3. APPLICATION STAGE

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Introduction

How to get prepared for applying?

Preparing an application for a transnational project has many different aspects to consider before submitting the application: collecting information to find or develop an idea, searching partners in other Mediterranean states, getting familiar with the Programme strategic framework and contents as well as with all technical procedures, assessing the administrative capability, building the project application.

STEP 1 – COLLECTING INFORMATION

The Interreg MED Programme and the National Contact Points of the participating states are the first organisms to request information for the project.

One of the possible first steps to take is to look into the information tools provided by the Programme website and make some desk research. A good way to start is to find ideas for projects, and for that purpose the Interreg MED Programme website provides the Project Library, with a database related to the results and ideas of previous projects.

Another possible first step is to contact your own country National Contact Point for the Interreg MED Programme. The National Contact Points can provide all sort of local information regarding the applications, the ongoing or future calls, the types of projects, the partners in your country and sometimes the NCP organise events, where there is a personal exchange of information.

The Interreg MED programme website displays the contacts of the National Contact Points per Member State of the Programme.

Furthermore, the National Contact Points display information of their own on another Interreg MED Programme webpage “Programming 2014-2020/National information”.

STEP 2 – GET FAMILIAR WITH TECHNICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE PROGRAMME

Also it is advisable that potential beneficiaries go through a review of previous calls for projects in order to get familiar with call procedures, themes or types of projects and partners involved. This information is also available at the Interreg MED Programme website at the «Project life» page.

Nevertheless, this information should be carefully confronted with the new 2014-2020 Programming Period information material, namely by reading the present manual, the EU regulations, and Application Form guides, available at the Interreg MED website section “THE PROGRAMME/ Programming 2014-2020/MED 2014-2020”.

STEP 3 – SEARCHING FOR PARTNERS

In the Interreg MED Programme the nature of projects is of cooperation. This means that the project objectives and outcomes must necessarily come from a transnational partnership between institutions from different countries in the Mediterranean cooperation area.

Note that, in searching for partners, only applications of entities and partners based on the cooperation geographical area of the Interreg MED Programme can be accepted for funding. For the eligible regions you can find information again in the Interreg MED website page: "Cooperation area 2014". In section 2.2 on partnership requirements potential beneficiaries can find all the information concerning partner's necessary qualifications.

In the search for partners, potential beneficiaries should consider to address entities from among the following groups, which are usually the Interreg MED Programme partners:

- Local public authority
- Regional public authority
- National public authority
- Sectoral agency
- Infrastructure and (public) service provider
- Interest groups including NGOs
- Higher education and research
- Education/training centre and school
- Enterprise, except SME
- SME
- Business support organisation
- EGTC (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation)
- International organisation, EEIG (European Economic Interest Grouping)

STEP 4 – ASSESSING YOUR ELIGIBILITY AND CAPABILITY

One of the most important documents potential beneficiaries have to read is the present section of the Programme Manual regarding the Application Stage, and more particularly the application procedure and assessment procedures. It provides useful information concerning the administrative basic requirements and assessment phases of the applications. This is very important, because it states clearly the exclusion criteria.

The Interreg Programme MED for 2014-2020 has a new approach for project management: a flexible choice through the modular system for modular projects, described in section 2.1.1, or horizontal projects, described in section 2.1.2. Therefore, the potential beneficiaries have to conceive and plan the project based on a specific type of project:

- Modular projects: single module or multi-module projects;
- Horizontal projects.

In this context, it is necessary to retain that management and communication skills and experience required vary from module to module and from a type of project to another. For example, being the Lead Partner of a single module project or an integrated project does not require the same management needs. The same applies regarding communication, as in modular projects potential partners won't have to produce basic communication materials, whereas in a horizontal project they will have to produce a communication strategy for a community of projects. Finally, EU and Programme rules regarding partnership and financial requirements are of utmost importance when preparing a project proposal.

Therefore, it is advisable to potential partners to read carefully the following sections of the Programme Manual, in order to assess if the organisations involved have the capacities, experience, skills and ambition necessary to apply for a more demanding in terms of management, financial capacity and communication requirements multi-module type of project or horizontal project, or if it has better chances of success applying for a single module project type, where management and communication responsibilities are simpler and financial capacities required are less important:

- The MED architecture (section 2.1.) regarding the different types of projects,
- Partnership requirements (section 2.2.)
- Keys for a good project (section 2.3.)
- Financial project requirements (section 2.4.)
- Communication requirements (section 2.5.)

3.1. Application procedure

The programming period 2014-2020 brings some changes to the application procedures, among which:

- **100% paperless** application process through the on-line monitoring tool SYNERGIE CTE;
- The proposal itself consists of **two main parts**: an Application Form and several compulsory annexes (including Partners' additional documents);
- A different deadline is established for the submission of each part;
- Partners' additional documents (declarations) will be produced using the templates provided by the Interreg MED Programme;
- The Lead Partner must keep all original compulsory annexes in its premises.

Please note that two different application procedures have been established, one for the modular projects (section 3.1.1) and another for horizontal project (section 3.1.2).

3.1.1. Application Procedure for modular projects

DOCUMENTS TO BE PROVIDED

Proposals must be submitted electronically using only the on-line monitoring tool of the Interreg MED Programme, SYNERGIE CTE. **Proposals arriving by any other means are not eligible.**

In order to submit a full proposal, the **Application Form** has to be accompanied by some compulsory annexes. Those annexes are to be uploaded (in a scanned signed version, if required) only to SYNERGIE CTE and no paper version is required. The originals must be kept by the Lead Partner.

More specifically, the following **compulsory annexes** are required:

- A scan of the signed Application Form confirmation page;
- A scan of the signed Partner declaration from all participating partners, including the Lead Partner, using the template provided by the Programme;
- A scan of the signed *"De minimis"* declaration only from the partners whose activities within the project are State Aid relevant and that are willing to apply the *de minimis* Regulation, using the template provided by the Programme if applicable);
- A scan of the signed Associated partner declaration, using the template provided by the Programme, one for each associated partner (if applicable).

The STAMP is a MANDATORY ELEMENT to be included in all annexes *(Application Form confirmation page***,** *Partner declaration, "De minimis" declaration and Associated partner declaration***) if applicable: for those project partners and associated partners whose national legislation requests a stamp in official/legal documents.**
Namely the following countries:
BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA
CROATIA, only for institutions officially using a stamp
GIBRALTAR (United-Kingdom)
GREECE
MONTENEGRO
PORTUGAL
SLOVENIA, only for institutions officially using a stamp
SPAIN, all partners excluding private partners

DEADLINES

The submission procedure consists of **two main parts**: an Application Form, to be filled in and validated, and several annexes (including Partners' additional documents) being compulsory, which shall be uploaded: thus please note that there are **two different deadlines** to be respected.

