PROGRAMME MANUAL

2. BUILDING A MED PROJECT

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

Programme cofinanced by the European Regional
Development Fund (ERDF)

Index

2. BUILDING A MED PROJECT 1
2.1. MED Projects architecture 3
2.1.1. Modular projects 3
2.1.2. Horizontal projects 14
2.1.3. Axis 4 Platform project 18
2.2. Partnership requirements 19
2.2.1. Definition of partners 19
2.2.2. Lead Partner requirements 22
2.2.3. Size of the partnership 23
2.2.4. Co-financing 23
2.2.5. Location of activities 24
2.3. Keys for a good project 26
2.3.1. Accurate solutions for real needs 26
2.3.2. Project intervention logic 26
2.3.3. Type of activities and deliverables 29
2.3.4. Partnership relevance 48
2.3.5. Sound project management 51
2.3.6. Sound project budget 53
2.4. Financial project requirements 56
2.4.1. Hierarchy of rules on eligibility of expenditure 56
2.4.2. General eligibility requirements 57
2.4.3. Non-eligible expenditure 57
2.4.4. Budget lines specification 58
2.4.5. Preparation costs 67
2.4.6. Eligibility period 68
2.4.7. Net revenues 68
2.4.8. Conversion into euro 69
2.4.9. State aid 69
2.4.10. Public procurement 77
2.4.11. Advance payment for IPA partners 77
2.4.12. Other financial requirements 78
2.5. Communication requirements 80
2.5.1. Communication and publicity rules 81
2.5.2. MED web platform: the communication and coordination hub 85
2.5.3. Communication tasks of modular projects 88
2.5.4. Specific communication tasks for specific modules 94
2.5.5. Communication in horizontal projects 96

2.1. MED Projects architecture

The Interreg MED architecture is composed of three typologies of projects:

- Modular projects
- Horizontal projects

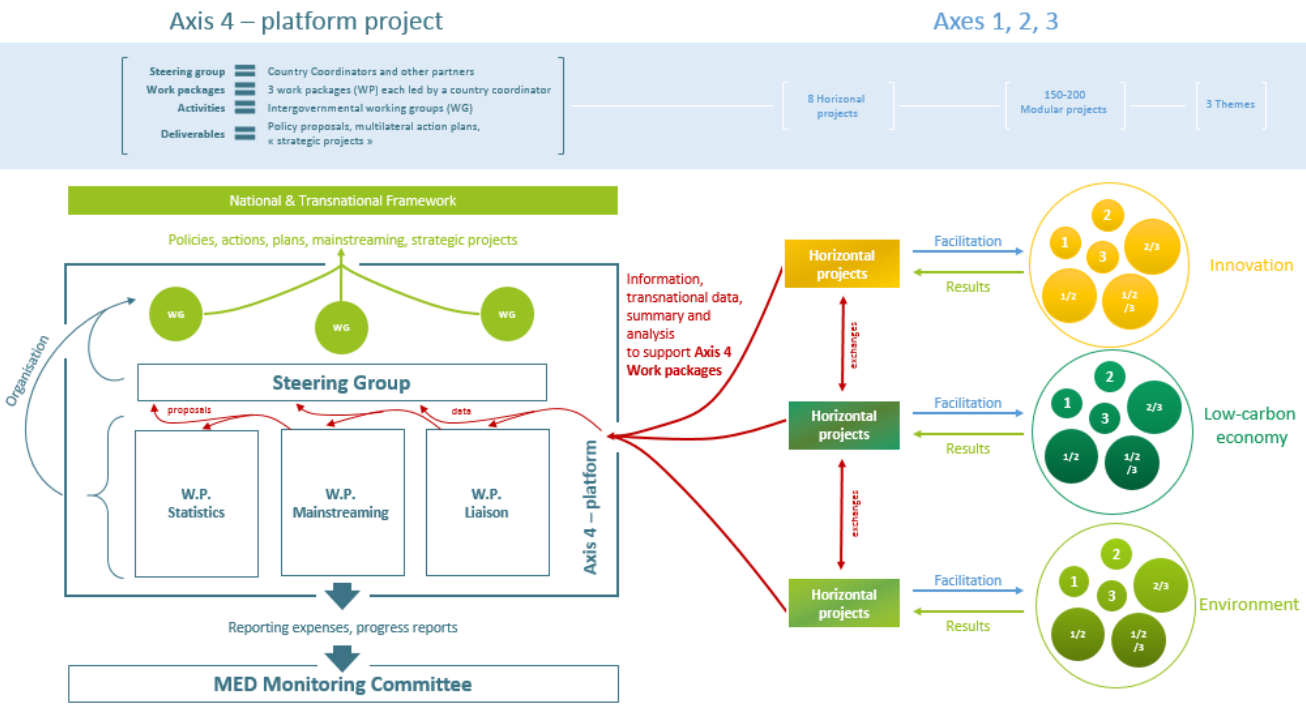
In Axis 1, 2 and 3

- Platform projects

In Axis 4

The Interreg MED architecture, with the links between the different types of projects, can be materialised with the following scheme:

FIGURE 9: INTERREG MED ARCHITECTURE OF PROJECTS



2.1.1. Modular projects

WHAT IS A MODULE-BASED APPROACH AND WHY ADOPT IT?

Based on the MED Programme 2007-2013 experience, the development of a new and innovative public intervention needs three successive phases:

- a phase of study and development of strategies and policies;
- a phase of testing, to validate the hypothesis developed;
- a phase of transferability and capitalisation of results at the transnational level.

A **module** is a complete cycle of a project, with a partnership, a budget, concrete objectives, outputs and expected results to be implemented in a defined period

The majority of the projects co-financed during the last programming period followed this scheme, combining all three phases in one single project. Nevertheless, the experience has shown that, in some cases, gathering these three phases in one same project does not allow each phase to be developed optimally.

With the aim of transforming ideas into concrete and innovative solutions with a transnational impact, the Interreg MED Programme 2014-2020 has decided a new orientation in order to give to each one of these phases a real space to grow in projects under thematic Priority Axis 1, 2 and 3. This approach is materialised by different "**modules**", which applicants must refer to in the elaboration of their project.

The module-based approach responds to the need to exploit in an optimal way the diversity of competences, characteristics and proposals of each partner structure, offering them a variety of operational combinations instead of a uniform operational model, similar to the 2007-2013 programme period.

Choosing the appropriate module, the partnership can focus on well identified types of activities bringing a concrete contribution to the delivery of the tackled specific objective. It can target and adapt the project to the focus and quality requirements of the European Commission and the MED area States. Each applicant can optimise its role and activities according to its expertise and skills, defining its role on the basis of its technical or institutional profile.

Three different modules have been defined by the Interreg MED Programme:

- ➔ Module 1: Studying
- ➔ Module 2: Testing
- ➔ Module 3: Capitalising

A modular **project** can be composed by one or several modules depending on its strategy and main objectives, expected results, competences and experience of the partnership. Each one of the possible configurations (**single-module** or **multi-module**) is called a **type of project.**

WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF MODULAR PROJECTS TO CHOOSE FROM?

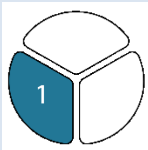
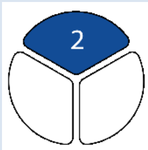
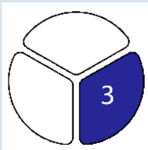
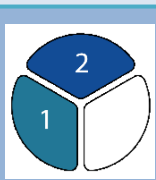
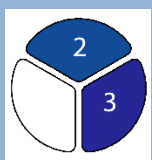
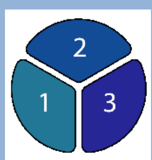
<u>**Two** categories of modular projects are available: **single-module** and **multi-module**</u>

The Terms of Reference of each Specific Objective, in each Call for Proposals, will indicate the types of projects to which candidates can apply

Each type of project has its own objectives and will contribute to the Interreg MED Programme indicators in a specific way. Each type of project requires an adapted partnership and different levels of management, monitoring and communication.

Regardless the criteria to be observed to ensure the eligibility of an application (for further information, please refer to section 3.3.1), for each type of project, specific guidance has been established for their duration, budget and partnership size, in order to correspond to the objectives established for each one of them.

FIGURE 10: TYPES OF PROJECTS ACCORDING TO THE MODULE-BASED APPROACH

	**Studying** *Etude*
	**Testing** *Expérimentation*
	**Capitalising** *Capitalisation*
	**Studying and Testing** *Etude et Expérimentation*
	**Testing and Capitalising** *Expérimentation et Capitalisation*
	**Integrated Projects** *Projets intégrés*

Project Module 1 (M1): “Studying”

This type of project has the objective to explore **innovative subjects** from a thematic and/or geographical perspective (new challenges, policies or trends) or to **create knowledge** in the MED area on issues, relevant for the participating regions, where the Interreg MED Programme experience is **insufficient**. This means that, as there is in general already vast knowledge available, only a limited number of projects of this type will be funded within the Programme, where a lack of knowledge is clearly identified and the need for a module 1 duly justified.

Projects focused on this module can:

- Analyse and state the art of an intervention field, produce complementary data and references;
- Design common approaches and elaborate common strategies;
- Reinforce or establish (new) networks in order to enhance the presence of the MED area at European and transnational level.

The main **outputs** to be developed by the projects can be: SWOT analysis, state of the art, benchmarking analysis, models, action plans, strategies and instruments.

The **duration** for this type of projects is up to **18 months**.

Project total eligible **budget** is recommended not to exceed **EUR 600.000** (for information regarding co-financing rates, please refer to section 2.2.4 of the Programme Manual). In any case, partners should ensure that the financial size of the project truly reflects the activities foreseen in the work plan and that it is based on the principles of sound financial management.

Regarding the **partnership**, it is highly recommended to include institutional and scientific partners mixed according to the project objectives. It is also recommended not to exceed 8 project partners.

Communication activities (other than the coordination with the horizontal projects strategy and the Interreg MED Programme communication strategy) for single module 1 projects are notably:

- To ensure that the results are 100% transparent and transferred to projects target groups and horizontal projects and the Programme in most adapted ways;
- To set up at least one promotion activity to promote the final output(s);
- To ensure appropriate actions to steer up the networks where the projects participate at European and transnational level. The programme will provide them a web platform and some coordination tools, but projects might need specific or dedicated tools for networking participation.

Under communication activities, other recommendations need to be taken into consideration, please refer to section 2.5 of the Programme manual.

Project Module 2 (M2) “Testing”

This type of project has the objective to **test** instruments, policies, strategies, joint plans already identified by previous projects (not necessarily arisen by the MED experience) through pilot activities, in the perspective of setting up solutions applicable to a wider set of users and territories.

Pilot activities can be set up when the context, data and actors are already well identified and when technical and institutional conditions are favourable. They may include, where necessary, the development of **preliminary studies** in the starting phase (feasibility or updating of the available data). They will necessarily include an evaluation of the pilot actions and a final phase for the **transferability of the results** in the territories concerned by the project (transfer of results in local policies and application of results in the territories and to the targets).

The main **outputs** to be developed by these projects can be: preliminary and feasibility studies (if needed: succinct and complementing existing data), pilot activities (including methodology for implementation, testing and evaluation phases), plans of transferability of results.

The **duration** for this type of projects is up to **30 months**.

Project total eligible **budget** is recommended to be in a range from **EUR 1.2 to 2.5 million** (for information regarding co-financing rates, please refer to section 2.2.4 of the Programme Manual). In any case, partners should ensure that the financial size of the project truly reflects the activities foreseen in the work plan and that it is based on the principles of sound financial management.

Regarding the **partnership**, it is highly recommended to include institutional and operational partners mixed according to the project objectives. It is recommended not to exceed 10 project partners.

Communication activities (other than the coordination with the horizontal projects strategy and the Interreg MED Programme communication strategy) for single module 2 projects are notably: To use more intensive Public Relations techniques and/or outreach strategy;

- To provide stories, interviews, end user testimonies, images that will nourish communication on several levels;
- To be active on social media to get in contact and raise awareness of local/regional citizens should be foreseen.

Under communication activities, other recommendations need to be taken into consideration, please refer to section 2.5 of the Programme Manual.

Project Module 3 (M3) “Capitalising”

This type of project has the objective to **capitalise on** (please refer to section 1.2.7 about capitalisation) existing projects results, not only achieved in the framework of the Interreg MED Programme but also coming from other corresponding initiatives developed at local, regional, national and transnational level in the Interreg MED programme cooperation area and adjacent zones. These complementary initiatives are for instance, other Interreg programmes (interregional, transnational and cross-border dimensions), Neighbourhood programmes (ENI MED), EU thematic Programmes (e.g. Horizon2020, LIFE+, European Investment Bank), International Organisations Programmes (World Bank, United nations, Union for the Mediterranean), Regional Programmes including those financed with European Structural Funds. Projects focused on this module should be based on methodologies, practices, intervention tools already tested and implemented by stakeholders at local or regional level that represent a strong interest for wider targeted dissemination in the MED area. The objective of Module 3 projects should not consist in “disseminating information” but in working on existing results, on a specific theme chosen by the partnership, to go one step further. M3 projects are therefore expected to clearly identify a concrete and limited set of outputs/experiences delivered by previous initiatives (or eventually, on the verge of being delivered) in one very specific theme and capitalise them (by merging them, completing or extrapolating to other areas). For example, a Module 3 project can create a new tool or service combining different existing tools, or issue recommendations based on tested methodologies, or apply to a different field or to a different territory an existing output. It will be also necessary to ensure that instruments, practices and methodologies are effectively taken on board by all actors concerned, and applied at local, regional, national or European level as broadly as possible and free of charge, in the territories targeted by the project. Module 3 projects can be compared to MED 2007-2013 projects from the Capitalisation Call for proposals.

The main **outputs** to be developed by these projects can be policy recommendations, Memorandum of Understanding, agreements, procedures and regulatory proposals, charters, protocols. The formal engagement of the relevant decision makers should be envisaged when structuring the project.

The **duration** for this type of projects is up to **18 months**.

Project total eligible **budget** is recommended to be in a range from **EUR 600.000 to 1.2 million** (for information regarding co-financing rates, please refer to section 2.2.4 of the Programme Manual). In any case, partners should ensure that the financial size of the project truly reflects the activities foreseen in the work plan and that it is based on the principles of sound financial management.

Regarding the **partnership**, it is highly recommended to include institutional partners and networks. It is recommended not to exceed 8 project partners.

Communication activities (other than the coordination with the horizontal projects strategy and the Interreg MED Programme communication strategy) for single module 3 projects are notably:

- To draw an initial stakeholder mapping defining roles and targets
- To develop a targeted public relations strategy and activities
- To build up a set of networks at regional and local level in order to raise awareness of the targeted stakeholders through social media and outreach communication strategies

Under communication activities, other recommendations need to be taken into consideration, please refer to section 2.5 of the Programme Manual.

Project Modules 1 and 2 (M1+M2) “Studying and Testing”

This type of project has the objective, because of a lack of prior literature, data or experiences, to create new knowledge in a specific field and to develop common solutions that can be directly tested in specific territories.

Therefore, this type of project should focus on **conducting** studies and **developing** common plans or instruments (M1), which then will be **tested** in order to **transfer** them to the public policies of the territories concerned (M2). They will necessarily include an evaluation of the pilot actions and a final phase for the **transferability of the results** in the territories concerned by the project (transfer of results in local policies and application of results in the territories and to the targets).

The main **outputs** to be developed by these projects can be a combination of those already foreseen for single modules 1 and 2, namely: SWOT analysis, state of the art, benchmarking analysis, models, action plans, strategies, instruments and pilot activities (including methodology for implementation, testing and evaluation phases) and plans of transferability of results.

The **duration** for this type of projects is up to **36 months**. It is recommended to foresee a ratio of 15 months for M1 activities and 21 for M2 activities.

Project total eligible **budget** is recommended within a range between **EUR 1.8 and 3 million** (for information regarding co-financing rates, please refer to section 2.2.4 of the Programme Manual). In any case, partners should ensure that the financial size of the project truly reflects the activities foreseen in the work plan and that it is based on the principles of sound financial management.

Regarding the **partnership**, it is highly recommended to include institutional, operational and scientific partners mixed according to the project objectives in order to ensure the maximum impact of project activities at all levels. Some partners might actively participate only in one of the modules according to their skills and experience. It is recommended not to exceed 12 project partners.

Communication activities (other than the coordination with the horizontal projects strategy and the Interreg MED Programme communication strategy) for multi-module projects M1+M2 are notably:

- To ensure that the results are 100% transparent and transferred to projects target groups in most adapted ways;
- To set up at least one promotion activity to promote the final output(s);
- To ensure appropriate actions to steer up the networks where the projects participate at European and transnational level;
- To provide stories, interviews, end user testimonies, images that will nourish communication on several levels;
- To be active on social media to get in contact and raise awareness of local/regional citizens should be foreseen.

Under communication activities, other recommendations need to be taken into consideration, please refer to section 2.5 of the Programme Manual.

Project Modules 2 and 3 (M2+M3) "Testing and Capitalising"

This type of project has the objective to **test,** at a wider level, instruments, policies, strategies, joint plans that have been already identified by previous initiatives (not necessarily arisen in the framework of the Interreg MED Programme) through pilot activities, ensuring the **transferability** of applied solutions in the territories concerned by the project (M2) and to **capitalise** results obtained during the first phase of the project (Module 2) with other projects results and experiences directly contributing to the project objectives (M3). These projects should work for the adoption of transnational models and their application in the regional and national policies for the MED, and even European area. They may include, where necessary, the development of **preliminary studies** in the starting phase (feasibility or updating of the available data). They will necessarily include an evaluation of the pilot actions and a phase for the **transferability of the results** in the territories concerned by the project (transfer of results in local policies and application of results in the territories and to the targets), while the formal engagement of the appropriate decision makers should be envisaged when structuring the project.

The main **outputs** to be developed by these projects can be a combination of those already foreseen for modules 2 and 3, namely: preliminary and feasibility studies (if needed), pilot activities (including methodology for implementation, testing and evaluation phases), plan of result transferability and policy recommendations, Memorandum of Understanding, agreements, procedures and regulatory proposals, charters and protocols. The formal engagement of the relevant decision makers should be envisaged when structuring the project.

The **duration** for this type of projects is up to **36 months**. It is recommended to foresee a ratio of 21 months for M2 activities and 15 for M3 activities.

Project total eligible **budget** is recommended within a range between **EUR 2.5 and 3.6 million** (for information regarding co-financing rates, please refer to section 2.2.4 of the Programme Manual). In any case, partners should ensure that the financial size of the project truly reflects the activities foreseen in the work plan and that it is based on the principles of sound financial management.

Regarding the **partnership**, it is highly recommended to include institutional, operational partners and networks mixed according to the project objectives in order to ensure the maximum impact of project activities at all levels. Some partners might actively participate in only one of the modules proposed according to their skills and experience. It is recommended not to exceed 12 project partners.

Communication activities, (other than the coordination with the horizontal projects strategy and the Interreg MED Programme communication strategy) for multi-module projects M2+M3 are notably:

- To ensure that results are 100% transparent and transferred to projects target groups in most adapted ways;
- To set up of at least one promotion activity to promote the final output(s);
- To ensure appropriate actions to steer up the networks where the projects participate at European and transnational level;
- To make a more intensive use of Public Relations techniques and/or outreach strategy;
- To provide stories, interviews, end user testimonies, images that will nourish communication on several levels;
- To foresee social media activities to get in contact and raise awareness of local/regional citizens.

Under communication activities, other recommendations need to be taken into consideration, please refer to section 2.5 of the Programme Manual.

Project Modules 1, 2 and 3 (M1 + M2 + M3) “Integrated Projects”

A specific call for proposals regarding this type of projects will be launched after the 1st call for proposals in order to develop integrated projects that will take into account the first results of the new 2014-2020 programming period, thus to focus on hot topics and topics already tackled at local level as well as on the topics identified as priorities by the horizontal projects.

Projects from this type have the ambition to create a direct impact on regional and national policies of the MED and European space and may integrate all types of activities foreseen in the single-module projects.

Their structure and actions should be fully oriented towards looking forward transnational solutions linked with the MED area in a global manner and not with specific territories. The problems faced and the solutions proposed will cut across the Mediterranean.

They should be elaborated in connection with other MED projects as well as with other projects or initiatives in the MED space (other Interreg and/or thematic programmes). Integrated projects should focus on issues of high relevance for the area, taking into account works realised at local level, of which results could be brought on a transnational scale. They could also be based on topics identified as priorities by the horizontal projects. Thus the integrated projects will ensure the consolidation and transnationality of the proposed solutions on issues of high relevance for the area.

The main **outputs** to be developed by these projects can be those already foreseen for modules 1, 2 and 3, namely: SWOT analysis, state of the art, benchmarking analysis, models, action plans, strategies, instruments and pilot activities (including methodology for implementation, testing and evaluation phases), plan of results transferability and policy recommendations, Memorandum of Understanding, agreements, procedures and regulatory proposals, charters, protocols. The formal engagement of the relevant decision makers should be envisaged when structuring the project.

The **duration** for this type of projects is up to **48 months**. It is recommended to foresee 15 months for M1 activities, 21 months for M2 activities and the final 12 months for M3 activities.

Project total eligible **budget** is recommended within a range between **EUR 3.6 and 6 million** (for information regarding co-financing rates, please refer to section 2.2.4 of the Programme Manual). In any case, partners should ensure that the financial size of the project truly reflects the activities foreseen in the work plan and that it is based on the principles of sound financial management.

Regarding the **partnership**, it is highly recommended to include institutional, operational and scientific partners and networks mixed according to the project objectives in order to ensure the maximum impact of project activities at all levels. Besides, it would be necessary to establish a group of partners that will compose the core partnership, which will be involved all along the project implementation, and other partners that may be involved especially in each one of the modules to be implemented. In addition, the Lead Partner and the responsible for operational work packages should be regional or state bodies (regional authorities NUTS II, regional or nationnal agencies, government bodies). It is recommended not to exceed 15 project partners.

