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Making the Mediterranean Green Transition happen

Interreg Euro-MED

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Open Call for Proposals Euro-MED04

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mission Green Living Areas

The 4th call for proposals is open from 12 March 2024 to 12 June 2024 at 13:00 (Brussels time). The call is targeted to Thematic projects: Test projects or Transfer projects focused on the Greener Mediterranean Programme priority and the related specific objective:

2.4 PROMOTING CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND RISKS PREVENTION

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Introduction

The ambition of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme (hereafter "The Programme"), which cooperation area covers 69 regions of 14 countries[1], is to support the transition towards a climate-neutral and resilient society, in line with the European Green Deal, the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, and the Territorial Agenda 2030.

In order to reach this goal and ensure concrete and manageable solutions, the Programme identified 4 **missions:**

- Strengthening an innovative sustainable economy
- Protecting, restoring and valorising the natural environment and heritage
- Promoting green living areas
- Enhancing sustainable tourism

Each mission operates as a **portfolio of actions** working on complementary thematic issues to enhance the full potential of their results.

To contribute and to be part of a mission is mandatory for the projects.

The actions under those missions are addressed within the Priorities, related Specific Objectives and types of projects supported by the Programme.

The Smarter and Greener Mediterranean priorities, implemented via **Thematic projects,** encompass the issues tackled by the Programme's missions.

The Better Mediterranean Governance priority, implemented via **Governance projects**, is the backbone for strengthening and amplifying the results of the Thematic projects in cooperation and coordination with other Programmes, initiatives, and strategies in the area.

Thematic projects are divided into 4 categories:

Study projects (**not targeted by this call)** perform analyses to better address a thematic issue and open the door to the development of new instruments, policies, strategies, and action plans.

Test projects (**targeted by this call)** experiment common instruments, policies, strategies and action plans already developed to validate concrete solutions to be transferred.

Indicative types of **activities for Test projects**:

- Conducting preliminary or feasibility studies (if necessary and not available by other projects)
- Adapting, testing solutions through pilot activities
- Assessing and monitoring results from the pilot activities

[1] For information on the Programme cooperation area, please see: Where we work - Programme Interreg Euro-MED (interreg-euro-med.eu)

- Elaborating plans for transferability of the results

Transfer projects (**targeted by this call)** optimise and share validated common instruments, policies, strategies and actions plans to have the stakeholders adopt them.

Indicative types of **activities for Transfer projects**:

- Conducting preliminary or feasibility studies
- Developing initial stakeholder mapping to define target roles and objectives
- Developing and implementing of a targeted public relations strategy
- Designing, customizing and deploying modules for transfer of results in a step-by-step approach.

Strategic territorial projects (not targeted by this call) conduct studies, test solutions and transfer results addressing the strategic topics of a specific type of territory.

Each Thematic project **shall contribute to one of the priorities and specific objectives** (SO) selected by the Programme:

1. Smarter Mediterranean:
- 1.1 "Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies",
2. Greener Mediterranean:
- 2.6 "Promoting the transition to a circular and resource-efficient economy",
- 2.4 "Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience, taking into account eco-system-based approaches",
- 2.7 "Enhancing protection and conservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure including in urban areas and reducing all forms of pollution",

In addition, each Thematic project **shall contribute to one of the 4 missions** of the Programme.

Governance projects are divided into 2 categories:

Thematic Community projects (not targeted by this call) facilitate the exchanges and the development of synergies between projects. They develop technical knowledge embedding the results of the projects and support the effective transfer of their results to other territories or stakeholders.

Institutional Dialogue projects (not targeted by this call) support the effective cooperation of all stakeholders concerned by the Programme missions to improve the governance at transnational level within and beyond the Interreg Euro-MED

Programme cooperation area. They optimize the conditions for the transfer and the mainstreaming of the projects results into practices and public policies.

There is one Thematic Community project and one Institutional Dialogue project for each of the 4 missions and for the whole duration of the Programme.

All the Thematic projects operating under each mission are supported by one Thematic community project and one Institutional Dialogue project.

Illustration of the structure of the programme and types of projects: Priorities, Specific Objectives and Missions.

In order to increase the impact on the territory, the approach of the Programme is built on the idea that improving governance is closely linked to the processes of capitalisation of the projects results. This requires addressing all the actors of the territories, including those not directly involved in the Programme.