➔ The **Application Form** has to be validated on SYNERGIE CTE by the 1st deadline set out in the concerned Announcement of the Call

➔ The uploading of the **compulsory annexes** to SYNERGIE CTE must be completed by the 2nd deadline set out in the concerned Announcement of the Call

In order to organise the reception and the treatment of the proposal, the JS needs to anticipate as much as possible the number of proposals that will be received. Lead Partners are invited to create a login for the fulfilment and submission of proposals by the date indicated in the concerned Announcement of the Call. Nevertheless, the creation of logins after that date will be possible.

HOW TO APPLY

The submission of the proposal must imperatively be made through the on-line monitoring tool of the Interreg MED Programme SYNERGIE CTE.

In order to submit the proposal the Lead Partner must:

1/ Create a Lead partner account on SYNERGIE CTE

First, applicants wishing to submit a proposal have to create a login for the on-line monitoring tool of the Interreg MED Programme SYNERGIE CTE by providing some basic contact information including name and e-mail address. SYNERGIE CTE will provide an activation link by e-mail. The account will be activated by clicking on the link.

2/ Fill in the application form on SYNERGIE CTE, according to the type of project selected

The application must be completed on SYNERGIE CTE. Guidance on how to fill in the form and what is expected in each question is provided in section 3.2. All documents needed for the development of the proposal, including the Programme Manual, the Terms or Reference and a courtesy Application Form in word format (not to be used for the submission), are available on the Interreg MED Programme website.

Before starting to work on the application on SYNERGIE CTE, the Lead Partner must choose the specific objective and the type of project to be submitted, according to the Terms of Reference of the call and Programme guidelines. In case of mistake, kindly contact the Joint Secretariat (JS) (programme_med@regionpaca.fr) as soon as possible in order to correct the situation. In some cases, the only solution would be to start the fill in of the Application Form again.

The Application Form has to be drafted in one of the two programme languages (English or French). There are some sections of the Application Form where information is requested in the two programme languages. Kindly bear in mind that the short description of the project in both languages is compulsory.

Bear in mind that coherence check will not replace the formal eligibility check. For further information, please refer to section 3.3.1 of the Programme Manual.

Lead Partners are invited to establish a starting date for their project following the indications provided by the Programme in the Terms of References of the Call for Proposals

Coherence checks shall be made during the whole period of the drafting; it is not recommended to wait until the final stages unless Lead Partner disposes of enough time for all corrections. Lead Partners are invited to use the coherence check after saving each section of the Application Form. Be careful not to let any results of coherence checks in red or orange on SYNERGIE CTE. They must be green even when they are not preventing the submission.

3/ Request the additional documents to partners signed

All partners must fill in a Partner declaration using the template provided by the Programme. These forms are then to be **date**,and **signed** by the Partner legal representative, scanned and thereafter sent to the Lead Partner. Before filling in the Partner declaration, partners are requested to read the sections 2.2.4, 2.4.9 and 2.4.12 very carefully. The form provided by the Programme cannot be altered or amended in any way.

Besides, only partners whose activities within the project are State Aid relevant and that are willing to apply the *de minimis* Regulation, must provide a "*de minimis*" declaration indicating any contribution received during the previous three fiscal years falling under the *de minimis* Regulation. Before filling in the *de minimis* declaration, partners concerned are requested to please read the section 2.4.9.very carefully. The form provided by the Programme may not be altered or amended in any way.

Associated partners should sign an Associated partner declaration provided by the Programme. The information regarding associated partners in the Application Form will not be considered if the relevant associated partner declarations are not provided.

No other type of document and no modification to the standard documents provided by the Interreg MED Programme will be accepted. All documents must be dated and signed.

Lead Partners are invited to check that the information included in the partner declarations is coherent with the information entered on the Application Form on SYNERGIE CTE. If any information, especially the co-financing amount, is not coherent, the Lead Partner must correct it.

Any Application Form not validated on SYNERGIE CTE will not be accepted.

4/ VALIDATE the content of the application form on SYNERGIE CTE by the 1st deadline

Once the application is entirely filled in, the Lead Partner must validate the Application Form on the on-line monitoring tool by the 1st deadline set by the Programme when launching the Call for Proposals. Please bear in mind that **the validation will only be effective after having pressed the VALIDATION button** (a single confirmation e-mail is automatically sent by the tool when the validation has been performed correctly). Should Lead Partner encounter any problem in filling or validating the Application Form on SYNERGIE CTE, it is imperative to contact the JS (programme_med@regionpaca.fr) before the closure of this phase.

Once Application Form is validated, it cannot be modified it anymore. Lead Partners are invited to keep the e-mail sent by the system attesting the time of validation (GMT+1). Please bear in mind that the e-mail will be sent to the contact person address entered previously in the system: kindly check that this information is correct in order to receive the confirmation e-mail.

Any proposal not submitted completely through SYNERGIE CTE will not be eligible.

5/ UPLOAD compulsory annexes through SYNERGIE CTE by the 2nd deadline

All the compulsory annexes must be uploaded to the system by the 2nd deadline set by the Programme when launching the Call for Proposals. In the framework of this call, the following documents must be uploaded:

- A scan of the signed Application Form confirmation page. Only the page of the PDF including the date, the signatureof the Lead Partner has to be uploaded. This page (point 2 of the summary, signatures) must have the mention "SUBMITTED".
- A scan of the signed Partner declaration from all participating partners using the template provided by the programme, including the Lead Partner. The national co financing amount included in this declaration must correspond to the information stated in the Application Form validated.
- A scan of the signed *"De minimis"* declaration, only from the partners whose activities within the project are State Aid relevant and that are willing to apply the *de minimis* Regulation, using the template provided by the Programme.
- A scan of the signed Associated partner declaration (if applicable), for each associated partner using the template provided by the Programme (if applicable).

Each document shall be scanned and uploaded individually and shall not exceed the size of 8 MB. Should Lead Partner face any problem uploading the additional documents on SYNERGIE CTE, it is imperative to contact the JS (programme_med@regionpaca.fr) before the closure of this phase.

Once the deadline for uploading the document has passed, no more documents can be uploaded. Lead Partners are invited to keep a screen shot of the list of uploaded documents

6/ Gather and keep the paper version of the signed documents

Original paper version of the signed - and stamped documents uploaded to SYNERGIE CTE must be gathered and kept by the Lead Partner.

GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE APPLICATION

Kindly be reminded that it is essential to consult all the reference documents of the Programme (Cooperation Programme, Programme Manual and Terms of Reference of the call) when preparing the proposal. In addition, it is advisable to pay attention to the following:

- For the application, all accessible sections provided in SYNERGIE CTE must be filled in.
- Please refer to section 3.3 of the Programme Manual in order to find the administrative and eligibility criteria to be respected as well as the quality assessment criteria that will be used for the selection of the proposals.
- Remember that the submission of the proposal is performed in two steps. First, the Application Form has to be validated, after that, all compulsory annexes have to be uploaded. Please bear in mind that the two deadlines must be observed in order to consider the proposal eligible. Once Application Form is validated, it cannot be modified anymore.
- Preparation costs cannot exceed the lump sum of EUR 30 000 set by the Interreg MED Programme.

Lead Partners are invited to fill in the Application Form in SYNERGIE CTE as early as possible. Some sections can be filled in during the preparation of the Application Form and be modified after if needed (until the final validation). Coherence checks should be launched throughout the drafting and before the final validation to correct eventual inconsistencies.

Moreover, please bear in mind that the signature of the partners' additional documents and their uploading can take some time. For this reason, after the validation of the Application Form, a second deadline exists to upload them (respecting the size limit established of 8 Mega for each document) for the submission of the full proposal. **Kindly note that the last day for the sub-mission of the proposals may be very busy for the system and that it could slow down.** Any problem in submitting the proposal or uploading the documents not caused directly by SYNERGIE CTE will not be considered. Should Lead Partner encounter problems, it is imperative to contact the JS before the closure of the call.

Finally, please do not hesitate to contact the MED JS for any further information.

3.1.2. Application Procedure for horizontal projects

A TWO-PHASE APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Horizontal projects have to submit their application through a two-phase procedure:

- A 1st phase consisting in a pre-application where only the following sections of the Application Form have to be filled in and will be assessed:
  - B. on partnership and general budget,
  - C. 1.2, 1.3., 1.4. on project relevance (project approach, transnationality, cooperation criteria),
  - C.2.1.. on project focus (intervention logic),
  - C. 3.1., 3.2, 3.3. on project context (synergies and complementarities)
- A 2nd phase consisting in a full Application Form, where all sections of the Application Form have to be filled in and will be assessed.

The 1st phase of the submission will be followed by an eligibility check and a first assessment, according to the administrative and assessment procedures approved by the Interreg MED Monitoring Committee (see section 3.3. of the Programme manual).

Only the best scores will be admitted to the 2nd phase of the submission.

An intermediate parallel step of information exchange, bilateral meetings or seminars could be promoted (in order to integrate possible Steering committee conditions and/or requirements) between HP partnerships (admitted to the 2nd phase) and the MED JS.

A second administrative check as well as a second final assessment will be realised after the 2nd phase of submission.

DOCUMENTS TO BE PROVIDED

Proposals, both in the first and second application stage, must be submitted electronically using only the on-line monitoring tool of the Interreg MED Programme, SYNERGIE CTE. **Proposals arriving by any other means are not eligible.**

During the first stage of application, the **Pre-application Form** has to be accompanied by the compulsory annexes listed below in a scanned version signed - and uploaded on Synergie CTE. No paper version is required. The originals must be kept by the Lead Partner.

More specifically, the following **compulsory annexes** are required[1]:

- A scan of the signedPre-application Form confirmation page;
- A scan of the signed Partners' expressions of interest from all participating partners, including the Lead Partner, using the template provided by the Programme.

The uploading has to be done before the final validation of the application form of the 1st stage. Kindly see the concerned Announcement call.

During the second application stage, in order to submit a full proposal, the **Application Form** has to be accompanied by the compulsory annexes listed below. Those annexes are to be uploaded (in a scanned signed version, if required) only to SYNERGIE CTE and no paper version is required. The originals must be kept by the Lead Partner.

More specifically, the following **compulsory annexes** are required:

- A scan of the signedApplication Form confirmation page;
- A scan of the signed -Partner declaration from all participating partners, including the Lead Partner, using the template provided by the Programme;
- A scan of the signed *"De minimis"* declaration only from the partners whose activities within the project are State Aid relevant and that are willing to apply the *de minimis* Regulation, using the template provided by the Programme;
- A scan of the signedAssociated partner declaration, using the template provided by the Programme, one for each associated partner (if applicable).

DEADLINES

For the **first phase of the application**, the submission procedure consists in **one part**: a simplified Pre-application Form accompanied by Expressions of Interest from all partners involved, to be filled in and validated on SYNERGIE CTE by the 1st deadline set out in the concerned Announcement of the Call.

For the **second phase of the application**, the submission procedure consists of **two main parts**: a full Application Form, to be filled in and validated, and several annexes (including Partners'

[1] To be validated by the Interreg MED Programme Monitoring Committee.

additional documents) being compulsory, which shall be uploaded: thus please note that in this case there are **two different deadlines** to be respected.

➔ The Application Form has to be validated on SYNERGIE CTE by the 2nd deadline set out in the concerned Announcement of the Call.

➔ The uploading of the compulsory annexes to SYNERGIE CTE must be completed by the 3rd deadline set out in the concerned Announcement of the Call.

In order to organise the reception and the treatment of the proposal, the JS needs to anticipate as much as possible the number of proposals that will be received. Lead Partners are invited to create a login for the fulfilment and submission of proposals by the date indicated in the concerned Announcement of the Call. Nevertheless, the creation of logins after that date will be possible.

HOW TO APPLY

The submission of the proposal must imperatively be made through the on-line monitoring tool of the Interreg MED Programme SYNERGIE CTE.

In order to submit the proposal the Lead Partner must, at the first phase of the application:

1/ Create a Lead partner account on SYNERGIE CTE

First, applicants wishing to submit a proposal have to create a login for the on-line monitoring tool of the Interreg MED Programme SYNERGIE CTE by providing some basic contact information including name and e-mail address. SYNERGIE CTE will provide an activation link by e-mail. The account will be activated by clicking on the link.

2/ Fill in the application form on SYNERGIE CTE

Both first and second phase applications must be completed on SYNERGIE CTE. Guidance on how to fill in the forms and what is expected in each question is provided in section 3.2. All documents needed for the development of the proposal, including the Programme Manual, the Terms or Reference and a courtesy Application Form in word format (not to be used for the submission), are available on the Interreg MED Programme website.