C**ommunication** activities of the Integrated projects (other than the coordination with the horizontal projects strategy and the Interreg MED Programme communication strategy) are similar to the activities of modular projects and should be oriented towards the objectives of each specific integrated project, in order to:

- Develop a more intensive use of international media relations;
- Provide stories, interviews, end user testimonies, images that will nourish communication on several levels;
- Ensure that results are 100% transparent and transferred to projects target groups in most adapted ways;
- set up a programme of promotion activities to promote results;
- Make a more intensive use of Public Relations techniques and/or outreach strategy;
- When necessary, ensure appropriate actions to steer up the networks where the projects participate at European and transnational level;
- Foreseen social media activities to get in contact and raise awareness of local/regional citizens.

Under communication activities, other recommendations need to be taken into consideration, please refer to section 2.5 of the Programme Manual.

HOW TO IDENTIFY THE RIGHT TYPE OF PROJECT?

Each type of project has its place in the architecture of the Interreg MED Programme, they are all useful and all must contribute to the programme success, there is no hierarchy or value difference.

Any project, either single-module or multi-module, should candidate on the basis of a diagnosis of outcomes of previous projects or initiatives. For example, a project Module 1 “Studying” will start from an identified diagnosis, while a project Module 2 “Testing” should and will use preliminary studies to build its methodology of tests and experiments. A project Module 3 “Capitalising” will build, transfer and implement, where appropriate, procedures, methodologies, recommendations from other projects already completed.

Applicants are invited to look at all the possible types of projects in order to choose the one that adapts the best to their objectives, experience, skills and ambition. The evaluation of the proposals will be based on the characteristics of each type of project and in consequence there is no “best” or “worst” choice but a “most adapted” solution.

Two key questions should be answered before selecting the type of project that best fits a project idea:

1. Where do I start from? This means that the applicant should establish a diagnosis of the situation: what is the state of the art of the issue tackled?

   ➔ This will help identify from which Module you need to start

2. How far should/can I go? This means that ambition and feasibility should be assessed.

   ➔ This will help identify how many modules you will combine

In order to define which modules, and eventually how many, should be implemented for reaching the objectives, the following criteria should be assessed:

- State of the art of the issue tackled: what has been done already, what can be reused, what is needed to be developed?
- Main objectives of the project idea: what are the identified needs? What does the project want to change for the area? What does the project want to realise?
- Expected outputs and results of the project idea: What does the project want to produce? For whom?
- Competences, skills and experience of the partnership: what the partnership does best?
- Timeframe and financial capacities: how much can the partnership dedicate to this work? What are the financial capacities of the partners involved?

The selection of the type of project based on the above criteria allow partnerships to determine the direction of their project proposal in regards to the objectives set and the expected results, taking into account the specific competences of each partner.

Not all partners have necessarily to be involved with the same intensity in all the modules of a multi-module type of project.

Partners need to be associated to those activities that are in line with their competences. However, a core team of partners should ensure the coordination of all the activities regardless the modules, as a good information flow and a clear decision making procedure have to be ensured by the management system of the project.

There is no possibility for a single-module project to continue directly with the implementation of a following module

The **single-module types of projects** are basically aimed at partnerships having immediate requirements and seeking quick answers, wanting to work on a specific issue with more agility, not requiring large financing efforts nor a complex implementation. Single-module projects will have the possibility to continue their work by applying for another type of project in forthcoming calls for proposals, following the requirements of the relevant Terms of References.

The **multi-module types of projects** are justified by a medium-term vision, with a project proposal combining different objectives and results and the need for a multiple skills partnership.
Important innovations in management and monitoring are required for multi-module projects.
In this regard, and in order to have an effective and relevant implementation, all multi-module projects will be required to have an external and independent evaluation process, that should follow the framework methodology developed by the Interreg MED Programme (for further information, please refer to section 4.4. of the Programme Manual). All costs needed for this activity will be included in the project budget breakdown and supported by the project itself.
The evaluation approach can also be relevant for single-module projects, but it is not compulsory.

Moreover, all projects (single or multi-module) should take into account a specific budget (staff, travel…) in order to contribute to transnational activities when requested by the Programme: coordination with the information and the communication of the horizontal projects and cooperation with the communication strategy of the Programme, including the observation of EU regulations and programme guidelines, organisation of events, participation in programme events, among other activities (for further information, please refer to section 2.5. of the Programme Manual).

HOW TO GO FROM A MODULE TO ANOTHER IN A MULTI-MODULE TYPE OF PROJECT?

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. More information is provided in section 4.5. of the Programme Manual.

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.

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.

2.1.2. Horizontal projects

Horizontal projects are the unifying element of modular projects working on the same theme

Horizontal projects can be summed up as:

1) a single interface for all modular projects involved in the same axis and/or objective synthesizing and homogenising answers to the same topics;
2) a single interface for the programme Authorities like a centre for the principal thematic information;
3) a single interface between the modular projects of the Interreg MED Programme resulting from a bottom-up process and the "governance" platform of the Axis 4 (a top-down process to orient the future Interreg MED strategy) in order to assist and supply the Axis *4* "platform project" initiative.

The horizontal project will be the unifying element of the main outputs / results of each modular project on a particular and shared subject. This will allow real synergies between projects in the same axis / objective of the Interreg MED Programme and provide a better visibility in order to reach policy making level.

Horizontal projects will support the module application procedure cooperating with both the programme and individual projects, concentrating and developing information and deliverables per each priority axis from an external point of view. Horizontal projects will not have to implement and achieve their own territorial objectives like all modular projects but to gather results in progress and facilitate transfer from modular projects to other communities (institutional, scientific and thematic European networks/stakeholders): under the monitoring of the programme Authorities they will have the task to promote the modular projects (concept referring to all thematic module-based projects from the Axis 1, 2 and 3, please refer to section 2.1.1 of the Programme Manual) communication and capitalisation actions within a joint framework, in order to better highlight the interests of the programme as well as of the transnational projects themselves.

<u>Horizontal projects</u>:

- Capture elements of the modular projects within each thematic Specific Objective and for the MED area as a whole; analyse them, summarise and ensure their transnational dissemination and transferability, in cooperation with the programme Authorities.
- Provide the frame to develop synergies, produce summaries and qualitative analysis as well as coordinate and manage (under supervision of the JS) communication of a cluster of projects.
- Structure and disseminate a message for the entire MED community and work on thematic inter-axes links (1, 2 and 3) and with the Axis 4 "platform" project (governance).
- Help and support the communication and capitalisation of selected modular projects for each call and for each specific objective. Each modular project will be linked to a horizontal project and should contribute to its communication and capitalisation activities.
- Propose a method for coordinating the joint communication and capitalisation, for working on thematic results with the 'community' of modular projects and propose relevant tools for these tasks.

Horizontal projects have dedicated terms of reference

The main **outputs** to be developed by these projects can be community building / communication / capitalisation strategies and action plans, internal communication products, policy papers and recommendations, technical papers and deliverables and target groups databases.

The **duration** for this type of projects is up to **36 months** (extensions would be possible)

Project total eligible **budget** is recommended not to exceed **EUR 1.4 million** (please refer to the Terms of Reference for specific budget recommendations depending on the Priority Axis chosen) (for information regarding co-financing rates, please refer to section 2.2.4 of the Programme Manual). In any case, partners should ensure that the financial size of the project truly reflects the activities foreseen in the work plan and that it is based on the principles of sound financial management.

The **partnership** should combine skills in community building, communication, coordination of works, capitalisation of results, thematic lobbying and networking at European level and know-ledge related to the theme of the Priority Axis/Specific objective chosen. The partnership should be composed of maximum 6 project partners..

Concerning **communication activities**, horizontal projects have a more specific role and tasks than the previous types of modular projects. The main activities to be considered for horizontal projects are:

- Develop the communication strategy of the thematic community of projects;
- Strategy building with the modular projects associated with the thematic priority ;
- Coordination with the modular projects, the Programme and other horizontal projects for a coherent approach;
- Provision of information to the Programme to nourish its information means, events and other initiatives;
- Active participation in the Interreg MED Programme activities.

Under communication activities, other recommendations need to be taken into consideration, please refer to section 2.5 of the Programme Manual.

FIGURE 11: SUMMARY OF TYPES OF PROJECTS SPECIFICITIES IN THEMATIC AXIS 1, 2, 3

Abbreviation	Name	Module type	Expected outputs (not exhaustive list)	Duration (Maximum – eligibility criteria)	Budget (recommended) (EUR)	Partnership (recommended)
M1	Studying	Single-module	SWOT analysis, state of the art, benchmarking analysis, models, action plans, strategies, instruments	18 months	Max 600.000	Max 8 PP, institutional and scientific partners.
M2	Testing	Single-module	Preliminary and feasibility studies (if needed), pilot activities (including methodology for implementation, testing and evaluation phases), plan of results transferability.	30 months	1.2 – 2.5 million	Max 10 operational and institutional partners.
M3	Capitalising	Single-module	Policy recommendations, Memorandum of Understanding, agreements, procedures and regulatory proposals, charters, protocols.	18 months	0.6 – 1.2 million	Max 8 PP mainly institutional or networks partners.
M1+M2	Studying and testing	Multi-module	SWOT analysis, state of the art, benchmarking analysis, models, action plans, strategies, instruments and pilot activities (including methodology for implementation, testing and evaluation phases), plan of results transferability.	36 months (M1: 15 m / M2: 21 m)	1.8 – 3 million	Max 12 PP, institutional, operational and scientific partners.
M2+M3	Testing and capitalising	Multi-module	Preliminary and feasibility studies (if needed), pilot activities (including methodology for implementation, testing and evaluation phases), plan of results transferability and policy recommendations, Memorandum of Understanding, agreements, procedures and regulatory proposals, charters, protocols.	36 months (M2: 21 m / M3: 15 m)	2.5 – 3.6 million	Max 12 PP, institutional, operational partners and networks.
M1+M2+M3	Integrated Projects	Multi-module	SWOT analysis, state of the art, benchmarking analysis, models, action plans, strategies, instruments and pilot activities (including methodology for implementation, testing and evaluation phases), plan of results transferability and policy recommendations, Memorandum of Understanding, agreements, procedures and regulatory proposals, charters, protocols.	48 months (M1: 15-m / M2: 21 m / M3: 12 m)	3.6 – 6 million	Max 15 PP, institutional, operational and scientific partners and networks

Horizontal Projects	Communication and capitalisation of the programme in the long term		Community building / communication / capitalisation strategies and action plans, internal communication products, policy papers and recommendations, Technical Papers, Deliverables and Target groups Databases	36 months	Max 1.4 million	Max 6 PP, institutional partners and networks

2.1.3. Axis 4 Platform project

The MED Programme aims to benefit from and contribute to develop a common vision, priorities and opportunities as well as to benefit from the framework of already existing macro-regions and/or other possible ones emerging in the future in cooperation with Partner States. This can be achieved through specific projects which can facilitate the appropriate tools and mechanisms to ease the implementation of better governance and thematic multi-sectoral integration in the Mediterranean.

This section will be further developed in the next future

This will be implemented by a 'Platform of national authorities project' programmed under the Axis 4.

With the 'PLATFORM' project the Interreg MED Programme intends to contribute to the global governance effort of the Mediterranean area by providing resources for a structured (ideally long-term) regional and multi-sectoral discussion forum. This contribution aims notably to bring valuable input from the results of thematic (under Axis 1, 2 and 3) Interreg MED projects to a more global 'mainstreaming' level.

Finally, under the umbrella of the 'PLATFORM' project, it is important to define consensual priorities that emerge from the dialogue and discussion in and between the Working Groups. These priorities can lead into the elaboration of strategic projects, which can eventually receive financing from the Platform initiative, upon the decision of the programme Monitoring Committee.

2.2. Partnership requirements

2.2.1. Definition of partners

ERDF PARTNERS LOCATED IN THE INTERREG MED PROGRAMME AREA

The project partners that are located in the territories of the European Union covered by the Interreg MED Programme, as specified in the section 1.1 on background and programme objective, are co-financed by the ERDF.

Partners participating in projects and receiving funding from the Interreg MED Programme shall be the following:

ERDF partners should bear in mind that the absence of advance payments and the time gap between incurring the expenditure and having it reimbursed may lead to cash-flow problems. This might be particularly relevant for private institutions.

- National, regional and local public bodies (including EGTCs in the meaning of Article 2(16) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013);
- Private institutions, including private companies, having legal personality[1];
- International organisations acting under the national law of any EU MED Member State or, with restrictions, under international law (see below for details).

The terms of references will provide a list of the most relevant partners[2] for each priority axis.

In the framework of the Interreg MED Programme, the so-called "public equivalent bodies", i.e. bodies governed by public law as defined in Article 2(1) of Directive 2014/24/EU on public procurement are eligible partners under category A. "national, regional and local public bodies". Please note that such bodies have to fulfil all the following characteristics in order to be considered as eligible partners:

- They are established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character;
- They have legal personality; and
- They are financed, for the most part, by the State, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law; or are subject to management supervision by those authorities or bodies; or have an administrative, managerial or supervisory board, more than half of whose members are appointed by the State, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law.

[1] Private institutions cannot act as Lead partners. IPA structures under private law are not eligible to the MED Programme. Please also refer to section 2.4 on State aid.
[2] List of potential type of partners: please refer to the Interreg MED Glossary.

NOTICE:
Please note that bodies whose main scope of activities within their business profile, as well as their project role, consists of project coordination, management or other activities that are of a mere executive or supporting character (service providers) cannot be involved as project partners. Compliance with this requirement will be checked during the quality assessment of project proposals which, on a case by case basis, could lead even to the exclusion of such partners.

International organisations acting under international law are only eligible as partners and they cannot act as Lead Partners.

They can participate in projects only upon their explicit acceptance of all requirements deriving from the Treaty for the Functioning of the European Union and the regulations applicable in the framework of the Interreg MED Programme, including – but not limited to – the following:

- Adherence to applicable community policies, including the respect of rules on public procurement;
- Acceptance of the national control requirements set in the framework of the Interreg MED Programme by the Member State in which the organisation acting as partner is located;
- Acceptance of controls and audits by all those bodies entitled to carry out such controls in the framework of the Interreg MED Programme, including the Managing Authority and Joint Secretariat, the Audit Authority and the European Court of Auditors as well as the relevant national authorities of the Member State in which the international organisation acting as project partner is located. Storage of all documents required for these controls must allow performing them in the geographical area covered by the Interreg MED Programme;
- Final financial liability for all sums wrongly paid out.

If a project proposal involving international organisations acting under international law in the partnership is approved, it must provide an *ad hoc* declaration signed by these institutions accepting the mentioned requirements. Besides, for reasons of legal security, additional legal information may be requested to these institutions prior to granting the fund.

The non-compliance with these requirements could lead to the exclusion of such partners.

IPA PARTNERS

In order to facilitate the IPA partners' participation, the MED Monitoring Committee has adopted a system of advance payments for partners from IPA countries.

Organisations from Candidate and Potential Candidate Countries participating in the Interreg MED Programme are eligible as project partners co-financed by the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA fund).

Countries concerned by the IPA fund within the Interreg MED Programme are **Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania.**

IPA partners can apply as project partners provided that their legal status is coherent with the Programme rules and the national laws applicable in the relevant IPA countries.

The following issues will have to be considered:

- IPA structures cannot act as Lead Partners;
- IPA structures shall be a national, regional, local public body or a public equivalent body[3]
- IPA structures under private law are not eligible to the Interreg MED Programme;
- IPA structures shall be non-profit making;
- IPA partners shall be directly responsible for preparation and management of project's activities with the partnership, not acting as an intermediary;
- IPA structures shall have stable and sufficient sources of finance to ensure the continuity of the organisation throughout the lifespan of the project.

ERDF PARTNERS OUTSIDE THE INTERREG MED PROGRAMME AREA (20 % GEOGRAPHICAL FLEXIBILITY RULE)

Organisations located in regions outside the Interreg MED Programme area, but inside the European Union, can become project partners (co-financed by the ERDF) only in exceptional and duly justified cases. This means that their participation needs to bring clear added value and expertise to the implementation of a project and has to be of benefit for the Interreg MED Programme area.

The ERDF allocated to a single project for such partners together with the ERDF spent outside the Programme area (as provided for in section 2.2.5 on location of activities) **cannot exceed 20 % of the total ERDF** contribution to this project.

Institutions located in EU regions outside the Programme area cannot act as Lead Partners.

Participation of EU-partners in project proposals is open to all EU regions, under all priority axes and irrespective of the legal status of the partners.

Nevertheless, should the activities to be carried out by partners located in countries outside the Programme area be considered as State aid relevant, the participation of these partners will finally not be allowed due to the impossibility for the Programme Monitoring Committee to validate the result of the State aid assessment on behalf of a Member State not participating in the Programme.

As for any other activities supported by the Programme, activities implemented by EU partners located outside the Programme area are subject to management verifications and audits.

At the application phase, the partners located outside the Programme area will have to present a **confirmation of the eligibility** of its legal status by the time of the Steering Committee approval. The responsible authority of the respective EU country shall sign this confirmation. In case of failure, the partner will be excluded from the project.

[3] "public equivalent bodies", i.e. bodies governed by public law as defined in Article 2(1) of Directive 2014/24/EU on public procurement

ATTENTION
In case of project approval, an agreement on management, control and audit responsibilities will have to be signed between the Managing Authority and the relevant EU country. The time limit will be of maximum 12 months after the project's approval (and in any case before the submission of the first payment claim). In case of failure, the partner will be excluded from the project.

ASSOCIATED PARTNERS

Institutions willing to be involved in the project without financially contributing to it are to be considered as "associated partners". Such associated partners will not receive ERDF/IPA funding, will have to participate with their own funds, and do not account for the fulfilment of the minimum partnership requirements.

Third country partners will not receive any ERDF/IPA funding from the Interreg MED Programme and are only allowed to act as associated partners.

Expenditure incurred by the associated partners might be borne by any of the financing project partners in compliance with the applicable eligibility rules.

In any case, the involvement of associated institutions must not conflict with public procurement rules. Therefore, expenditure incurred by these bodies should in principle be limited to reimbursement of travel and accommodation costs related to their participation in the project meetings.

2.2.2. Lead Partner requirements

The "Lead Partner principle" applies to the Interreg MED Programme, in compliance with Article 13 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013. This means that each partnership appoints one organisation to act as Lead Partner, which takes full responsibility for the implementation of the entire project.

Even if the MED Certifying Authority will directly transfer each partner's contribution, the Lead partner shall still ensure that partners receive the reimbursement in full and as quickly as possible.

The Lead Partner is a public body or a body governed by public law (according to the definition of the Directive 2014/24/EU). The Lead Partner must be physically based in the EU part of the Interreg MED Programme area.

Private institutions, international organisations acting under international law and IPA partners cannot act as Lead Partners.

After approval of a project by the Steering Committee, the Lead Partner will sign a Subsidy Contract with the Managing Authority (PACA Region, FRANCE) and kick-off the project implementation.

During the implementation phase, the main task of the Lead Partner is the coordination of the project with "sound financial and project management"[4] (for further information, please refer to section 2.3.4. on partnership relevance, 2.3.5. on sound project management and 2.3.6. on sound project budget).

In addition, the Lead Partner should maintain a good communication flow among the partnership and ensure an efficient exchange of information that enables the successful delivery of the project outputs. The Lead Partner is also responsible for communication with the Programme bodies, especially the Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat.

The responsibilities of the Lead Partner are defined in the Subsidy Contract. The Lead Partner has to lay down the arrangements with all other partners in a written agreement (Partnership Agreement).

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

The models of Subsidy Contract and Partnership Agreement is available on the Interreg MED Programme website and in Annex of the Programme Manual, and will have to be signed after the approval of the proposals (for further information, please refer to section 3.4 on contracting procedures).

2.2.3. Size of the partnership

As a minimum requirement, the partnership must involve:

- at least **four financing partners**
- from at least **four different countries** from the Interreg MED Programme area and
- with at least **three of the partners located in the Union part** of the Interreg MED Programme area (three ERDF partners within the MED Programme area)

The size of the partnership should reflect the scope of the project and remain manageable. Section 2.1provides additional recommendations on the most suitable partnership size according to each type of project. The Terms of References can also set specific requirements regarding the partnership.

2.2.4. Co-financing

The Interreg MED Programme is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and by the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA).

The ERDF/IPA co-financing rate for all partners and Lead Partners is **85%.**

[4] The principle of sound financial management is defined in chapter 7 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012. This regulation states that the budget shall be spent "in accordance with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The principle of economy requires that the resources used by the institution for the pursuit of its activities shall be made available in due time, in appropriate quantity and quality and at the best price. The principle of efficiency is concerned with the best relationship between resources employed and results achieved. The principle of effectiveness is concerned with attaining the specific objectives set and achieving the intended results."

The only exception applies for SMEs acting as partners under Article 20 of the General Block Exemption Regulation (Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014) for which the ERDF co-financing rate is **50%** of the total eligible budget.

The share of expenditure not covered by ERDF/IPA shall be guaranteed by each project Lead Partner and partner by means of national co-financing, which can be provided as follows:

In the case of IPA partners, private contributions are not allowed since the structures under private law are not eligible for the IPA fund.

- Own public contribution: public funding at national, regional or local level, provided directly with own funds by the partners having a public status.
- Automatic public contribution: public funding at national, regional or local level, obtained via specific co-financing schemes set up by the Member States.
- Other public contribution: public funding at national, regional or local level, provided by institutions having a public status but not participating in the partnership.
- Own private contribution: private funding provided directly with own funds by the partners having a private status.
- Other private contribution: private funding provided by institutions having a private status but not participating in the partnership.

The contribution of each Lead Partner and project partner, be it a public or private institution, must be confirmed by the Lead Partner in the Application Form and by every single partner by filling-in the relevant partner declaration (the latter has to be compulsory annexed to the Application Form, please refer to section 3.1. on the application procedure).

2.2.5. Location of activities

In line with the requirements for the geographical location of partners, and as a basic principle, the Interreg MED Programme supports project activities taking place in the Programme area.

