Interreg Euro-MED

Co-funded by the European Union

PROGRAMME MANUAL

Versions	Content	Date
V1		22/06/2022
V1.1	Inclusion of the notion of investment among project activities (section I. C ii.e)) and related complementary information in Pre-contracting phase (section II.A.) and Eligibility of expenditures (section III A.)	29/07/2022
V1.2	Integration of the chapter dedicated to complaints and disputes	27/09/2022
V1.3	Improved phrasing of section I. C ii.e) related to investment activities + Annex C	17/10/2022
V1.4	Update of sections "I. B. ii". and "II. A I" related to the participation of PPs from Eu but outside the Programme cooperation area.	19/12/2022
V1.5	Integration of sections "II, G related to the Web platform and tools, III, E related to Controls, Audit and Verifications and IV, A and D related to Key mechanisms, GDPR and Intellectual Property.	17/03/2023
V1.6	Integration of the concepts of "key productions" and "reporting package" in the Manual. Integration of a warning point on the distribution of the project budget in section I.D iii.b) and as footnote under section II.A . Integration of sections II.E Project reporting and JS monitoring and III.D Financial flow and project financial performance	20/04/2023
V1.7	Integration of sections "I.C.v." and "IV.B" related to the communication strategy and the conflict of interest and risk of fraud	05/06/2023
V1.8	Integration of parts I C.f) mandatory communication activities; part II G. Amending my project; and part II H. Closing my project Integration of single bank account principle Integration of Annexes V.D Mapping Jems and V.F Graphic identity of projects Update following an amendment of the regulation: GBER and De Minimis regulation- Section State Aid and related consequences on eligibility of VAT - Section Eligibility of expenditures (section III A & B.) Update on Internal national Controllers (Section Control, audits and verifications III.e;i) Update on percentage of correction concerning EU communication and visibility rules (Section II viii. Project branding and information and publicity rules)	29/02/2024

V2	Consolidated version	07/06/2024
V3	Integration of the "fast lane" process – other adjustments relating to CC 1 staff costs and CC4 equipment/ownership, to the validation of final project outputs, to reporting on communication activities and to project closure.	16/12/2025
V4	Update concerning the participation of private IPA institutions (Section I B ii Building my consortium) Improved phrasing and harmonisation concerning project ending and last reporting period (section IIE..i.e Project reporting and Joint Secretariat monitoring + Foot notes) Warning point added under section concerning prevention of conflict of interest and the awards of external contracts (section IIIC.iii Public procurement and external contracting)	18/06/2026
V.5	Extension of the Mission Promoting green living areas to the SO 2.7 *Enhancing protection and conservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution* (section I.C. i. Intervention logic - Figure 1)	28/07/2026

Table of contents

I. Building my project and submitting my application 12

A. Getting informed about the calls for proposals 12

i. Different types of calls for proposals 12
ii. Different types of projects 13
iii. Background documents 14
iv. Events to support project applicants 15
v. Tools available to project applicants 16

B. Building my consortium 17

i. Partnership architecture 17
a) Project coordination and Lead Partner role 17
b) Project partners 20
c) Associated Partners 22
ii. Eligibility and legal status 23
iii. Partnership relevance 29

C. Designing the project activities 31

i. Intervention logic 31
ii. Composition of a project 36
a) Concepts 36
b) Types of work packages 37
c) Types of Outputs and related Indicators 38
d) Concepts of Legacy and Capitalisation 40
e) Communication, management and investments activities 40
f) Mandatory activities to be integrated in each proposal: 44
iii. Principles governing activities and productions 48
a) Coordination 48
b) Transnationality 49
c) Transferability 49
d) Sustainability and durability 50
e) Synergies among projects 50
f) Principles behind productions 50
iv. Horizontal principles and Greening 51
v. Designing your communication strategy 54
a) Guiding principles 54
b) Drawing up your Communication Strategy 56

D. Drawing up my budget 64

i. Co-financing of operations 64
ii. Costs to be paid in advance by project partners. 65
iii. Guiding principles 65
a) Project budget developed in close cooperation with partners 65
b) Economy, Efficiency, Effectiveness 67
c) Budget in Euros 67
d) Cost categories to be considered. 68
e) Location of activities 68
f) Activities to budget 68
g) VAT 70

E. Submitting my application 71
i. Jems: the Programme online monitoring tool 71
ii. Submission of proposals 72
a) Application Form 72
b) Annexes 74

F. Assessment of proposals and results 75
i. Appraisal of proposals 75
ii. Project selection and communication of results 75