Before starting to work on the application on SYNERGIE CTE, the Lead Partner must choose the specific objective and the type of project (horizontal project) to be submitted, according to the Terms of Reference of the call and Programme guidelines. In case of mistake, kindly contact the Joint Secretariat (JS) as soon as possible in order to correct the situation. In some cases, the only solution would be to start the fill in of the Application Form again.

The Application Form has to be drafted in one of the two programme languages (English or French). There are some sections of the full Application Form where information is requested in the two programme languages. Kindly bear in mind that the short description of the project in both languages is compulsory.

Lead Partners are invited to establish a starting date for their project following the indications provided by the Programme in the Terms of References of the Call for Proposals.

Coherence checks shall be made during the whole period of the drafting; it is not recommended to wait until the final stages unless Lead Partner disposes of enough time for all corrections.

Bear in mind that this coherence check will not replace the formal eligibility check. For further information, please refer to section 3.3.1 of the Programme Manual.

Lead Partners are invited to use the coherence check after saving each section of the Application Form. Be careful not to let any results of coherence checks in red or orange on SYNERGIE CTE. They must be green even when they are not preventing the submission.

3/ Request the additional documents to partners andsigned

For the first stage of the Application, all partners must fill in an Expression of Interest using the template provided by the Programme (please refer to the annexes of the Programme Manual). These forms are then to be **dated** and **signed** by the Partner legal representative, scanned and thereafter sent to the Lead Partner.

For the second stage of the Application, all partners must fill in a Partner declaration using the template provided by the Programme (please refer to the annexes of the Programme Manual). These forms are then to be **dated** and**signed**by the Partner legal representative, scanned and thereafter sent to the Lead Partner. Before filling in the Partner declaration, partners are requested to read the section 2.2. of the Programme Manual very carefully. The form provided by the Programme may not be altered or amended in any way.

Besides, only partners whose activities within the project are State Aid relevant and that are willing to apply the *de minimis* Regulation, must provide a "*de minimis*" declaration indicating any contribution received during the previous three fiscal years falling under the *de minimis* Regulation. Before filling in the *de minimis* declaration, partners concerned are requested to please read the section 2.4.9. of the Programme Manual very carefully. The form provided by the Programme may not be altered or amended in any way.

Associated partners should sign an Associated partner declaration provided by the Programme. The information regarding associated partners in the Application Form will not be considered if the relevant associated partner declarations are not provided.

No other type of document and no modification to the standard documents provided by the Interreg MED Programme will be accepted. All documents must be dated andsigned

Lead Partners are invited to check that the information included in the partner declarations is coherent with the information entered on the Application Form on SYNERGIE CTE. If any information, especially the co-financing amount, is not coherent, the Lead Partner must correct it.

Any Application Form not validated on SYNERGIE CTE will not be accepted.

4/ VALIDATE THE CONTENT OF THE APPLICATION FORM ON SYNERGIE CTE

For the first phase of the application, once the application is entirely filled in and the Expressions of Interest uploaded, the Lead Partner must validate the Application Form on the on-line monitoring tool by the 1st deadline set by the Programme when launching the Call for Proposals. Please bear in mind that **the validation will only be effective after having pressed the VALIDATION button** (a single confirmation e-mail is automatically sent by the tool when the validation has been performed correctly). Should Lead Partner encounter any problem in filling or validating the Application Form on SYNERGIE CTE, it is imperative to contact the JS (programme_med@regionpaca.fr) before the closure of this phase.

For the second phase of the application, once the application is entirely filled in, the Lead Partner must validate the Application Form on the on-line monitoring tool by the 2nd deadline set by the Programme when launching the Call for Proposals. Please bear in mind that **the validation will only be effective after having pressed the VALIDATION button** (a single confirmation e-mail is automatically sent by the tool when the validation has been performed correctly). Should Lead Partner encounter any problem in filling or validating the Application Form on SYNERGIE CTE, it is imperative to contact the JS (programme_med@regionpaca.fr) before the closure of this phase.

Any proposal not submitted completely through SYNERGIE CTE will not be eligible.

Once Application Form is validated, it cannot be modified it anymore. Lead Partners are invited to keep the e-mail sent by the system attesting the time of validation (GMT+1). Please bear in mind that the e-mail will be sent to the contact person address entered previously in the system: kindly check that this information is correct in order to receive the confirmation e-mail.

5/ UPLOAD compulsory annexes through SYNERGIE CTE by the 3rd deadline

All the compulsory annexes must be uploaded to the system by the 3rd deadline set by the Programme when launching the concerned Call for Proposals. In the framework of this call, the following documents must be uploaded:

- A scan of the signedApplication Form confirmation page. Only the page of the PDF including the date, the signature of the Lead Partner has to be uploaded. This page (point 2 of the summary, signatures) must have the mention "SUBMITTED".
- A scan of the signed Partner declaration from all participating partners using the template provided by the programme, including the Lead Partner. The national co financing amount included in this declaration must correspond to the information stated in the Application Form validated.
- A scan of the signed *"De minimis"* declaration, only from the partners whose activities within the project are State Aid relevant and that are willing to apply the *de minimis* Regulation, using the template provided by the Programme.
- A scan of the signed Associated partner declaration (if applicable), for each associated partner using the template provided by the Programme (if applicable).

Each document shall be scanned and uploaded individually and shall not exceed the size of 8 MB. Should Lead Partner face any problem uploading the additional documents on SYNERGIE CTE, it is imperative to contact the JS (programme_med@regionpaca.fr) before the closure of this phase.

Once the deadline for uploading the document has passed, no more documents can be uploaded. Lead Partners are invited to keep a screen shot of the list of uploaded documents

6/ Gather and keep the paper version of the signed documentS

Original paper version of the signeddocuments uploaded to SYNERGIE CTE must be gathered and kept by the Lead Partner.

GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE APPLICATION

Kindly be reminded that it is essential to consult all the reference documents of the Programme (Cooperation Programme, Programme Manual and Terms of Reference of the call) when preparing the proposal. In addition, it is advisable to pay attention to the following:

- For each application phase, all accessible sections provided in SYNERGIE CTE must be filled in;
- Please refer to section 3.3 of the Programme Manual in order to find the administrative and eligibility criteria to be respected as well as the quality assessment criteria that will be used for the selection of the proposals;
- Remember that the submission of the proposal is performed in three steps, for applicants selected after the first phase. First, the pre-application has to be validated, then and after selection by the Steering Committee of the Programme, the full

Application Form has to be validated, after that, all compulsory annexes have to be uploaded. Please bear in mind that all deadlines must be observed in order to consider the proposal eligible. Once Application Form is validated, it cannot be modified anymore;

- Preparation costs cannot exceed the lump sum of EUR 30 000 set by the Interreg MED Programme.