All activities implemented by the Lead Partners and ERDF partners of the MED Programme area in EU regions outside the MED Programme area - including the participation in missions, study visits and events – can be accepted only in exceptional and duly justified cases.

The following requirements must be respected:

- They are for the benefit of the regions of the Programme area;
- They are essential for the implementation of the project;
- They are explicitly foreseen in the Application Form or, if not, have been previously authorized by the MA/JS.

All projects are invited to foresee in the Application Form a little budget for travels outside of the MED area in order to participate in external events (not organised by the project itself); **however, it is warmly recommended to limit as much as possible the organisation of the project's meetings, events and seminars outside the MED area.**

According to article 20 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 and to the Interreg MED Cooperation Programme, the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat must closely monitor all activities located outside the Union part of the Programme area, both at the application and at the implementation phase.

Activities financed by IPA funds should be implemented, as a basic principle, in the IPA territories. Activities outside the IPA territories benefiting the IPA countries will be analysed on a case by case basis by the MA/JS.

2.3. Keys for a good project

2.3.1. Accurate solutions for real needs

The project idea must address a common need among the involved territories with concrete actions that will enable sustainable joint solutions.

This main objective (usually one for a project), set in the long-term, must clearly contribute to the chosen programme specific objective[5].

The specific objectives of the project (not more than three) ought to be as **precise** as possible and relevant for the programme and the involved regions. They should be ambitious although still being realistic to be reached within the timeframe of the project. These objectives which will be clearly defined in the Application Form, and their achievement within the project duration will need to be demonstrated.

The **transnational cooperation** means added value to address the need identified in the involved territories. It should clearly activate synergies going even beyond the project partnership: just compiling up local and/or regional actions is therefore not sufficient for a project to be successful.

The project must be **innovative**. It should be built under the perspective of capitalising any relevant experiences and results (from activities financed by Interreg MED or other programmes) in order to go farther and improve existing/create new solutions. This point of departure has to be fully identified, as well as the strategy for its use in the development of the project proposal.

Sustainability of a project is another key element. A transnational cooperation project has a "start-up" function: It is thought to be the first step of further developments (e.g. a larger investment) and improvements (e.g. an improved policy). The uptake of results, the deployment at a larger scale and/or the mainstreaming is a crucial success factor to be already considered during project development. **Communication** also plays an important role in achieving sustainability.

Last but not least, it is worth considering whether other **EU programmes**, beyond MED, could better fit your project idea.

2.3.2. Project intervention logic

Projects have to strictly apply a **result-oriented approach**[6], clearly defining the **results** and the **changes** the project is striving for and **linking them with the territorial challenges and needs**

[5] For more information please refer to section 1.1.3 on priority axis and specific objectives.

identified. The coherence of the project intervention logic with the targeted specific objective of the programme is a pre-condition for a project to be approved and funded.

Project intervention logic has to be coherent and shall provide the necessary information for the programme to assess the contribution of a project to the "achievement of the specific objectives and results of the relevant priority", in line with Article 125(3) (a) (i) of the CPR.

A project should demonstrate through its intervention logic that it:

- Targets one single programme priority specific objective;
- Contributes to the respective programme result and result indicator;
- Links in a logic sequence the project activities and outputs to the specific objective target

In order to be able to assess and measure project's contribution to the achievement of programme objectives, the project needs to establish project intervention logic mirroring the programme intervention logic[7].

This has to be highlighted and justified in the Application Form, under section C.2.1. where project overall objective and results are asked to be linked with a programme specific priority and programme result.

Projects will be assessed by their contribution to both output and result indicators related to the programme priority specific objective under which they have submitted their Application Form. Projects have to demonstrate in their Application Form how they will contribute to achieving both types of indicators by clearly linking their foreseen outputs and main results to the corresponding indicators under the chose Programme priority specific objective. This implies a shift in the approach and focus of projects compared to previous programming periods: the emphasis is now first and foremost on the delivery of outputs and results rather than on the implementation of project activities.

LINK BETWEEN PROGRAMME AND PROJECT INTERVENTION LOGIC

Project and programme intervention logics are intrinsically linked and cannot be considered separately.

---

[6] For more detailed information about the result-oriented approach please refer to section 1.2.2.

[7] INTERACT, Establishing ETC Programme logic and linking Programme and Project intervention logics.

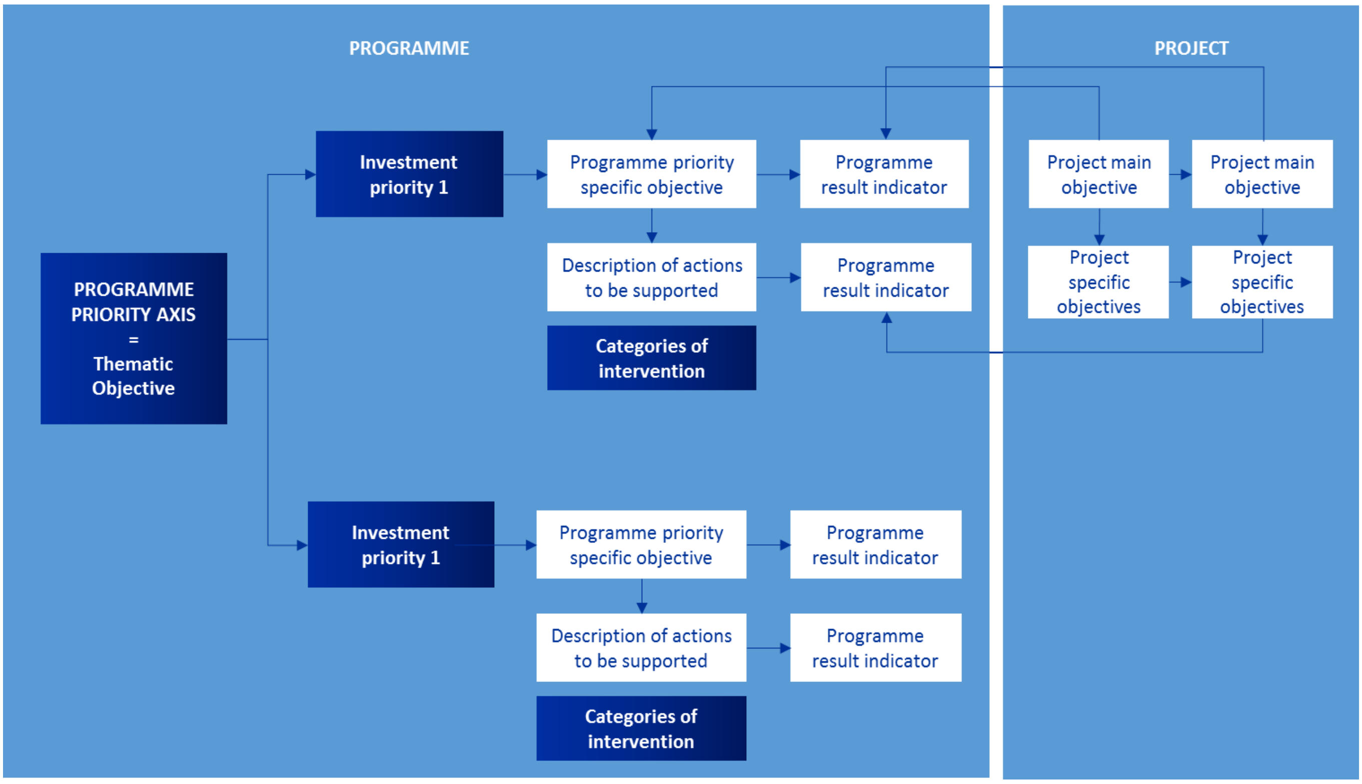


FIGURE 12: PROGRAMME AND PROJECT INTERVENTION LOGIC (source: INTERACT)

In the above scheme, the keywords should be interpreted as follows:

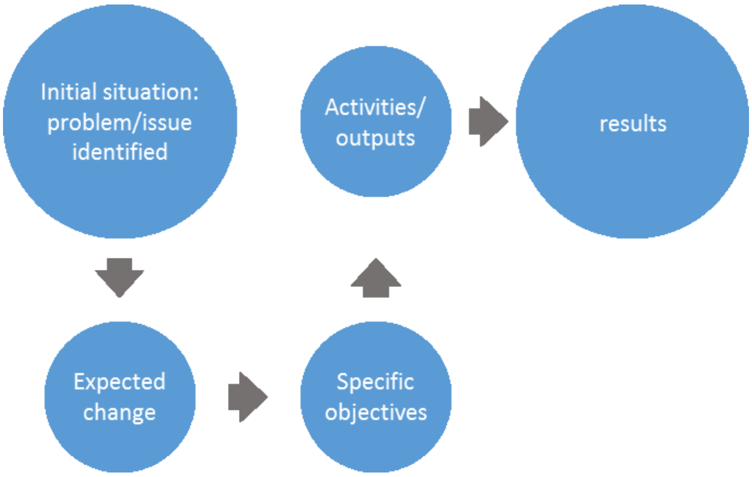
- Priority axis -> thematic area which reflects the most relevant needs and potentials of the programme area
- Programme specific objective -> what the programme wants to change for its inhabitants in this thematic area
- Actions to be supported -> the kind of activities the programme intends to finance to achieve this change
- Programme outputs -> the direct products of the activities, which will contribute to the change
- Programme results -> the measurements which will capture the effect of the actions financed

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The project intervention logic has to show how a desired change will be achieved

The **theory of change** should be at the heart of each project. The aim of this approach is to produce a narrative of how the change envisaged will take effect. By focusing project logic on the theory of change, the ability to establish contribution to results in the programme cooperation area that were deliberated in their theory is strengthened.

Projects have to develop an intervention logic taking into account the attempted change as the basis for result-orientation. The project intervention logic will have to show how a desired change will be achieved. It should thus reflect the current situation (e.g. a problem), its underlying causes and the change which the project seeks to achieve by implementing the planned activities. It also needs to indicate what has to happen in order to trigger the change.
Project development should start from describing the initial situation, i.e. the problem and/or



issue to be addressed. Project partners should then think about what they want to achieve and define expected outcomes and results. These envisaged results have to reflect the desired change and need to be translated into specific project objectives.

FIGURE 13: THE THEORY OF CHANGE

After the intervention logic is set in place (starting from the initial situation and ending with the envisaged change), preconditions, activities and outputs necessary to reach the objectives and results need to be defined.

Please consult the section 4.4.2 on Methodological tools for the preparation and implementation of MED projects for developing the project intervention logic.

2.3.3. Type of activities and deliverables

A project is structured into Work Packages and activities and produces deliverables and outputs to achieve concrete results that reach the objectives set.

As there is sometimes confusion between “activities”, “deliverables” and “outputs” in projects, the aim of this section is:

- to clarify the concepts,
- to define types of activities and deliverables that projects can implement and produce
- to define some common quality standards that will ensure the relevance and the usefulness of the project results for the Programme and its priorities,

Indeed the results of a project depend on the quality of its activities, outputs and also deliverables.

CONCEPTS

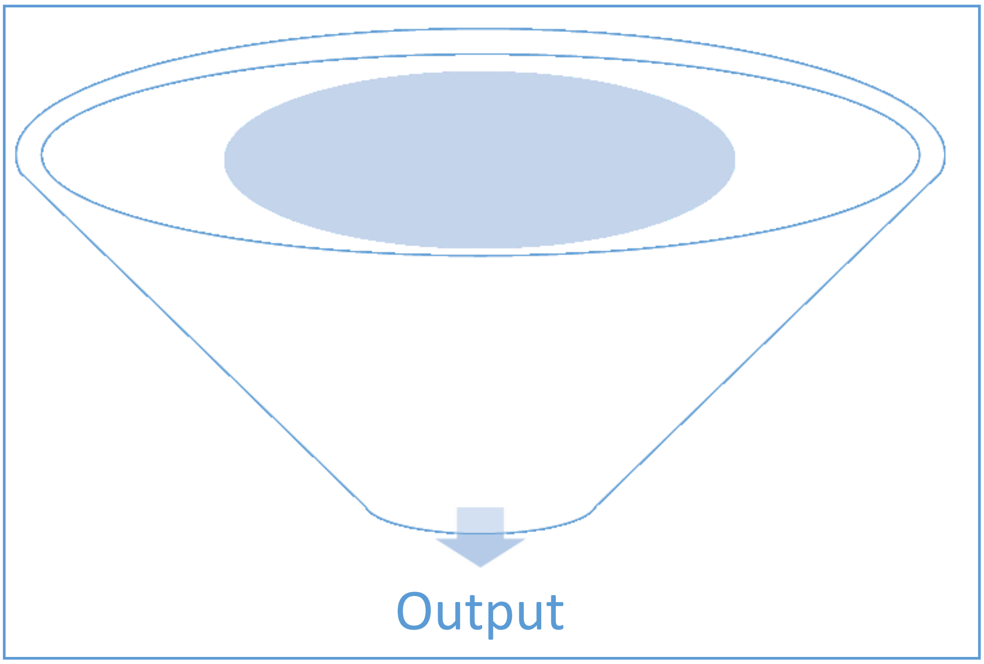
A "**Work Package**" (WP) can be defined as a group of related project activities required to produce project main outputs.

An "**Output**" can be defined as what comes out of an activity or a set of activities carried out.
Project outputs are the outcomes obtained following the implementation of project activities. Each output should be captured by a programme output indicator and should directly contribute to the achievement of the project result.

An "**Activity**" can be defined as a process, done for a particular purpose.
Each Work package is divided into activities. Activities have to lead to the development of one or more project outputs.

A "**Deliverable**" can be defined as the physical evidence of what has been produced through an activity or as the physical evidence/support of the output that was produced through an activity.
Each activity should include one or more deliverables that contribute to the achievement of project outputs. All steps of a single activity do not necessarily need to be listed as separate deliverables, but should be aggregated into one deliverable when applicable and relevant.

FIGURE 14: COMPOSITION OF A WORK PACKAGE



TYPES OF WORK PACKAGES

Depending from the type of project chosen, a project can be composed from 3 to 7 Work Packages (WP).

Some WP are common to all projects …

- WP0: Preparation costs (optional)
- WP1: Project Management (mandatory)
- WP2: Project Communication (mandatory)

… Whereas thematic work packages differ depending on the type of project:

- For Module 1 projects: one thematic WP: “Studying”
- For Module 2 projects: two thematic WP: “Testing” + “Transferring”
- For Module 3 projects: one thematic WP: “Capitalising”
- For Module 1+2 projects: three thematic WP: “Studying” + “Testing” + “Transferring”
- For Module 2+3 projects: three thematic WP: “Testing” + “Transferring” + “Capitalising”
- For Module 1+2+3 projects: four thematic WP: “Studying” + “Testing” + “Transferring” + “Capitalising”
- For Horizontal projects: HP will use, besides WP0, 1 and 2, the WP “Capitalising”and the WP: “Community building”

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES

Project activities can be related to the management and the evaluation of the project, the communication and the development of the project theme.

In the Application Form, applicants are required to organise their project through Work packages (optional and compulsory ones) depending on the type of project selected. For each work package, applicants have to choose from a list of types of activities and a list of types of deliverables, that they should further define and describe, depending on what they plan to implement and produce. Furthermore, outputs produced should be defined, taking into account they should contribute to the Programme output indicators (see section 1.3.4. on Programme output indicators).

This section defines, for each work package, the types of activities and respective types of deliverables that can be selected, with examples of deliverables (non-exhaustive list) the project could produce.

FIGURE 15: ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE WP 0 ‘PREPARATION COSTS’ (OPTIONAL)

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES	TYPES OF DELIVERABLES	EXAMPLES OF DELIVERABLES
Preparing and submitting a project proposal	Application Form	Application Form

Definitions for each example of deliverable are available in the Glossary (section 6 of the Programme Manual

Activities related to day to day follow up and reporting to the Programme structures do not necessarily include deliverables but are to be considered under the type of activity "managing administrative and financial issues"

FIGURE 16: ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE WP 1 'PROJECT MANAGEMENT'

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES	TYPES OF DELIVERABLES	EXAMPLES OF DELIVERABLES
Managing administrative and financial issues	Method	Steering and Technical committees procedures Guidelines
	Tool	manual / guidance / plan Intranet / online platform Course / training
	Meeting	SC and TC meeting minutes
Setting up common methodologies for actions	Method	Methodology / guidelines
	Tool	manual / guidance /plan Course / training
Evaluating the project	Data	Evaluation report
	Method	Evaluation method Evaluation plan
	Tool	online platform / toolbox survey/ questionnaire/ collecting information tool instructions

FIGURE 17: ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE WP 2 'PROJECT COMMUNICATION'

The creation of a poster is compulsory, see section 2.5.1..Guidance.C of the Programme Manual

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES	TYPES OF DELIVERABLES	EXAMPLES OF DELIVERABLES
Coordinating the WP	Method	Methodology / guidelines
	Tool	manual / guidance /plan Course / training
Setting up common methodologies for actions	Plan	Communication Plan Capitalisation Plan

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Networking [8]</td><td>Informal grouping of actors</td><td>Forum / Blog / Platform</td></tr>
<tr><td>Formalised grouping of actors</td><td>Agreement
Memorandum of Understanding
Charter
Protocol</td></tr>
<tr><td>Collaborative network</td><td>Living Lab</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Delivering information</td><td>Digital or written communication</td><td>Article
Booklet / Brochure
Newsletter
Proceedings
Multiple compilation
Social networks
Story telling
Flyer
Poster
Widget / Goodies</td></tr>
<tr><td>Press conference</td><td>Press conference report
Press kit</td></tr>
<tr><td>Exchanging information [8]</td><td>Public / political event</td><td>Conference report
Forum</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Transferring knowledge / know-how / expertise [8]</td><td>Training material</td><td>e-learning platform
Training course material</td></tr>
<tr><td>Training course</td><td>Training report
Training methodology</td></tr>
<tr><td>Tailored event</td><td>Atypical / tailored event report</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Coordinating with Horizontal projects communication and capitalisation activities</td><td>Provision of information and data</td><td>Report</td></tr>
<tr><td>Meeting</td><td>Report</td></tr>
</table>

[8] Please mention in the Deliverable title if it’s related to the governance platform under axis 4, mainstreaming (regional programmes) or European Programmes or networks.

The coordination with Horizontal project and the contribution to Programme communication activities are compulsory for all projects

Contributing to Programme communication activities	Provision of information and data	Feeding the web platform Report
	Meeting	Report
Participating to external events	Meeting	Report

FIGURE 18 ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE WP 'STUDYING'

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES	TYPES OF DELIVERABLES	EXAMPLES OF DELIVERABLES
Coordinating the WP	Method	Methodology / guidelines
	Tool	manual / guidance /plan Course / training
Studying field	Report	State of the art SWOT Analysis Needs analysis Diagnosis Case study Comparative analysis Feasibility study Prospective study Benchmarking study Consultation report Technical workshop report

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES	TYPES OF DELIVERABLES	EXAMPLES OF DELIVERABLES
Compiling and organising information and data	Data collection	Thematic data collection Good practices Stakeholders and beneficiaries database
	Map	Maps GIS Itinerary / routes
	Observatory	Observatory
Providing tools, methods and services	Method	Indicators list Benchmarking method Methodology / toolkit Road map Guidelines Model
	Tool	Training material Decision tool Monitoring tool
Developing common approaches and strategies	Method	Strategy Action plan Model
	Tool	Tool
Exchanging information	Technical event	Seminar report Workshop report Meeting report

FIGURE 19: ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE WORK PACKAGE 'TESTING'

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES	TYPES OF DELIVERABLES	EXAMPLES OF DELIVERABLES
Coordinating the WP	Method	Methodology / guidelines manual / guidance /plan

	Tool	Course / training
Preparing pilot activities	Preliminary study	Preliminary or fine-tuning study for launching pilot activities
Testing (processes, techniques, models, tools, methods and services)	Tool Service	Testing report Software Support / service Facilities
	Method	Report Methodology Model
Simulating (processes, techniques, models, tools, methods and services)	Tool Method	Simulation report
Evaluating processes, techniques, models, tools, methods and services	Report	Evaluation report Evaluation tool Evaluation methodology
Transferring knowledge / know-how / expertise	Training material	e-learning platform Training course material
	Training course	Training report Training methodology
Exchanging information	Technical event	Seminar report Workshop report Meeting report

FIGURE 20: ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE WORK PACKAGE 'TRANSFERRING'

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES	TYPES OF DELIVERABLES	EXAMPLES OF DELIVERABLES
Coordinating the WP	Method	Methodology / guidelines manual / guidance /plan
	Tool	Course / training
Transferring tested processes, techniques, models, tools, methods and services	Method	Plan Model
	Tool	Protocol
Exchanging information	Technical event	Seminar report Workshop report Meeting report
Transferring knowledge / know-how / expertise	Training material	e-learning platform Training course material
	Training course	Training report Training methodology
	Tailored event	Atypical / tailored event report

FIGURE 21: ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE WORK PACKAGE 'CAPITALISING'

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES	TYPES OF DELIVERABLES	EXAMPLES OF DELIVERABLES
Coordinating the WP	Method	Methodology / guidelines manual / guidance /plan
	Tool	Course / training
Systematising knowledge	Data	Thematic data collection Good practices Stakeholders and beneficiaries database Report
	Method	Methodology
	Tool	Tool Maps GIS
	Observatory	Observatory
Transferring knowledge, know-how, expertise, systems or processes [9]	Method	Plan Model
	Tool	Protocol
	Training material	e-learning platform Training course material
	Training course	Training report Training methodology
	Technical event	Seminar report Workshop report Meeting report
	Tailored event	Atypical / tailored event report
Mainstreaming results [9]	Method	Action plan

[9] Please mention in the Deliverable title if it's related to the governance platform under axis 4, mainstreaming (regional programmes) or European Programmes or networks.

