly mentioned. The maximum number of characters allowed is 2000.

B.3 MANAGEMENT

This section provides information on how the project will be administered and financially managed, in order to meet the requirements set. This section contains the following fields:

B.3.1. Lead Beneficiary and Beneficiaries' Competence (Experience, Structure, Personnel, Resources, etc.):

Please describe the Experience, Structure, Personnel, Resources, Institutional role etc. of the participating beneficiaries that indicate their relevance in the proposed project. The Applicant needs to define:

- Which are the organisation's competences related to the project activities?
Which is the institutional and financial capacity?
- Which are the experiences relevant for the project?
- Which is the organisation's capacity to directly or indirectly influence local/ regional/ national policies?

- What are the reasons for the selection of Lead Beneficiary?

Given that this field should not exceed 4000 characters, the Applicant can attach to the Application Form documents providing additional elements to that description, for example a diagram of the Beneficiary's structure etc.

B.3.2 Project management and coordination (structures, decision making procedures, internal communication, etc.)

Please describe how the management on the strategic and operational level will be carried out in the project, specifically:

- Structure, responsibilities and procedures for the day-to-day management and co-ordination
- Communication within the partnership
- Reporting and evaluation procedures
- Risk and quality management

This field should not exceed 2000 characters.

B.4 INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY

B.4.1 Information and Publicity Strategy

Please describe: i. the basic structure of the Project's Communication Plan (timetable, milestones etc), ii. the information and publicity measures to be carried out (website, events, publicity material etc), iii. the means of communication to be used to disseminate the Project's outputs, results and achievements (social media, brochures, promotional material etc) and iv. how the anticipated project results are going to be promoted at a national and/or at a regional level. The rules regarding the publicity and communication can be found in the Project

Beneficiaries Guidebook entitled Information and Publicity (Annexes). This field should not exceed 3000 characters.

B.5 MATURITY OF THE PROJECT

B.5.1 Preparatory and administrative activities undertaken

Describe the maturity of the project in terms of completion of the administrative procedures that allow the implementation of the project i.e. licenses, designs, permits, land acquisition, tenders documents, etc. This information should be provided for all project activities (services, equipment, infrastructure). This field should not exceed 3000 characters.

It is emphasized that submitted project proposals must have the maximum level of maturity according to the relevant selection criteria.

B.6 SUSTAINABILITY OF RESULTS

B.6.1 Sustainability, durability and transferability of main outputs delivered in the project

Please describe how the project main outputs will be further used once the project has been finalised. Please describe concrete measures (including e.g. institutional structures, financial sources etc) taken during and after project implementation to ensure the durability of the project main outputs. If relevant, please explain who will be responsible and/or the owner of the output.

In addition, you need to explain how the project will ensure that the project's outputs are applicable and replicable by other organisations/regions/countries outside of the current partnership. Please describe to what extent it will be possible to transfer the outputs to other

organisations/regions/countries outside of the current partnership." This field is limited to 3000 characters.

B.7 CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION & ADDED VALUE

B.7.1 Cross Border cooperation

Please describe how the cross border cooperation is demonstrated in order to achieve the project's objectives and results. Please explain why the project objectives cannot be efficiently reached acting only on a national/regional/local level and/or describe what benefits the project beneficiaries/target groups/project area/programme area gain in taking a cross border approach." This field is limited to 2000 characters.

B.7.2 Intensity of Cross-Border Cooperation

According to Art.12 from 1299/2013 par.4 "Beneficiaries shall cooperate in the development and implementation of operations. In addition, they shall cooperate in the staffing or the financing of operations, or in both. **Please mark with an "X"** the ways the partnership cooperates and describe how this is achieved.

B7.3. Capitalization:

Please describe in which way does the project capitalize previous cooperation and experience (if applicable), especially in the Programme area.

