PROGRAMME MANUAL

# 4. IMPLEMENTATION STAGE (under construction)

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

Programme cofinanced by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

# Versions

| **CONTENT** | VERSION | DATE |
|---|---|---|
| **Programme Manual** | 1 | 03/09/2015 |
| **6. Interreg MED GLOSSARY** | 2 | 07/08/2015 |

# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| **AA** | Audit Authority |
| **AF** | Application Form |
| **CA** | Certifying Authority |
| **CP** | Cooperation Programme |
| **ENI** | European Neighbourhood Instrument |
| **ERDF** | European Regional Development Fund |
| **FLC** | First Level Controller |
| **IPA** | Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance |
| **JS** | Joint Secretariat |
| **MA** | Managing Authority |
| **NCP** | National Contact Point |
| **SEAP** | Sustainable Energy Action Plan |
| **SME** | Small and Medium size Enterprises |
| **SWOT (analysis)** | Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats |
| **ToR** | Terms of Reference |
| **VAT** | Value Added Tax |

# Index

## 4.1. Reporting process (under construction)

### 4.1.1. FLC system

### 4.1.2. Progress reports and payment claims

## 4.2. Modifications (under construction)

## 4.3. Controls and audits (under construction)

# 4.4. Support system for project implementation

## 4.4.1. Presentation of the support system for project implementation

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECTS SUPPORT SYSTEM

For 2014-2020, the issue of the quality of projects is particularly important. In this context, the MED programme has designed a support system that aims to help Lead Partners and partners to implement their activities and, when applicable, link the different modules in an efficient way.

The support system proposed by the programme is based on the following parts:

**"METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS FOR THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MED PROJECTS"**

During the 2007-2013 period, evaluations have highlighted the difficulties faced by some projects in anticipating and properly planning their activities. For 2014-2020, it is required that projects have a good command of their actions and work sequences.

For this reason, projects can refer to the guidelines provided in section 4.4.2 "**Methodological tools for the preparation and implementation of MED projects**". In this section, they can draw on the indications provided on the "Planning of the activities of a MED project" that insist on the necessity to anticipate the sequence of operations and of the potential consequences of the modification of an activity, of a deadline on the overall project.

The section also provides guidance on the logical framework, the SWOT analysis and the use of sociogram for the project.

The use of these tools is not compulsory but it is recommended by the programme to ensure a good implementation of the project.

Projects can contract external experts to assist them in the use of these tools.

**"Points of attention"**

An essential aspect for the good functioning of projects lies in their ability to anticipate possible difficulties that the partners may face during the life of the project.

Referring to the experience of the 2007-2013 projects, the programme provides the stakeholders with a list of **"points of attention"** in section 4.4.3 that identifies the main difficulties observed in the implementation of projects. For each point, the programme also provides guidance on actions to be taken in order to limit these risks or reduce their impact on the project.

**Other documents provided by the programme**

Besides the methodological tools presented above that aim to support the implementation of projects, the following document must be taken into account to ensure a proper functioning of the support and monitoring system:

**"ASSESSMENT OF THE SUPPORT SYSTEM"** (see document in annex 6)
This factsheet should allow Lead Partners, partners and external experts (when relevant) to submit their comments on the support system provided by the programme.
Two types of forms are proposed, one for the Lead Partner and one for the external expert.
Lead Partners must transmit their form to the Joint Secretariat at the end of the project with their final report. External experts must transmit their form as soon as their assignment ends.
These contributions will be taken into account by the Joint Secretariat to improve, if needed, the support system for the next calls for projects.

**"PROCUREMENT FOR EXTERNAL EXPERTS"** (see document in annex 5)
Multi-module projects are required to hire an external expert to support them in the evaluative monitoring of the project, and to ensure a proper transition from one module to another.
To facilitate the recruitment of external experts for multi-module projects, the programme provides guidelines for the drafting of procurements (support expected, methodology, skills…).
Such guidelines shall ensure that the projects will benefit from comparable levels of expertise for the implementation of their activities.

PRESENTATION OF THE PROJECT SUPPORT SYSTEM PER TYPE OF MODULAR PROJECT

FIGURE 35: SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR SINGLE MODULE PROJECTS

SINGLE MODULE PROJECTS

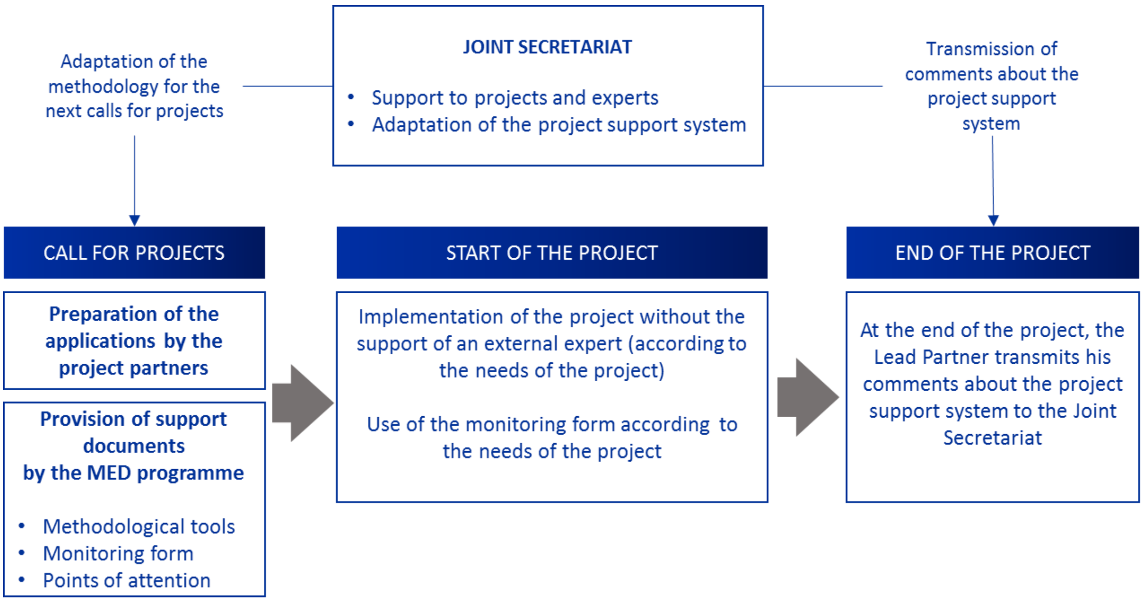
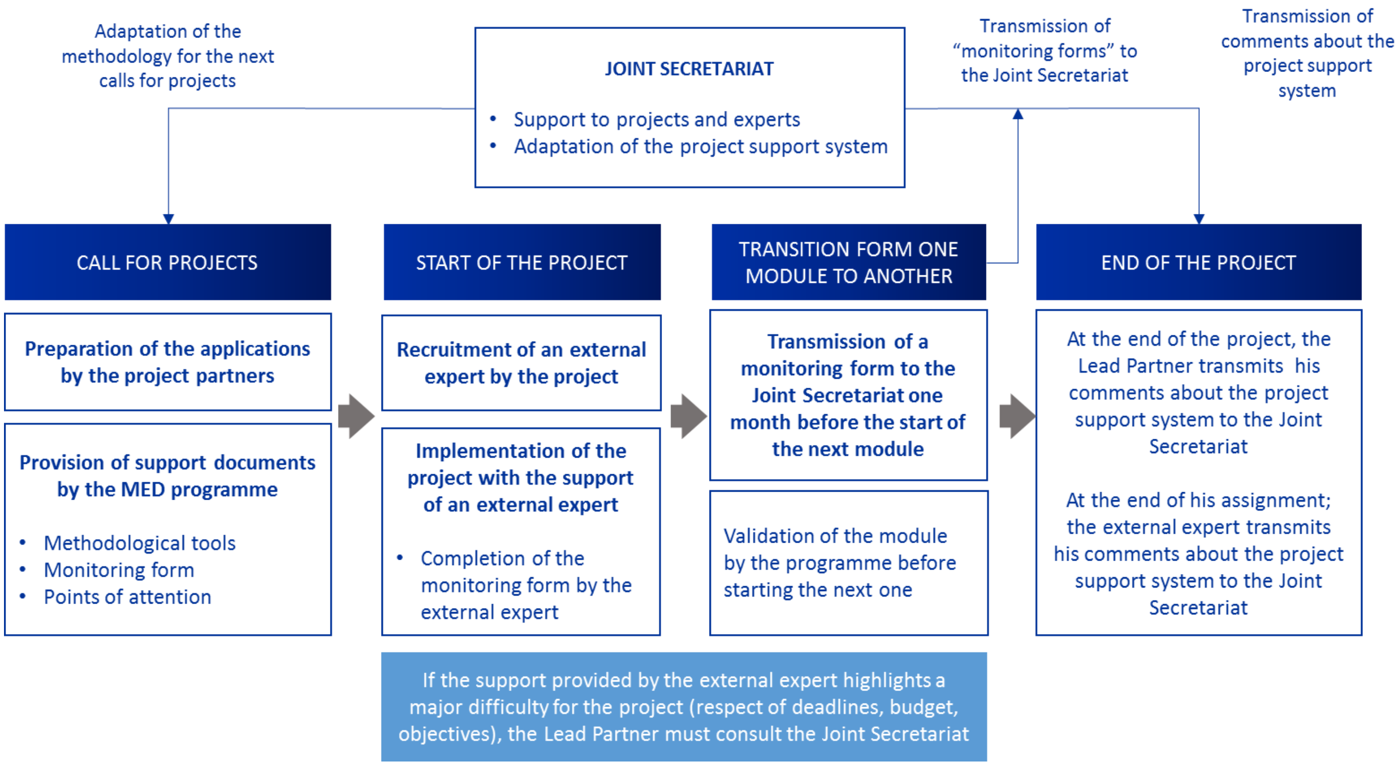