Lead Partners are invited to fill in the Application Form in SYNERGIE CTE as early as possible. Some sections can be filled in during the preparation of the Application Form and be modified after if needed (until the final validation). Coherence checks should be launched throughout the drafting and before the final validation to correct eventual inconsistencies.

Moreover, please bear in mind that the signature of the partners' additional documents and their uploading can take some time. For this reason, after the validation of the Application Form, a second deadline exists to upload them (respecting the size limit established of 8 Mega for each document) for the submission of the full proposal. **Kindly note that the last day for the submission of the proposals may be very busy for the system and that it could slow down.** Any problem in submitting the proposal or uploading the documents not caused directly by SYNERGIE CTE will not be considered. Should Lead Partner encounter problems, it is imperative to contact the JS before the closure of the call.

Finally, please do not hesitate to contact the MED JS for any further information.

3.2. The use of SYNERGIE CTE during the Application procedure

The following section aims to provide guidelines for applicants in order to submit a project proposal through the on-line monitoring tool of the Interreg MED Programme, SYNERGIE CTE (for more information about the submission procedure, please refer to section 3.1).

The Application Form and the submission procedure have been designed with the administrative and eligibility criteria[2] and quality assessment criteria[3] in mind, therefore applicants are advised to consider these criteria when completing it.

In a different document, called Synergie guide, available on the Interreg MED Programme website (www.interreg-med.eu), you'll find the detailed outline of the Application Form to help you in gathering the relevant information from your partners and preparing your answers before filling it. All steps you have to follow have been described. Information/tips to help you to proceed have been also included.

To assist you further, a courtesy Application Form in Word version is available on the Interreg MED Programme website (www.interreg-med.eu).

For any problems that you might experience with the submission of your proposal, please contact the Interreg MED Programme Joint Secretariat: programme_med@regionpaca.fr. Kindly indicate in the object of your mail "Synergie" in order to speed up the treatment of your question.

3.2.1. To take into consideration before start the fill in

It is highly recommended to **gather all the relevant information before starting to fill in** the Application Form, especially the information regarding the partner organisations. Please check the present section of the Programme Manual in order to have an idea of the information you will need.

Submitting any proposal **takes a lot of time**. Kindly foresee enough time to fill in the entire Application Form. Having the information beforehand you will be able to follow each step smoothly. You can save as you go along and complete the information in several steps. Do not under-estimate the time needed to prepare a high quality proposal.

[2] For further information, please refer to section 3.3.1.
[3] For further information, please refer to section 3.3.2.

Kindly remember that in each section a maximum **number of character to be respected has been established**. If you exceed this limit the system usually prevents the save. If you exceed this number, extra characters will not be considered during the evaluation phase.

If you decide to write down your Application Form in a word document, and then you copy paste the text in the system, kindly be aware that the system will not count the number of characters.

The Application Form must be filled in in one of the two official languages of the Interreg MED Programme, **English and French**. The same language must be used all the time. This language would be considered as the language of the project.

Only section [Short description] **must** compulsorily be provided in both languages (English and French). Kindly refer to eligibility criterion A.7, see section 3.3.

As a general rule, the title of the project, the name of the partners, WP, outputs, activities and deliverables should be provided in both languages as well. If the translation of any of these elements is not possible, please indicate the same name in one of the languages twice.

INTRODUCTION TO SYNERGIE CTE

Some **symbols** will inform you about actions that should be implemented. Here below you can find an explanation of the main symbols that you can find on Synergie CTE:

 *: Click to add a new element.*

 *: Click to modify the information of the element.*

 *: Click to remove the element.*

 *: Click to see an element without modifying the information.*

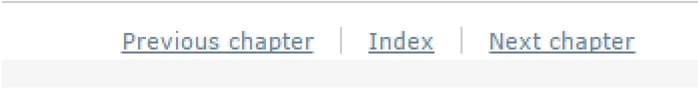
 *: Click to enter a date, a calendar will pop-up.*

 *: Click to spread out.*

 *: Click to produce the PDF form. For further information please refer to* ***Step # 15***.

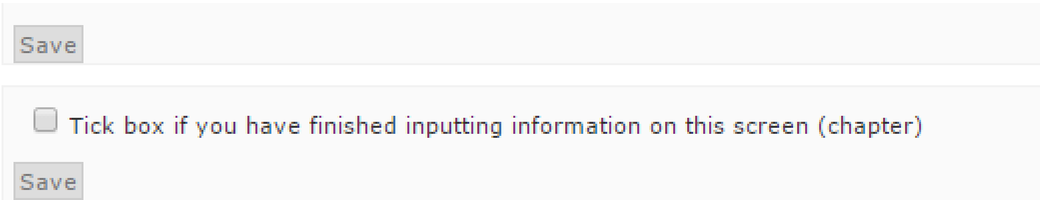
[Link]: Click to go further or to create a new element.

On the top of each page of the Application Form, you will find three links to go to the previous chapter of the Application Form, to the Index of the Application Form and to the Next chapter of the Application Form.



<u>Remember to click on the bottom Save in each page.</u>

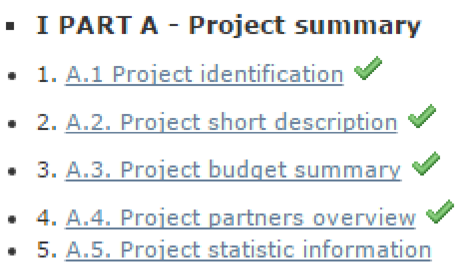
In some pages you will find **two "Save" buttons**.



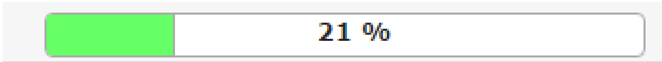
Click always first on the first button. Then enter in the section again and tick «Tick box if you have finished inputting information on this screen» and click on the second $\boxed{\text{Save}}$ button. Thus you will be allowed to follow your progression. **If you click just on the second button the information will not be recorded.**

When the data is successfully recorded, a green message will appear on the top of the screen.

In the Application From index, you will see a green tick every time that you have declared that a section has been completely filled in or when the section is filled in automatically by the system. This will help you to follow up you progress.



On the right up corner, you will have as well a progress bar that will show you how many has been completed.



You will have to enter the information via the section «**Enter main elements**» or through the «**Index**» of the Application Form. Specifications are indicated in this document. You are invited to fill in all the information required in each single section according to the order established in this document in order not to forget any relevant information.