- Capitalization of beneficiaries' know-how experience
- Capitalization of beneficiaries' experience in Cross border Cooperation activities
- Capitalization of previous cooperation among current beneficiaries
- Capitalization of previous relevant projects

This field is limited to 500 characters

B.8 COMPATIBILITY WITH EU AND NATIONAL POLICIES

B.8.1 Consistency of the project with EU horizontal policies:

Please state (by the appropriate selection) if the theme tackled by the proposed project will address directly or indirectly each of the EU horizontal policies (Equal opportunities, Sustainable Development, Equality between men and women. Select only one option per principle and provide the justification. **Please mark with an “X” accordingly and justify your selection.**

B.8.2 Contribution to other EU (incl. Macro-regional strategies), National, Regional and Local policies:

Please describe the project’s contribution or achieved synergies and complementarities with relevant EU/regional/national strategies, instruments and policies; in particular, those concerning the project or programme area. This field is limited to 2000 characters.

4. SECTION C – PARTNERSHIP

This section provides contact and other useful details concerning the beneficiaries participating in the project implementation, starting with the Lead Beneficiary. The total number of beneficiaries must not exceed ten (10) including the Lead Beneficiary.

Beneficiary Details:

- **Name of institution in English:** Please provide the official translation in English of the name of the beneficiary’s institution.
- **Name of institution in original language:** Please provide the name of the beneficiary’s institution in the original language.
- **Distinctive Title/Abbreviation:** Please specify the distinctive title of the beneficiary’s institution.
- **Legal Status:** Please specify the legal status of the beneficiary in accordance with national legislation, by selecting a value from the drop-down list.

- **Legal Representative:** Please provide the name of the legal representative of the partner. The legal representative is a natural person authorised to represent and bind the institution. In the case of the Lead Beneficiary, the legal representative of the institution must sign the Application Form.
- **Position of the legal representative in the organisation:** Please specify the position of the legal representative in the organisation.
- **Contact Person for the project:** Please specify the name of the person that is nominated as the contact person for the project.
- **Project Manager:** Applicable only to the Lead Beneficiary. Please provide the details of the person nominated as the Project Manager. The person responsible for the project should be a staff member of the Lead Beneficiary who has an overall picture of the project and who coordinates the preparation of the application form on behalf of the partnership.
- **Financial Manager:** Applicable only to the Lead Beneficiary. Please provide the name of the person nominated as the Project Financial Manager that will be responsible for monitoring all financial aspects related to the project's implementation. The same person can be designated as both Project Manager and Financial Manager. If the person designated as Financial Manager is permanent staff of the partner, the designation can be done at the stage of presenting the Application Form. If the Person designated as Financial Manager will be external, the word "external" should be filled in at the stage of presenting the Application Form. For approved projects, the actual name of the person that will result from the public call procedure will be nominated when available.
- **Address:** Please provide the full postal address of the Beneficiary's institution.
- **Country:** Please provide the country of origin of the specific partner.
- **NUTS III code:** Please provide the NUTS III code of the area where the activities of the beneficiary will take place.
- **Telephone:** Please provide the telephone number of the Contact Person of the Project.
- **E-mail:** Please specify the e-mail of the Contact Person of the Project.
- **Fax:** Please specify the fax number of the Contact Person of the Project.

- **Website:** Please provide the website address of the beneficiary's institution.
- **Staff Costs Calculation Method:** Please select the method of the Staff costs calculation method according to the Call rules.
- **Office and Administration Costs Calculation Method:** Please select the method of the Office and Administration Costs calculation method according to the Call rules.
- **Is the organisation entitled to recover VAT based on national legislation for the activities implemented by the project VAT?:** Select the appropriate status from the drop down list. If the beneficiary selects "Partly" the applicant needs to select, why and for which activities.
- **Taxation Office:** Please specify the Name of the Beneficiary's Tax Office
- **Tax Number:** Please specify the Tax number or the Social Security Number of the Beneficiary's Institution.

Budget of Lead Beneficiary/Beneficiary:

- **Total Budget:** This field is automatically filled in and concerns the total budget corresponding to the specific partner.
- **ERDF:** This field is automatically filled in and concerns the community contribution corresponding to the specific partner.
- **National Contribution:** This field is automatically filled in and concerns the national contribution corresponding to the specific partner.
- **National Counterpart Type:** Please select National counterpart type. **For the case of the INTERREG V-A 'Greece-Bulgaria' 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme this must be set to "National Public Funding"**

Bank Details of Lead Beneficiary/Partner:

Bank details should be filled in after the approval of the project proposal.

- **Bank Name:** Please provide the name of the Bank Institution where the specific beneficiary holds an account related to the project payments.
- **Address:** Please provide the address of the Bank Institution.