FIGURE 36: SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR MULTI-MODULE PROJECTS

MULTI-MODULE PROJECTS



DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE FOR PROJECT SUPPORT

**FIGURE 37: DOCUEMENTS AVAILABLE FOR PROJECT SUPPORT**

| Support documentation | Description | Objective | Actors involved | Terms |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Methodological tools** | Description of methodological tools that can be used by project partners | Improving the preparation, planning and implementation of projects | To be used by Lead Partners and project partners | To be used right from the project design phase |
| **2. Monitoring form** | Form dedicated to the qualitative monitoring of the project by the external experts and project partners in multi-module projects | Assessing the progress of the project, identifying difficulties and proposing solutions for a sound implementation of the module | The external expert is in charge of drafting the monitoring form in close relation with the Lead Partner and the project partners | Project partners and external experts specify the use of the monitoring form themselves (frequency)<br>The project must transmit to the Joint Secretariat a form completed one month before the start of the next module |
| **3. Points of attention** | List of points highlighting specific difficulties for the conception and implementation of projects | Anticipating the main difficulties partners can face during the preparation and implementation of the project | Dedicated to the Lead Partner and to project partners<br>The external expert shall pay a specific attention to these points during his/her mission | Points of attention must be taken into account right from the project design phase and throughout its implementation |
| **4. Assessment of the support system** | Form to be used by Lead Partners and external experts to give their comments on the project support system | Improving the project monitoring system for the next calls for project | Two different forms are proposed. One for the Lead Partner and one for the external expert | The Lead Partner transmits the form to the Joint Secretariat at the end of the project (with the final report)<br>The external expert transmits the form to the Joint Secretariat at the end of his/her assignment |
| **5. Procurement external expert** | This document provides guidelines (technical and methodological information) for the drafting of public procurement for the recruitment of external experts by the project | Helping to specify the mission of the external expert and ensure that projects can benefit of comparable level of assistance | To be used by the Lead Partner and the partners for the drafting of the public procurement | The tender for the recruitment of the external expert must be launched as early as possible after the project selection notification |

ROLES OF THE ACTORS INVOLVED IN THE MED PROJECT

The success of the project support system relies on a clear distribution of roles and on a good communication between all the actors involved. In a synthetic way, their responsibilities can be listed as follows:

Joint Secretariat:

- Providing methodological tools on the website of the programme when launching calls for projects
- Screening the quality of each module before the project can start a new one. Analysing of the "monitoring forms" transmitted by the external experts
- Analysing the "assessment forms" transmitted by the Lead Partners and the external experts and adaptation of the project support system for the next calls for projects.

Lead Partner of the project:

- As soon as a project application is considered, project partners must go through the support documents provided by the programme. The Lead Partner must pay a particular attention to the "points of attention" in order to anticipate potential difficulties in the preparation and implementation of the project;
- As soon as the project starts, the Lead Partner recruits the external expert (if relevant). For the drafting of the procurement, the LP must use the guidelines provided by the programme in the document "Procurement external expert" (see annex 5);
- During the implementation of the project, the Lead Partner holds a close relationship with its partners and with the external expert (if relevant). In multi-module projects, the LP must provide the external expert with any useful information to ensure an efficient support process (especially for the drafting of the monitoring form);
- At the end of the project, the Lead Partner transmits comments of the partnership on the project support system ("Assessment of the partnership on the project support system" (see annex 6)) to the Joint Secretariat.

Project partners:

- Project partners must take note of the documents provided by the programme, right from the project design phase. They must pay a specific attention to the "points of attention" which can help to anticipate a number of difficulties as early as the project preparation phase;
- During the implementation of a multi-module project, project partners must maintain a steady relation with the external expert and provide him/her the information necessary for the proper operation of the project (for the drafting of the monitoring form for example);
- At the end of the project, project partners share their comments with the Lead Partner about the project support system ("Assessment of the project support system").

External experts:

- From the start of his/her mission, the external expert should promptly meet the Lead Partner and the partners to explain his/her methodology and the support s/he will provide them with;
- The external expert assists the project in the use of the "methodological tools" proposed by the programme (if project partners are using them);
- During the lifetime of the project, the external expert shall maintain a close relationship with the Lead Partner and regular contacts with the partners to monitor their activities and identify possible difficulties they might be faced with in the implementation of the module. In case difficulties arise, he must propose solutions based in particular on the analysis of the "monitoring form";
- The external expert drafts the "monitoring form" according to the procedure defined with the Lead Partner; a copy of the "monitoring form" is sent to the JS at least one month before the scheduled start for the next module;
- At the end of his/her assignment, the external expert sends comments to the Joint Secretariat using the form "Assessment of the projects support system".