In each page, you will find **guidance** about the type of information that is expected in each section of the Application Form.

Text boxes in yellow have to be filled in. If they are kept empty, you might have issues to submit your application.

If the system requests to provide any information not compulsory in both languages, kindly include the same text in both boxes or enter "N/A" in the empty box in order to continue the submission of the Application Form.

Coherence checks shall be made during the whole period of the drafting of the Application Form; it is not recommended to wait until the final stages unless Lead Partner disposes of enough of time for making the necessary corrections. Lead Partners are invited to use the coherence check after saving each section of the Application Form. (See **Step # 14**).

Even if SYNERGIE CTE is based on PRESAGE CTE, the on-line monitoring tool of the 2007-2013 programming period, there are some differences that could prevent the correct submission of your proposal. It is warmly recommended to follow the instructions included in the present document in order not to scape any step.

STEPS TO THE ONLINE SUBMISSION PROCESS

The following stages have been identified in order to assist applicants during the application procedure. Detailed step-by-step procedures can be found in the present document.

- *Creation and validation of the Lead Partner account (Steps # 1 to 5)*
- *Creation and summary of the proposal (Steps # 6 to 7)*
- *Creation of the partnership (Step # 8)*
- *Project description, work plan, budget, indicative time plan (Steps # 9 to 13)*
- *Validate the Application form (Steps # 14 to 15)*
- *Upload compulsory annexes (Step #16)*

3.3. Assessment of project proposals

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

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

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

3.3.1. Administrative and eligibility criteria

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

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

FIGURE 32: ADMINISTRATIVE AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA LIST

Nº	Criteria	Section(s) of the Programme Manual to find more information
A	Administrative check	
A.1	The application form has been submitted via the online monitoring tool of the Interreg MED Programme, SYNERGIE CTE, respecting the deadline	3.1 and 3.2
A.2	The compulsory annexes per each partner have been duly signed and uploaded to the online monitoring tool of the Interreg MED Programme, SYNERGIE ETC	3.1 and 3.2
A.3	The partnership has used the Interreg MED Programme templates, without making any alterations or amendments	3.1 and 3.2
A.4	The Application Form confirmation page has been duly signed	3.1 and 3.2
B	Eligibility check	
Nº	Criteria	Section(s) of the Programme Manual to find more information

B.1	The project fulfils minimum partnership requirements: 4 partners representing 4 different countries from the Interreg MED Programme area of which at least 3 from the Union part of the Interreg MED Programme area	2.2 and 2.3.4
B.2	The Lead Partner is a public body or a body governed by public law (according to the definition of the Directive 2014/24/UE) and it is physically based in the Union part of the Interreg MED Programme area	2.2
B.3	The amounts of national co-financing indicated in the "partner declarations" are: a) equal b) superior c) inferior, up to 0,99 € of negative difference with reference to the amounts of national co-financing corresponding to the ERDF/IPA requested in the application form**.**	2.2.4 and 3.1
The following eligibility criteria are to be checked by the on line monitoring tool SYNERGIE CTE (if the criterion is not respected, the system prevents the submission of the proposal)		
B.4	Time limits are respected: start and end dates of the project respect the call and Interreg MED Programme requirements	2.1 and ToR
B.5	No partner concentrates more than 30% of the total eligible budget (ERDF+IPA+national co-financing)	2.3.6
B.6	No country concentrates more than 40% of the total eligible budget (ERDF+IPA+national co-financing)	2.3.6
B.7	Preparation costs do not exceed the lump sum of EUR 30 000 set by the Interreg MED Programme	2.4.5

The STAMP is a MANDATORY ELEMENT to be included in all annexes *(Application Form confirmation page***,** *Partner declaration, "De minimis" declaration and Associated partner declaration***) if applicable: for those project partners and associated partners whose national legislation requests a stamp in official/legal documents.**
Namely the following countries:
BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA
CROATIA, only for institutions officially using the stamp
GIBRALTAR (United-Kingdom)
GREECE
MONTENEGRO
PORTUGAL
SLOVENIA, only for institutions officially using the stamp
SPAIN, all partners excluding private partners

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

Since all Application Forms and compulsory annexes are submitted via the online monitoring tool SYNERGIE CTE, some of the above requirements will be automatically checked by the system during the submission of the application in order to help applicants avoiding mistakes. However, the check of the compliance of each proposal with the above requirements, including the correctness of the submitted annexes, will be carried out during this step of the procedure of assessment of the proposal. For more information about the submission procedure and the use of the online monitoring tool SYNERGIE CTE please refer to sections 3.1 and 3.2.

On the other hand, during this phase Participating States will check the eligibility of partners[4] from their territory and their capacity of involvement in the proposals submitted. This information will be considered in the assessment phase.

[4] In the case of ERDF partners outside of the MED area, please refer to section 2.2.1.

3.3.2. Quality assessment criteria (2 steps evaluation)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Second assessment phase:
The second assessment phase for the **final proposal to the selection** will cover all applications having obtained the minimum score requested in the first evaluation phase (24 points at least, at least 5 out of 10 points per question).
It will incorporate the questions of the first phase to the remaining questions of the evaluation grid and it will be mainly focused on "operational criteria"

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

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

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

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

QUALITY ASSESSMENT GRID

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

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

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

For the horizontal projects, the assessment grids, scores and conditions for both phases are the same as those applied to the modular projects. Nevertheless, for horizontal projects, the first assessment will be carried out on the information requested in the pre-application form, whilst the second phase will consider the full application form submitted in the second phase of the submission process (see section 3.1.2. of the Programme manual).