- **Postal Code:** Please provide the postal code of the Bank Institution.
- **Town:** Please provide the name of the town where the Bank Institution is located.
- **Country:** Please specify the country where the Bank Institution is located.
- **IBAN:** Please specify the International Bank Account Number.
- **SWIFT code:** Please specify the SWIFT Code.
- **Holder of the account:** Please specify the original name of the account holder.

5. SECTION D - BUDGET

This section includes all the budget details of the beneficiaries. The Applicant has to fill in all the tables concerning the Costs/per partner/Deliverable/Budget Line. In addition the Applicant keep in mind that all fields marked in grey are automatically filled in, based on the information provided in other parts of the Application Form.

Project Budget:

This table summarizes the project budget information and is automatically filled in. It contains the following fields:

Union Support: The European Union's contribution corresponding to the specific project.

National Counterpart: The national contribution corresponding to the specific project. It is further analysed to National – Public Funding and National – Private Funding.

Total Budget: the sum of Union Support plus the National Counterpart corresponding to the specific project.

Total Project Budget per WP/ Budget Line:

This table summarizes the total project costs per work package and Budget Line and is automatically filled in based on the information provided in the following tables that present the costs per partner, deliverable and Budget Line and that will be further analyzed.

Costs per Beneficiary / Deliverable / Budget Line:

The following tables present the costs per deliverable and Budget Line for each beneficiary participating in the project, starting with the Lead Beneficiary.

Please fill in with the title of the deliverable implemented by the specific partner. Then provide the analysis of the budget for the specific deliverable per Budget Line. The Totals per Work Package, Deliverable and Budget Line are automatically filled in and marked in grey.

NOTE: Each beneficiary may participate/ implement maximum 5 deliverables in each Work Package. The number of deliverables per beneficiary may not exceed 30 in total for the specific project.

Further analysis of the budget needs to be provided in the Justification of the Budget.

NOTE: The Applicant must attach to the Application Form as Annexes the Justification of budget costs for the proposed activities (providing concrete examples of the way the Deliverable costs have been calculated). This justification includes, for example, calculations based on man-months of effort for the tasks described, specific offers for supplies etc. The **Justification of the Budget** document shall be provided in the required format (see the Applicant's package).

6. SECTION E – TIMETABLE

This section provides information on the actions implementation timetable as well as on the provisional allocation of the project budget per action and reporting period.

Timetable

The timetable is filled in automatically according to the information provided in the WPs part in the "Detailed description" Section.

Budget per Year

Please specify the provisional allocation of the budget in the Annual periods covering the project's duration. In each field representing a reporting period of the Year X specify the budget in Euros that corresponds to the part of the budget of the specific WP that will be spent during this period. The Totals per Action and per Reporting Period will be filled in automatically.

Attention!

The "Budget per reporting period" Table should be in line with the "Total Project Budget per WP/Budget Line" table in Section D "Budget".

7. SECTION F – INDICATORS

This section provides information on the outputs and results which are expected to be achieved with the project proposed.

Priority Axis:

The priority axis under which the specific project is proposed is automatically filled in based on the relevant information provided at the Project Identification Section (Section A) of the Application Form.

Thematic Objective:

The Thematic Objective under which the specific project is proposed is automatically filled in based on the relevant information provided at the Project Identification Section (Section A) of the Application Form.

Investment Priority:

The investment priority, under which the specific project is proposed, is automatically filled in based on the relevant information provided at the Project Identification Section (Section A) of the Application Form.

Specific Objective:

The specific objective, under which the specific project is proposed, is automatically filled in based on the relevant information provided at the Project Identification Section (Section A) of the Application Form.

Output Indicators:

Outputs are tangible and visible results or products relating to project activities. Outputs are quantified through the use of indicators. Expected project outputs will contribute to the aims of the specific Priority Axis/Investment priority/Specific objective.

- **Indicators:** The output indicators defined in the Programme for the specific Priority Axis objective are filled in automatically.
- **Unit of Measurement:** Output indicators are measured in physical units. The measurement units of the predefined output indicators are automatically filled in based on the information provided above.
- **Target:** Please specify the targeted value of each output indicator.