Therefore, the design of the different types of projects is based on the overall strategy of the Programme, called "**Results Amplification Strategy**" (RAS), developed to amplify the results of the Thematic projects and have a more sustainable impact on the territories through better coordination and, where possible, integration of (inter)sectoral practices and policies.

It is essential to take into account the Programme RAS before and during the design of the proposal to fully understand the challenges related to the implementation of the Thematic projects, which are the targeted types of projects for this call for proposals.

Which are the objectives targeted with these Terms of reference?

In the context of the 4th Call for proposals, Terms of Reference (hereinafter ToR) are presented for each one of the 4 Programme missions. One mission can concern one or several specific objectives.

This ToR concern projects under the Cohesion Policy Objective PO2 "A greener, low-carbon Europe transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe" summarised for the Programme under the priority "Greener Mediterranean" and refer to the Mission "**Green Living Areas**".

Each project selected under this mission through this call has to contribute to one of the following specific objectives (SO):

- 2.4 "Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience, taking into account eco-system-based approaches",

Sustainable development and management of living areas are crucial to the quality of life of Mediterranean people. The effects of climate change are increasingly tangible in the Mediterranean region, experiencing an **increasing number of extreme climatic events**, of rising intensity, such as heat waves or heavy rains. The negative consequences such as **heat island effects, floodings and coastal erosion** are amplified by decades of urban development resulting in urban sprawl, soil sealing, inadaptation of the building stock and disconnection of natural corridors (green, blue, black).

Therefore, in the frame of this call, the **Green living areas** mission focuses on climate change adaptation of living areas.

The key idea is to encourage sustainable development and an integrated vision of the **territories' adaptation to climate change** by supporting the transition towards a greener and healthier environment.

Projects should focus on:

- **Increase the capacity of public authorities** in effective planning and financing for climate change adaptation.
- **Develop a holistic and transdisciplinary approach** to green living areas issues. Designing green living areas solutions or policies means dealing on a given territory with subjects that are highly intertwined. The approach adopted shall therefore be holistic cross cutting several fields of expertise (e.g: urban planning, architecture, landscaping, ecology, hydrology, energy and climate engineering etc…)
- **Reinforce citizens' engagement** for more sustainable living areas. The current call encourages the involvement of citizens in the projects making process and governance from design to decision and management, thus recognising citizens' expertise and right to the city as well as ensuring the suitability of projects to people's need.

With respect to a sober use of land, projects under the current call should focus on urban regeneration targeting issues such as heat island effects, water cycle management or building stock adaptation. Such projects should integrate the life quality dimension i.e search for multifunctionality, offering amenities to the public. Solutions and strategies developed can include nature-based solutions; but should also value nature for what it is and not only for the benefit provided. Actions towards building stock should integrate long term climate modification, including focus on summer comfort. **Energy efficiency** should be tackled in priority. This means that a project can only involve renewable energy if it is combined with an energy efficiency approach. For example, it will only be possible to integrate renewable energies into a building if the renovation of the building is integrated.

When addressing these issues, **synergies with Smart Specialisation Strategies** (S3) covering the Interreg Euro-MED cooperation area are encouraged.

Projects should integrate in the design of the proposal the complementarities with other initiatives, strategies and programme priorities focusing on similar challenges, among others:

- UfM and more specifically the Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Change, along with the "2030 Greener Med" Agenda supporting its implementation and the Ministerial Declaration on Blue Economy
- UNEP-MAP
- EUSAIR macro-regional strategy
- EUSALP macro-regional strategy
- WestMED Initiative (sea-basin strategy)
- Other European Programmes covering all shores of the Mediterranean (ADRION, NextMED, Horizon Europe, LIFE, PRIMA, EMFAF,...)

In the context of this Call, projects elaborating a complementary approach with results from LIFE, PRIMA/HORIZON, EMFAF are strongly encouraged.

Moreover, the project should contribute to relevant strategies/directives, according to the project focus, among others:

- EU Green Deal
- EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change
- EU Water Framework Directive
- EU biodiversity strategy for 2030
- Territorial Agenda 2030
- The ambient air quality Directive
- New European Bauhaus
- Urban Agenda for the EU
- European climate Pact

What are the expected outputs and results?