FIGURE 33: STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

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

Assessment questions (Main questions)	Sub-question number	Guiding principles for the assessment – To what extent does the project … (Sub questions)	Concerned sections in the Application Form
1. Project's context (relevance and strategy) *How well is a need for the project justified?*	1.1	▪ The project addresses common territorial challenges of the programme or a joint asset of the programme area- there is a real demand for the project	C.1.1
	1.2	▪ The project clearly contributes to a wider strategy on one or more policy levels (EU / national / regional)	C.3.1
	1.3	▪ The project makes use of available knowledge and builds on existing results and practices	C.3.2 C.3.3
	1.4	▪ The project makes a positive or a neutral contribution to the programme horizontal principles: equal opportunities and non-discrimination, equality between men and women, sustainable development	C.4.1
2. Cooperation character *What added value does the transnational cooperation bring?*	2.1	▪ The importance of the transnational approach to the topic addressed is clearly demonstrated: - the results cannot (or only to some extent) be achieved without cooperation and/or the cooperation has a significant added value for the partners - there is a clear benefit from cooperating for the project partners / target groups / project area / programme area (Please, take note that the evaluator will pay special attention to the fulfilment of at least 3 of the following cooperation criteria: joint development (mandatory), joint implementation (mandatory), and joint staffing or joint financing).	B.1 C.1.3 C.1.4
	2.2	▪ The project demonstrates new solutions that go beyond the existing practice in the sector/programme area/participating countries or adapts and implements already developed solutions	C.1.2

Assessment questions (Main questions)	Sub-question number	Guiding principles for the assessment – To what extent does the project … (Sub questions)	Concerned sections in the Application Form
3. Project's contribution to programme's objectives, expected results and outputs *To what extent will the project contribute to the achievement of programme's objectives according to the MED CP and more particularly to the ToR of the specific objective?*	3.1	• The project's results and main outputs clearly link to programme priority and its indicators - The project overall objective clearly links to a programme priority specific objective - The project results clearly link to a programme result indicator - The project specific objectives clearly link to the project overall objective - The project main outputs clearly link to the project specific objectives - The project main outputs clearly link to programme output indicators	C.2.1
	3.2	• Results and main outputs: - are in accordance with the selected target groups needs	C.2.1
	3.3	- are specific	C.2.1
	3.4	- are realistic (is it possible to achieve them with given resources – i.e. time, partners, budget- and they are realistic based on the quantification provided)	C.2.1, D
	3.5	• Project main outputs are durable (the proposal is expected to provide a significant and durable contribution to solving the challenges targeted) – if not, it is justified	C.5
	3.6	• Project main outputs are applicable and replicable by other organisations/regions/countries outside of the current partnership (transferability) – if not, it is justified	C.5
4. Partnership relevance *To what extent is the partnership composition relevant for the proposed project?*	4.1	• The project involves the relevant actors needed to address the territorial challenge/joint asset and the objectives specified.	B
	4.2	• With respect to the project's objectives the project partnership: - is balanced with respect to the levels, sectors, territory - consists of partners that complement each other	B, C.5
	4.3	• Partner organisations have proven experience and competence in the thematic field concerned, as well as the necessary capacity to implement the project (financial, human resources, etc.)	B
	4.4	• All partners play a defined role in the partnership and get a real benefit from it	B, C.5

OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Assessment questions		Guiding principles for the assessment – To what extent does the project …	Concerned sections in the Application Form
5. Management *To what extent are management structures and procedures in line with the project size, duration and needs?*	5.1	▪ Management structures (e.g. project steering committee) are proportionate to the project size and needs and allow partners' involvement in decision-making ▪ Management procedures (such as reporting and evaluation procedures in the area of finance, project content, communication) are clear, transparent, efficient and effective ▪ Project management includes regular contact between project partners and ensures transfer of expertise across the partnership (internal communication within the partnership) ▪ Necessary provisions quality management are in place (self and/or external evaluation)	C.5 WP 1 (Management) C.4.2
	5.2	▪ The Lead Partner demonstrates competency in managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects or can ensure adequate measures for management support	B.1
6. Communication and Capitalisation *To what extent are communication and capitalisation activities appropriate and forceful to reach the relevant target groups and stakeholders?*	6.1	▪ The communication and capitalisation (when relevant) objectives clearly link to the project specific objectives ▪ The approach/tactics chosen are appropriate to reach communication and capitalisation (when relevant) objectives ▪ Communication and capitalisation (when relevant) activities and deliverables are appropriate to reach the relevant target groups and stakeholders	C.5 WP 2 (Communication)
7. Work plan	7.1	▪ Proposed activities and deliverables are relevant and lead to the planned main outputs and results ▪ Distribution of tasks among partners is appropriate (e.g. sharing of tasks is clear, logical, in line with partners' role in the project, etc.) ▪ Time plan is realistic (contingency included) ▪ Activities, deliverables and outputs are in a logical time-sequence	C.5 C.7

Assessment questions		Guiding principles for the assessment – To what extent does the project …	Concerned sections in the Application Form
To what extent is the work plan realistic, consistent and coherent?	7.2	Activities outside (the Union part of) the programme area clearly benefit the programme area (if applicable)	C.6
	7.3	• The added value of investments and their transnational relevance is demonstrated to reach the project objectives (if applicable)	C.8
8. Budget *To what extent is the budget coherent, proportionate, realistic and valuable?*	8.1	• Sufficient and reasonable resources are planned to ensure project implementation • Project budget appears proportionate to the proposed work plan and the main outputs and results aimed for • Total partner budgets reflect real partners' involvement (are balanced and realistic)	B.1, C.5, C.8, D
	8.2	• Financial allocation per budget line is in line with the work plan • Distribution of the budget per period is in line with the work plan • Distribution of the budget per WP is in line with the work plan • The need for engaging external expertise is justified and the costs are realistic • The need for equipment purchases is justified and the costs are realistic • The budget is clear and realistic and in line with the Programme financial recommendations	B.1, C.5, C.8, D
9. Final overview	9.1	• The project globally answer to the expectations and needs of the Programme. It's coherent in the implementation of all its sections? (no score, only an appreciation)	Full project

3.3.3. Communication of results to the Lead Partner

Decisions on funding of projects will be made by the Steering Committee of the Interreg MED Programme based on the results of the assessment described in section 3.3.2.

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

3.3.4. Resolution of complaints

The procedures set in place for the resolution of complaints are differentiated according to the object of the complaint.

COMPLAINTS RELATED TO ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION

Lead Partners of rejected project proposals will be informed in writing about the decision of the Steering Committee, providing details on the reasons why an application was not eligible or approved, according to the information included in section 3.3.3.

Any complaint related to the assessment and the selection of the proposals shall be submitted by the Lead Partner as the one representing the project partnership affected by the funding decision. It is therefore the task of the Lead Partner to collect and bring forward the complaint reasons from all project partners.

The right to complain applies to the Lead Partner whose project application was not selected during the project assessment and selection process. It applies also to the projects approved under conditions, this only if no agreement on the conditions can be reached during the contracting process between the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat and the Lead Partner.

The complaint can be lodged only against the following criteria:

a. the assessment and the selection of the proposal, based on the criteria approved by the Monitoring Committee, do not correspond to the information provided by the Lead Partner during the project assessment and selection process; and/or

b. the project assessment and selection process failed to comply with specific procedures laid down in the Cooperation Programme, the Programme Manual and the Terms of Reference of the concerned call that materially affected or could have materially affected the decision.