II. Implementing my project 77

A. Pre-contracting phase 77
i. Additional documentation 78
a) State Aid 78
b) International organisations acting under international law 78
c) Partner located in a Region outside the Programme cooperation area and belonging to an EU Member State 78
d) Investments activities foreseen by the partners or detected during project assessment: 79

B. Contracting phase 79
i. Contractual documents 79
a) Subsidy Contract 79
b) Partnership Agreement 80
ii. Preparation costs 81

C. Starting the project 82
i. Setting up the Project Steering Committee 82
ii. Creating partners account on Jems 83
iii. Setting up the control process 84

D. Events and training to support project partners and controllers: 84

i. Lead Partners seminar: 85
ii. National Controllers training: 85
a) Training organised by the JS 85
b) NCs trainings organised in the Euro- MED area: 86

E. Project reporting and Joint Secretariat monitoring 87
i. Project reporting 87
a) General framework 87
ii. Partner report 89
a) Activity reporting 90
b) Financial Reporting 90
iii. National Control certificate and report 91
iv. Project reporting package: Project Report and payment claim 91
v. Reporting on deliverables, outputs and results 94
vi. Reporting on communication activities 95
vii. Reporting on carbon footprint: 95
viii. Joint Secretariat monitoring 96
a) Assessment and acceptance of the reporting package 96
b) Project daily monitoring 98
c) Online tools for day-to-day follow-up of project progress 98
d) Interaction between thematic and Governance projects 99
e) Project performance and monitoring of project risks 99
ix. Additional aspects related to the monitoring of Governance Projects 101

F. Project websites and tools 102
i. The Interreg Euro-MED web platform 102
a) Architecture 103
b) Main objectives: 104
c) Technical specificities 105
d) User manual and tutorials 106
ii. Basecamp 106
a) Objective 106
b) Features 107
c) User manual 107

G. Amending my project 108
i. Three types of modification 109
ii. Modification procedure 109
iii. Level of approval of the modification and attached documentation 111

H. Closing my project 118
i. Steps prior to formal closure of the project 118

ii. Last reporting period and eligibility of expenditure 119
a) Final adjustment 120
iii. Final reporting 120
a) Last project reporting package 121
b) Eventual additional questionnaires (DG Regio, carbon footprint, COM) 122
c) Closing letter 122
iv. Partners' obligations after project closure 123
a) Project website and internet tools 123
b) Elements of the audit trail 123
c) Key productions, equipment and investments 124

III. Financial issues 126

A. Eligibility of expenditures 126
i. Hierarchy of rules on eligibility of expenditure 126
a) The EU rules 126
b) The Programme rules 127
c) National eligibility rules 127
ii. Forms of reimbursement 127
a) Real costs 127
b) Simplified cost options (SCOs) 128
iii. General eligibility criteria 128
iv. Non-eligible costs 129
v. Eligibility period 132
a) Preparation 132
b) Implementation 132
vi. Conversion into euro 134
vii. Categories of costs 134
a) Staff Costs (CC1) 134
b) Office and administrative costs (CC2) 140
c) Travel and accommodation costs (CC3) 142
d) External expertise and service costs (CC4) 146
e) Equipment costs (CC5) 151
f) Costs for infrastructure and works (CC6) 154
viii. Project branding and information and publicity rules 157

B. State aid 164
i. What is State Aid? 164
ii. Who is concerned? 165
iii. How to deal with State Aid? 166
a) Direct State aid granted to one or more partners (GBER/de minimis) 168
b) Indirect State aid granted to third parties 169

iv. State aid follow-up 170
v. State aid criteria self-check flow 172

C. Public procurement and external contracting 173
i. Three levels of rules for procurement procedures 173
ii. Entities not subject to public procurement obligations 176
iii. Fraud Prevention when awarding external contracts 176

D. Financial flow and project financial performance 178
i. Financial flow 178
a) Recovery of unduly paid amount 182
b) Project performance and budget absorption: 183
ii. Decommitment : 184

E. Controls, audits and verifications 185
i. National control 186
a) Independence and qualification of controllers 187
b) Two types of control systems 188
c) Scope of national control 192
d) How to implement the control work 193
e) Timeframe for the implementation of controls 196
f) Control costs 198
ii. Quality controls carried out by the MA/JS or Participating State 198
a) JS administrative verifications 198
b) On-the-spot visits of the MA/JS 198
c) Management Quality Control eventually implemented by the participating States 199
iii. Audit of operations 199
iv. Other levels of controls 201