The projects selected under this mission must develop a set of activities to tackle the identified common challenges and lead to the expected change in the identified key sectors. Activities shall be designed to produce the outputs and reach the results listed below. Possible types of activities are described in the Programme Manual. (Section "Design the project activities" and Annex "Deliverables list").

Depending on the Specific Objective chosen projects are particularly expected to produce solutions and strategies or action plans.

Solutions are methodologies, tools, technologies, services, partnership/cooperation agreements and should be developed through the involvement from at least 2 partners from the Programme cooperation area, tested in real conditions and easily transferable. In the context of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme, the participation of all partners in the development of the solution is encouraged, depending on the nature of the activities implemented

Targeted solutions should aim at supporting the energy transition and climate adaptation, increasing the resilience of living areas and improving the quality of life in the targeted territories.

A **strategy** is a course of actions designed to achieve a long-term goal in a specific domain.

An **action plan** is the translation of jointly developed strategies into actions. Targeted strategies should contribute to the main Mediterranean or EU strategies/directives of the topic tackled and be easily transferable.

Other achievements could be carried out as long as they are coherent with the corresponding SO and the requirements of the ToR.

Under SO 2.4

Indicative list of solutions:

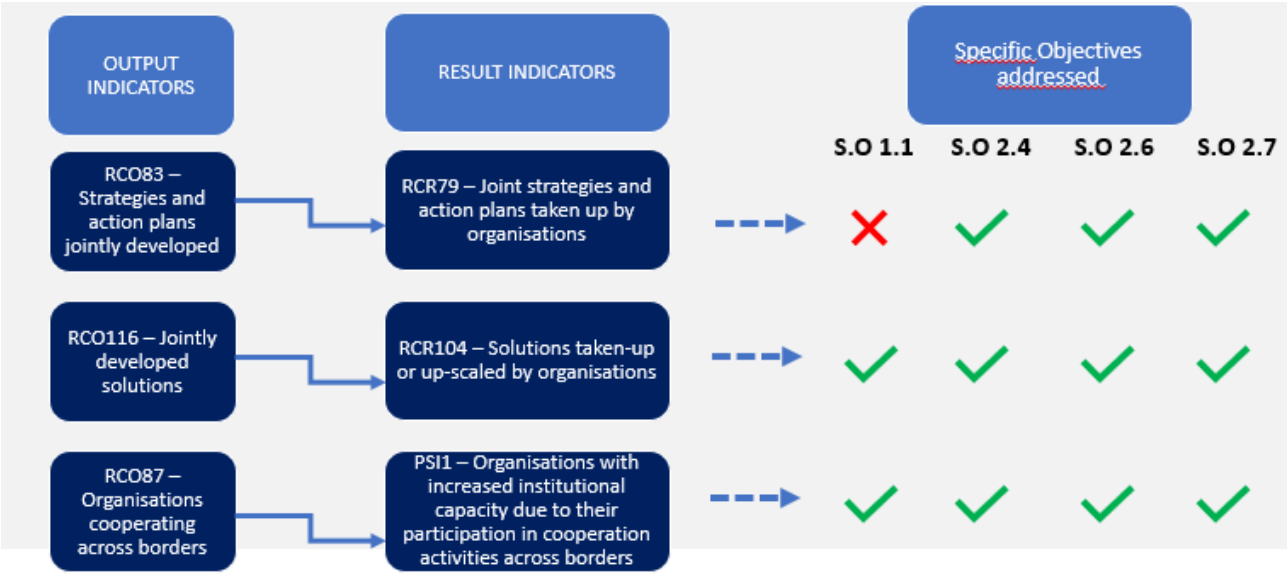
- ✓ Solutions supporting integrated planning and/or financing schemes for climate change adaptation and resilience as well as concepts for just transition;
- ✓ Solutions for rolling out nature-based solutions in living areas;
- ✓ Solutions to support climate-resilient, sustainable use and management of water in living areas.

Indicative list of strategies and action plans:

- ✓ Strategies and action plans for integrating climate adaptation and resilience into further regional/local plan;
- ✓ Strategies and action plans for urban agendas at local level;
- ✓ Strategies and action plans to contribute to a more effective implementation of existing policies and instruments,
- ✓ Strategies and action plans to improve access to funding/investment and for more climate-resilient living areas.