		Strategy Plan Model
	Tool	Legal acts Protocol
	Recommendations	Political recommendations Policy paper
	Training	Training material Training sessions report
	Technical event	Seminar report Workshop report Meeting report
	Public / political event	Conference report Forum Meeting report
Creating synergies and cooperation mechanisms	Informal grouping of actors	Forum / Blog / Platform
	Formalised grouping of actors	Agreement Memorandum of Understanding Charter Protocol
	Collaborative network	Living Lab
	Meeting	Report Minutes
Lobbying and Advocacy [9]	Method	Action plan Strategy Plan Model
	Tool	Legal acts Protocol
	Recommendations	Political recommendations Policy paper

	Meeting	Report Minutes

NOTE:

A Horizontal Project will capitalise on the existing S.O Interreg MED (Thematic community) projects results, but also it can be enriched by other regional and transnational initiatives. Networking and lobbying activities for the whole thematic community will be part of the HP strategy.

What are the differences between Capitalising in a M3 and Capitalising in a Horizontal Project?

The M3 projects capitalise results on a **specific theme chosen by the partnership from former projects** to go one step further. An M3 or M2+M3 project will identify a concrete and limited set of experiences delivered by previous initiatives in one very specific theme and location and capitalise them by merging them, completing or extrapolating to other areas different to the project territory. (local, regional, national or European level).
Module 3 projects can be compared to MED 2007-2013 projects from the Capitalisation Call for proposals.
The M3 projects should feed larger horizontal project activities that are covering each specific objective as a whole.

While

The HP will capture elements of the modular projects within each thematic Specific Objective will analyse them, summarise and ensure their transnational dissemination and capitalise them towards/ Axe 4, EU Institutions, Mainstream programmes if relevant. The Horizontal project is capitalising results to benefit the whole programme objectives.
The activities of the Horizontal projects do not consider specific territories or local actors, but the whole MED cooperation area. The main task of each horizontal project is to gather information from all other projects in order to synthetize it and spread it out in all the MED area.

FIGURE 22: ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE WORK PACKAGE 'COMMUNITY BUILDING.

COMMUNITY BUILDING: Community building is a field of practices directed toward the creation or enhancement of community among individuals within a territory or with a common interest. It relies on varied activities and events to improve relationships and exchanges between the members of the community, to develop a sense of common purpose, and to keep all stakeholders committed to the realization of common goals. In the framework of the Interreg MED Programme, it consists in developing a thematic community of projects in the framework of horizontal projects.

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES	TYPES OF DELIVERABLES	EXAMPLES OF DELIVERABLES
Coordinating the WP	Method	Methodology / guidelines manual / guidance /plan Community Building Strategy / plan
	Tool	Course / training
Animating the Thematic Community	Meeting	Report Minutes
	Informal grouping of actors	Forum / Blog / Platform
	Networking Sessions	Minutes Conclusions and wrap_ups
	Digital or written communication	Newsletter Proceedings Multiple compilation Social networks
	Tool	Survey/ questionnaire/ collecting information tool
	Training material	e-learning platform Training course material
	Training course	Training report Training methodology
	Tailored event	Atypical / tailored event report

	Meeting	Report Minutes

DEFINING PROJECT-SPECIFIC OUTPUTS

Unlike types of activities and deliverables are defined by the Interreg MED Programme, outputs have to be defined by each project.

Please note that not every work package must have one or several main outputs (in fact, a project may have only one main output). A project main output is one that can be captured by a programme output indicator and that directly contributes to the achievement of the project result. Project main output and programme output indicator need to have the same measurement unit to be able to aggregate them. An aggregation of project main outputs based on programme output indicators is essential for the achievement of output targets set on the programme level.

Indicatively, some examples of outputs are proposed, for each work package related to the content development of projects:

For the WP 'studying'
SWOT analysis, state of the art, benchmarking analysis, definition of approaches, joint action plans, common strategies, establishment of networks…

For the WP 'testing'
Preliminary studies (feasibility), common methodology for demonstration, testing and evaluation of pilot activities' reports…

For the WP 'transferring'
Plan of results portability, transferability protocol…

For the WP 'capitalising'
Policy recommendations, Memorandum of Understanding, agreements, procedures, regulatory proposals….

Following the programme and project intervention logics, project outputs and activities should contribute to the Programme output indicators, defined per Specific Objective:

FIGURE 22: OUTPUTS INDICATORS AND ACTIVITIES

S.O.	Output Indicator title	Examples of outputs or activities
1.1.	Number of operational instruments to favour innovation of SMEs	Tool Service
	Number of enterprises receiving grants	(Enterprises partner of projects)
	Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	Support services

	Number of transnational innovation clusters supported	Support services
2.1.	Number of available planning tools to manage and monitor energy consumption in public buildings	Tools
	Number of strategies to develop energy consumption management plans for public buildings	Strategies
	Number of targets participating in capacity raising activities on energy efficiency	Events Trainings
	Number of regions and sub-regions engaged (through charters, protocols, MoU) in developing energy efficiency plans/strategies	Agreement Memorandum of Understanding Protocol Legal act
2.2.	Number of planning tools to develop energy plans including local RES	Tool
	Population of islands covered by plans	Testing Implementing policies and plans Adopting policies and plans

S.O.	Output Indicator title	Examples of outputs or activities
	Population of rural areas covered by plans	Testing Implementing policies and plans Adopting policies and plans
	Number of models to develop action plans including local RES in energy mix	Method Plan
	Number of regions and sub-regions engaged (through charters, protocols, MoU) in increasing share of local RES in energy mix	Agreement Memorandum of Understanding Protocol Legal act
2.3.	Number of instruments available to foster the use of LC transport solutions, including multimodal ones	Tool Service
	Number of models to develop urban plans including low carbon transport and multimodal connections soft actions	Method Plan
	Population involved in awareness raising activities	Events
	Number of urban areas engaged (through charters, protocols, MoU) in developing urban plans/strategies including low carbon transport and multimodal connections soft actions	Agreement Memorandum of Understanding Protocol Legal act
3.1.	Number of instruments available to enhance the development of sustainable and responsible tourism	Tool Service
	Number of tourist destinations covered by a sustainable tourism evaluation tool	Testing
	Number of strategies applying sustainable tourism management criteria	Strategy
	Number of regions and sub-regions engaged (through charters, protocols, MoU) in implementing sustainable tourism plans	Agreement Memorandum of Understanding Protocol Legal act
3.2.	Number of joint governance plans	Plan

	Surface of habitats supported to attain a better conservation status	Testing
	Number of protected areas engaged (through charters, protocols, MoU) in implementing management strategies	Agreement Memorandum of Understanding Protocol Legal act
4.1.	Number of stakeholders (structures) involved in supported initiatives (per category representing public and private stakeholders)	Events Trainings

QUALITY STANDARDS FOR ACTIVITIES

What are the quality criteria for activities, how to meet them?

The Interreg MED programme has identified 3 main qualitative criteria.

Within a transnational cooperation programme, undertaken activities must meet three main criteria :

- Coordination
- Transnationality
- Transferability

What does coordination mean?

All actions must be coordinated by a partner in charge. Coordination is not natural, it must be supported by strong organisational skills; and modalities of organisation must be agreed with and communicated to the whole partnership in time.

From the beginning of the project, all partners in charge of WP and/or activities must:

- Have a complete overview of the development of the activity (partners' responsibilities and work load, time table, expected results, deliverables, etc.)
- Provide partners with precise instructions on the WP implementation

What does transnationality mean?

All actions must be transnational. It implies that approach, actions and results transcend the limitation to the sub-national boundaries of the territories of intervention of the partners. Approach has to be shared by the partnership, that actions are complementary within the partnership and that the results of the actions will benefit the whole partnership. Transnational perspective should prevent projects from being limited to a patchwork of local initiatives.

Therefore, the actions must meet criteria such as:

- Sharing common methodology for performing actions of the same type between partners territories
- Ensuring complementarity of work
- Ensuring comparability of data and information to permit a transnational synthesis and use of results.

What does transferability mean?

All protocols and results must be transferable to MED area scale and therefore, the actions must be reusable and / or adaptable. The partnership must ensure that the following criteria are met:

- Comparability of data and information

- Reliability and traceability of data and information
- Strength of methodology and protocols used
- Relevance of format
- Clear definition of target

What is needed to ensure a qualitative implementation of activities?

In order to produce an output of high quality it is essential to ensure the quality of the process that produces it (the activity).

As the deliverable is the physical evidence that will remain of what was produced, it is essential that its testimony meets criteria to be useful and make non-participating actors benefit from what was produced.

Setting common standards for activities

In transnational cooperation projects, any type of activity requires a perfect coordination of partners' competences.

Activities must be coordinated to ensure the steadiness of the outputs

Activities must be coherent with the type of expected outputs.

Coordinating translates concretely in the project into assembling, harmonising, orchestrating activities between partners coming from different domains of expertise, of activities and different areas to ensure the solidity of the results of the project.

None of these activities will happen naturally. It takes a leader to build common understanding, provide guidelines and monitor the process to ensure its effectiveness.

Common definition of the work to be done, practical guidelines and ways of monitoring the process must be set beforehand, involving the entire partnership in the process. The result of this procedure should be documented and serve to describe how to perform the activity and give all the practical common instructions that each partner needs to apply in order to ensure a harmonised work.

Therefore, it is requested that all main activities be provided with the methodology or the practical instructions that will ensure its proper coordination.

Hereafter some indicative specific guidelines/methodologies that can be produced by and aimed at partnership:

Project management and monitoring guidelines and methodologies, produced by MED 2007-2013 projects, are available in the MED library

- Procedures for administrative management
- Procedures for internal communication
- Procedures for monitoring project activities
- Internal training material
- Practical instructions for conducting a study
- Practical instructions for conducting a pilot action
- Protocol for testing a tool, a service
- Communication and dissemination plans
- Evaluation of project outputs and results protocol, plans,
- Etc.

Setting common standards for deliverables and outputs

In transnational cooperation projects, any type of deliverable and output requires the development of common standards in terms of methodology to provide and format to apply.

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

For each category (type of activity, deliverable, output indicator), quality standards are defined at the programme level and follow-up procedures include the systematic delivery by the partnership of methodologies used for the achievement of key deliverables and outputs. This is necessary to ensure the quality of the deliverables / outputs chain and facilitate the evaluation by the programme.

The raw data should also be provided to feed statistical data for the geographical area. Used in a transnational study, the comparability of local / national datasets must be ensured.
The formats of these deliverables should also be guided to maximise their potential for reuse. Open data approach should be considered as the rule when compiling or delivering information.
The Interreg MED Programme provides applicants with a definition of each type of deliverable in section 6 Glossary of the Programme Manual. Furthermore, general standards are defined in section 4.4. on project follow-up.

Besides, the partnership, within the guidelines/methodologies for implementing activities, must decide on and describe the specific standards required for each deliverable/output produced within the project.

2.3.4. Partnership relevance

THE SETTING UP OF A RELEVANT PARTNERSHIP IS ESSENTIAL

Having relevant and competent partners on board is essential for both setting up and successfully implementing a transnational cooperation project. Moreover, in a modular approach this partnership shall be consistent with the objective of each Module (for further information regarding specific partnership requirements per type of project, please refer to section 2.2 on partnership requirements, section 2.1.1. on modular projects and section 2.1.2. on horizontal projects).

THE LEAD PARTNER

The Lead Partner (institution) is responsible for coordinating and driving the partnership from the project idea until the finalisation of the project proposal. It formally submits the Application Form and is thus responsible for contents and commitments expressed in it. Then, the Lead Partner is the contractual counterpart of the programme (signing the Subsidy Contract with the Managing Authority).

Following the Lead Partner principle, the Lead Partner is responsible for ensuring sound management and successful implementation of the entire project. Therefore, the Lead Partner should be an institution experienced in the management of projects supported by EU funds. For more information please refer to section 2.2.2.

Accordingly, the Lead Partner should, at least, have the following profile (most skills are also applicable to project partners):

- Experienced in the management of EU funded projects
- Prepared to take a leading and driving role within the partnership
- Having sufficient capacity (institutional, financial and human resources) to prepare the project application and to manage the implementation of the project
- Having the thematic knowledge and expertise relevant for the project
- Being committed to the project throughout the entire project application and implementation phases

THE PARTNERSHIP

The quality of a project depends largely on an adequate composition of its partnership. A good partnership should pool all skills and competences of relevant institutions necessary to address the issues tackled by the project in order to achieve the set objectives and namely those set for the chosen module(s). When building a partnership, the following general aspects should be taken into account:

- Focus your partnership on entities **relevant** for reaching the project results (e.g. thematically, geographically, level of governance).
- Involve as project partners only institutions whose **interests are closely linked** to the project objectives and planned interventions. They should also have the capacity to create strong links to target groups addressed by the project.
- Apply a **result-oriented approach** by involving institutions who are supposed to realise and subsequently implement the project outputs and results.
- Ensure that involved institutions have the **required competences** (e.g. involve environmental authorities if you work on the development of environmental policies).
- Ensure a **balanced partnership** in terms of number of institutions involved per country. Distribution of project activities and responsibilities as well as related budgets should be also adequately balanced.
- Ensure that **decision makers** (e.g. ministries, regional governments) are either directly **included** in the partnership or can be effectively reached by the project partners.
- Where necessary, involve **expert organisations** (e.g. universities, research institutions) as a source of knowledge.
- Keep the partnership **size manageable** (for further information regarding specific partnership requirements per type of project, please refer to section 2.1.1. on modular projects and section 2.1.2. on horizontal projects). Having a broad partnership should not be a goal in itself when preparing a project.
- Ensure the **commitment** of all partners from the very beginning. Once the project approved partner changes are to be regarded as exceptional cases, creating a strain to the entire project.
- Partner institutions should have **sufficient financial capacity** to pre-finance and implement the foreseen activities, keeping in mind that the time-lapse between the payment of project costs and the ERDF/IPA reimbursement usually corresponds at least to some months
- Institutions from outside the programme area should only be involved in exceptional and well justified cases. Their involvement should bring a clear benefit to the programme

area and add value to the partnership (for further information regarding specific partnership requirements per type of project, please refer to section 2.2 of the Programme Manual on partnership requirements, section 2.1.1. on modular projects and section 2.1.2. on horizontal projects).

2.3.5. Sound project management

COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT

To manage the project efficiently, the Lead Partner must elaborate an efficient and reliable management and coordination system. The coordination concerns the implementation of the various components of the project, including its administrative and financial management. The Lead Partner is also responsible for the drafting of the progress and final reports, as well as the submission of the payment claims.

For each project, the Lead Partner must appoint a project coordinator responsible for its overall organisation. This person should be qualified to handle the thematic coordination of the project activities and components. The coordinator should be able to act as a driving force and to mobilise the partnership in order to achieve the objectives laid down in the application. It is highly recommended that a coordinator with experience in management of transnational projects is appointed.

For each project, the Lead Partner must also appoint a financial manager responsible for the accounts, financial reporting, and internal handling of the Union support and national co-financing.

The financial manager should:

- Work in close contact with the coordinator and the partners in order to enable efficient overall financial management of the project;
- Be familiar with accounts management, as well as with handling international transactions;
- Be aware of the EU and national legislation regarding financial management and controls, public procurement and, where appropriate, State aid, and will make sure that these rules are respected.

In order to ensure efficient communication with the programme management, the coordinator must speak fluently French and/or English. It is as well advisable that the financial manager speaks one of these languages.

For detailed information regarding Lead Partner requirement, please refer also to **section 2.2.2.** **Decision making – PROJECT Steering Committee**

Each project must determine the necessary procedures for decision-making and coordination between the partners. The partnership must establish a Steering Committee composed of representatives of all the partners. During its first meeting, the Steering Committee must approve its rules of procedure, validated by the whole partnership.

The tasks of the Steering Committee include

- Monitoring and validation of project contents: This includes verifying that the project implementation is in line with activities and outputs defined in the approved Application Form. Furthermore it means validating the quality of main project outputs and the progress towards achieving set objectives;

- Monitoring of project finances: This includes monitoring the project budget, budget flexibility and project spending;
- Review of the management performance and of the quality of progress reporting towards the programme bodies;
- If applicable, decisions on required project modifications (e.g. content, partnership, budget, duration) to be requested for approval to the programme bodies. If a partner jeopardizes the implementation of the project, the Steering Committee can decide to exclude the partner in question from the project. In this case, it will be necessary to address a request for change to the Programme Authorities (please refer to section 2.2 on partnership requirements);
- Working groups, task forces and advisory groups may be established to coordinate the day-to-day running of activities, to fulfil specific tasks, etc. Adequate representation of involved partners must be observed in establishing decision-making and coordination mechanisms.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Each project must set up a **monitoring and evaluation system**. This system must enable the Steering Committee of the project to evaluate the general progress of the project. This system must give information on the following points:

- Progress noted in the achievement of the objectives of the project on the basis of output and result indicators defined by the Programme;
- Level of effectiveness and efficiency of the project implementation: Does the project proceed in accordance with the initial calendar presented in the Application Form? Is the budgetary programming running correctly and are the allowances by budgetary heading respected? Are the results coherent compared to the expenditures committed (ratio cost/benefit)?
- Quality of the organisation, of the management and coordination: are the management and coordination procedures efficient and are the resources devoted to these processes sufficient?

For further information regarding project follow-up and project implementation support system, please refer to section 4.4. Note that the assignment of an external expert for evaluative monitoring (section 4.5.1) is compulsory for multi-module projects and horizontal projects.

2.3.6. Sound project budget

Kindly be reminded that no budget modification will be allowed during the first year of project implementation. Besides in the case of multi-modular project it would be warmly recommended to concentrate all modifications during the transition from one module to another.

The budget of the project must be drafted following the real cost principle[10], fully accomplishing the principles of adequacy of costs and sound financial management. As provided under chapter 7 of the Financial Regulation (Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012) the principle of sound financial management builds on the following three principles:

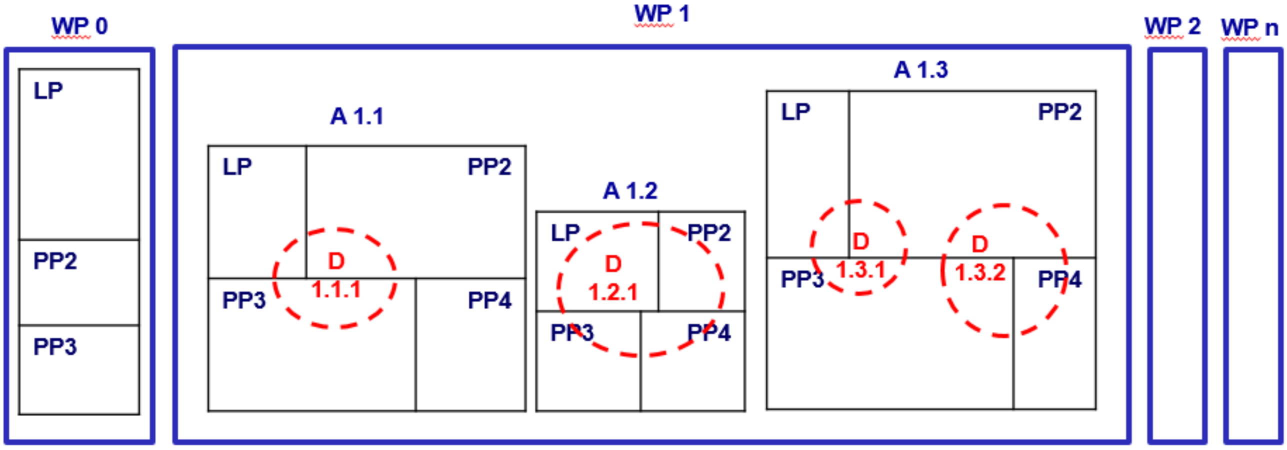
- The principle of economy requires that the resources used by the beneficiary in the pursuit of its activities shall be made available in due time, in appropriate quantity and quality and at the best price;
- The principle of efficiency concerns the best relationship between resources employed and results achieved;
- The principle of effectiveness concerns the attainment of the specific objectives set and the achievement of the intended results.

Accordingly, the project budget shall reflect the work plan, i.e. outputs, activities and deliverables planned in order to achieve the intended results.

Further guidance on eligibility of the expenditures, budget lines and financial requirements can be found in section 2.4.

The Application Form must contain a detailed budget per partner structured per budget line and work-package. For further information about how to enter the budget, please refer to section 3.2.

FIGURE 23: DELIVERABLE BUDGET CREATION



In particular, the following financial information will be required in the Application Form:

[10] Except for preparation costs as well as when simplified cost options are used for calculating costs under office and administration budget line. For further information, please refer to sections 2.4.4. and 2.4.5. of the Programme Manual.

- Share of the preparation costs lump sum among ERDF partners (for further information, please refer to section 2.4.5);
- For each WP, budget per project partner and budget line;
- Indicative budget for deliverables;
- Payment forecasts per reporting period;

Tools used by applicants when drafting the project budget must therefore allow to plan, at the level of each partner, the budget allocated to budget lines, work packages and reporting periods. Even if the information at level of activity is not required, it is warmly recommended to track this information in order to self-assess the strength of the proposed budget.

Concerning the **indicative budget for deliverables**, the following elements are to be taken into consideration:

- The deliverable budget must cumulate the part to be financed by each partner.
- Eligible VAT needs to be considered.
- The budget foreseen for each deliverable should be an estimation of the costs needed for its development, and may include staff costs, travel and accommodation costs and external expertise and services costs.
- This information will be used for the evaluation of the proposal. Any overestimation of the deliverable budget may be evaluated negatively.

FOR EXAMPLE

In order to establish an indicative budget for the type of deliverable "TECHNICAL EVENT", the following expenditures of all concerned partners may be considered:

- Staff of partner in charge for the organisation of the event;
- Communication of the event: website update, production of promotional material;
- Facilities: rent of the room, catering, translation;
- Travel and staff of partners involved during the event;
- Travel of experts, speakers, stakeholders and associated partners invited to the event;
- Post-com activities;
- Draft of the technical event report.