The definition and guidelines for selecting the indicators and defining their target value are provided as an annex to this document. The Output Indicators for each Axis in regard to the current call are provided in the following tables:

Table 13: Output Indicators-Priority Axis 2

Priority Axis 2: A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border area		
Code	Indicator	Unit of Measurement
O0202	Number of cultural and/or natural assets rehabilitated/protected	number
CO09	Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural or natural heritage and attractions	visits/year

CO23	Surface area of habitats supported in order to attain a better conservation status	hectares
O0203	Surface water resources under joint monitoring	hm3

Table 14: Output Indicators-Priority Axis 4

Priority Axis 4: A Socially Inclusive Cross-Border Area		
Code	Indicator	Unit of Measurement
O0204	Number of health care institutions reorganized, modernized or reequipped	number
O0205	Number of health ICT systems developed	number
CO36	Population covered by improved health services	Persons
O0206	Number of participants in social entrepreneurship projects promoting gender equality, equal opportunities and social inclusion across borders.	number

8. SECTION G – CHECKLIST FOR SUBMISSION

This section provides a checklist of requirements that have to be fulfilled before officially submitting the project proposal. Please make sure that you have fulfilled all of the requirements listed in that section by clicking on each checkbox, before submitting the documents.

8. Evaluation of Project Proposals

8.1 Procedure

After submission, each project proposal will be subjected to a two-phase evaluation procedure carried out by the Joint Secretariat and based on the selection criteria described below.

In cases where specific knowledge is needed for the evaluation of a project proposal, the Managing Authority and the National Authority will be informed by the JS and will appoint external experts for the needs of the evaluation.

1st phase: Administrative and technical requirements

Projects will be checked for their **administrative compliance** and **eligibility criteria**, in order to ensure that they fulfil the administrative and eligibility requirements of the Programme. This is an on-off procedure. Projects, which fail to fulfil the above requirements of the Programme, will be excluded from the 2nd phase check.

- **Administrative compliance:** It confirms that a proposal has been submitted within the deadline set; the Application Form has the official format specified by the Managing Authority, is complete and meets all the requirements set in the respective Call; all the required documents to be submitted along with the Application Form are properly filled in, signed, stamped and attached to the Application Form;
- **Eligibility criteria:** These criteria examine whether the proposal fulfils the requirements for being eligible for funding by the Programme. These requirements are, for instance, the structure of the cross-border partnership, the general compatibility with the Programme objectives and principles, the co-financing requested, the duration of the project etc. Proposals that do not fulfil the eligibility criteria will be rejected. Additional information is requested from applicants only in the case of permitted errors agreed between the two countries and approved by the Monitoring Committee.

After the completion of the 1st phase check, the Managing Authority submits to the Monitoring Committee:

- 1) List of all project proposals that have undergone the administrative and eligibility check
- 2) Evaluation forms of the 1st phase check

Subsequently, the Monitoring Committee decides on the results of the 1st phase check.

All the Lead Beneficiaries of the submitted project proposals will be informed in writing on the results obtained after the 1st phase check.

2nd phase: Quality assessment of the projects

Only projects that demonstrate administrative compliance and satisfy the eligibility criteria will be subjected to **quality assessment**. The first part of the quality assessment is an on-off procedure. All projects proposals that have passed successfully the 1st phase evaluation are checked if they fulfil the obligatory requirements set by the Programme for the investment priority they are applying under. The second part of the quality assessment is based on a scoring system and concludes with a ranking list of all the project proposals that have passed successfully the 1st phase evaluation.

During the second part of the second phase, proposals are evaluated using **core selection criteria**. These entail evaluating the nature of the proposed project, its relevance with and contribution to the achievement of the specific objectives of the Programme, its viability, sustainability and results in the eligible territory, the cross border cooperation and capitalization, the quality of the cross-border partnership, as well as the monitoring and management methodology proposed, information and publicity actions and planning of the budget.

The core selection criteria are divided into:

- **Project Quality (Content related criteria)** (relevance of the proposal taking into account the specific requirements laid down in Annex A for each investment priority, quality of the results, impact and sustainability, innovation, cross border cooperation and capitalization) and
- **Implementation related criteria** (quality of the partnership, quality of the methodological approach, budget and finance).

A threshold of 27 points is set to the Content related criteria and a threshold of 24 points is set to the Implementation related criteria.