IV. Legal mechanisms 202

A. General Data Protection Regulation 202
i. What is considered as personal data? 202
ii. Who is concerned by the GDPR implementation? 202
iii. What rights do data subjects have? 203
iv. What is data controller and processor(s)? 203
v. What are the responsibilities of the data controller? 203
vi. What penalties in the case of infringement? 204
vii. Who is responsible for the data collected in projects websites and by other means? 204
viii. Subject consent 205

ix. What do project partners need to do: Check list 205

B. Conflict of interest and risk of fraud 206

i. Definitions 206

ii. Procedures to deal with the risks of illegal activities, fraud and corruption 208

C. Intellectual property 210

D. Handling of complaints and disputes 212

i. Handling of complaints and disputes by the Programme Authorities 213

a) Complaints related to formal appraisal of proposals 213
b) Protests and disputes about decisions taken during project implementation 215

ii. Complaints to the Administrative Tribunal 216

V. Annexes 218

A. Activities and deliverables list 218

B. Tables (indicators/deliverables/SO/activities) + methodology and indicators template 230

i. Indicators for SO 1 (i): RCO87, RCO116, PSI1, RCR104 231

ii. Indicators for SO 2 (iv): RCO87, RCO116, RCO83, PSI1, RCR104, RCR79 238

iii. Indicators for SO 2 (vi): RCO87, RCO116, RCO83, PSI1, RCR104, RCR79 247

iv. Indicators for SO 2 (vii): RCO87, RCO116, RCO83, PSI1, RCR104, RCR79 256

v. Indicators for ISO 1 (vi): *RCO87, RCO116, PSI1, RCR104* 264

C. Recommendations for Green events 269

i. Project publications and dissemination products - greening 269

ii. Checklist for organising green and inclusive events 269

D. Mapping Jems 273

E. Mapping Platform (drafting ongoing) 275

F. Graphic identity of projects 276

G. Requirements for data collection, productions delivery and activity reporting 279

i. Format requirements and criteria for key project productions 279

ii. Format requirements and criteria for promotional material 282

iii. Requirements for the reporting on communication activities (Project analytics) 282

iv. Requirements for the specific reporting expected from governance projects: data collection needed to perform the assessment of the Results Amplification strategy (RAS) 283

Introduction

This Manual aims to describe and explain the rules applicable to proposals and projects selected within the framework of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme, hereafter referred to as "Programme". This document is divided into parts, chapters, sections and annexes, all of them complementary and organised according to the "life cycle" of a project also referred to as “operation”.

The elements established in the Programme Manual are binding and constitute the rules of the Programme. These elements are based on the applicable European regulations and approved by the Monitoring Committee of Interreg Euro-MED Programme.
The Manual is addressed to the stakeholders involved in the different phases of a project: potential applicants, applicants, lead partners, partners, associated partners of a project, but also national controllers.
As those responsible for all phases of project implementation, from development to closure, Lead Partners are expected to be familiar with the contents of this Manual and to keep themselves informed of any changes. In addition, Lead Partners are expected to use the Manual for information purposes and to disseminate it to project partners in order to ensure the proper implementation of project activities and the knowledge and understanding of the Programme rules by the whole partnership.
The Sections: *Implementing my project*; *Financial issues* and *Key legal mechanisms* should be known and fully understood by the national controllers (former “First Level Controllers” - FLC) in charge of the validation of the declared expenditures.

I. Building my project and submitting my application

A. Getting informed about the calls for proposals

i. Different types of calls for proposals

Open calls for proposals: This is a "wide audience" type of call for proposals and is open to any type of application and partnership respecting the expectations of the Programme as defined by the Terms of Reference of the Call. Access to the Application Form is done via the creation of a free account, directly on the monitoring tool "Jems" (Joint Electronic Monitoring System).

In some cases, the Terms of Reference gives the possibility for projects to apply for a fast lane process to shift the ongoing projects to their next implementation phase[1] based on criteria and procedures approved by the Monitoring Committee of the Programme. The Programme distinguishes two different fast lane procedures; the targeted calls for proposals and the project modification to add a transfer phase[2].

Targeted calls for proposals: This type of call is open to partnerships of "pre-identified" categories of partners or from pre-selected Interreg Euro-MED projects Access to the Application Form for targeted calls is usually provided by the Joint Secretariat (JS) but this may vary according to the procedure defined in the Terms of Reference of the call.

At the launch of each call (open or targeted), a series of tools, developed by the JS in cooperation with the National Contact Points[3] is made available to applicants to support and inform them on the contents of the call and the steps to be taken to submit their proposal. All the elements related to the opening of a new call will appear on the dedicated web page of the Programme[4].