#### LIMITATIONS OF THE PROJECT SUPPORT SYSTEM

The quality and usefulness of project support largely depends on the commitment of partners and on the quality of communication between the Lead Partner, the partners and the external experts.

The approach is essentially voluntary and implies that each partner regularly informs the other partners about its activities, especially in case of difficulty.

It also implies that the external expert (when relevant) be actively involved in the process, be considered as an additional resource to promote the effective implementtation of the project and be involved in committees, meetings and project information flows.

### 4.4.2. Methodological tools for the preparation and implementation of MED projects

The methodological tools presented in this section and in annexes are provided by the Interreg MED programme. The use of these tools is not compulsory but it is recommended by the programme to ensure a good implementation of the project.

#### PLANNING OF THE ACTIVITIES OF AN INTERREG MED PROJECT

Importance of planning activities for a MED project

One of the main challenges for projects partners is to ensure the sequence, timing and articulation of all the activities of a project. A dysfunction in this sequencing (unsuitable preparation of tasks, improper means, unforeseen administrative delays…) is likely to disrupt the project or to hinder the implementation of activities.

A good management of the sequence of activities is essential for the progress of any project. It is all the more for 2014-2020 MED projects based on multi-modules logic.
In project engineering, the planning of activities (timing, sequencing, and responsibilities) can be achieved using different "**GANTT diagram**" models. The use of this type of tool is highly recommended for the preparation of multi-module MED projects.

### Specify activities, sub-activities, tasks and people in charge

The use of this type of chart requires splitting planned activities in **sub-activities and tasks** (usually going beyond the level of detail required in the application form). Each task should be entrusted to an individual or a team within the partnership. If it is not possible to reach this level of detail when completing the application form, this should be done in the first weeks of implementation of the project. **At this stage, it is essential that each partner knows precisely the level of skills, level of information and availability necessary for the implementation of actions and tasks**.

The level of detail of activities and tasks **shall not be excessive at the project level**. It should especially enable the different partners to have a **synthetic view of the implication of their activities with those of other partners, and vice versa** (If I do not perform such a task on time, what will the potential impact be on my partner and on the overall project). Each partner then has the possibility to develop a more detailed planning of activities to ensure the successful completion of his own tasks (organisation of a seminar, workshop, publications…).

It is essential that activities be detailed when they require the contribution of external services or sub-contractors, the use of public procurement, etc. (execution of a small infrastructure, large event, pilot activity…).

### Competencies and skills

The level of skills, of information and availability of actors actually involved in the implementation of activities are key factors of success (or bottleneck) of territorial cooperation projects. As for administrative tasks, **it is essential that people involved are aware of the specificities of European projects management beforehand** (previous experience, information, training sessions).

These administrative constraints are usually underestimated and it is necessary to take into account in the planning specific difficulties due to the management of a transnational partnership (transmission of documents, communication, partner confronted to economic, administrative or institutional difficulties (elections…), etc.).

### Detailing sequences and interconnections

Once the activities are sufficiently detailed, they must be connected to each other to determine:

- The sequences: in what order should they be implemented?
- The interconnections: does the start of the activity depend on the completion of the previous one?
- Human resources: can the people in charge simultaneously perform the different tasks they are in charge of

The level of detail will vary according to the nature of the project and activities. It should especially help to **identify constraints of time and resources partners will be confronted to** (for a facility, a pilot project or an event, one must take into account the preparation and launching of public procurement, the validation of expenses by competent authorities (national, regional, local authorities), etc.). One must also take into account regulations and administrative constraints that differ from one member state to another (documents to be provided, deadlines, etc.)

### Key implementation steps and flexibility

Once the sequence of activities and the foreseeable timeframe are defined, it is necessary to **identify milestones to follow the progress of the project.**

Milestones are generally key events or achievements taking place at the end of a phase or a group of tasks, etc. (realisation of a specific event, production of a deliverable…). Milestones are essential for the preparation of technical and financial progress reports. Given the limited available time for the preparation of a territorial cooperation project and the period between the submission of an application and its selection, it is often necessary at the start of the project (kick off meeting or first monitoring committee) **to make sure that the assumptions set in the logical framework remain valid** and that **foreseen activities and tasks are achievable**. At this stage, **each partner must have a clear vision of the skills required, of the available human resources and of the planned activities**.

This capacity for self-analysis and questioning is **essential at the end of each module to start the following one in the best possible conditions.**

### The fundamental role of good communication for the implementation of the project

During the project lifetime, many factors can interfere with the implementation of activities and disturb the progress of the project (legal, administrative, organisational constraints). It is the responsibility of the Lead Partner (with the support of the external expert) to take into account these difficulties and to assess their impact on the implementation of the project (incidence on the achievement of certain tasks, on the production of deliverables, on the reporting; consequences for other partners, etc.).
**This work requires constant exchanges between all partners and a regular update of the planning of activities and tasks**. This approach assumes that the Lead Partner maintains a good communication level but also that each partner commit to informing about its own difficulties.

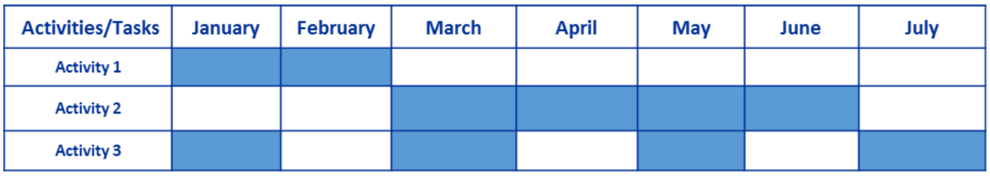
### Use of a « GANTT diagram » for the planning of activities of a MED project

To plan activities and task of a project, project partners may use different methodological support. Among them, the "GANTT diagram" allows to visualise the timeline of the various tasks that make up the project.

A GANTT diagram can be completed using the PERT method (*Programme Evaluation Research Task*) which is used to specify the sequence between tasks.

In summary, a GANTT chart takes the form of a chronogram. The abscissa axis shows the time unit, the ordinate axis shows the various actions or tasks to be completed.

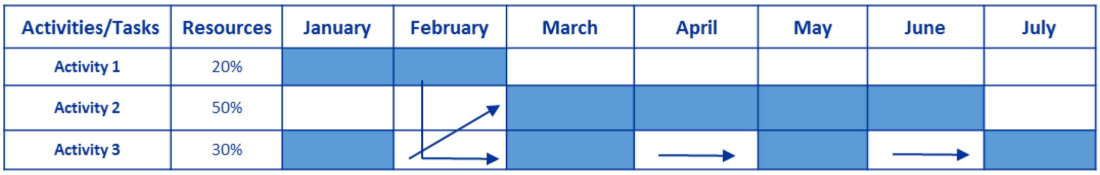
**FIGURE 38: TIME CHART**




Compared to the time chart, the GANTT diagram can display :

- Resources (people in charge of a task or % of time spent by one person on different tasks)
- Dependencies between tasks (task to be completed in order to initiate the next one)

FIGURE 39: GANTT CHART




This type of diagram can be developed with a spreadsheet to set an image of the organisation and conduct of the overall project (models are available online).
In order to manage the diagram in a dynamic way more easily (especially to include changes on timing or tasks during the implementation of the project), it is better to use specialised software that generate automatic update of schedules (open or paid version accessible online).