Programme indicators

By developing such solutions, strategies and action plans, projects will contribute to the Programme indicators, depending on the S.O. they are applying to. Please consult the Programme Manual (Section Building my project / Designing project activities + Annex Methodology and Indicators template) for defining the project contribution to the Programme indicators:



- **Output indicator "Organisations cooperating across borders" (RCO87):**

The indicator counts the organisations cooperating formally in the supported project. An organisation is the legal entity acting as partner or associate partner in the project.

- **Result indicator "Organisations with increased institutional capacity due to their participation in cooperation activities across borders" (PSI1):**

This indicator measures the number of organisations (defined in RCO87), that actively participated in cooperation activities of a project across borders and consequently increased their institutional capacity in the thematic field of the project. It refers in particular to organisations actively participating in the development of joint solutions, strategies and action plans.

- **Output indicator "Jointly developed solutions" (RCO116)**

This indicator counts the solution newly developed by the project partnership or the solution already developed that are adapted to the Programme context and geographic area by the partnership.

- **Result indicator "Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations" (RCR104)**

This indicator measures the number of solutions (defined in **RCO116**) (other than legal or administrative), developed by the supported project and taken-up or upscaled by a given organisation. The uptake or upscale (effective or at initial stage) should occur during the implementation of the project or at project closure. The organisation adopting the solutions developed by the project may be or not a direct participant in the project.

- **Output indicator "Strategies and action plans jointly developed" (RCO83)**

This indicator counts the strategies, and action plans developed jointly at regional or local level.

- **Result Indicator "Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations" (RCR79)**

This indicator measures the strategies/action plans (defined in **RCO83**) effectively taken up or being at the initial stage of uptake, by the supported project. The uptake should occur during the implementation of the project or at project closure. The organisation adopting the strategies/action plans developed by the project may be or not a direct participant in the project.

What are the targeted areas and target groups?

The interventions planned by the projects must cover some specific kinds of territories of the Programme (targeted areas) and address specific groups of beneficiaries (target groups), in order to maximize its impact in the frame of the objectives pursued by the corresponding mission.

Targeted areas

The Programme targeted area goes beyond its cooperation area[2] and covers a vast variety of territories in the whole Mediterranean whose challenges could be tackled by the projects. A realistic and detailed selection of the areas covered is fundamental for its success.

In the context of the Mission **Green Living Areas**, projects should focus on the following areas:

- Coastal/ maritime areas
- Islands
- Rural and Mountain areas

[2] See Footnote 1

- Urban areas
- Ports

Target groups

The core target groups of the Programme consist of national, regional and local public authorities engaged in policymaking, working together with other relevant bodies responsible for the definition and implementation of policies.

In the context of the mission **Green Living Areas**, target groups are:

- Local public authorities
- Sectoral agencies
- Infrastructure and public service providers
- Interest groups including NGOs
- Higher education and research organisations
- Education/training centres and schools
- Enterprises, including SMEs
- General public

Coordination with Governance projects

Each project shall participate actively in the thematic community of the mission it belongs to, and benefit from the experience and support of the governance projects. Those activities will be co-financed through the project budget.

This implies active participation in group activities and investment in the activities of the governance projects to maximise the impact of the results. The details of these activities are developed by the governance projects that will lead their implementation, but from the outset, the thematic projects must adhere to this approach of cooperation between projects for the Programme strategy to work. In the project proposal, this dimension must be integrated, and a part of the budget must remain flexible to allow at least the **participation in meetings** (indicatively 2 per year) and the necessary **preparation** (providing data, participating in collective workshops, etc).

Moreover, the Programme supports the implementation of the Euro-MED Academy in coordination with these projects which serve as a training platform to support the dissemination and transfer of knowledge and results. In this framework, all thematic projects have to participate in the **joint elaboration of pedagogical material** and have to produce at least **a short (1 minute) video presentation** to be published. The creation of this video will be framed by the Academy steering committee composed of

representatives of the JS and the governance projects in order to ensure harmony and a common approach.

For more details on activities to be foreseen, please refer to the Programme Manual, "Designing the project activities" and specially the "**Mandatory activities to be integrated in each proposal**" and "Drawing up my budget" sections.

What should the projects build on?