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

In view of the allocation of budget to reporting periods, the following elements are to be taken into consideration[11]:

- The reporting periods run on a six-monthly basis as from the project start date proposed by the Programme (for further information regarding the reporting process, please refer to section 4.1.).
- The budget allocated to each reporting period should be an estimation of the actual payments to be done and certified in the respective reporting period. Therefore, the

[11] Due to a dysfunction of the online monitoring tool that information will not be requested in the first call for modular projects.

budget only partly reflects the activities taking place in a certain period. Indeed, if an activity is carried out close to the end of a reporting period, the related payment may take place in the following period and the costs should therefore be budgeted only in the following reporting period.

- The capacity of spending and certifying of each partner in order to adapt as much as possible this estimation to reality.
- The time needed to set up procedures of effective competition.
- The amounts included in the Application Form will be afterwards incorporated to the Subsidy Contract to be signed between the Lead Partner and the Managing Authority and may be used to calculate the impact of the programme's decommitment on the projects budget. For more information please refer to sections 2.4.12. and 4.3. on controls and audits.

The controls and audits section will be available before the start-up of the projects approved in the framework of the first call for proposals

Spending forecasts will be subject to analysis during the assessment of project proposals. In particular an artificial distribution of total costs (e.g. evenly throughout the project duration and therefore not reflecting actual payments) will be evaluated negatively due to its negative effect on the decommitment calculations on programme level.

<u>Some elements to have in mind while drafting the budget proposal:</u>

- Even if the programme does not set formal thresholds for budget lines, some budget lines establish recommendations about the maximum percentage to be allocated to them. For further information regarding budget lines, please refer to section 2.4.4.
- In the case of office and administrative costs, no detailed budget needs to be planned for this budget line since **the expenditure is automatically calculated by the on-line monitoring tool** as a flat-rate of staff costs.
- **Some budget thresholds must be respected regarding distribution per partner and country**: <u>for the most important partner</u> (30% of the total eligible budget: ERDF + IPA + national co-financing) and <u>the most important country</u> (40% of the total eligible budget: ERDF + IPA + national co-financing). The online monitoring tool will block the submission of proposals not observing those limits.
- Depending on the national First Level Control system (centralised or decentralised), partners shall budget external auditors costs under the external expertise and services budget line.
- A progress report and a payment claim, included FLC certificates, will be submitted after each six-monthly reporting period by the Lead Partner.
- In the case of modular projects, projects have to foresee some budget for cooperation activities with the horizontal projects and the Programme Authorities as well as the participation in Programme events. For further information regarding communication tasks of modular projects, please refer to section 2.5.3.
- Activities outside the MED area have to be identified in the Application Form. For further information regarding location of activities, please refer to section 2.2.5.
- No budget modification will be allowed during the first year of project implementation. For further information regarding budget modifications, please refer to section 4.2.

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

The controls and audits section will be available before the start-up of the projects approved in the framework of the first call for proposals

2.4. Financial project requirements

This chapter aims to outline the main financial requirements to be considered for the development of a project proposal. For further information on financial matters, please refer to section 4.3. on Controls and Audits.

Further guidance on how to develop a sound project budget can be found in section 2.3.6 on sound project budget.

2.4.1. Hierarchy of rules on eligibility of expenditure

Three levels of rules apply to the eligibility of expenditure in the framework of all Interreg Programmes, including Interreg MED Programme:

1. **EU rules**: Due to the fact that the programme is co-financed from ERDF, all general rules concerning eligibility of expenditure regarding the structural funds are applicable. This includes:

- Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 (Financial regulation) providing the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union;
- Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 (Common provisions regulation) where Articles 6 and 65 to 71 give specific provisions on applicable law as well as on eligibility of expenditure;
- Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 (ERDF regulation) where article 3 gives specific provisions on the eligibility of activities under the ERDF;
- Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 (ETC regulation) where Articles 18 to 20 give specific provisions on eligibility of expenditure applicable to programmes of the European Territorial Cooperation goal;
- Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 481/2014 containing specific rules on eligibility of expenditure for cooperation programmes.

In addition, in the case of partners funded by IPA Funds, the following rules are applicable as well:

- Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 (IPA II Regulation) establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II);
- Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 (Common implementing regulation) laying down common rules and procedures for the implementation of the Union's instruments for financing external action;

2. **Programme rules:** namely additional rules on eligibility of expenditure for the cooperation programme as a whole. In addition to what is included in the present section, more detailed information will be given in the Control and Audit section.

3. **National eligibility rules:** which apply for matters not covered by eligibility rules laid down in the abovementioned EU and programme rules.

Eligibility rules set out by the Interreg MED Programme must be obeyed.

2.4.2. General eligibility requirements

The principle of sound financial management builds on three principles: economy, efficiency and effectiveness, please refer to section 2.3.6 for more details.

As a general principle, expenditure is eligible for funding when fulfilling **all** of the following **general eligibility requirements**:

- It relates to the costs of implementing a project according to the latest approved Application Form;
- It relates to items that did not receive support from other EU Funds as it would result in double funding;
- It is essential for the implementation of the project and it would not be incurred if the project is not carried out;
- It complies with the principle of real costs except for costs calculated as flat rates and lump sums;
- It complies with the principle of sound financial management (refer to section 2.3.6);
- It is borne directly by the beneficiary and supported by accounting documents justifying incurred expenses/payments (invoices, pay rolls…) except for costs calculated as flat rates and lump sums;
- It is incurred, engaged and paid out within the eligible period (as described in section 2.4.6);
- It is incurred within the MED area. In case it is incurred outside the MED area, the requirements indicated in section 2.2.5. have been respected;
- It is registered in the beneficiary's accounts through a separate accounting system or an adequate accounting code set in place specifically for the project;
- It complies with eligibility rules at European, Programme and national level; and when applicable, the relevant public procurement rules have been observed;
- It has been validated by an authorised First Level Controller[12].

Please note that costs which are not eligible according to the applicable eligibility rules cannot be claimed, even if included in the approved Application Form.

2.4.3. Non-eligible expenditure

[12] First Level Controller is the body or person responsible for verifying at national level that the co-financed products and services have been delivered, that the related expenditure has been paid and that it complies with the applicable EU, programme and national rules. For more information on the First Level Control system to be applied in each country please refer to www.interreg-med.eu. (available soon)

With regard to **non-eligible expenditure**[13], provisions are given in the following section. Nevertheless, the following expenditure should be considered as **not eligible in all the following cases**:

- In-kind contributions[14], as defined in Article 69(1) of Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013;
- Shared costs[15];
- Fines, financial penalties and expenditure on legal disputes and litigation;
- Costs of gifts, except those not exceeding EUR 50,00 per gift where related to project promotion, communication, publicity or information;
- Costs related to fluctuation of foreign exchange rate;
- Interest on debt;
- Purchase of land;
- Recoverable VAT according to national VAT legislation;
- Charges for national financial transactions;
- Costs for alcoholic beverages;
- Fees between beneficiaries of a same project for services, equipment and work carried out within the project;
- Heavy investments, infrastructures and works, as described by the Directive 2014/24/EU (annex II), with the exception of those defined as a small scale investments in the framework of pilot actions in section 2.4.4.

2.4.4. Budget lines specification

Project budgets must be structured according to the following budget lines:

1) Staff costs
2) Office and administrative expenditure
3) Travel and accommodation costs
4) External expertise and services costs
5) Equipment expenditure

The controls and audits section will be available before the start-up of the projects approved in the framework of the first call for proposals

These budget lines apply to all Work Packages. The creation of additional sub-budget lines different to the ones established by the Programme is not allowed. Information included in this document is intended to help partners to properly build a budget for the proposal. More details as well as guidance on how to report these costs will be provided in the section 4.3. Controls and Audits.

[13] For more information please refer to:
- Article 69(3) of the Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013 and Article 3(3) of Regulation (EU) No. 1301/2013.
- Article 18 of Regulation (EU) No. 1299/2013.
- Article 2(2) of the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No. 481/2014.

[14] Contributions in the form of provision of works, goods, services, land and real estate for which no cash payment supported by invoices or documents of equivalent probative value has been made.

[15] Shared costs derive from activities carried out by one partner whose costs are covered by more than one project partner. Costs sharing systems are forbidden within the Interreg MED Programme.

BUDGET LINE 1. STAFF COSTS

This budget line refers to the costs of staff employed by the beneficiary institution (Lead Partner or project partner) for implementing the project. Staff can either be already employed by the beneficiary or contracted specifically for the project.

Expenditure included under this budget line is limited to:

A. Salary payments fixed in an employment document (employment contract or appointment decision) or by law relating to responsibilities specified in the job description of the staff member concerned. Salary payments have to relate to activities which the beneficiary would not carry out if the project concerned was not undertaken.

Payments to natural persons working for the beneficiary under a contract other than an employment/work contract may be assimilated to salary payments and such costs are eligible if:

- The person works under the beneficiary's instructions and, unless otherwise agreed with the beneficiary, on the beneficiary's premises;
- The result of the work carried out belongs to the beneficiary;
- The costs are not significantly different from those for personnel performing similar tasks under an employment contract with the beneficiary.

If those conditions are not met, this expenditure must be allocated under budget line External expertise and services costs.

B. **Any other costs directly linked to salary payments** incurred and paid by the employer (such as employment taxes and social security including pensions) as covered by Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 provided that they are:

- Fixed in an employment document or by law;
- In accordance with the legislation referred to in the employment document and with standard practices in the country and/or institution where the individual staff member is working;
- Not recoverable by the employer.

Depending of the assignment (full-time, part-time, contracted on an hourly basis) to work on the project, staff costs of each individual are calculated **based on real costs** and as follows:

FIGURE 24: CALCULATION OF STAFF COSTS

Full-time	An employee dedicates 100% of his/her working time to the project. The full-time assignment to the project must be included in the employment/work contract or in a specific statement issued by the partner structure. No registration of the working time (e.g. time sheets) is required. **Staff costs = total of the gross employment cost**

Part-time assignment with a fixed percentage of time worked on the project per month	An employee dedicates a fixed percentage of his/her working time to the project. This percentage is set out in a document issued by the partner at the beginning of the project. This assignment can only be modified when the level of involvement of the partner changes from one module to another in the case of multi-modal projects. No registration of the working time (e.g. time sheets) is required. **Staff costs = fixed percentage of the gross employment cost**

Part–time assignment with a flexible number of hours worked on the project per month	An employee dedicates a flexible share of his/her working time to the project. In all cases, the applicable hourly rate per year shall be calculated by dividing the latest documented annual gross employment costs by 1.720 hours. Data from the working time registration system (e.g. time sheets) providing information on the number of hours spent per month on the project are required. The time registration system must cover 100% of the actual working time of the individual. **Staff costs = part of the gross employment cost depending on the number of hours actually worked on the project** The calculation of the hourly rate is on a standard number of 1.720 hours per year: *Hourly rate = latest documented annual gross employment cost/1720 hours* *Staff costs = hourly rate * number of hours worked on the project per month*
Contracted on an hourly basis	An employee is contracted on an hourly basis and dedicates a certain number of hours to work on the project. The staff costs are calculated on the basis of an hourly rate fixed in the employment document. Data from the working time registration system (e.g. time sheets) providing information on the number of hours spent per month on the project are required. **Staff costs = part of the gross employment cost depending on the number of hours worked on the project** *Hourly rate = fixed in the employment document* *Staff costs = hourly rate * number of hours worked on the project*

Unjustified ad-hoc salary increases or bonuses for project purposes are not eligible.

BUDGET LINE 2. OFFICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENDITURE

Office and administrative expenditure covers operating and administrative expenses incurred by the beneficiary and necessary for the implementation of the project.

Eligible cost items under this budget line are (exhaustive list):

a) Office rent;
b) Insurance and taxes related to the buildings where the staff is located and to the equipment of the office (e.g. fire, theft insurances);

The office and administrative budget line includes equipment for general office use, for which the exclusive use in the project cannot be demonstrated. In consequence, this equipment shall not be allocated under the equipment budget line. Please refer also to section Budget Line 5. Equipment expenditure.

c) Utilities (e.g. electricity, heating, water);
d) Office supplies;
e) General accounting provided inside the beneficiary organisation;
f) Archives;
g) Maintenance, cleaning and repairs;
h) Security;
i) IT systems (operating/administrative IT services of general nature, linked to the implementation of the project);
j) Communication (e.g. telephone, fax, internet, postal services, business cards);
k) Bank charges for opening and administering the account or accounts where the implementation of the project requires a separate account to be opened;
l) Charges for transnational financial transactions.

Office and administrative expenditure shall be reimbursed by the Programme according to a flat rate of **15 % of eligible staff costs.** No detailed budget needs to be planned for this budget line since **the expenditure is automatically calculated by the on-line monitoring tool. Direct costs falling under this budget line are not eligible.**

BUDGET LINE 3. TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION COSTS

Costs under this budget line refer to the expenditure on travel and accommodation of the **staff of the beneficiary** for missions essential for the effective implementation of the project (e.g. participation in project meetings, project site visits, meetings with the programme bodies, seminars, conferences, etc.).

Eligible cost items under this budget line are (exhaustive list):

a) Travel costs (e.g. public transport tickets, travel and car insurance, fuel, car mileage, toll, and parking fees);
b) Costs of meals;
c) Accommodation costs;
d) Visa costs;
e) Daily allowances.

Any cost item listed in points a) to d) which is covered by a daily allowance shall not be reimbursed in addition to the daily allowance.

Projects should foresee travel and accommodation costs for participation in events organised by other entities in which they might participate

Travel and accommodation costs occurred outside t
he MED area are eligible only if they accomplish with requirements provided in Article 20(2) of Regulation (EU) No. 1299/2013 and Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No. 481/2014. Furthermore, those costs are eligible only if they are indicated in the approved Application Form or authorised by the MA/JS **prior to the travel**. For more information on the location of project activities please refer also to section 2.2.5.

Travel and accommodation costs of external experts (including invited speakers, experts and chairpersons of meetings) and service providers, as well as those related to associated partners, can be only claimed under the **external expertise and services budget line**. Please refer to the following budget line information.

Kindly bear in mind that the following activities may need some budget allocated under the travel and accommodation costs category: participation in events organised by the Interreg MED Programme, National Authorities, Horizontal Projects, other MED and Interreg projects working on the same subjects, etc. and that some of the latter may take place outside of the MED area.

BUDGET LINE 4. EXTERNAL EXPERTISE AND SERVICES COSTS

Costs under this budget line refer to external expertise and services provided by a public or private body or a natural person outside of the beneficiary organisation. The external experts and service providers are sub-contracted to carry out certain tasks or activities which are essential for the implementation of the project (e.g. studies and surveys, translation, promotion and communication, services related to meetings and events). External expertise and services costs are paid on the basis of contracts or written agreements and against invoices or requests for reimbursement.

Eligible cost items under this budget line are (exhaustive list):

a) Studies or surveys (e.g. evaluations, strategies, concept notes, design plans, handbooks);
b) Training (e.g. venue and trainers);
c) Translations;
d) IT systems and website development, modifications and updates (e.g. setting-up and/or update of a project IT system or website);
e) Promotion, communication, publicity or information;
f) Financial management;
g) Services related to the organisation and implementation of events or meetings (including rent, catering or interpretation);
h) Participation in events (e.g. registration fees);
i) Legal consultancy and notarial services, technical and financial expertise, other consultancy and accountancy services;
j) Intellectual property rights;
k) Verification and validation of expenditure carried out by authorized First Level Controllers;
l) Provision of guarantees by a bank or other financial institution where required by the Programme;
m) Travel and accommodation for external experts, speakers, chairpersons of meetings and service providers;
n) Other specific expertise and services needed for the project.

Activities such as FLC costs, subcontracting, travel and accommodation of persons not working as staff for the project fall under this budget line

Kindly bear in mind the following common activities that should be allocated under the external expertise and services budget line: audit in the case of decentralised systems (First Level Controller), evaluation of the project, sub-contracted management and communication activities, translation, organisation of events and project meetings, travel and accommodation of speakers, stakeholders and possible associated partners.

The controls and audits section will be available before the start-up of the projects approved in the framework of the first call for proposals

External expertise and services have to be duly specified in Application Form (C.8) by describing at least the nature of the expertise/service, the link to the relevant activity as listed in the working plan (C.5) and the related budget of the concerned project partner. External expertise and services not foreseen in the Application Form must be authorised by the MA/JS **in advance**.

Eligibility of costs for external expertise and services is subject to the full respect of EU, Programme and national (including stricter institutional) public procurement rules and must comply with the basic principles of transparency, non-discrimination and equal treatment. For further information, please refer to section 2.4.10 on public procurement and section 4.3 on Controls and Audits.

In the case of beneficiaries planning to allocate the majority of its budget to an in-house body, it would be warmly recommended to check the possibility of placing the in-house body as a partner of the project.

Costs referring to project-related tasks sub-contracted by the beneficiary to in-house bodies, including staff and travel and accommodation cost, as well as costs referring to cooperation between public bodies, are eligible under this budget line as long as they are charged on a real costs basis – thus without any profit margin – and they comply with the applicable public procurement provisions.

Travel and accommodation costs of external experts, (including invited speakers, experts and chairpersons of meetings) and service providers, as well as those related to associated partners, can be claimed only under the external expertise and services budget line. It is highly recommended that the travel and accommodation costs of external experts are directly borne by the partner organisation.

In the case of associated partners, it is warmly recommended to detail in the Application Form which of the partners will bear the expenditure incurred by each one of these bodies. For more information on associated partners, please refer to section 2.2.1.

Even if the programme does not set formal thresholds for this budget line, the share of external expertise at project level **should not exceed 50% of the total eligible budget,** as beneficiaries of a project should be the actual implementers of the project.

BUDGET LINE 5. EQUIPMENT EXPENDITURE[16]

Costs under this budget line refer to equipment purchased, rented or leased by a beneficiary, including costs of equipment already in possession of the beneficiary organisation and used to carry out project activities, and to small scale facilities or infrastructures which are essential for the implementation of the project.

Eligible cost items under this budget line are (exhaustive list):

a) Office equipment;
b) IT hardware and software;
c) Furniture and fittings;
d) Laboratory equipment;
e) Machines and instruments,
f) Tools or devices;

Costs of equipment for general office use not exclusively used for the project is already covered by the flat rate of the office and administrative expenditure budget line and thus shall not be allocated under the equipment budget line. Please refer also to section Budget Line 2. Office and administrative expenditure.

[16] This budget line may include "small scale investments" costs in the case of a project including pilot activities and territorial experiences.

g) Vehicles;
h) Other specific equipment needed for the project.

When drafting the proposal, the above equipment items shall be identified within the following categories:

1. Equipment for general office use as computers, office furniture, printers, telephones, cameras, etc. which is necessary for the implementation of the project and which is used exclusively for project purposes. Equipment for general (office) use **shall be reimbursed as depreciable asset** in compliance with national accounting rules and internal accounting policies of the beneficiary. The full cost of such equipment is eligible **solely** in the case that the depreciation period is shorter than the time lap between the purchase of the equipment and the end of the project.

Equipment for general (office) use for which the **exclusive use** in the project cannot be demonstrated shall be considered as not eligible, since it is already covered by the flat rate of the office and administrative expenditure budget line.

2. Thematic equipment directly linked to (or forming part of) the project thematic activities, which will be used for the project implementation by beneficiaries and target groups in line with the project objectives. Thematic equipment **can be reimbursed in full**[17].

Thematic equipment for which the exclusive use in the project cannot be demonstrated shall be charged **pro-rata** on the basis of a transparent method set in place by the beneficiary for allocating the share of its use in the project.

3. Small scale investment as facilities or infrastructures of limited size or scope, which are essential to the successful implementation of a pilot activity. Their purpose must be the demonstration of the feasibility and effectiveness of a proposed solution (e.g. services, tools, methods or approaches). This expenditure may refer either to an object (e.g. a light structure) that will be set up ex-novo or to the adaptation of an already existing infrastructure.

This last option will be possible only in the framework of pilot activities. Costs for small scale investment outside the MED Programme area are not eligible.

All costs related to this budget line have to be duly specified in the Application Form (C.8) by describing at least the nature and quantity of the equipment to be purchased, the link with the relevant activity as listed in the work plan (C.5) and the related budget of the concerned project partner. During project implementation, purchase of any equipment or any small scale investment not explicitly mentioned in the Application Form will have to be subject to prior approval by the MA/JS.

The controls and audits section will be available before the start-up of the projects approved in the framework of the first call for proposals

Eligibility of costs for equipment is subject to the full respect of EU, Programme and national (including stricter institutional) public procurement rules and must comply with the basic principles of transparency, non-discrimination and equal treatment. For further information, please refer to section 2.4.10. on public procurement and section 4.3. on Controls and Audits.

[17] I.e. outside depreciation schemes if in line with national accountability rules and internal accountability policies of the beneficiary.

Moreover, equipment items and small scale investments listed in the Application Form are only eligible:

- If they have not already been financed by other EU grants
- If they have not already been depreciated
- If they are not already included as indirect costs under the office and administration budget line

2.4.5. Preparation costs

Approved projects which successfully signed the Subsidy Contract with the Managing Authority are entitled to receive reimbursement of their preparation costs in the form of a lump-sum. That means that in case projects foresee this kind of expenditure in the Application Form (the lump sum is not automatic), they will be reimbursed with no need to present invoices or other administrative justification for the incurred costs.

Please note that preparation costs are covered by a lump sum and there is no possibility for the projects to opt for real preparation costs. For further information please refer to section 2.4.5.

Please bear in mind that one eligibility criterion checks that the lump sum of EUR 30.000 for preparation costs is not exceeded. The non-respect of this criterion will declare the proposal ineligible.

The reimbursement of these costs will follow the principles detailed below:

- The lump sum is not automatic. Preparation costs budget must be indicated in the Application Form, giving concrete information on the amount allocated to the concerned ERDF project partner(s);
- The lump sum will amount to **EUR 30 000** of **total eligible expenditure** per project;
- The co-financing rate of the preparation costs will be in line with the co-financing rate applicable to the partner(s) to which the lump sum is allocated;
- The lump sum covers all costs linked to the preparation of the project;
- Any difference between the granted lump-sum and the real costs occurred for preparation is neither checked nor further monitored by the Programme;
- Only ERDF partners are entitled to budget and claim preparation costs.