The use of this type of tool requires spending additional time for the design of the project but can improve its monitoring and implementation in a significant way.

## MODEL OF A LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

A logical framework allows to build the project intervention logic, i.e. the links between the needs addressed by the project, achievements, actions or activities developed by the project, and the expected effects of the project on the mid-long term. Please refer to section 2.3.2. for more information on project intervention logic.

The logical framework will help identifying indicators necessary to monitor the achievement of objectives, to identify the source of information and to highlight the assumptions and risks affecting the project.

Before starting the design of a logical framework, it is necessary to undertake an **analysis of the existing situation**. This analysis includes four main elements:

- Problem analysis: identifying what the main problems are and establishing a cause and effect relationship. This can be done using a “problem tree analysis” (see below)
- Stakeholder analysis: having identified the main problems, the cause and effects relationship between them, it is necessary to consider who these

problems impact on most and how the different stakeholders can be involved in the project

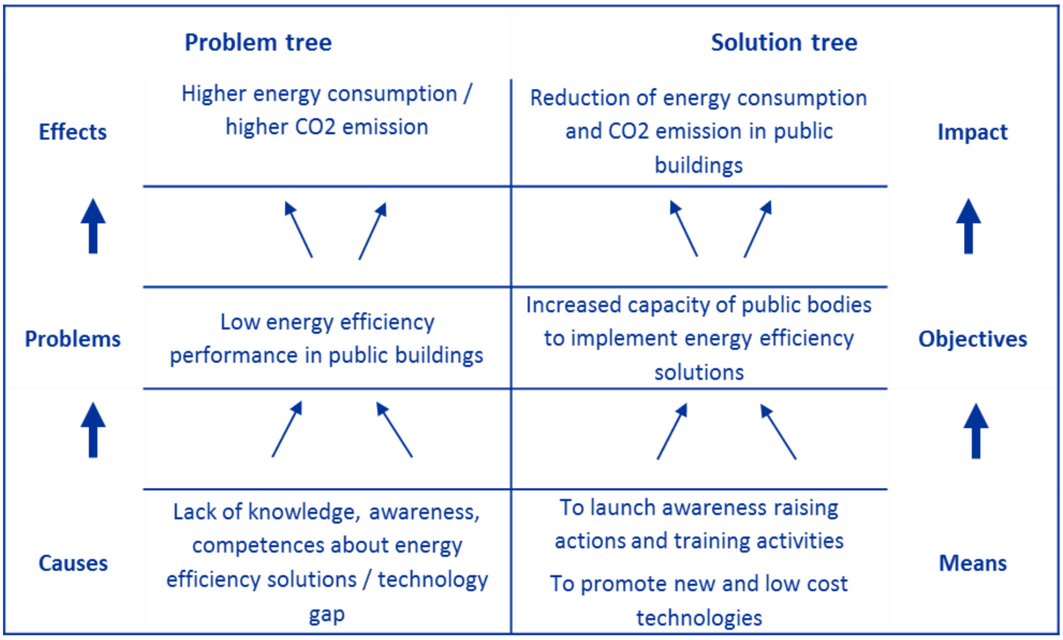
- Analysis of objectives (or solutions): giving an image of the improved situation in the future. This analysis can be done using an "objective tree" (see below)
- Analysis of strategies: Comparison of different options to address a given situation

Problems and solutions tree analysis

With the problem analysis, project partners can identify the negative aspects of a given situation and establish the cause and effects relationship between them. The "Tree" is composed of three parts: the identification of the main problems (trunk); the cause of the problem (roots); the effects of the problem (branches). Ideally, the drafting of a problem tree should be undertaken with the contribution of all identified stakeholders and target groups.

With the solutions analysis, project partners can describe the situation in the future once identified problems have been solved. The negative situations identified in the "problem tree" are converted into objectives that are realistically achievable. An objective tree might show many objectives that cannot all be reached.

**FIGURE 40: SIMPLIFIED SCHEME OF PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS TREES**




Drafting of the logical framework

The results of the problem and objective trees are used as a basis for preparing the Logical framework. This is done in four steps (see the table below)

**1: definition of the intervention logic**

Starting at the top of the logical framework table and using the information from the Objective Tree, writing the overall objective (Reduction of energy consumption…), specific objective (to increase the capacities of public bodies…), expected results (increased capacities of public bodies…) and activities (awareness raising actions …) of the project. When necessary, specifying the means and cost needed to carry out these activities (**2**)

**3: definition of indicators + source and means of verification**

Starting from the top to the bottom of the hierarchy of objectives, identifying the verifiable indicators for measuring the progress in terms of quantity, quality and time (following the requirement of the programme)

The source and means of verification must be considered and specified at the same time as the formulation of indicators (to test whether or not indicators can be realistically measured at the expense of a reasonable amount of time and money).

**4: definition of assumptions and risks**

Reflecting up from the bottom of the Logical framework, considering how, if each assumption holds, it will be possible to move from the activities to the overall objective or the project. Assumptions are external factors that can influence the implementation of the project but that usually are out of the control of projects partners.

**FIGURE 41: MODEL OF LOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

| | Intervention Logic | Objectively verifiable indicators | Sources and means of verification | Assumptions |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Main objectives** | 1 What is the overall broader objective to which the action will contribute? (impact) 3 | What are the key indicators related to the overall objective? | What are the sources of information for these indicators? | What are the external factors needed to sustain objectives on the long term? |
| **Specific objectives** | What specific objective must the project achieve? | Which indicators show that the specific objectives of the action have been achieved? | What sources of information are available? What are the methods required to collect this information? | Which factors and conditions are necessary to achieve that objective? What risks must be taken into account? |
| **Expected results** | What are the specific deliverable results expected to achieve the specific objectives? What are the effects and benefits foreseen of the project? | What are the indicators to measure whether and to what extent the action achieves the expected result? | What are the sources of information of these indicators? | What external conditions must be met to obtain the expected results on schedule? |
| **Activities** | 4 What are the key activities to be carried out and in what sequence in order to produce the expected results? | Means: What are the means required to implement these activities (personnel, equipment, supplies, training, studies, etc.) | What are the sources of information about project progress 2 Cost: What are the action costs? | What preconditions are required before the project starts? What conditions out of the control of the project must be fulfilled for the implementation of project activities? |

This scheme can be used for the preparation of applications. For 2014-2020 ETC projects, **one must highlight the clear focus given to the identification of targets and the selection of indicators that must correspond to those listed in the cooperation programme**. Please refer to section 2.3.2. regarding the link between programme and project intervention logic.