The capitalisation of experiences and results is a common thread in the Programme and the core of the strategy to amplify results. Therefore, project proposals will have to take into account at least the Interreg MED Programme 2014-2020 experience and draw on the implementation and work of previously implemented projects.

To this end, we invite you to consult the library of the Interreg MED Programme 2014-2020 where you will find the main deliverables of all the projects: Interreg MED (interreg-med.eu)

Capitalisation of knowledge and experience shall not stop to the Interreg MED Programme. For this reason, it is important to consider in the drafting of your proposal also results from implemented projects of other relevant programmes or initiatives in the Mediterranean area.

You can consult all information regarding EU funded programmes and results in the following links: https://interreg.eu/ and https://keep.eu for Interreg projects and Projects & Results (europa.eu) for directly managed by the European Commission Programmes.

In particular, for this call, emphasis is given to the capitalisation of results from PRIMA/HORIZON, LIFE and EMFAF (DG Mare) Programmes:

PRIMA: https://prima-med.org/what-we-do/years/

LIFE: LIFE 3.0 - LIFE Project Public Page (europa.eu)

Best projects and LIFE Awards - European Commission (europa.eu)

Technical Data sheet

Financial allocation and project duration

The indicative financial allocation for this call for proposals is around 44 million euros in total (35,2M€ of Interreg funds + 8,8M€ of national co-financing), of which around 11M€ for this Mission.

An estimated number of 20 projects is expected for this call, of which 5 under this Mission.

Only Test projects and Transfer Projects are eligible for this call.

Projects need to be either Test Projects or Transfer Projects.

Applications for Transfer projects are strongly encouraged.

- Total budget per Test project should not exceed 2 500 000 EUR
- Total budget per Transfer project should not exceed 1 500 000 EUR

Test Project duration: maximum 33 months

Transfer Project duration: maximum 27 months

Expected partnership structure for this call

- **As a minimum, the project partnership must be composed of partners based in five (5) different countries within the Interreg Euro-MED Programme cooperation area** (eligibility criteria B.1)**.**

- **The LP is a public body, or a body governed by public law** (as defined in Directive 2014/24/EU) (eligibility criteria B.2).

NB: Institutions wishing to participate in the project without contributing financially are considered as "associated partners" (AP) for which no limit of participation is set; these are not considered in the respect of the minimum partnership composition[3].

No specific requirement applies regarding partnership composition or participation in past and ongoing calls. Still, the participation to several projects within the same call is not encouraged as it might endanger the quality of the implementation.

Multi-participants are verified by the National Authorities to ensure their administrative and financial capacity.

[3] Cf Programme Manual: definition of "associated partner"

For Test projects, it is highly recommended to include institutional and operational partners, mixed according to the project objectives, and not to exceed 10 project partners.

For Transfer projects, it is highly recommended to include institutional partners and networks, and not to exceed 8 project partners.

Key project dates

Starting date of the activities: 01/04/2025

Ending date for Test projects: 31/12/2027

Ending date for Transfer projects: 30/06/2027

Please consider that **activities related to the implementation <u>and to closure activities</u>** (i.e preparation and presentation of the final certification by the PPs and project final report and payment claim by the LPs) must be **completed by the end date of the project**.

Timeline of the Call

The provisional timetable for the Euro-MED04 call for Thematic projects is as follow:

Key steps	Dates
Transnational information event for the opening of the call (online)	08/03/2024 10:00-12.30
Opening of the Call	12/03/2024 at 13.00 Brussels time
National information campaign by the Programme's National Authorities	Following national calendars
Thematic seminars (online)	21/03/2024 10:00-11:00: Mission Green Living Areas 21/03/2024 11:30-12:30: Mission Natural Heritage 22/03/2024 10:00-11:00: Mission Sustainable Innovation Economy 22/03/2024 11:30-12:30: Mission Sustainable Tourism
Technical meetings (online)	04/04/2024 10:00-12:30: Partnership & Logical framework, Strategic framework

	15/04/2024 10:00-12:30: Work Plan / Mandatory activities / Communication activities / Indicators / Investments 17/04/2024 10:00-12:30: Budget/Eligibility of expenditure/ State aid 16/05/2024 10:00-12:30: Q&A
Closure of the Call	12/06/2024 at 13.00 Brussels time
Submission of mandatory annexes	26/06/2024
Assessment of proposals (**one step assessment**)	Between June 2024 and January 2025
Selection by the Monitoring Committee	February 2025
Pre-contracting and contracting procedures	February - March 2025
Starting date of the projects	01/04/2025

Please note that the details of this schedule are subject to change **following the number of proposals submitted** and should be considered as indicative.