Each Term of Reference specifies the types of projects which are invited to apply for the call.

[1] To better understand the concept of 'phases', see below: point ii. Different types of projects
[2] In case of project modification, the specificities of the procedure are detailed in a specific Test + transfer framework document approved by the Monitoring Committee and published on the programme website for each concerned calls
[3] See the list of NCPs on our website, "contact us" section => NCP
[4] https://interreg-euro-med.eu/en/get-involved/, "open calls" section

ii. Different types of projects

The Programme foresees 2 types of projects: one type (Governance projects) aiming at improving governance issues that contribute to better coordination between the 4 Programme's Missions and the other type (Thematic projects) focussing on thematic issues. All two types of projects are complementary to one another.

Governance projects are divided into 2 categories:

Thematic Community projects 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 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.

The thematic projects are modularised into; "study", "test" and "transfer" phases to allow beneficiaries more specifically qualified in one or another field, to produce high quality targeted results.

Thematic projects are divided into 5 categories:

Study projects 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 experiment common instruments, policies, strategies and action plans already developed to validate concrete solutions to be transferred.

Transfer projects optimise and share validated common instruments, policies, strategies and actions plans to have the stakeholders adopt them.

Test + transfer projects combine the test and the transfer phases to allow the transfer of the tested solutions within the same project.

Strategic territorial projects conduct studies, test solutions and transfer results addressing the strategic topics of a specific type of territory.

Each Thematic project must 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.

iii. Background documents

Before starting the drafting of a proposal, it is essential to refer to the following documents made available on the Programme website:

- The Terms of Reference of each call and its technical data sheet including the eligibility and assessment criteria and eventual specific compulsory annexes as well as the modalities for the selection of proposals,
- The Word Application Form template (courtesy version, provided for information with specific indications to facilitate the writing of the proposal),
- The Jems guide for entering the proposal on the Programme's IT tool,
- The Programme Manual,
- The Interreg Euro-MED 21-27 Cooperation Programme and its annexes,
- The Interreg Euro-MED 21-27 Communication Strategy,
- The Interreg Euro-MED 21-27 Results Amplification Strategy,
- The Interreg Euro-MED ACADEMY[5].

For further information, the network of National Contact Points (NCPs) representatives and the Joint Secretariat team (programme@interreg-euro-med.eu) are available to applicants.

[5] Interreg Euro-MED Academy

iv. Events to support project applicants

Different types of events are organised by the Programme for each call for proposals in order to inform and support potential applicants. The content and timing of the following events may vary according to each call for proposals.

Information session

An information session is systematically organised by the Programme on the occasion of each call opening to inform potential applicants about the Programme, the content of the Terms of Reference (topics addressed, objectives and specific expectations of the Programme towards the call). Depending on the type of call concerned, this informative session can be attended with free registration or upon invitation (from the Programme or the national authorities).

During this event, participants *receive information on the key steps and tools of the call, and the elements relating to the application and assessment phases*. Time is scheduled for discussion with the JS team.

The participation to this session is strongly recommended for any (lead) partner potentially interested in the Call, in order to limit as much as possible the submission of proposals that would not be adapted to the Programme's expectations.

Technical meetings

Technical meetings are regularly organised by the JS throughout the application phase of a call and aim to support applicants in the construction of their proposal. These meetings are generally organised online and consist of a half-day session *focusing on one of the key points in the preparation of a proposal* (partnership, work plan, eligibility of expenditure, etc.). Public question and answer sessions are also organised as part of these meetings.

The frequency and content of technical meetings may vary depending on the complexity of the Terms of Reference and the type of call.

Thematic seminars

Thematic seminars may be organised to *facilitate the understanding of the Programme's architecture and expectations related to the concerned call to encourage the sharing of experience and the transfer of results*. Speakers from outside the JS may also contribute to this type of seminars.

Depending on the type of call concerned, the thematic seminars may be accessible with open registration or upon invitation (from the Programme or the national authorities).

Bilateral meetings with the JS

Where appropriate and if foreseen by the Programme Authorities for the relevant Call for Proposals, bilateral meetings are organised on specific time slots. A project idea[6] is submitted to the JS by the applicants when applying for this type of meeting, if foreseen by the Call.

Bilateral meetings bring together a limited number of potential partners of the same proposal and members of the JS for approximately 30 minutes and enable applicants to better understand the Programme's expectations with regards to a given theme.

No pre-assessment of the proposal or technical recommendations on the precise drafting of the proposal can be made during these meetings.