The partnership decides which ERDF partners will receive what share of the reimbursement of preparation costs. It is strongly recommended to reach a consensus within the partnership on the distribution of preparation costs, reflecting the actual preparation activities carried out by the partners in a fair and transparent way.

If a share of the preparation costs lump-sum is allocated to an IPA partner in the Application Form, this part will not be reimbursed to the project and will be reduced from the project total eligible budget[18].

After the signature of the Subsidy Contract, the ERDF corresponding to this lump-sum will be automatically transferred to partners concerned, according to the information included in the Application Form approved. **No changes will be accepted after the approval of the proposal.**

In case a project is not implemented or even started, the MED Programme Monitoring Committee reserves the possibility of recovering the ERDF already reimbursed based on this lump-sum.

[18] There is an ad hoc mechanism of advance payments for the IPA partners, for further information please refer to section 2.4.11.

2.4.6. Eligibility period

Expenditure is eligible according to the following periods:

A. Costs for the **implementation** of an approved project are eligible from the date of the approval of the proposal by the MED Programme Steering Committee until its official ending date as set in the Subsidy Contract.

All operational expenditure shall be incurred and invoiced before the official ending date established by the Subsidy Contract. All costs can be paid out within two months after this date. Any expenditure paid out after that date shall not be eligible.

B. Costs for project **closure** (e.g. preparation of the last progress report, final report and costs for control of expenditure) are eligible, and must be incurred, invoiced and paid out within two months after the official ending date of the project.

In the case of partners issued from IPA countries, it would be not possible neither to request an advance payment (for more information please refer to section 2.4.11) nor to submit a payment claim before the signature of a Financing Agreement between the European Commission, the MED Programme Managing Authority and the Government of each IPA country[19].

2.4.7. Net revenues

As a general principle[20], eligible expenditure of a project (and consequently the Union contribution to it) shall be reduced according to the net revenue generated by the project both during its implementation as well as until three years after its completion.

Net revenues are:

Cash in-flows directly paid by users for the goods or services provided by the project, such as charges borne directly by users for the use of infrastructure, sale or rent of land or buildings, or payments for services. MINUS Any operating costs and replacement costs of short-life equipment incurred during the corresponding period

[19] For more information about the signature of the Financing Agreement of each concerned IPA country please refer to www.interreg-med.eu.
[20] In accordance with Articles 61 and 65(8) of Regulation (EU) 1303/2013.

Please note that operating cost-savings generated by the project shall be treated as net revenue unless they are offset by an equal reduction in operating subsidies.

In case of revenue-generating projects, applicants are to calculate the expected net revenues following the method described under Articles 15 to 19 of the Delegated Regulation (EU) No 480/2014.

Expected net revenues, generated during the project implementation and after completion, **are to be indicated in the budget of the Application Form** in order to offset the corresponding Union contribution. Applicants shall not indicate expected net revenues in the Application Form in the following cases:

- If the total budget of the project does not exceed EUR 1 000 000[21];
- If the specific project output generating net revenue is State aid relevant (for further information regarding State aid, please refer to section 2.4.9).

2.4.8. Conversion into euro

The project budget must be developed in Euro and, in case of approval, reporting of project expenditure to the MA/JS shall be made solely in Euro.

Any expenditure incurred in a currency other than the Euro shall be converted into Euro using the monthly accounting exchange rate of the European Commission in the month during which that expenditure was submitted for verification by the concerned partner to its First Level Controller.

The European Commission publishes the monthly exchange rates on the first day of the month under: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro_en.cfm

2.4.9. State aid[22]

WHAT IS STATE AID

According to Article 107 (ex. Article 87) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, State aid is defined as any aid granted by a Member State or through State resources in any

[21] Please note that even if a project below EUR 1 000 000 total budget is exempted to include the forecast of expected net revenues in the Application Form, such project – in case of approval - must record and deduct from Union contribution net revenues generated during implementation or after closure.

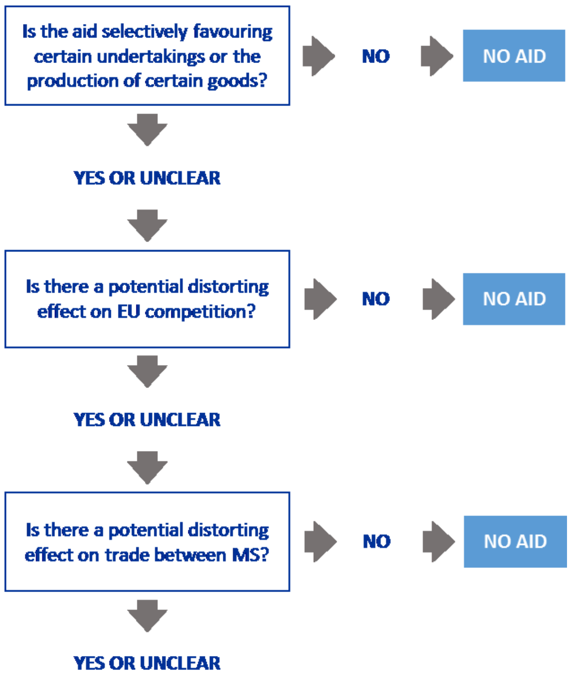
[22] This section only concerns EU partners funded by ERDF. Legal basis to be taken into account as far as state aids are concerned:

- The Treaty on the functioning of the European Union: Articles 107 and 108.
- The General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER): Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty.
- Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de Minimis aid.

form whatsoever which distorts or threatens to distort competition by favouring certain undertakings or the production of certain goods.

Based on this definition, it can be concluded that there is State aid only if ALL the following 5 points (cumulative criteria) are fulfilled:

1) The measure must confer a benefit or advantage on the recipient which it would not otherwise have received (which is always the case for any Interreg programme);



2) It must be granted by a Member State or through State resources (which is always the case for any Interreg programme);
3) It must selectively favour certain undertakings or the production of certain goods[23];
4) It must distort or threaten to distort competition;
5) It must affect trade between Member States.

FIGURE 25: STATE-AID SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

WHO IS CONCERNED BY STATE AID

An **undertaking** is an entity engaged in an economic activity in the context of the proposed project.

Any project partner offering goods and services in the market in the context of the proposed project is thus an undertaking, regardless of its legal status ownership, the way it is financed and whether its aim is to make profit or not.

In the Partner declaration, a question concerns whether the partner carries out or not an economic activity in the project (undertaking offering goods and services on the market regardless of its legal status and whether its aim is to make profit or not).

[23] With the meaning of the Article 87(1) EC in comparison with other undertakings in a comparable legal and factual situation in the light of the objective pursued by the measure concerned.

Even if an entity provides the goods or services free of charge or is financed entirely by the state, it can be subject of the State aid rules. State aid rules apply thus to both public and private partners.

This concept of undertaking is very wide and may include SMEs, large companies, public bodies, NGOs, associations, universities, etc.

Activities carried out within the framework of statutory tasks normally performed by public authorities do not fall within the concept of an undertaking, in view of their non-business purposes and procedures, but in some cases, however, local public or administrative bodies may be considered to be similar to undertakings.

In the evaluation of the existence of a potential State aid issue, the nature of the beneficiary is therefore not relevant since, as said, even a not-profit organisation can be engaged in economic activities. In consequence, **the main element to take into account is the nature of the activities that the partner institution and the project intend to implement through the public funding**.

HOW TO DEAL WITH STATE AID

In the case of the Interreg MED Programme, State aid relevant activities are financed only if they are in compliance with Article 20 of the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)[24] or in compliance with the *de minimis* Regulation[25].

The decision on whether to apply the GBER or the *de minimis* Regulation is to be made by the applicants themselves, taking into account the information included below. Both instruments specify certain limits on the maximum amount of aid and/or on the co-financing rate to be applied. Project partners should consider carefully the implications before opting for one of the two instruments.

General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)

As part of an administrative simplification, the European Commission adopted the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER) and allows any Member State to not notify a number of State aid measures to the Commission. It consolidates and harmonizes the rules previously existing and enlarges the categories of State aid covered by the exemption. Compared to the previous GBER, a specific and new Article 20 has been adopted which is directly opened to Interreg.

Article 20 of the GBER applies only to SMEs[26] fulfilling the conditions established regarding thresholds, transparency, incentive effect, aid intensity, eligible costs, cumulation, publication and information.

[24] Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014).
[25] Commission Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid.
[26] "SME" stands for small and medium-sized enterprises as defined in EU law: Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprise
The main factors determining whether a company is an SME are the number of employees and either turnover or balance sheet total.

- Medium-sized: Employees < 250; Turnover ≤ € 50 m; Balance sheet total ≤ € 43 m.
- Small: Employees < 50; Turnover ≤ € 10 m; Balance sheet total: ≤ € 10 m.

SMEs meeting the criteria of the SME definition, as stated by the Annex I of the General Block Exemption Regulation, (and willing to benefit from it) shall tick the relevant answer in the ERDF partner declaration to be submitted with the Application Form (for further information, please refer to section 3.1).

In case these conditions are fulfilled, the following costs can be deemed eligible[27]:

- costs for organisational cooperation including cost for staff and offices to the extent that it is linked to the cooperation project;
- costs of advisory and support services linked to cooperation and delivered by consultants and service providers;
- travel expenses, costs of equipment and investment expenditure directly related to the project, depreciation of tools and equipment, to the extent that they are used exclusively for the project.

The services referred above shall not be a continuous or periodic activity nor relate to the undertakings usual operating costs, such as routine tax consultancy services, regular legal services or advertising.

The aid amount under Article 20 of GBER shall not exceed 50%[28] (all types of public sources included) of the eligible costs. In addition, aid to SMEs for cooperation costs incurred by participating in Interreg projects cannot exceed EUR 2 million per undertaking and per project.

De minimis rule

In other cases for which a potential State aid issue was identified, partners may decide to apply the de minimis rule.

Partners benefiting from the *de minimis* rule must sign a *de minimis* declaration indicating any contribution received during the previous three fiscal years falling under the *de minimis* Regulation, to be submitted with the Application Form (for further information, please refer to section 3.1).

To benefit from the de minimis rule, aid has to satisfy the following criteria:

- The ceiling for the aid covered by the de minimis rule is EUR 200 000 (cash grant equivalent) over any three tax year period.
- The ceiling applies per Member State. Unlike as in the past, in the case of the Interreg MED Programme the aid will be considered as granted by France (location of the MA) and will not cumulate with State aid under *de minimis* regime granted by another Member States.
- The ceiling will apply to the total of all public assistance considered to be *de minimis* aid.
- The ceiling applies to aid of all kinds, irrespective of the form it takes or the objective pursued.

- Micro: Employees < 10; Turnover ≤ € 2 m; Balance sheet total ≤ € 2 m.

These ceilings apply to the figures for individual firms only. A firm which is part of larger grouping may need to include employee/turnover/balance sheet data from that grouping too. For the details of how this works, please refer to: http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition/index_en.htm

[27] In order to adapt those cost categories to the budget lines established by the Interreg MED Programme in section 2.4.4, kindly use the following correspondences:

- BL 1: Staff costs: cost for staff
- BL 2: Office and administrative expenditure: cost for staff and offices
- BL 3: Travel and accommodation: travel expenses
- BL 4: External expertise and services costs: costs of advisory and support services linked to cooperation and delivered by consultants and service provider
- BL 5: Equipment expenditure: costs of equipment and investment expenditure directly related to the project, depreciation of tools and equipment, to the extent that they are used exclusively for the project

[28] Co-financing rate of 50% for the SME partner.

- The regulation only applies to “transparent” forms of aid, which means aid for which it is possible to determine in advance the gross grant equivalent without needing to undertake a risk assessment.

COMPARATIVE CHART

The comparative chart included here below aims to give information regarding the differences between the two possible State aid schemes to be used by concerned partners in the framework of the Interreg MED Programme.

FIGURE 26: COMPARATIVE CHART FOR STATE AID

	GBER	*De minimis* rule
Maximum public contribution (ERDF grant)	Up to **EUR 2 million** per SME and per project. If the SME is participating in a second different project, this operator will be able to receive EUR 2M + EUR 2M.	Up to **EUR 200 000** over a period of 3 fiscal years, this being the fiscal year of the date of the MED grant (date of the signature of the subsidy contract) and the previous two fiscal years. An undertaking (and all other entities belonging to the same company group) can receive the *de minimis* aid several times provided that it is a different Member State granting the *de minimis* aid. Within the Interreg MED Programme, the *de minimis* is considered as granted by the Member Stated where the Managing Authority is located (France).
Co-financing rate	Up to 50%	Up to 85%
Undertakings concerned	Only SMEs (for Interreg)	Undertakings in all sectors
Application phase	The undertaking shall state that it applies for ERDF under the General Block Exemption Regulation in the Partner Declaration to be submitted with the Application Form	The undertaking shall state that it applies for ERDF under the *de minimis* Regulation in the Partner Declaration and shall submit a *de minimis* declaration with the Application Form, indicating any contribution received during the previous three fiscal years falling under the *de minimis* Regulation
Eligibility and evaluation phase	Plausibility check undertaken by the MA/JS and Consultation of the relevant Member State (e.g. undertakings in difficulty should be excluded; Member States confirmation that the relevant partners have social security expenses and taxes up to date proving the solvency of the partner)	Plausibility check undertaken by the MA/JS and Consultation of the relevant Member State (e.g. undertakings in difficulty should be excluded; Member States confirmation that the relevant partners have social security expenses and taxes up to date proving the solvency of the partner)
Documents to be provided after the approval and before the	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,	Update of the *de minimis* declaration, only if the included amounts have changed since the submission of the proposal[29] and eventual modification of the Application form.

[29] 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.

	GBER	*De minimis* rule
signature of the Subsidy Contract	small and medium-sized enterprise. Once the entity has proven its SME status, no further controls to be carried out about the nature of its activity In case it is not a SME, the project will only be approved under the condition that this partner is excluded, and replaced by a similar solvent undertaking under the definition of SME	
Suspensory clause included in the subsidy contract	The undertaking will be excluded in case of false statement proven after the approval of the project (e.g. during the complementary tests to be carried out during the follow-up of the project; ERDF expenditures reimbursement stop from the date the undertaking does not constitute an SME anymore)	The undertaking will be excluded in case of false statement proven after the approval of the project (e.g. during the complementary tests to be carried out during the follow-up of the project; *de minimis* amounts were not declared before the signature of the subsidy contract, consequent reduction of ERDF *a pro rata*)
Eligible costs	Only the following costs are eligible: - costs for organisational cooperation including cost for staff and offices to the extent that it is linked to the cooperation project; - costs of advisory and support services linked to cooperation and delivered by outside consultants and service providers; - travel expenses, costs of equipment and investment expenditure directly related to the project, depreciation of tools and equipment, to the extent that they are used exclusively for the project. The services referred above shall not be a continuous or periodic activity nor relate to the undertakings usual operating costs, such as routine tax consultancy services, regular legal services or advertising.	All costs that are eligible under the MED Programme
Complementary tests to be carried out during the follow-up of the project	Interreg MED JS will carry out complementary tests during the management verifications.	Interreg MED JS will carry out complementary tests during the management verifications in order to ensure that the *de minimis* threshold is not exceeded and to verify the scope of the Regulation.

Further information on State aid can be found on the European Commission's DG Competition website:

(*http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/overview/index_en.html*)*http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/overview/index_en.html*) where also comprehensive guidelines on the notion of State aid[30] will be soon made available.

The INTERACT programme has also summarised a list of questions and answers on this topic: *http://admin.interact-eu.net/downloads/9263/Questions_Answers_ETC_and_State_Aid_April_2015.pdf*

Applicants may also consult the relevant national authorities to obtain more specific information on rules and limitations concerning State aid.

[30] A draft version available at the time of writing can be accessed at http://ec.europa.eu/competition/consultations/2014_state_aid_notion/draft_guidance_en.pdf

2.4.10. Public procurement

It is strongly recommended to become familiar with the applicable procurement rules and, if necessary, seek the advice of procurement experts early enough before launching an award procedure.

The acquisition by means of a public contract of works, supplies or services from economic operators is subject to rules on public procurement. Such rules aim to secure transparent and fair conditions for competing on the common market and shall be followed by the beneficiaries when procuring the above mentioned services, works or supplies on the market.

Rules may differ depending on the kind of goods and/or services to be purchased, as well as the value of the purchase and the legal status of the awarding institution. They are set at the following levels:

- EU rules (i.e. public procurement directives[31] for ERDF partners and rules on external action procurement[32] for IPA partners)
- National rules[33]
- Interreg MED Programme rules

Public authorities and other institutions falling under the scope of application of the procurement laws[34] must comply with the applicable rules on public procurement.

Institutions not falling under the scope of application of the public procurement laws (e.g. private companies for most procurement activities as defined under the EU regulation) are exempt from the application of public procurement laws. Notwithstanding this, such institutions (e.g. private bodies, non-governmental organisations, international organisations) **have to observe the basic principles on which the procurement norms are based and ensure the best value for money or, if appropriate, the lowest price**. Please check national rules and guidelines in this respect.

With regard specifically to **Interreg MED Programme rules**, for all contracts with contracting amounts between **EUR 5 000,00** (excl. VAT) and the threshold set by the applicable EU or national rules, beneficiaries need to have documented proof that **at least three offers** from three different providers have been asked. In the case where the partner must comply with stricter rules (I.e. national or internal rules), these stricter rules apply. This rule applies for all partners, public and private.

2.4.11. Advance payment for IPA partners

[31] More information on EU rules on public procurement can be found at the following link: *http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/publicprocurement/index_en.htm*
[32] Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 of 11 March 2014 laying down common rules and procedures for the implementation of the Union's instruments for financing external action.
[33] National rules include laws on public procurement, related delegated or implementing acts or any other generally applicable legally binding rules and decisions.
[34] Namely “contracting authorities” within the meaning of Directive 2014/24/UE.

A mechanism of advance payments for IPA partners will be in place. The pre-financing payment may amount to 10% of the IPA approved budget of the partner and it will be recovered in the first four payment claims (25% of the advance in each payment claim).

2.4.12. Other financial requirements

Even if detailed information on financial requirements related to project implementation is provided in section 4.3 on Controls and Audits, key principles explained in this chapter must be kept in mind by applicants when preparing their project proposals.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Responsibilities of Lead Partners and project partners related to information and communication measures (including a set of instructions for project communication and branding) are laid down in EU regulations[35]. In addition to these, specific Programme requirements also apply. Please note that all these rules do not only apply to promotional material but are also relevant for the organisation of meetings and events and, if foreseen by the project, the purchase of physical objects and the realisation of soft works.

Promotional giveaways (e.g. project gadgets) will only be eligible for funding if they are the only way to reach one or more of the defined target groups and objectives. Such publicity material need to be allocated under external expertise and services budget line. Besides, principles of sound financial management must be always respected.

More details as well as guidance on information and communication requirements is provided in section 2.5. Communication requirements.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE AND DECOMMITMENT OF FUNDS

Applicants are strongly advised to carefully plan the budget allocation to reporting periods within the Application Form and the Subsidy Contract, by realistically reflecting the actual spending capacity of the project as well as the time needed for paying out and certifying costs incurred. For further information on this subject, please refer to section 2.3.6.

In order to be considered as eligible, expenditure must have been actually paid out and then verified by First Level Controllers. Financial performance of projects will be measured exclusively on the basis of verified expenditure.

It is to be kept in mind that Programmes may get funds decommitted by the European Commission[36] in case that allocations set in the financial tables of the Interreg Programme are not translated into effective requests for payment to the European Commission within the set timeframe. Should this loss of funds (ERDF and/or IPA) result from projects lagging behind their payment targets based on the spending forecast included in the Subsidy Contract signed between the Lead Partner and the Managing Authority (as further explained in section 2.4.2), the Programme might have to reduce contribution to these projects.

[35] Articles 115-117 and annex XII of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 as well as in Articles 4-5 of the Implementing Regulation (EU) No 821/2014.
[36] As provided for in Article 136 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

VAT

In accordance with Article 69 (3) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, VAT is not eligible except where it is non-recoverable under national VAT legislation.

VAT which is recoverable by whatever means cannot be considered as eligible.

In practice, if a partner can recover VAT (regardless whether it actually does it or not), all expenditure reported to the Programme has to be reported without VAT.

2.5. Communication requirements

Communication has a strategic management function for the Interreg MED Programme. It is necessary to attract relevant partners, demonstrate added value, transfer results and finally to achieve changes and empower stakeholders. Communication is therefore present at all levels and in all phases, from the project basis to the transnational capitalisation.

As it is transversal, communication is a horizontal programme task: project partners as well as programme bodies, on different territorial levels, shall share and coordinate one consistent and connecting approach. The communication strategy shall be an orientation for all those communicating on the programme and its projects: both for programme communication on transnational, national and regional level (MA, JS, NCPs, MS) and for project communication in modular and horizontal projects (PP and LP).

On the other hand, communication shall also be understood as a process that is built on dialogue and feedback, on evaluation and adaptation. Hence, the overall communication strategy of the programme and the projects will lay on a reliable strategic frame that is yet flexible enough to be annually updated and detailed.

For the period 2014-2020, the Interreg MED Programme has adopted a new approach for project management that drives new orientation on project identities and on (expected) results rather than on processes or simple outputs.

Project partners will have to develop their relations in the spirit of the "MED community".
In order to do so, each project will belong to one of the thematic communities of projects running during the whole programme life and to which they will contribute.

In this sense, the project communication approach will be based on thematic communities rather than on the identity of the project itself. The project identity will thus slightly step aside to allow the development of a true "community identity".

For this reason, as a general rule, project logos no longer be developed. Also project names should be brought in line to refer to a specific MED community of projects.

The Communication part of the Programme manual is divided into three main parts, a general part, serving as a joint orientation and two practical parts on the realisations, requirements, activities, responsibilities assigned to projects to be detailed by project types.

2.5.1. Communication and publicity rules

BACKGROUND

The Annex XII of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and the Annex I of the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 821/2014 include specific requirements as regards information and publicity activities.