Submission of proposals, evaluation and selection procedure

This section describes the procedure for the submission of proposals, the assessment and the selection process in the framework of the Euro-MED04 Call – THEMATIC PROJECTS. In addition to the present specifications, the Programme Manual, as well as all the documents relevant for preparing the application (courtesy version of the application form, templates of partners' declarations and Jems Guidelines), are available on the Programme website on the dedicated page of the call.

Submission of proposals

The Lead Partner is responsible for the application process on behalf of the whole project partnership and will have to create a profile on the Jems platform to access the online form.

It is important to be sure that **the email address used** for the account creation is **easily accessible** by the applicant as it will be automatically taken over by the system for the reception of any subsequent notification, confirmation, etc.

The application procedure for this call consists of **two consecutive stages**:

- **The submission of the Application Form, Euro-MED04 Call – THEMATIC PROJECTS, written in English or French: to be validated on "Jems" before 12/06/2024, at 13.00 (Brussels time).** (eligibility criterion A.1)
- **The submission of mandatory annexes: to be uploaded on Jems before 26/06/2024 at 13.00 (Brussels time).**

Application form: the template of the thematic projects' application form is the same, regardless of the category of project to which a Lead Partner applies **and must be created and completed on the Jems platform.**

The courtesy version of the application form provided by the Programme is a guidance document made available to applicants ***for information only*** and contains indications on the information expected in the different sections of the form**.**

Mandatory annexes, documents to be provided

The following standard annexes must be **signed and uploaded in PDF format** into the system by the above date (Brussels time):

- For each partner participating (including the LP) in the project: a copy of the partner declaration (or LP) **generated from the Jems system**. These forms must be **dated** and **signed** by the legal representative of the partner structure.
- For each of the associated partners (if applicable): a copy of the associated partner declaration, **generated from the Jems system**. These forms must be **dated** and **signed** by the legal representative of the partner structure.
- For any partner declaring an investment in the AF: a Statement of Capacity and Compliance with the Principles for Investment, **generated from the Jems system**. These forms must be **dated** and **signed** by the legal representative of the partner structure in charge of the implementation of the so-called investment(s)

The absence of any document or an error in its contents will be presented to the Committee and may be included as a condition for the signature of the Subsidy contract (on the basis of Annex II below: List of pre-contractual criteria).

Points of attention concerning the validity of a document

The content of the templates provided by the Programme and, where applicable, generated via Jems cannot be modified or amended in any way. All templates requiring a signature must be dated and signed (handwritten or electronic signature) to be considered valid.

The electronic signature is considered valid for the Programme as far as it is recognised at national level; in case of doubt as to the format, it is recommended to **contact your National Authority** (or the one of the partners concerned) to ensure the validity of your documents before submitting them to the Programme.

In case of delegation of signature and for any document concerned, a proof of delegation must be uploaded with the signed document for it to be considered valid.

The (signed) documents are uploaded in PDF version on Jems, **the original paper version** must be kept by the partners in the project file.

Assessment of project proposals

- **Administrative and eligibility criteria**

The administrative and eligibility check is carried out to verify whether an application meets the minimum criteria established by the Programme for the projects of the Call.

The list of administrative and eligibility criteria to be met is given below in **Annex I** of this document.

Proposals not fulfilling one of these conditions will be considered ineligible and will not be further processed. Lead partners will be informed of the outcome of this first check.

- **Quality assessment criteria**

The list of project assessment criteria is available below in **Annex III** of this document.

The score for each assessment question will be calculated on a scale from 1 to 5 points. The evaluation grid for thematic projects is composed of 7 questions with a variable weighting depending on programme expectations.

The Lead Partners will be informed of the outcome of this assessment phase.

- **Pre-contractual criteria:**

If **two months**[4] after the selection of the project, the issues highlighted during the pre-contracting phase and conditions are not fulfilled, the Monitoring Committee may decide to cancel the project or to withdraw the partner concerned (**Annex II**).