The complaint should be lodged in writing by e-mail (programme_med@regionpaca.fr) to the Managing Authority of the Interreg MED Programme within 2 calendar months after the Lead Partner had been officially notified by the Managing Authority about the results of the project selection process. If a complaint is submitted after that deadline it will be rejected without further examination. Cette décision peut également être contestée devant le Tribunal Administratif de Marseille, dans un délai de deux mois à compter de sa notification.

The complaint should include:

a. name and address of the Lead Partner;
b. reference number of the application which is a subject of the complaint;
c. clearly indicated reasons for the complaint, including listing of all elements of the assessment which are being complaint and/or failures in adherence with procedures limited to those criteria mentioned previously;
d. date, signature and stamp of the legal representative of the Lead Partner;
e. any supporting documents.

No other grounds for the complaint than indicated above will be taken into account during the complaint procedure.

The Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat examine the complaints on the basis of the information brought forward by the Lead Partner in the complaint lodged and the supporting documents. It may involve the Monitoring Committee if necessary.

The decision of acceptance or rejection of the complaints is made by the Managing Authority and communicated to the Monitoring Committee. The Lead Partner is notified of the decision within 20 working days.

In case of acceptance of the complaint, the case will be sent back to the Steering Committee to review the project application and its assessment.

COMPLAINTS RELATED TO DECISIONS MADE DURING THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Any complaint in relation to decisions made by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat on the basis of the Subsidy Contract or Monitoring Committee decisions will follow the rules laid down in the Subsidy Contract concluded between the Managing Authority and the Lead Partner. In principle, the complaint shall be submitted by the concerned partner to the MA/JS that will examine and provide in due time an answer (in collaboration with the MC if necessary).

Where courts, public prosecution offices or other national institutions are competent in relation to the object of the complaint, the beneficiary has the right to turn also to these authorities in France, where the MA/JS are located.

Complaints related to First Level Control, Second Level Control and Audit have to be lodged to the responsible national authority according to the applicable national rules.[5]

[5] For further information about these specific complaint procedures please contact the concerned National Contact Point and check the national information included on www.interreg-med.eu.

3.4. Contracting procedure

3.4.1. Pre-contracting procedure

Project proposals selected for funding by the Interreg MED Programme Steering Committee may be approved as submitted or under conditions.

Following the projects selection, the JS will organise a Lead Partner Seminar in order to ensure that projects clearly understand Programme requirements and are quickly operational.

PROJECTS APPROVED UNDER CONDITIONS

In the case of projects that have to fulfil conditions for approval before entering into the contracting procedure, a revision of the submitted Application Form and/or the submission of additional documents or information should take place. During this phase the Lead Partner, in close exchange with the JS, has to make the necessary adaptations to the Application Form in order to fulfil all the conditions established by the Steering Committee.

MULTI-MODULAR PROJECTS

In addition, the multi-modular selected projects, in cooperation with the JS, shall identify the key deliverables and milestones on the basis of the planning provided in the Application Form that will be used during the follow-up of the project implementation, as well as in the MA/JS verification to go from one module to another. For more information, please refer to section 4.5. of the Programme Manual. As a general rule, no more than 2 milestones per year should be identified in order to ensure a feasible management and monitoring.

MINOR ADJUSTMENTS

Furthermore, this stage can be used to solve any **minor technical issues** or adjustments in the Application Form highlighted during the JS evaluation.

During this phase the Lead Partner, in close exchange with the JS, has to make the necessary adjustments to the Application Form in order to cover the technical inconsistencies detected by the JS.

Finally, approved projects including partners benefiting from a State aid regime[6] or international organisations acting under international law must provide the following documents:

GBER	SMEs shall provide a SME status declaration, according to the definition of SME of the Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprise.
De minimis rule	Update of the *de minimis* declaration, only if the included amounts have changed since the submission of the proposal[7].

[6] For more information please refer to section 2.4.9. of the Programme Manual.
[7] The *de minimis* threshold shall take effect from the date of the MED grant (date of the signature of the Subsidy Contract). Therefore, the de minimis amount granted by the Interreg MED Programme shall include amounts changes from the date of the project submission to the date of the signature of the Subsidy Contract.

International organisations acting under international law	International organisations acting under international law shall provide a declaration accepting the requirements deriving from the Treaty for the Functioning of the European Union and the regulations applicable in the framework of the Interreg MED Programme defined in section 2.2.1 of the Programme Manual. No template from the Programme will be provided. (*to be validated by the Interreg MED Programme Monitoring Committee*)

If the relevant document cannot be provided, the concerned partner would be excluded, and replaced by a similar solvent undertaking.

3.4.2. Contracting procedure

A unique Subsidy Contract concerning ERDF and IPA partners will be signed between the Managing Authority and the Lead Partner.

Once the project is approved[8], the Managing Authority signs a **Subsidy Contract** with the Lead Partner. The Subsidy Contract determines the rights and the responsibilities of the Lead Partner and the Managing Authority, as well as the activities to be carried out, the conditions of financing, the requirements concerning reports and financial controls, etc.

If the Subsidy Contract cannot be signed because of faults attributable to the project, the Interreg MED Steering Committee may decide to reject it.

Besides, in order to ensure the quality of the implementation of the project, as well as the satisfactory achievement of its goals a **Partnership Agreement** must be concluded between the Lead Partner and all the partners involved in the project.

The Partnership Agreement clearly states the so called "Lead Partner Principle" for the operational management and coordination of the project (for more information please refer to section 2.3.4). The Partnership Agreement allows the Lead Partner to extend the arrangements of the Subsidy Contract to the level of each partner.

The Subsidy Contract and the Partnership Agreement will be available before the start-up of the projects approved in the framework of the first call for proposals

A model of the Subsidy Contract and of Partnership Agreement is available on the website of the Interreg MED Programme (www.interreg-med.eu**).**

Two copies of both documents, the Subsidy Contract and the Partnership Agreement, must be signed in original and submitted together to the JS. One copy will be kept by the MA/JS and the other one by the Lead Partner.

Within three months following the signature of the Subsidy Contract, the Lead Partner must send to the Joint Secretariat the **minutes of the first Steering Committee** of the approved project attesting the beginning of the activities and detailing the structures of management that ensures the good performance of the project, as well as the contact person of each partner, following the requirements set by the Programme (please refer to section 4 on implementation stage).

[8] Project selected without modification or project selected under conditions after these conditions have been taken into account.

FIGURE 34: SUMMARY OF THE PROCEDURE, FROM THE APPLICATION TO THE START OF THE IMPLEMENTATION