The different sets of criteria per Investment Priority are annexed to the Project Application Guidelines.

8.2 Scoring

The selection criteria will be taken into account by the evaluators to assess the projects. The purpose of the core selection criteria is to assess the quality of the eligible project proposals. The maximum total score a project may obtain is 82 points. Quality criteria are closely linked to the nature and objectives of each Investment Priority of the INTERREG V-A Greece–Bulgaria 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme. The obligatory requirements to be fulfilled by the project proposals per Investment Priority are stated in the first section of the second phase evaluation. In case of non fulfillment of these obligatory requirements the project proposal receives 0 scoring and is deemed ineligible.

The Joint Secretariat carries out the evaluation of proposals, based on these selection criteria, approved by the Monitoring Committee.

The submitted project proposals will be evaluated by two assessors – 1 Greek and 1 Bulgarian at least for the 1st phase evaluation “Administrative and technical requirements”. The final score of the proposals will be defined in the following way:

- for evaluations with a difference equal or up to 5 points in the score of the 2 assessors, the average score will be calculated and will define the final score obtained.
- for evaluations with a difference higher than 5 points, a third evaluation will take place. This will be executed by the JS Coordinator and the average score of the scores given by the three assessors (2 assessors and the JS Coordinator) will be calculated and will define the final score obtained.

Additionally, a third evaluation by the JS coordinator will take place in the following cases:

- the total score given by one of the assessors on the section "Project quality section (Content related criteria)" is below the defined threshold (e.g. 27 points), while at the same time the second assessor has given a score above the defined threshold;
- the total score given by one of the assessors on the section "Implementation-related criteria section" is below the defined threshold (e.g. 24 points), while at the same time the second assessor has given a score above the defined threshold;

The final score given to the project, which may fall under the two cases mentioned above, will be the average score of the scores given by the three assessors (2 assessors and the JS Coordinator).

The Managing Authority ensures that the evaluation procedure is carried out in a transparent and independent manner, and in accordance to the requirements of the Call for Proposals and the approved selection criteria.

Then the JS, with the consent of the Managing Authority, submits to the Monitoring Committee:

- 1) The fiches of the submitted project proposals, summarizing the most important information about the project proposals
- 2) The ranking list of all evaluated project proposals

3) All the evaluation forms of the 1st and 2nd phase checks

4) Evaluation report

The project proposals are ranked according to the results obtained in the evaluation procedure. They are divided into three categories (based on the budget available and the results of evaluation):

- Project proposals to be accepted
- Project proposals to be rejected and
- Project proposals to be further discussed at the Monitoring Committee (acceptable under conditions, such as budget surplus, provision of further necessary documents, licenses, permits, etc).

In case of equal scoring of two or more project proposals, while the available budget is not enough to fund all of them, the JS will present the advantages and disadvantages of each proposal to the members of the MC, who will decide on the proposal(s) to be funded.

To be proposed for financing by the Programme, a project must meet all the below mentioned requirements:

- obtain a total rating score equal or higher than the minimum score allowing a project to be financed (51 points),
- be evaluated with a score higher than 0 at any sub criterion of the Project quality section (Content related criteria) and fulfills all the obligatory criteria of each investment priority as set in the Programme document and listed in the first part of the quality assessment,
- be evaluated with a score equal or higher than the threshold of 26 points set in the Project quality section (Content related criteria),
- be evaluated with a score equal or higher than the threshold of 24 points set in the Project quality section (Implementation related criteria),

- v. be in line with all the requirements of the budget available for each Priority Axes as stated in the Call for Proposals,
- vi. be placed into a ranking list that takes into account the score and the budget available for each Priority Axes as stated in the Call for Proposals

The Monitoring Committee selects the projects to be funded. All the Lead beneficiaries of the submitted project proposals will be informed in writing on the results obtained on the performance of the 1st and 2nd phase checks after the completion of the decision procedure of the Monitoring Committee.

If a proposal is accepted under conditions, the Managing Authority will have to check that these conditions are taken into account before Subsidy Contracts are signed with the competent Authorities.

Any complaints submitted on the evaluation will be treated according to chapter 5.3.o of the Programme document. Further clarifications are going to be provided upon further specification of the above mentioned procedure.

ANNEX: Evaluation Criteria per Investment Priority

See attached in a separate document