[4] The date to be taken into account for the calculation of the two months is the one of the **sending of the Joint Secretariat email** notifying the Monitoring Committee decision.

ANNEX I: List of administrative and eligibility criteria

N°	Criteria
A	**Administrative check**
A.1	The application form was submitted via the online monitoring tool of the Interreg Euro - MED Programme, Jems, respecting the deadline defined in the Missions Terms of Reference
B	**Eligibility Check**
B.1	The project meets the minimum criteria relating to the composition of the partnership: 5 partners representing 5 different countries within the Interreg Euro - MED Programme cooperation area
B.2	The Lead Partner is a public body or a body governed by public law (according to the definition of Directive 2014/24/EU)
B.3	The proposal is in line with the category of project open for this Call and the duration and budget allocated for this category
B.4	The Specific Objective selected corresponds with the Mission selected

ANNEX II: List of pre-contractual criteria

N°	Criteria
C	**Pre-contracting check**
C.1	The Application Form has been consolidated considering minor technical issues and/or to integrate the adjustments deriving from the assessment phase or from the Programme Monitoring Committee recommendations/conditions.
C.2	Compulsory annexes of each partner and associated partners are duly signed and available in the Interreg Euro-MED on-line monitoring tool Jems (including, if relevant, De Minimis Declaration and Ad hoc Declaration for International Organisations under international law). When applicable, project partners have used the template provided by the Programme without modifying their content/format
C.3	In case of partner outside the Interreg Euro-MED cooperation area, a confirmation of the eligibility and of the legal status of the partner has been received by the competent national authority. The responsible authority of the respective EU Member State has provided a written communication to the MA/JS confirming aforementioned information and, in accordance with Art 22 of the ETC Regulation, its formal acceptance to reimburse any amounts unduly paid for each one of those partners, in accordance with Article 52(2) of ETC regulation.
C.4	The administrative information has been consolidated in the Application Form (partner identity, address, contact details, legal and financial information, bank account)
C.5	The budget has been consolidated in the Application Form and, if relevant, compulsory ad-hoc documents have been updated consequently and provided to the JS (correct use of flat rate, correct origin of co-financing source, justification for travel and accommodation costs declared as real cost, forecast per semester, distribution of preparation costs, state aid self-assessment).

ANNEXE III: List of qualitative assessment criteria

Assessment in 1 phase

The quality assessment will be conducted in a single phase.

The score per assessment question will be calculated on a scale of 5 points, with some sections having a different weight considering their importance in this call:

1. Relevance with Euro-MED context x1,5
2. Cooperation character x1
3. Intervention logic x1
4. Partnership relevance x2
5. Horizontal Principles x1
6. Work Plan x2,5
7. Budget x1.

The final maximum score reachable by a proposal is of 50 points equivalent to a 100%.

As indicated in the table below, in the first column you can find the main assessment questions. Each main question is supported by specific sub-questions (guiding principles for the assessment) and corresponds to specific sections of the Application form, as mentioned in the assessment grid below.

Each main question score consists of a single score, taking into account all of the elements mentioned as sub-questions.

Assessment:
The threshold for projects to be recommended for approval to the Monitoring Committee by the Joint Secretariat is of **35** out of 50 what corresponds to 70% .

Projects will be selected by the Monitoring Committee, taking into consideration their score (in descending order), positions of each national delegation and budget availability for the call.

Following the assessment of all proposals, these are ranked according to their final overall score within one mission. A final decision on project approval or rejection is taken by the Monitoring Committee. Based on their overall score and final ranking, the proposal with the best score per mission will be approved. In case the budget available for the Call is not sufficient to approve all projects above the threshold of 35 points, applicants with the same lowest score will be invited for an interview to pitch their proposal.