Project beneficiaries must inform the general public about the assistance obtained from the European Union and IPA, and ensure that those who take part in the operation have been informed of that funding, too.

The observance of these rules is critical for the co-financing of the communication materials.

Which obligatory elements have to be used?

Projects must be aware that products or activities not taking into account these obligations can be considered as ineligible for funding!

EU branding illustrative elements have to be employed in all published materials and/or activities addressed to the public. It must be noted that these obligations do not only relate to printed publications, but also to audio-visual, digital or electronic material (websites, web tools, videos, podcast, etc.). These elements are also supposed to be used in the framework of events (e.g. on PPT presentations, agendas, bags and other conference material).

Projects are recommended to use the illustrative elements also for internal office documents in order to draw all project partners' attention to the obligatory use of those elements.

Following the new architecture of the Programme that links modular projects to thematic communities, the Interreg MED Programme has adopted a single project branding approach that includes the European Territorial Cooperation logo ("Interreg"), the Programme logo (Mediterranean"), the MED Communities logo (eight different communities) and the related project's logo. This is explained in "ELEMENT A".

This approach allows to comply with a part of the EU eligibility rules as to the use of EU emblem and logos. The other part (ELEMENT B) is about the reference to the European fund that co-finances the communication and information materials.

ELEMENT A: THE USE OF LOGOS

So, all logos (communities and projects) already include:

A – The emblem of the European Union (EU flag), in accordance with the graphic standards, and reference to the European Union;

B – The European Cooperation Objective logo (Interreg);

C – The Programme logo ("Mediterranean" naming with the brush stroke symbol coloured with all of its four axis colour gradient).

A. The thematic community logo

A common solution applied to each community will be provided by the Programme as the following example. The horizontal projects will make use of a thematic community naming, instead of a project name in the logo. The partnership name could be used in descriptive texts of the communication materials, in the footer or in a visible place, as "Interreg MED Blue Growth featured by 'project partnership name'".

When a publication or a communication action is developed by several projects, it is not necessary to display all the project logos on the communication materials. A list of project names is enough and the logo that should be used is the "thematic community" logo.

B. Project's logo

As for the modular project logos, a common solution will be provided by the programme following the model here under. The modular project logo is composed of the Programme's logo, the thematic community pictogram and the project name.

A branding package with all the versions of the logo will be available in JPG and EPS files. EPS versions are mostly used by professional illustrators and with professional illustration software (thus they might not be readable on general computers), while JPGs can be used also for WORD, PPT, EXCEL and similar standard software.

Each project will download its brand package ready to use on the Interreg MED web platform at www.interreg-med.eu.

ELEMENT B: THE REFERENCE TO EU CO-FINANCING

All projects **cofinanced by the ERDF** should be aware that the reference to the fund must appear on all promotional materials, if otherwise they will not be eligible:

A) Projects with partners from EU Member States only:

«Project co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund»

VERY IMPORTANT: This reference to the fund and the project logo are the two mandatory elements that must **appear on** every material co-financed by the ERDF.

B) **Materials cofinanced by the IPA (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro).**

No specific reference to the fund is necessary. **The project logo is the only compulsory element** in that it already includes the EU flag emblem and the reference to the «European Union» (as mentioned before).

LANGUAGE VERSIONS

The reference to the ERDF can also be written in other languages used in the cooperation area. In any case, it must be guaranteed that the transnational project approach will nevertheless be clear to the public (e.g. in textual reference and background descriptions).

RULES FOR APPLICATION

A single brand book will be available for the communities and the projects for the rules to follow concerning graphic applications. Nevertheless, please take notice of some **unacceptable modifications of the original versions:**

The following is not allowed:

- Disproportionate resizing;
- Rotation of the logo combination;
- Modifications as regards typography and colour;
- Changes between the different elements included.

Positioning, size, background and transparency of the logo

The logo shall be placed in a harmonious and usually top central or other visible position (examples: on the outside, front or back cover for brochures, on the starting page of the project website, on the cover of a DVD etc.)

The logo shall most preferably be placed on a white or suitable, one coloured background. In case the logo combination is placed on coloured background, a contrast between the colour of the background and the logo combination must be foreseen. In case the logo combination is placed on a photo, a suitable, not overloaded background shall be chosen.

Also, the logo must be placed in its **non-transparent version** (this means that inside the frame the background remains white). The use in its transparent version can only be accepted on a suitable, one coloured and light background.

When necessary, for reduced size materials (PEN Drives, for example) a minimum size must be applied so as the textual elements remains readable (any overlapping has to be excluded):

Minimum size: 1,55 cm x 2,55cm

A vertical version of the logos is not foreseen.

Please contact the JS Communication Unit to find solutions avoiding any ineligibility in case the minimum size cannot be used.

For further information as to the usage of EU emblem, please check the graphic guide on:

- *http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/emblem/graphics1_en.htm*
- *http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/logos/*

C. Other relevant communication obligations for all projects

There are other mandatory obligations for projects to observe, according to the Annex XII of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

As set forth in the regulation, beneficiaries shall give a short description of the operation on their websites, including its aims and results, and highlighting the financial support from the Union. In the case of the Interreg MED Programme, projects shall provide this description in English and French on their website hosted on the Interreg MED web platform, (for further information on the platform see section *MED web platform: the communication and coordination hub*.)

A second condition for all projects to follow is to place a poster (of minimum A3 size) at a location readily visible to the public, such as an entrance area of a building, stating the financial support from the Union.

D. Special obligations

In case of infrastructure investments with a public contribution of more than EUR 500 000 specific illustrative requirements, set out in Annex XII of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, have to be adopted. More specifically, this relates to the production and the setting up of **plaques and billboards** at the relevant sites which shall contain the logo and references as set out above.

BILLBOARD, DURING THE PROJECT

Projects under these conditions shall follow the obligations of putting a billboard at the site of each operation during the implementation of the operation if it consists in the financing infrastructure or physical constructions and when the total public contribution to the operation exceeds EUR 500 000. Information that shall be stated on the plaque is listed in the Commission's Annex XII of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

PERMANENT PLAQUE, AFTER PROJECT COMPLETION

Once the operation is complete, the billboard shall be replaced by a permanent explanatory plaque that must be in a very visible site and of significant size, no later than three months after completion of the operation that consists in the purchase of a physical object or in the financing of infrastructure or of construction operations AND if the total public contribution to the operation exceeds EUR 500 000. Information that shall be stated on the plaque is listed in the Commission Annex XII of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

In this very rare case, please contact the JS Communication Unit to adopt relevant solutions.

Tips

In order not to risk the ineligibility of any activity or product, you can countercheck the products with the programme's Communication Unit before printing. Send your draft versions to *laura.pugieu@interreg-med.eu* or *paulo.emerenciano@interreg-med.eu* and inform your project officer.

In the communication section of the programme website you can also find links to useful communication handbooks and/or guidelines informing on how to set up and implement coherent communication strategies or on how to implement specific PR activities. The Med Programme will also offer communication trainings and seminars.

FURTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS AND LINKS

References

- Commission Annex XII of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013;
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 821/2014;
- The European Commission's website with guidance on the use of the EU emblem:
  http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information/logos/index_en.cfm

Guidance

- Communication Section including Communication Handbook for MED project partners:
  http://www.programmemed.eu/index.php?id=15583&L=1

2.5.2. MED web platform: the communication and coordination hub

The Interreg MED programme will host all the websites of its projects on the same server and will provide a ready-to-use website for all of them

For the 2014-2020 programming period, the Interreg MED Programme will provide a complete website (calendar, document library, directory, tools etc.) to each selected project.

Project participants will be able to devote more resources to the production of content and to the quality of their achievements without spending time with technical questions.

Partners will only have to inform the JS of the domain (ex: www.medproject.eu) they wish to have (one «.eu» domain per website) and receive all the elements to manage and configure their website (visuals, features, content, social networking, etc.)

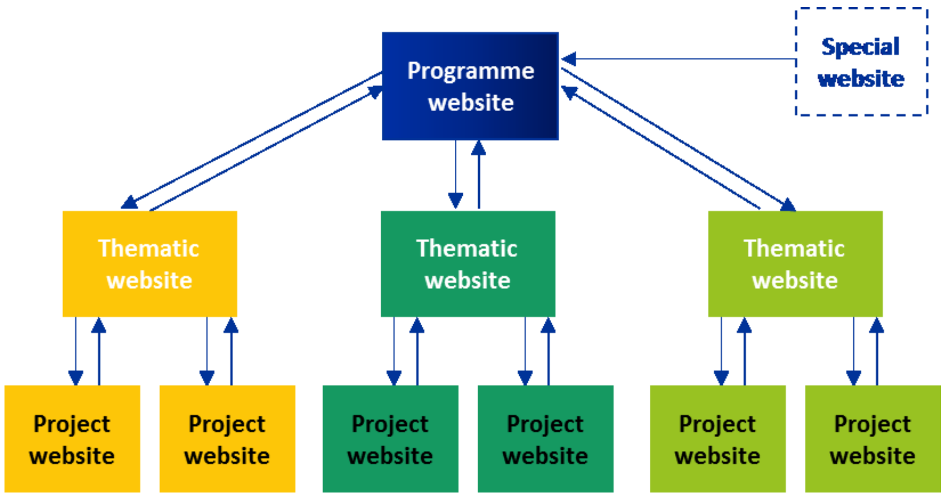
The Interreg MED programme will host all projects websites on the same server and will provide a ready-to-use website for all of them. This solution will allow hosting and web development cost reduction, improving the overall quality of projects websites and will facilitate information sharing between programme stakeholders.

Since sharing information will be easier, more information will be shared and thus it will easily and automatically be referenced (events, reports, etc.). This will allow time for partners to focus on their projects and for the JS to analyse more effectively the project outputs. It will improve support for partners.

The platform will be hosted in dedicated Interreg MED Programme webservers, integrating the following:

- Interreg MED Programme;
- Specific thematic projects communities, as for example, energy efficiency, sustainable tourism, protected areas, blue innovation, green innovation, social innovation and creative industries, renewable energy sources, low carbon transport, … (approximatively 8 communities)
- Projects websites;
- Special Websites (for events)

FIGURE 29: ARCHITECTURE OF THE WEB PLATFORM



All these websites are generated under a similar architecture, the same concept model and similar and common shared functionalities, in order to ease the follow up as well as their evolutions and maintenance.

Projects developing specific web tools requiring a dedicated website that cannot be provided by the Programme (to be checked with the Programme's IT manager) shall have their own website. However, the website provided and hosted by the programme must still be regularly updated and a link to the web tool must be added in a visible place of this website.

New functionalities can be developed over time by one or more projects, in cooperation with the JS and shared with other projects.

Updating the project website does not require any specific technical skills and the programme will develop tutorials to help project partners in using the different features of the website. However, project partners will still work with specialised service providers for the development of graphics, editing and content translation or implementation of multimedia elements, when necessary.

The main objectives of the platform:

For projects:

- Harmonise all websites of the programme in terms of organisation and layout of the content, user interfaces and navigation experience to facilitate the navigation from a website to another for all stakeholders of the programme;
- Ensure the presence of the main features on all websites, compliance with disclosure rules of the programme and the online publication of specific information;
- Reduce development and hosting costs by providing projects a basic website integrating the functionalities necessary for the project life, adapting to each project type;
- Propose to all projects technical tools to facilitate the transfer and analysis of data through common formats and technologies (calendar, directory, documents, etc.).

For the programme:

- Ensure the duration of projects' productions in their context and in time, even after the programming period;
- Facilitate and automatize the collection of data present in the project websites, including directories, calendars, documents (maps, databases ... etc.) and news;
- Improve pedagogical materials and support offered to project partners by providing them with similar tools as well as customised resources and technical support;
- Propose dashboards summarising data from the websites of the projects, from extractions of the monitoring tool and from fields filled in by the JS responsible officer for the monitoring during project implementation.

Sharing and broadcasting data must primarily be based on the general principles of flow (RSS, etc.). To this end, there are various tools of the platform that users can choose to follow to keep up with calendars as well as document libraries, news or discussions.

Features

- Configurable user interfaces
- Authentication / Single Sign

- Multiple profile accounts
- Directory of individuals and institutions
- Project Organization
- News
- Integration of Social Networks
- Fields of Research
- Exchanges and discussions Space
- Private area
- Calendars
- Form Creation Tool
- Libraries
- Document Preview Tool
- Multimedia Centre
- FAQ and Glossary
- Mailing Tools
- Dashboards and monitoring tools
- Statistical Analysis

2.5.3. Communication tasks of modular projects

GENERAL AND MODULE WISE REQUIREMENTS

Projects will not have to produce a logo. The programme will provide a common solution for each project logo, and another one to the thematic community.

As stated in the Interreg MED Programme Architecture section (section 2.1), the Programme has adopted a modular approach for project implementation. This approach means different communication responsibilities and strategies for the projects according to their typology.

However, before entering the communication specificities of each type of modular project, there are some common orientations for all projects to be observed.

First of all, Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 provides a framework of mandatory rules concerning the information and publicity for beneficiaries, which can be found in section 2.5.1 on communication and publicity rules.

Secondly, the project communication approach will no longer be based on the identity of the project itself but on a thematic community of projects to allow the development of a true "community identity". This leads projects to a greater communication coordination with the horizontal projects and the Programme itself, which brings specific tasks to all projects to be considered.

In this regard, there are three interactive levels that regularly communicate and cooperate with each other, in order to create a greater awareness of results. All projects are requested to take into consideration these three levels of intervention in their communication approaches:

- Transnational/Programme level;
- thematic community/horizontal projects level;
- Project level.

The three levels define the degree of intervention as well as the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder in terms of communication activities and supports, definition of the communication strategy and media communication. This clear separation will allow a greater complementarity and help to avoid any overlapping.

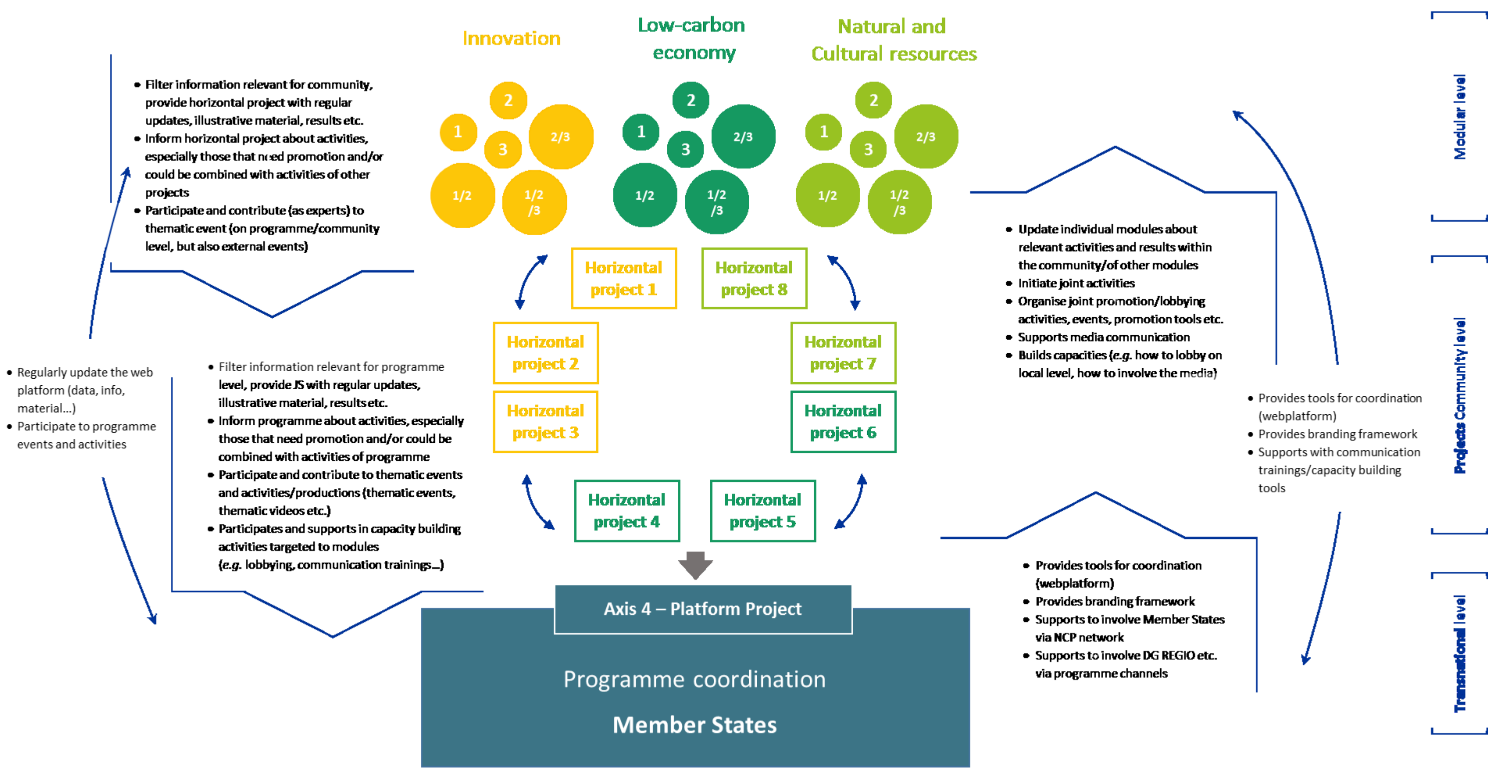


FIGURE 30: COMMUNICATION LEVELS OF INTERVENTION

A. Project communication approach

Each project must present its communication approach in the related field of the Application Form (section C.5. of the AF, Work Plan, Communication Work Package); for this purpose, the project should draw major lines concerning the name of the project, target groups, communication channels, tactics and tools.

The Lead Partner of every modular project must define the project communication approach strategically, in view of its target public and involving all partners from the conception of the approach to the actions.

In the Application Form, the applicant has only 2000 characters to describe its communication approach, therefore we recommend to be as specific as possible. Please find herein some tips and rules to follow in order to better conceive the approach.

All indications in this part concern a block of general rules to all modular projects, but to fulfil the Application Form, applicants must also consult the requirements foreseen in section 4.2 Specific tasks for specific modules.

THE ACRONYM OF PROJECTS

The acronym chosen to identify the project must not be longer than 12 characters. The choice of project acronym should respect few guidelines:

- Be short and memorable;
- Not to repeat acronyms of previous projects, to avoid any confusion or mistakes with them;
- Be intuitive, meaning that it must correctly identify the project purpose or mission;
- Be easy to pronounce and “catchy”. For this reason, technical information should be avoided, including Programme specific terminology, like “M1” (Module 1), or reference to the Interreg MED Programme (already included in the logo), for example.

INVOLVEMENT OF PARTNERS

The quality of project communication results comes from a committed work of all partners and not only the Lead Partner or the partner responsible for communication activities. Furthermore, a good internal communication management of the partnership is a key for the external communication of the project.

In short, as regards to the partnership it is advisable for the projects to:

- make sure they have a good collaboration system, and that partners are aware of the purpose and their fundamental role in increasing the impact and visibility of the project.
- define a workflow and a reporting system based on:

What is common to the partnership?

- information about the project’s objectives, processes, results;
- EU communication obligations.

What is specific to each partner of the project?

- Proximity with certain stakeholders;
- Linguistic & cultural issues.

CORRECT DEFINITION OF THE TARGET GROUPS

Projects must have a concrete knowledge of their target groups, to tailor the activities, news and messages to meet their expectations and interests. To do this, it is advisable to list and map all the groups or segments of public, and analyse their attitude and interest towards the information the project wishes to communicate.

Then to sustain an effective communication strategy, projects should maintain a lifelong relationship with the target groups. These relationship should be:

- Directed to the real target that benefit from the communication;
- Committed, regular, true and transparent;
- Realistic and coherent with the purposes and promises of the project;
- Based on common knowledge, mutual feed-back and evaluation.

For more detailed information on methods to work with targets, please consult, in the communication section of the Programme website Factsheet 2 – Target Audiences of the MED Communication Handbook.

TACTICS – MINIMUM COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES FOR EACH PROJECT

Following the communication approach, all modular projects shall include in their plan at least the following activities:

- Social media communication of/for project and active participation in thematic community and Programme social media communication;
- Publication of at least one short portrait of the project – adapted to main target group(s) (printed publication such as flyer or audio-visual such as video);
- Presentation at and contribution to external events (e.g. with other projects, the community of projects, etc.);
- At least one activity targeted to the general public, possibly via local, regional or specialised media, in line with the targeted public;
- Participation in information and training seminars (and/or following guidance provided):
    - Web platform trainings;
    - Communication trainings;
    - Other capacity building seminars;

All these activities should be implemented in the respect of the rules on information and publicity for all beneficiaries, according to the EU regulation No 1303/2013.

TACTICS – COMMUNICATION COORDINATION ACTIVITIES

After approval, all modular projects will be associated to a horizontal project, which coordinates the communication strategy of the thematic community to which they are attached. This means that, alongside the communication strategy for each project, all modular projects must foresee communication coordination roles and tasks:

- At their own project level, they must ensure that they involve all their partners in every communication action to share or merge activities with other modular projects, including the development of an evaluation of communication activities, discussing common methods, sharing tools, exploring complementarities and economies of scale, between other modular projects within the thematic community of projects;
- At the thematic community of projects level, they should give an active contribution to the strategy-set/update/realisation of the related horizontal project, in order to enrich the horizontal project/thematic community communication strategy and actions. Regarding target groups, modular projects should distinguish, with horizontal projects, the target groups that should be addressed directly by the projects with those that should be addressed by the horizontal project.
- Projects are also requested to provide regular information to horizontal projects and the Programme in format and deadlines to be defined (for thematic publications, events etc.), mainly through the web platform that the Programme will be providing

to the projects (please consult the section *MED web platform*) and other tools and forms of participation, decided in the horizontal project strategy.

Thus, all projects shall cooperate with the horizontal project coordination activities, by following specific guidelines, by participating in meetings and common actions, by sharing stakeholders mapping and databases, according to a communication plan set by the horizontal project (please consult section 2.5.4. on Communication requirements for horizontal projects).