MODEL OF A SWOT ANALYSIS (STRENGHTS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS)

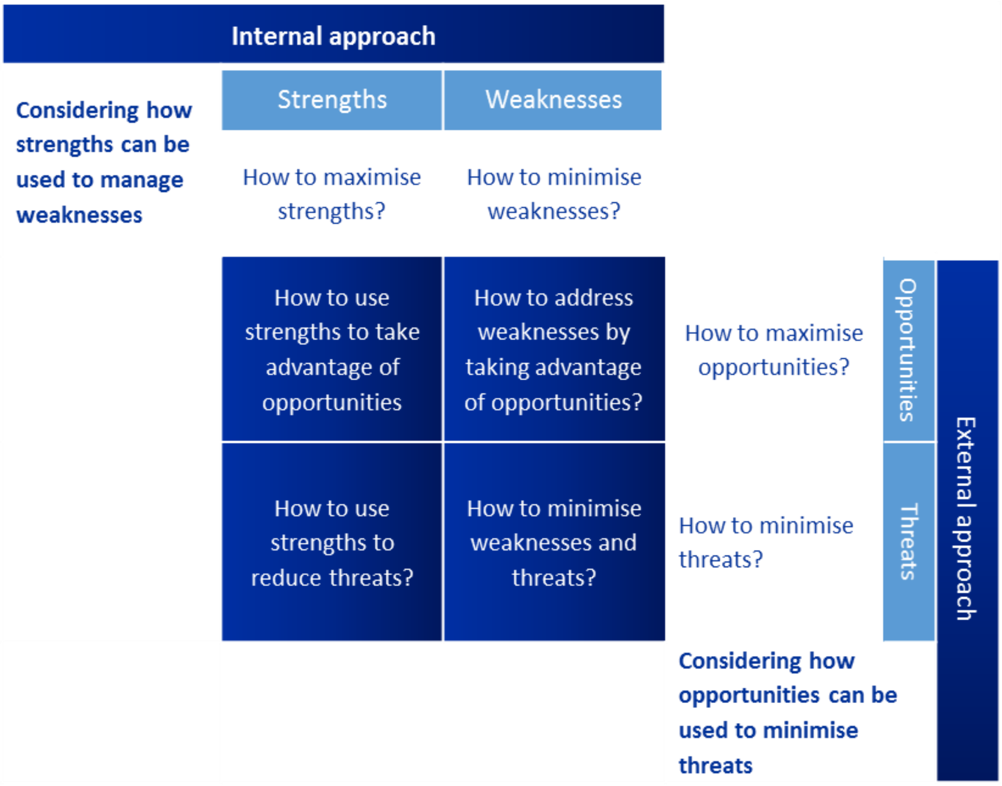
The SWOT analysis is a strategic analysis tool. This tool combines the study of strengths and weaknesses of an organisation, a territory, a sector, a project, etc. with the opportunities and threats coming from its environment.

Its goal is to take internal and external factors into account in the strategy of the project, thereby maximising the strengths and opportunities, while minimising the impact of weaknesses and threats.

Using this tool shall help synthetizing the frame of the project

**FIGURE 42: DESCRIPTION OF STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS**

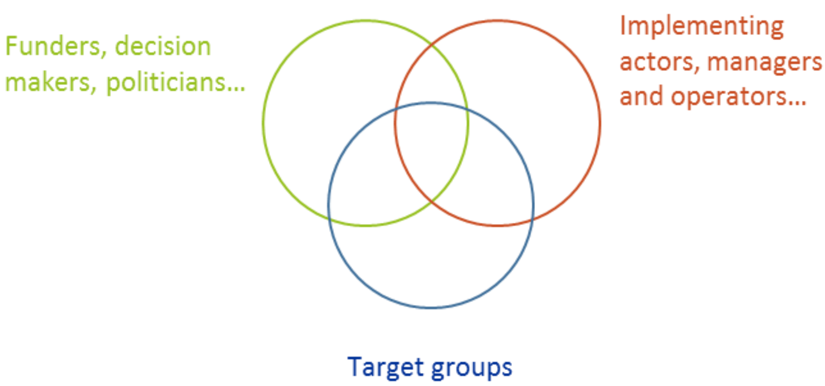
**FIGURE 43: STRATEGY DEVELOPED FROM THE SWOT ANALYSIS**




MODEL OF A SOCIOGRAM

The sociogram is a tool to identify the actors involved in the project. This tool is useful to identify the stakeholders, their role and relationship.

**FIGURE 44: SOCIOGRAM CHART**



The sociogram can be used as follows:

Each one of the actors involved in the project is placed in the sociogram, either in one of the circles if he belongs to only one category or in the intersection of two or three circles if he belongs to several categories.

- The circle of « funders, decision makers, politicians » represents the decision makers of the project;
- The circle of "implementing actors" represents bodies in charge of the operational and daily implementation of the project;
- The circle of "target groups" represents the final beneficiaries or "targets" of the project.

With the sociogram, the project can:

- Develop a better knowledge of project stakeholders;
- Help selecting the types of partners to meet when organising interviews, meetings, events, workshops…
- Check that the project is targeting well identified final beneficiaries.

### 4.4.3. Points of attention in project implementation

OBJECTIVES OF THE LIST OF « POINTS OF ATTENTION »

During the implementation of 2007-2013 MED projects, the main difficulties encountered in the implementation of projects were related to the respect of schedules, budget, the consistency and stability of partnerships.

The objective of this document is to identify the main causes of these difficulties and to give project partners the possibility to anticipate them and ease the implementation of projects.

In the list of "points of attention", many have regard to measures to be taken when drafting the application form. This phase is usually confronted to strong time constraints and the identification of these points should help the partners be better organised and prepared during this period.

<u>Role of the external expert</u>
During the life of the project, external experts will refer to this list to ensure that the partners anticipate potential difficulties and that the necessary measures are taken so that the project can achieve its objectives in good conditions.
The external expert will also use his own experience to adapt the monitoring process to the type and objectives of the project.

<u>Adaptation to the specificities of projects</u>
This document consists of a list of points of attention applicable to all projects. All these points are however not relevant according to the organisation, strategy and objectives of each project. The partnership should focus on the points relevant for their project and specific situation.

LIST OF POINTS OF ATTENTION

| | **1. Difficulties that could be observed during the implementation of the project** | **2. Possible consequences on the project** | **3. Measures to be considered** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Administrative and financial management** | - Change of name or reorganisation of a project partner during the implementation of the project | - Necessity to modify the partnership agreement<br>- Delays in the implementation of activities | - To inform the Joint Secretariat<br>- To adapt the planning of the project after exchanging with all project partners |
| | - Change of the person in charge of the project for one project partner<br>- Change of a project partner (institutional change…) | - Necessity to modify the partnership agreement<br>- Delays in the implementation of activities | - To inform the Joint Secretariat<br>- To adapt the planning (or activities) of the project after exchanging with all project partners |
| | - Insufficient quality of information provided by the partners to the first level controllers<br>- Insufficient quality of the reports of first level controllers<br>- Slow or inefficient first level control system (especially for centralised control systems) | - Delays in the transmission of technical and financial reports/ delays in payments / delays in activities | - To inform (to train) each partner on the administrative obligations for the first level controls<br>- To make sure that controllers have enough experience and be demanding on the respect of their contractual commitment (in the case of decentralised systems)<br>- To encourage controllers to take part in the information / training sessions offered by the programme<br>- To inform the Joint Secretariat of any difficulties encountered with centralised control systems in order to intervene in the States concerned |