1. Strategic assessment criteria

Assessment questions (Main questions)	Guiding principles for the assessment To what extent does the project … (Sub questions)	SCORE	Comment	Sections in AF
1.Project Relevance (with Euro-MED context and with call expectations *How well is a need for the project justified?*	▪The project addresses common territorial challenges of the Programme or joint asset of the Programme area – there is a real need for the project (well justified, reasonable, well explained) ▪The project clearly contributes to a wider strategy on one or more policy levels (EU / national / regional) ▪The project actions will support the wider use and transfer of available knowledge and demonstrates new solutions that go beyond existing practices in the sector/programme area/participating countries or adapts and implements already developed solutions.			C.2.1 C.2.2 C.2.5 C.2.2 C.2.6
2.Cooperation character *What added value does the transnational cooperation bring?*	▪The importance of the transnational approach for the topic addressed is clearly demonstrated ▪ The results cannot (or only to some extent) be achieved without transnational cooperation. ▪ There is a clear benefit from cooperating for the target groups / Programme area. ▪ Cooperation criteria are fulfilled (Please take note that the evaluator will pay special attention to the fulfilment of at least 3 of the following cooperation criteria: joint development (mandatory), joint implementation (mandatory), and joint staffing or joint financing).			C.2.3 C.2.4 C.7.5

Assessment questions **(Main questions)**	**Guiding principles for the assessment To what extent does the project …** **(Sub questions)**	**SCORE**	**Comment**	**Sections in AF**
3.Project Intervention Logic *To what extent is the project intervention logic relevant?*	▪The project overall and specific objectives (including communication objectives) clearly contribute to the achievement of the Programme priority specific objective and is linked to the Results Amplification Strategy and the mission tackled. ▪The project outputs and results contribute to the Programme indicators – and are in line with the specific objectives and the requirements of the Priority.			C.1 C.4(only specific objectives description) A.5
4.Partnership relevance *To what extent is the partnership composition relevant for the proposed project?*	▪ The project involves the relevant actors needed to address the challenge/joint asset for territorial development and the objectives specified for the mission tackled ▪ The project partnership: - is balanced with respect to the levels, sectors, territory - consists of partners that complement each other - each partner plays a defined role ▪Partner organisations have proven experience and competence in the thematic field concerned, as well as the necessary capacity to implement the project (financial, human resources, etc.) – in particular, the Lead Partner demonstrates capacity/competence in coordinating the project action and the partnership. ▪Associated partners have a defined role and bring added value.			C.3 B.1 B.1 C.7.1 B.1

Assessment questions (Main questions)	Guiding principles for the assessment To what extent does the project … (Sub questions)	SCORE	Comment	Sections in AF
5. Horizontal principles *What is the project's impact on horizontal principles?*	▪ Ensure respect for fundamental rights and compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union in the implementation of the Funds. ▪ Ensure equal opportunities and non-discrimination based on gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation ▪ Ensure equality between men and women, gender mainstreaming and the integration of a gender perspective ▪ Promote sustainable development as set out in Article 11 TFEU, accounting for UN SDG, the Paris Agreement and the "do no significant harm" principle			C.7.6

2. Operational assessment criteria

Assessment questions	Guiding principles for the assessment To what extent does the project …	SCORE	Comments	Sections in AF
6. Work plan *To what extent is the work plan realistic, consistent and coherent?*	▪ Proposed activities and deliverables are relevant and lead to planned outputs and results ▪ Project outputs and results are realistic (it is possible to achieve them with given resources – i.e. time, partners, budget – and they are realistic based on the quantification provided) ▪ Distribution of tasks among partners is appropriate (e.g. sharing of tasks is clear, logical, in line with partners' role in the project, etc.) ▪ Time plan is realistic, and activities, deliverables and outputs are in a logical time-sequence. ▪ Communication activities (and deliverables) are appropriate to reach the relevant target groups and stakeholders ▪ Project outputs are durable (the proposal is expected to provide a significant and durable contribution to solving the challenges targeted)-if not needs to be justified Project main outputs are applicable and replicable by other organisations/regions/countries outside of the current partnership (transferability) – if not needs to be justified			C.4 C.5 C.6 C.7.2, C.7.3 D C.8.1, C.8.2 C.8.3

Assessment questions	Guiding principles for the assessment To what extent does the project …	SCORE	Comments	Sections in AF
7. Budget *To what extent is the budget coherent, proportionate, realistic and valuable?*	Sufficient and reasonable resources are planned to ensure project implementation Total partner budgets reflect real partners' involvement - are balanced and appropriate corresponding to the partners' responsibilities in the project.			D E.3
8. Final overview	The project globally answers to the expectations and needs of the Programme. Is it coherent in the implementation of all its sections?	*(comment without score)*		Full AF