As far as possible, in particular for projects with a duration longer that one year, the horizontal project and the Programme should be informed each year of the planned activities for the following year, in order to better frame complementarities of communication actions and avoid repetitions and waste of resources.

TOOLS

Applicants must specify the tools they will use to set in place the communication approach. The choice of the tools must be done strategically, i.e. it must address the targets and the stakeholders in an effective manner.

The Programme will provide a web tool, the web platform (please refer to section 2.5.2 MED web platform: the communication and coordination hub), in which the thematic communities of projects, the Programme and the projects will be able to display and update their information, concerning project management, deliverables, outputs, results, events, news and databases, capacity building information.

To allow transfer and capitalisation of results, projects have to make sure that their web information is updated regularly.

However, this tool should be completed with activities such as:

- Setting up project communities or group works;
- Sending out messages to local target groups;
- Targeting specific stakeholders;
- Creating involvement with targets and stakeholders, through campaigns.

For different purposes there is a wide variety of tools: social media, surveys, events, web tools for video production, infographics, working web platforms, mobile applications. It is really up to the project to decide which tools other than the Interreg MED Programme platform are more efficient to reach its target public. To have a clear view of the web platform available functionalities, please consult section 2.5.2.

STRATEGY OBJECTIVES LINKED TO MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

The communication objectives derive from the management objectives. This is a baseline communication strategy. It is advisable to the projects to build-up their strategies on the same grounds, in order to achieve better results and coherence.

Project’s overall communication objectives should be expressed in short bullet point format and clearly indicate what the project communication will bring to the project.

It is important to define these objectives in a way to be able to measure the success of communication activities. This should be about setting SMART (specific, measurable, assignable, realistic and time-related) goals that are broad enough to allow flexibility and room to adapt to changing circumstances.

To find out more on how to draw a strategy, please consult, in the communication section of the Programme website Factsheet 1 – The Communication Strategy.

TIMELINE

It is advisable to create a timeline that identifies when each activity will take place. This will help to ensure that deadlines do not slip, opportunities are not missed, and that activities are fully prepared.

The calendar for project communication activities must be in line with the horizontal project's plan, in order to better set up the coordination between all levels of the Programme architecture.

EVALUATION OF COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

It is important to evaluate the success of communication activities, in order to learn which ones were successful and which should be improved or left aside. Evaluation also creates useful feedback to share with other projects and the Programme, so that they can learn from the project experience.
Evaluation of communication activities should be included in the global project evaluation.

B. Resources to be foreseen

Each project should allocate resources for its own communication activities and in order to establish a regular work relationship with the related horizontal project and with the Programme.

The partnership should assign communication responsibilities to a single partner, whereas a contact person should be designated to act as liaison with the horizontal project and the Programme.

Financial and human resources must be allocated to ensure the project participation in external events, when justified and useful for the project, other than the horizontal project events and seminars.

Finally, as already explained, there is no need to allocate resources for website development and the creation of a logo for the project, as those are provided by the Programme. However, specific branding can be created for event campaigns and products or services delivered by the project, if necessary.

2.5.4. Specific communication tasks for specific modules

When fulfilling the Application Form each kind of modular project (M1, M2, M3 or a combination of modules) has to consider its own specific communication activities, adding and complementing the general activities described before, the ones that are the most suited to their activities.

A. Minimum activities specific for Module 1 and Module 2

To better communicate Module 1 and Module 2 results, projects are specifically recommended to ensure at least the following activities:

- Guarantee that results are 100% transparent and transferred, especially to potential partners of follow-up projects/modules. This means to absolutely avoid that information is kept internally, to increase chances for follow-up;
- Results of analyses, studies and tests shall be communicated to projects target groups in the most adapted ways, according to the practices of the targets;
- Follow illustration and format guidelines of the Programme to present their outputs;
- It is recommended to publish most essential results (or a summary of them) in the two official languages of the Programme: English and French;
- Publishable summaries for communication directed to the general public in both languages: French and English;
- At least one promotional activity to promote the final output(s), e.g. social media campaign, an event, exhibition, seminar has to be foreseen;
- Projects delivering policy recommendations must draw up at least one communication activity or a strategy to build credibility for the project output in relation with the horizontal project. For more details, please consult in the Programme website: Factsheet 2.b Communicating with Policy Makers;
- Technical studies (Module 1) and tests (Module 2) are extremely difficult to understand by unprofessional specific targets but even by professionals of other scientific areas. In this regard projects are advised to take extreme care with the messages conveyed and the comprehensiveness of the presentations. It is highly recommendable for project to use an accessible language and a user-friendly format when presenting the results in order to make the whole concept and its details easily understandable. Story telling could be an option.

THE CASE OF NETWORKS UNDER MODULE 1

Projects with Module 1 can include the reinforcement or establishment of networks. In order to communicate a network, specific coordination and information tools should be built up guaranteeing that the members of the network can receive up to date information, can exchange, can be identified, etc.

Module 1 projects must state in their communication approach in the Application Form how they intend to address this issue. Which methods and tools they will be setting up.

The Programme will provide a web platform for the projects, that already offers a useful coordination tool (discussion forum, document management tool, database of project partners), but there can be other efficient tools, depending on the partners dynamics, as for example a dedicated coordination platform or blog (integrated in the website).

B. Module 3 – Capitalisation activities

Module 3 projects must transfer results from previous projects to territories and targeted beneficiaries. This means that concrete actions on local or regional level or directed to specific targets should be undertaken in order to raise awareness of the target public. Therefore, module 3 projects are in charge of one level of transferability of results. They must identify the subject of their interest and define how to make it known, used, applied at its project level.

Due to their connection to the field, module 3 projects are keener to provide or build more concrete stories, to share with the horizontal project and the Programme, who are responsible for the transnational transferability.

Activities foreseen or expected to be carried out by module 3 are:

- Public relations and/or outreach strategy (e.g. local markets, local entities, associations professional, involving local schools etc., specialised media to draw the attention of specific targets, participation in events as fairs, sectorial and professional meetings);
- Stories, interviews, end user testimonials, images that will nourish communication on several levels;
- Social media activities to get in contact and raise awareness of local/regional citizens;
- Video or radio strategy to bring the stories to a higher level of visibility;
- Seminars or living exhibitions to present demonstrations, experiences, i.e. get the target groups into direct contact or experiencing the subject of the project.

IN THE CASE OF POLITICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

In the case of political recommendations, a lobbying orientated strategy should be implemented. Therefore, it is advised and expected to draw an approach focused on public relations, as for example:

- Initial stakeholder mapping and analysis and a strategy focused on multipliers:
  - Getting a public character or high credibility and prestigious institution to sponsor the project;
  - Using expert columns in local media, as a public intervention in the agenda setting;
  - Finding a media partner for an expert event mixing and involving with the political level;
- Organising a minimum of hearings and establish regular direct contacts and travels;
- Participating in meetings with the specific targets;
- Eventually getting policy papers or memorandum of understanding proving the adoption of the policy recommendation.

Multi-module projects (M1+2, M2+3 and M1+2+3) are expected to combine the activities foreseen for the specific modules they are including in the project.

2.5.5. Communication in horizontal projects

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HORIZONTAL PROJECTS REGARDING COMUNICATION

A. Communicating role

The horizontal projects are the centre of capitalisation and communication of the Programme, since they will are the hub of communication in every direction. They represent the thematic communities of modular projects. (Please refer to section 2.1.2. on horizontal projects for further information on the role and objectives of such projects.)

In this context and for transnational transferability purposes, they have to process and filter the results of the exchange with modular projects contributions to the thematic community, in particular with results of their activities, qualitative information, participation in events, delivery of stories from the field that could be interesting at the transnational level in order to promote the thematic community.

To achieve efficient external communications, horizontal projects have to ensure that not only are the key messages clear and meaningful but also transferred to the right audience. For this purpose, horizontal projects must define their target audience clearly and select the appropriate and relevant information to be communicated to this public. They should also guarantee the quality of the materials to be published, not only from the point of view of the written contents. The texts should be written in plain language, and demand quality image files: high resolution professional images and high quality audio-visual materials. For this purpose, the horizontal project must establish guidelines and orientations for the modular projects. The Programme can provide guidance on this matter and can also provide joint training webinars or seminars in this and other capacity building events.

Please note that the roles and tasks of the horizontal projects and the Module 3 projects are very different and cannot be merged. The basic criteria to distinguish them is the scope of the dissemination process. Module 3 projects mostly capitalise on existing results then transfer them to specific targets, keeping a thematic and territorial focus. While a horizontal project can coordinate several Module 3 projects and transfer their results to the transnational level, through the synthesis of the modular project results, and take the transfer to a broader and wider level, for the whole MED area. Horizontal projects and Module 3 projects should therefore be perfectly coordinated in order to avoid any overlapping.

The communication responsibilities of horizontal projects can be summed up as the following:

They must

- Draw the communication strategy of the thematic community they are charge of;
- Implement this communication strategy through an annual communication plan;
- Coordinate this communication strategy between all the stakeholders.

B. Coordinating role

By their very nature, horizontal projects also play an important coordinating and facilitating role for the thematic community. Indeed, in order to ensure a good information flow between all stakeholders, all of them should be perfectly coordinated between each other. It is notably the responsibility of the horizontal project to establish guidelines and set up the rhythm for the delivery and exchange of information with project partners to occur in a regular, usual flow of communication.

Horizontal projects must therefore draw a communication strategy that foresees:

- A method for coordination that will help coordinate all communication activities between the various stakeholders;
- And that includes efficient coordination mechanisms to maintain a regular information flow.

As a consequence, horizontal projects must draw an external AND internal communication strategy.

As for the internal dimension, horizontal projects must take into consideration the three main interactive levels of interventions previously stated:

- Transnational/Programme level;
- Thematic community/horizontal project level;
- Modular project level.

A regular information flow and coordination mechanisms shall be foreseen in order to ease the communication and cooperation:

- Between the partners of the horizontal project;
- With the modular project partners of the thematic community and with other horizontal projects;
- With the Programme in order to feed the communication of the Programme at a transnational level.

The horizontal project application must therefore meet these three dimensions, proposing relevant and necessary tools, methods and resources to coordinate the communication activities of the modular projects related to the thematic community they are in charge of. To this end, they shall draw a strong internal communication strategy, bringing together competences, capacities, best practices, exploring complementarities.

In order to facilitate cooperation between partners, all modular projects shall foresee coordinating roles and tasks for the communication activities.

The modular level communication activities will be carried out by the projects, under the coordination of the horizontal project, as explained in the previous section.

Note that, the organisation of local communication or capitalisation events by modular projects should be included in the horizontal project plan/calendar and inform/involve a representative of the Horizontal project; the financial resources for the organisation of these meetings should be borne by the modular projects;

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE HORIZONTAL PROJECT

The horizontal project must start its communication tasks addressing its project partners, making sure that everyone is involved and lined up with project objectives and responsibilities. The horizontal project must set forth an internal and effective dynamic of cooperation and coordination inside the project itself.

Usually the role of the Lead Partner is already complex, in a horizontal project this complexity increases, since the scope of the project is considerably wider and involves the coordination of the modular projects.

The roles and responsibilities of each partner shall be clearly defined and stated (for example, define who is in charge of press relations and media campaigns, of the monitoring and evaluation of the communication strategy, of organising events, etc.) If all the project communication activities are assigned to a single partner, his role must be clearly defined. Again, all partners must be involved actively in the provision of information and in the communication of the horizontal project and not just the Lead Partner.

Although the number of partners is reduced for the horizontal projects, it is most relevant to establish the tools, means and approach to produce a single voice, a single behaviour among peers.

The communication plan must involve and create internal mechanisms of coordination in order to facilitate cooperation between partners, which can be achieved through some of the following concrete activities:

- In every communication the project must ensure that all partners will, in their own media, publish the same content about the horizontal project;
- The partners will meet at least once a year to plan and evaluate the ongoing communication activities of the project;
- The responsibilities of each partner must be drafted and clear;
- A cooperation method to take these responsibilities must also be explained in the communication plan, i.e. how the project will organise itself to address the different elements of the communication strategy. For example, if it creates «working groups» or if it specialises each partner on a specific task;
- It must be clearly mentioned the role of communication in the management model of the project;
- Team building among the selected projects should be ensured, with for example the organisation of a “Speed dating” at the launching event;
- A proportionate number of communication and capitalisation seminars including networking sessions/speed dating/project display corners/expositions/trainings (e.g. maximum 5 in the period between the kick-off and the final conference and short *ad hoc* decentralised meetings/stakeholder consultations with key stakeholders in a team building spirit).

PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND COORDINATION WITH THE PROGRAMME

The communication strategy for the horizontal project must be set up in coordination with the programme and with the modular projects of its thematic community, through meetings, working papers or consultations.

This orientation has the purpose to grant the strategy the coherence and adherence of every modular project to develop a clear understanding of mutual tasks and coordination methods, and in further updating and implementing the strategy.

Under the coordination tasks, the Programme must be involved and informed in the process of all changes occurred in the communication strategy. Other horizontal projects might be involved in the discussion of common approaches regarding management issues of the communication strategy.

Regular information on the ongoing development of the strategy and the incurrent needs for further developing the communication strategy must be given to the Programme following the planning and evaluation activities demands from the Joint Secretariat.

The horizontal project is also responsible for the provision of information and regular update of the Programme web platform, *inter alia*, including news, events agenda, summaries, and feed of documents issued by the projects activities of the related thematic web pages.

Under the coordination tasks, the horizontal project shall cooperate at all times, with the Programme, in the organisation of transnational events, seminars, capacity building trainings and publications, providing printed and audio-visual materials, and an active participation in the events animation with related thematic content. This active participation will involve costs to be foreseen in the budget.

In this regard, during the project duration, the Programme will provide the framework to the horizontal projects for the preparation of joint activities with and among horizontal projects, including a communication working group involving all communication officers or personnel in charge of communication in the horizontal projects and the NCP representatives.

COMMUNICATION PLAN AND ACTIVITIES

Horizontal projects are requested to present a first draft version of their communication strategy including a communication plan (or activity plan), no later than 4 months after the project approval.

To guide projects through the main concepts of this task, the programme offers its Communication handbook, accessible at the Programme website. We suggest to follow the guidance of the following documents:

- factsheet 1 Communication Strategy;
- Factsheet 2 Target Audiences;
- Factsheet 2.b Communicating with Policy Makers.

In a general way, the communication tasks of horizontal projects can be summed up as the following:

1) Strategy building and updating (annual plans);
2) Management/regular update of the thematic website:
    - Nourished by information and data of project;
    - Further nourishing (after selection) the Programme website;
3) Social media communication of/for the thematic community and active participation in the Programme social media communication;
4) Participation of the communication officers of all horizontal projects in the MED communication working group;
5) Publication of state of the art (print publication and/or video) in a coordinated way with the programme – in order to develop a series of communication material including all thematic communities;
6) Organisation of thematic events
    - Involving projects ;
    - Coordinated with the Programme;
7) Active contribution to events organised by the Programme (with possible co-organisation);
8) Presentation at and contribution to external events (e.g. with modular projects and other thematic communities etc.); Public Relations and media communication (division between programme and horizontal projects to be defined, during pre-kick off).

In a more precise way, here is the list of the minimum concrete activities to be included in the communication plan:

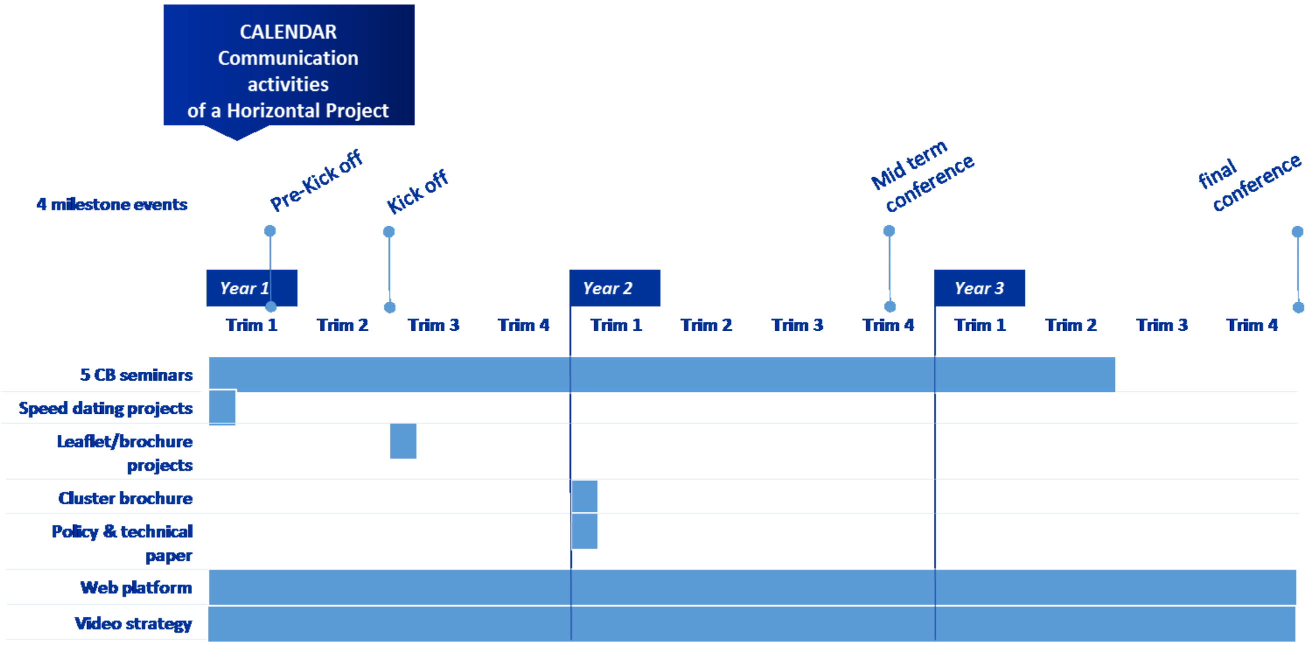
- 4 key events : Preparatory meeting; Official kick-off; Mid-Term Conference; final Conference;
- Lobbying activities in Brussels with relevant international networks and at the EP/CoR/EC, if needed;
- One thematic Community brochure after 1 year then regular production of thematic publications (printed or online publications);
- Short leaflet of the selected projects after 6/8 months of their respective implementation;
- Participation in Programme events:
    - Thematic working groups;
    - Axis 4 “platform” project meetings;
    - Coordination events with programme bodies (JS and NCP);
- Communication with specialised media;
- Presence and moderation of social networks to promote the thematic community;
- Transferable and reusable databases. For this purpose it could be suggested to projects to produce databases connected to smartphone applications (improvement of complementary instruments and tools);
- At least one videos for the project (promotional videos, reportages, video streaming of the events);

All above mentioned activities must comply with EU and Programme communication rules. All the activities shall be coordinated together with the Interreg MED Programme authorities, through planning activities and a MED communication working group.

PROVISIONAL CALENDAR FOR COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

A provisional calendar must be proposed for communication and capitalisation activities. Taking the minimum activities as reference, the calendar allows to set in place the main milestones of the communication strategy and the coordination tasks. The calendar should be further developed at the beginning of the horizontal project, taking into account key events and milestones of the modular projects of the thematic community.

FIGURE 31: MODEL OF CALENDAR FOR COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES OF HORIZONTAL PROJECTS



RESOURCES TO BE FORESEEN

Each horizontal project shall foresee one full time professional communication officer (a "mediator") that could also be responsible for the capitalisation activities. If the horizontal projects proposes two separate officers, one for communication work package and another for capitalisation work package (moreover if they are from different partners or countries), it is absolutely critical to present a model of hand-in-hand cooperation between them.

This person will be in charge of moderating the communication relations with the modular projects associated with their horizontal projects, including to ensure a database or network of contacts of the staff of projects in charge with the communication and capitalisation at the modular projects level. This professional could also be in charge of mediating with the Programme communication activities.

The coordination of communication activities being rather complex (with the programme, other horizontal projects and the modular projects attached to the horizontal project), resources to follow up the strategy from the conception, up to the evaluation and the improvements should be assigned, in order to guarantee the follow-up and connections at all levels.

Also, the "mediator" appointed in the partnership will help the projects strengthen synergies between themselves. The mediator would have the task to foster synergies between the projects and therefore be an integral part of their crossed-exchanges to facilitate them.

Financial and human resources must be allocated to ensure the project participation in external events other than the horizontal project events and seminars. These events can be promoted by other thematic communities or by the Programme or be relevant thematically with specific transnational events.

Concerning the project budget allocated to communication activities, no resources should be dedicated to the development of a website and a logo as explained in section 2.5.2. However, specific branding can be developed for event campaigns.

EVALUATION OF COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

According to the defined objectives, projects should lay down their communication evaluation criteria, indicators, measures and methods, during the operation and at its closure. If it is an operation of long-term duration, a mid-term evaluation should also be foreseen.

To establish comparability of results, the horizontal project can propose a common framework and structure of evaluation, sufficiently flexible to be adapted by the projects. In alternative, the horizontal project can analyse the results of the communication evaluation and submit it to the programme.

To increase efficiency and comparability between modular projects in evaluation of communication activities, the modular projects will cooperate with the horizontal project in setting up a common evaluation grid and methods.

In these common or individual exercises the Programme can provide the necessary knowledge to support and frame the exercises of evaluation of communication activities.

There is not necessarily a budget for the communication evaluation, since it can be integrated either in the overall project evaluation (see section 4.4. of the Programme Manual) or made by available web tools, through the MED web platform (find out more at section 2.5.2 *MED web platform*).

How can an analysis of evaluation be done?

Providing a report of tendencies, as for example:

- What actions were evaluated? Events, campaigns, news, media coverage, sites;
- What main methods were employed, quantitative or qualitative;
- Through what means: web, focus group, surveys;
- What was the focuses;
- What were the main results of the evaluations: which actions had more success and which ones didn’t;
- What improvements and recommendations could be done in the evaluation processes