| | **1. Difficulties that could be observed during the implementation of the project** | **2. Possible consequences on the project** | **3. Measures to be considered** |
|---|---|---|---|
| | - Insufficient preparation of partners for second level controls | - Risks of delays and disorganisation for the partners concerned | - To communicate within the partnership about possibilities of second level control<br>- To consider the effects in terms of receipts management and procedures |
| | - Excessive delays regarding internal procedures for engaging and paying expenses by the responsible authorities (local authorities, ministries, large administrations…) | - Delays in the transmission of technical and financial reports / delays in payments / delays in activities | - To inform the relevant administrations of the specific constraints of ETC projects / To exchange with the relevant administrations before the start of the project to enable faster processing of files<br>- To anticipate possible delays in the validation of expenses in order not to block other partners |
| | - Excessive reimbursement terms from the Lead Partner to the partners | - Can cause delays in subsequent spending (and activities) of partners | - To strictly set the reimbursement system with the relevant services of the Lead Partner<br>- To inform the relevant services of the specificities of ETC projects |
| | - Insufficient cash for the partners<br>- Difficulty (or unwillingness) of partners to incur additional expenses if previous expenses are not reimbursed | - Risk of blockage in the implementation of activities and in finalising the project<br>- Risk of withdrawal of a partner<br>- Risk of disorganisation of the project and of the partnership | - To inform partners of budgetary constraints specific to ETC projects<br>- To ensure that the partners can bear their expenses, without being dependent of previous reimbursement<br>- To take into account the number of other ETC projects in which the partners are already involved<br>- As part of the partnership agreement, to clarify how partners must proceed when they encounter a difficulty. To insist on the necessity to inform the Lead Partner and the Partners as soon as possible in order to adapt the project if necessary (allocation of activities among partners, budget, timing…) |

| | 1. Difficulties that could be observed during the implementation of the project | 2. Possible consequences on the project | 3. Measures to be considered |
|---|---|---|---|
| | - Weak experience of a partner in the management of ETC projects | - Direct delays on administrative and financial reports, on the implementation of operations | - To provide for detailed exchanges during the preparation phase of the project about administrative constrains, good and bad practices…<br>- To insist on the animation role of the Lead Partner and to organise the transfer of experience between partners (meetings, conference calls…)<br>- To provide for a systematic transfer of experience with partners that have never been involved in an ETC project |
| **Implementation of activities** | - Technical, administrative and legal difficulties related to the implementation of specific operations (investments, developments, pilot projects…) | - Direct delays in the implementation of the project | - Include an analysis of the technical, administrative and legal constraints related to specific operations in the project preparation (investments, developments, pilot projects…)<br>-provide for accurate identification of deliverables and to anticipate questions relating to intellectual property when laboratories, universities or companies are involved in the project<br>- Pay a specific attention to the technical preparation of projects related to regulatory matters or requiring investments (equipment), pilot projects, etc.- Pay particular attention to technical and legal issues in the case of a transfer or dissemination of tools, practices, methodologies from one country to another<br>- Anticipate questions related to intellectual property in order to ensure a wide dissemination of methodologies, processes, technics developed by the project |

| | **1. Difficulties that could be observed during the implementation of the project** | **2. Possible consequences on the project** | **3. Measures to be considered** |
|---|---|---|---|
| | - Delays with public procurement procedures | - Direct delays in the implementation of the project | - To ensure the planning and anticipation of tenders required for the implementation of the project (development of technology, building equipment, etc.)<br>- To anticipate delays by clearly identifying the type of procurements and the costs when preparing the application<br>- To get in touch with the procurement service during the preparation of the project application to anticipate the launch of future procurements<br>- To inform the procurement service about the specificity of ETC projects |
| | Difficulties to reach the political and institutional levels required for the implementation of public policies and strategies | Risk of non-adoption of policies by relevant decision makers | - To anticipate the difficulties of coordination / harmonisation of public policies between the regions of the different Member States (technical and legal constraints, timing…)<br>- To anticipate political and institutional difficulties related to the mobilisation of key players and to the definition of common transnational strategies |

| | **1. Difficulties that could be observed during the implementation of the project** | **2. Possible consequences on the project** | **3. Measures to be considered** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Composition and operation of the partnership** | - Lack of coordination and consultation between the partners about the strategy, the objectives, the tools, the implementation of operations, the breakdown of tasks, the deadlines, etc. | - Loss of coherence between activities<br>- Delays in the implementation of the project<br>- May have to modify the allocation of tasks between the partners<br>- Risk of isolation of partners | - To anticipate the setting up of partnerships. If involvement of a less experienced partner, to exchange with this partner and ensure his integration in the project<br>- Emphasize the facilitator role of the Lead Partner who must maintain regular contacts with all partners. Responsiveness and flexibility of project governance are essential to its success. Provide regular use, formal and informal of new communication tools (videoconference…).<br>- The Lead partner must have a strategy for mobilising partners and using activities coordination tools (factsheets, guides, charts, retro planning…)<br>- Provide a detailed distribution of tasks with a clear assessment of the capacities of each partner |
| | - Insufficient awareness of the diversity of partners and of the complexity of their tasks<br>- Difficulty to anticipate the detailed expenditures for the implementation of activities | - Risk of confusion during the implementation of activities<br>- Risk of budget overrun<br>- Risk of non-completion of certain operations | - In the application form, activities are sometimes not sufficiently detailed. The Lead Partner can (must) use additional tools to help each partner elaborate its work programme and detailed budget. |

| | **1. Difficulties that could be observed during the implementation of the project** | **2. Possible consequences on the project** | **3. Measures to be considered** |
|---|---|---|---|
| | - Insufficient quality of partners reporting (technical and financial reports)<br>- Insufficient description of expenses<br>- The heading of activities and expenditures declared by the partners do not match the heading used in the project application<br>- Documents sent by the partners do not correspond to the documents mentioned in the reports (list of signatures, invoices…) | - Confusion for the drafting of reports, loss of time<br>- Decrease of the quality of reporting with an increased risk of blockage in the expenditures validation process<br>- Loss of cohesion within the partnership | - To choose partners able to cope with administrative constraints (human resources, administrative capacities)<br>- To exchange information and experience between projects partners dedicated to the reporting process from the start of the project<br>- To inform the partners about the potential difficulties and risks. To make sure that they mobilise the necessary resources and provide for adequate action in case of difficulty (exchanges, training, methodological and technical support…) |
| | - Overlap or delays in the implementation of activities of the different partners | - Risk of loss of coherence of the project, isolation of partners, disorganisation, delays or difficulties in completing the project | - To plan an accurate sequencing of all the project activities (especially those related to the coordination of activities between partners)<br>- During the lifetime of the project, provide regular reminders related to and adapt the methodology, the sharing of activities between partners, the division between administrative, technical and coordination tasks, etc. (animation role of the Lead Partner) |

| | 1. Difficulties that could be observed during the implementation of the project | 2. Possible consequences on the project | 3. Measures to be considered |
|---|---|---|---|
| | - Insufficient administrative capacities of partners<br>- Insufficient awareness of procedures for European Territorial Cooperation programmes | - Incorrect definition of deadlines<br>- Delays in the provision of administrative documents and reports<br>- Inadequate content of reports | - To pay a particular attention to partners with no ETC experience<br>- To organise an exchange of experience between all the partners on administrative issues<br>- To provide explanatory documents, guides, forms that can facilitate the work of partners and project management<br>- To provide animation and support for partners that do not have experience with territorial cooperation programmes |
| | - Unavailability or change of person involved; administrative and financial bottleneck due to local, regional or national elections | - Improper implementation of activities<br>- Disorganisation of the partnership | - To take into account periods of election in the planning of activities of the project<br>- To anticipate any period of slowdown of the activities of the project |
| | - Communication difficulties between the partners due to language issues | - Risk of misunderstanding on the distribution of activities, responsibilities; with the definition of objectives<br>- Risk of isolation of partners | - To make sure that partners can communicate in one of the official language of the programme<br>- To provide for translation costs when necessary (documents, committees, workshops…)<br>- To ensure that each partner can express himself and contribute actively to the project |

| | **1. Difficulties that could be observed during the implementation of the project** | **2. Possible consequences on the project** | **3. Measures to be considered** |
|---|---|---|---|
| | - Insufficient availability or involvement of a partner | - Delay on administrative procedures<br>- Operations not implemented<br>- Disorganisation of the partnership | - Take time to identify and mobilise partners. Partners must know each other and meet regularly<br>- To avoid the mobilisation of « last minute » partners<br>- To exchange and inform clearly about the specific constraints of ETC programmes<br>- Each partner must be in charge of important activities to get involved in the project properly. To stimulate their participation to the project (exchanges, solicitations, …)<br>- To use available methodological tools to facilitate the integration of partners in the project (provided by the programme or by the Lead partner) |
| | - Insufficient competences of partners in the implementation of activities<br>- Difficulties in having the institutional and political support needed to achieve the objectives of the project | | - pay a specific attention to the specialisation and to the competences of partners for each type of activity they are involved in<br>- pay a specific attention to the composition of the partnership and to the profile of each partner in order to have the institutional and political support needed to achieve the objectives of the project |

| | 1. Difficulties that could be observed during the implementation of the project | 2. Possible consequences on the project | 3. Measures to be considered |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Complex or large projects** | - Difficult management of projects with a large number of partners, with different modules, with a large budget and a large number of operations | - Delays at different implementation steps of the project, and risk that some operations cannot be achieved (coordination, communication between partners, insufficient cash to meet the investments needs, complexity of public procurement procedures, need of technical expertise…) | - To anticipate a period of preparation which is long enough for large projects (setting up of the partnership, preliminary studies, detailed planning of roles, activities and means, etc.)<br>- To ensure that partners are fully aware of their obligations and are able to fulfil them<br>- To adapt monitoring and animation tools to be able to detect any failure or weakness of a partner (animation role of the Lead partner) |
| **State Aid** | - Identification of some activities that fall under the state aid regime during the project implementation | - Risk of stopping some activities and risk of reimbursing if irregularities are detected by subsequent audit<br>- Risk of questioning the participation of some partners to the project | - To provide for a detailed analysis of activities that could fall under the state aid regime. To mobilise relevant competences to perform theses analyses |
| **Financial engineering** | - Possible difficulties with the use of financial engineering tools (expertise, technical, administrative, financial requirements…) | - Risk that some activities cannot be achieved<br>- Risk of disorganisation of activities or of the strategy of the project | - To ask for preliminary analyses and to clearly identify the opportunities and potential difficulties related to the use of financial engineering tools<br>- To have relevant expertise capacities within project partners |

| | 1. Difficulties that could be observed during the implementation of the project | 2. Possible consequences on the project | 3. Measures to be considered |
|---|---|---|---|
| **External communication and valorisation of results** | - Communication activities not coordinated between the partners<br>- Communication activities limited to general information<br>- No clear identification of targets | - Loss of project visibility<br>- Risk of isolation of partners | - To clearly identify the partner in charge of communication activities. To ensure that this partner has the necessary skills and a precise view of its task<br>- To develop a comprehensive communication plan for the project (objectives, means, targets, …)<br>- To exchange with partners about the communication activities that will be undertaken by each one of them<br>- To mobilise external communication services at project or partner level if lack of experience and skills<br>- To pay particular attention to the selection of partners, external stakeholders and target groups on which the project will rely for the capitalisation and dissemination of its results (technical, institutional and political capacities; geographic coverage; diversity of stakeholders…) |
| | - Insufficient identification and involvement of target groups and external actors (at local, regional, national and international level) | - Risk of remaining focused on an administrative management of the project<br>- Low visibility of the activities achieved by the project<br>- Low transfer of knowledge, practices and experiences | - To clearly identify target groups in the project application<br>- To clearly identify lists of final beneficiaries in the different territories covered by the project<br>- To set up concrete actions to involve target groups in the project (technical committees, workshops, working groups, seminars…)<br>- To adapt communication activities to the profile of target groups (public bodies, private bodies, investors, social bodies, …)<br>- To involve key players at territorial level as “external partners”, “technical and strategic advisers”, etc. |

# 4.5. How to go from a module to another?

For 2014-2020, the issue of the quality of projects is particularly important for multi-module projects, since their funding is subject to successful completion of each module that compose the whole project (incomplete or unsatisfactory completion of a module can block the implementation of the following one(s)). In order to ensure that all multi-module projects are able to successfully complete their project, a specific monitoring system has been developed by the Interreg MED Programme.

MOBILISATION OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS

For 2014-2020 programmes, partnerships who decide to carry out multi modules projects must recruit an “**external expert**”.

This expert will have to meet a number of conditions specified by the programme (see the guidelines provided for the drafting of the tender for the recruitment of external experts (document “procurement for external experts”).

Once recruited, the role of the external expert is to assist the Lead Partner and the partners in successfully implementing their project. In particular, the expert must help the project to anticipate any difficulties that could prevent the transition from one module to another.

The level of methodological assistance of the expert may be adapted to suit the needs of each project (needs to be specified in the tender for the recruitment of the expert).
The minimum requirements are that the expert:

- provides assistance for the implementation and progression between modules
- provides a “monitoring form” to the Joint Secretariat before the start of a new module
- ensures that the Lead Partner informs the Joint Secretariat in case major problems arise in a project (timing, budget, partnership…)
- transmits a form about his “assessment of the support system” to the Joint Secretariat at the end of its assignment

It should be noted that the programme does not require external monitoring throughout the duration of the project. Once the last module has been launched (the second or the third of the project), the project can be finalised with or without the support of the external expert depending the needs of the project (to be specified in the contract signed with the expert).

USE OF A MONITORING FORM

To promote a qualitative monitoring, the programme provides partners with a “**monitoring form**” that should help them assess the project progress on some key points and to propose any adjustments for the transition to the next module. The drafting of this form is provided by the external expert in close collaboration with the Lead Partner and all the partners of the project.

The monitoring form is essentially dedicated to project partners. The partnership and the external expert will specify how this form shall be used (producing a form for each monitoring committee, at key implementation steps of the project, at mid-term, etc.). **The project will have to transmit one copy of this form to the Joint Secretariat to report on project progress one month before the start scheduled for the following module.**

**The form provides information to the Joint Secretariat but does not take part to the formal validation process of the module.**

The transition from one module to another requires that the ongoing module is well implemented and that a number of conditions are met to move towards the next module. This process requires anticipation work because difficulties met in achieving a first module may have direct consequences on the implementation of the following ones (partnership, organization, budgets, skills, goals, etc.).

The “monitoring form” should allow the external expert and project partners to monitor the implementation of the module and anticipate potential difficulties. In particular the form should help to:

- check that the module is implemented in accordance with the framework set out in the application form
- anticipate potential bottlenecks
- ensure that the activities of the ongoing module are well implemented and that the project can move towards the next module

The external expert is in charge of filling out the monitoring form. To be useful and effective, the form shall be completed by taking the situation and the comments of each project partner into account.

Partners and external experts will specify how the form shall be used (completion of a form for each monitoring committee, at key implementation steps, at mid-term, etc.) at the start of the project. This timing is particularly important since the forms will foster exchanges and discussions between the partners for the proper achievement of the project. The form must not only be drafted to describe a situation, but also to anticipate potential difficulties and take the necessary actions at key stages of the project.

The only obligation for partners and the external expert is to provide the Joint Secretariat with a monitoring form one month before the start of a new module in order to inform the programme authorities about the progress of the project.

**FIGURE 45: MONITORING FORM**

Project:
Module:
Date:
N° of monitoring form:

| Key issues for the implementation of the project | | Indicators | Source of information | Findings | Actions already taken or foreseen |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Planned and foreseen operations / targets met | 1.1. What operations / activities foreseen in the current module must be completed (or what target met) in order to start the activities of the next module? | - Listing of operations and activities | Application form<br>Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners | | <u>Actions already taken:</u><br><u>Actions foreseen:</u> |
| | 1.2. What is the status of these operations? To what extent are the targets met? (or will be met?)<br>What are the possible consequences on the activities planned for the next module ? | - Operations not started, ongoing and completed<br>- % of the target met<br>- Qualitative analysis | Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners<br>Control panel, progress reports<br>Minutes of the steering committee | | <u>Actions already taken:</u><br><u>Actions foreseen:</u> |
| | 1.3. What measures are proposed by the partnership to address any gaps in the implementation of planned activities? (were activities well defined, are objectives shared between partners, are means appropriate, is the organisation of the project efficient, are skills suitable / sufficient? …) | - Types of measures proposed | Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners<br>Minutes of the steering committee<br>Expert opinion | | <u>Actions already taken:</u><br><u>Actions foreseen:</u> |

| Key issues for the implementation of the project | | Indicators | Source of information | Findings | Actions already taken or foreseen |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Planned and foreseen operations / targets met | 1.4. Has the partnership planned corrective measures ? | - Qualitative analysis | Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners<br>Minutes of the steering committee<br>Progress report | | Actions already taken:<br>Actions foreseen: |
| 2. Set up and operation of the partnership | 2.1. Are partnership operating conditions adequate for a good implementation of the module? What are these operating conditions? | YES / NO<br>- Frequency of meetings<br>- Terms of exchange and cooperation between partners | Application form<br>Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners | | Actions already taken:<br>Actions foreseen: |
| | 2.2. Do partners mention specific difficulties in the achievement of their tasks? Which ones? (Administrative, economic, legal, organisational…)<br>Does the external expert observe any other specific difficulty? Which one? | YES / NO<br>- Types of difficulties | Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners<br>Minutes of the steering committee | | Actions already taken:<br>Actions foreseen: |
| | 2.3. Can these difficulties alter the implementation of the following module? (availability of partners, responsibilities, skills, …) | YES / NO | Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners<br>Expert opinion | | Actions already taken:<br>Actions foreseen |
| | 2.4. What kind of measures are being considered to alleviate the difficulties encountered? (Organisational changes, new partner, share of responsibilities…) | - Types of measures | Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners<br>Minutes of the steering committee<br>Expert opinion<br>Desk analysis | | Actions already taken:<br>Actions foreseen |

| Key issues for the implementation of the project | | Indicators | Source of information | Findings | Actions already taken or foreseen |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. Performance of project management | 3.1. Have project management tools been implemented? Which ones (planning, IT project management tools…) | YES / NO<br>- Types of tools | Desk analysis | | Actions already taken:<br>Actions foreseen: |
| | 3.2. Are projects management tools in place performing well? (planning and coordination between activities…) | - Qualitative analysis | Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners | | Actions already taken:<br>Actions foreseen: |
| | 3.3. Do partners feel comfortable with these tools? | - Grading scale 1-3 (no, somewhat, yes) | Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners | | Actions already taken:<br>Actions foreseen: |
| 4. Deadlines and budget | 4.1. Does the implementation of the module respect the original planning? What are the potential sources of delay? | - YES / NO<br>- Delay observed (weeks…)<br>- Source of delay observed | Application form<br>Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners | | Actions already taken:<br>Actions foreseen: |
| | 4.2. Can the delays observed/foreseen affect the implementation of the next module?<br>If so, what steps are taken to remedy this situation? | - YES / NO<br>- Qualitative analysis | Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners<br>Expert opinion | | Actions already taken:<br>Actions foreseen: |
| | 4.3. Does the project face any difficulty regarding the budget?<br>Is the expenditure in line with the estimated budget? | - YES / NO<br>- Qualitative analysis | Application form<br>Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners | | Actions already taken:<br>Actions foreseen: |
| | 4.4. Can the difficulties related to the project budget affect the implementation of the next module?<br>If so, what steps are taken to remedy this situation? | - YES / NO<br>- Qualitative analysis | Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners<br>Expert opinion | | Actions already taken:<br>Actions foreseen: |

| Key issues for the implementation of the project | | Indicators | Source of information | Findings | Actions already taken or foreseen |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4. Deadlines and budget | 4.5. Do the expenses incurred correspond to the estimated budget? Should budget adjustment be considered by the end of the module? Which ones? | - YES / NO<br>- Quantitative analysis | Application form<br>Exchanges with the lead partner and the partners | | <u>Actions already taken:</u><br><u>Actions foreseen:</u> |

VERIFICATION PHASE FROM THE JS

A verification performed by the MA/JS will determine if a project continue to the next module, in a multi-module project

Multi-module projects will be governed by a Subsidy Contract that will differentiate the different modules, each module having its own objectives, outputs, calendar and budget.

At the end of each module, the MA/JS will perform a verification of the activities carried out and the deliverables produced by the project in order to check their compliance with the requirements established and to pass to the next module.

The aim of this verification will be to confirm that the identified expected results for the concerned module have been reached according to the Subsidy Contract and the approved Application Form, and that the partnership is ready to start the new phase of the project.
In particular, the MA/JS verification will focus on following aspects:

- Analysis of content-related progress and production of key pre-identified deliverables in due form as scheduled;
- Financial progress of the project;
- Management and administrative performance;
- Partners' engagement;
- Realistic forecast and recommendations for the remaining modules;
- If applicable, identification of deviations and delays in regard to the Application Form, as well as necessary project modifications (partnership, finance and activities).

The "Modifications" section will be available before the start-up of the projects approved in the framework of the first call for proposals

A verification checklist will be provided to the projects after their approval (and annexed to the Subsidy Contract) in order to make them aware about the key elements that will be checked by the MA/JS.

This verification will take place in a short period of time between the end of a module and the start of the following one on the basis of a specific report. The MA/JS will ensure that this verification does not hinder the progress of activities and the transition between modules.

Based on this verification, the MA/JS may decide:

- to agree on the **continuity** of the project as foreseen in the Application Form;
- to propose a **modification** of the project in order to adapt it to the new "reality", taking into account the results of the verification;
- to propose to the Interreg MED Programme Steering Committee a **deprogrammation** of the forthcoming modules.

This section will be further developed before the start of the 1st call for projects

Upon transition from one module to another, the partnership may propose a modification of the project regarding the partnership, major budget changes and activities in order to better adjust to the needs of the following module. For further information regarding modifications please refer to section 4.2. of the Programme Manual.

# 4.6. The use of SYNERGIE CTE during the implementation stage (under construction)