The JS undertakes to receive the first registered applicants within the limit established by the Programme at the time of the publication of the call and of one meeting per project idea.

Before the meeting, and to maximise the time dedicated to the exchanges, it is expected that the applicants have read the Terms of Reference and the Call's key documents in full.

v. Tools available to project applicants

Online Forums[7]

On the dedicated platform[8] made available to applicants by the Programme, applicants can post their project ideas, discuss them, and compose or consolidate their partnership.

Frequently Asked Questions

As soon as the call is launched, the JS and the National Contact Points are available to provide answers to the various requests submitted to the Programme. To limit the burden of individual answers, questions relating to an ongoing call must be addressed only via an online form[9] made available to applicants on the Programme webpage. Questions are processed by the JS and published on the FAQ where the Programme's answer will

[6] Template for project idea provided by the Programme
[7] The forums are not moderated by the Programme
[8] Get involved - Programme Interreg Euro-MED (interreg-euro-med.eu), "Find project partners" section
[9] Documents & tools - Programme Interreg Euro-MED (interreg-euro-med.eu), below the FAQ section.

appear as soon as possible. Applicants are invited to consult the FAQ regularly for updates.

Technical requests for access to the IT system will be addressed to the JS in the same way.

B. Building my consortium

i. Partnership architecture

a) Project coordination and Lead Partner role

Each partnership appoints one organisation to act as Lead Partner (here after LP), which takes full responsibility for the implementation of the entire project (Article 26 of Reg 1059/2021). In addition to this responsibility, the LP also assumes a role of project partner.[10]

Who can be Lead Partner?
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 legally based in one of the eligible regions of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme cooperation area[11].

Private institutions or international organisations acting under national or international law cannot act as Lead Partners.

Role and obligations of the Lead Partner
The Lead Partner:

- prepares the proposal in collaboration with all the applicants involved in the project;
- submits the Application Form and is responsible for related contents and commitments;
- signs a Subsidy Contract with the Programme Managing Authority;
- signs a Partnership Agreement with all partners involved in the project;

[10] Project partner-Definition: any institution financially contributing to the project and contributing to its implementation, as identified in the approved Application Form. It corresponds to the term "beneficiary" used in the European Structural and Investment Funds Regulations
[11] Interreg Euro-MED Programme cooperation area is composed of 69 regions of 14 countries: 10 EU Member States and 4 EU candidate or potential candidate countries. See the cooperation area map here.

- ensures the coordination of the partnership and of the project in line with sound financial[12] and project management principle;
- maintains a functional and permanent communication flow among the partnership and ensures an efficient exchange of information that enables the successful delivery of the project outputs;
- is responsible for communication with the Programme bodies, namely the Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat;
- gathers from the partnership all partners inputs related to financial and activity reporting, checks the conformity of activities and expenditure with the application form and consolidates the different elements to prepare the project report,
- ensures the timely submission of the necessary information for the progress and financial reporting to the JS.

Expected requirement about the Lead Partner

The Lead Partner should have the following profile:

- Experienced in the management of EU funded projects;
- Prepared to take on 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 relevant thematic knowledge and expertise for the project;
- Being committed throughout the project proposal application process as well as during the implementation phase;
- Must speak and read fluently English and/or French (at least the LP coordinator) depending on the project's working language chosen in order to ensure efficient communication within the partnership and with the Programme authorities.

Expected staff profiles and related functions

To manage the project efficiently, the Lead Partner must develop 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.

[12] The principles of sound financial management are defined in Financial Regulation 2018/1046 art 2 and detailed in the present Manual, chapter "Drawing up my budget".

The Lead Partner must appoint a project coordinator and a financial manager.

The project coordinator:

- is experienced so as to ensure the thematic coordination of the project activities and work packages;
- is able to act as a driving force of the project and to mobilise the partnership in order to achieve the objectives set in the application;
- is experienced in management of EU funded projects;
- speaks and reads fluently English and/or French depending on the project's working language chosen to ensure communication within the partnership and with the Programme authorities.

The financial manager:

- is experienced so as to ensure the management of the project budget, including budget modifications, financial reporting and submission of payment claims to the Programme. He must ensure that project partners have received the Interreg funds from the Accounting Authority;
- is responsible to closely and regularly monitor the financial performance of the project partners;
- works in close contact with the project coordinator and the partners in order to enable the efficient overall financial management of the project;
- ensures that the project does not contribute to the Programme de-commitment risk;
- is familiar with accounting/bookkeeping, as well as with handling international transactions;
- is aware of the EU and national legislation regarding financial management and controls, public procurement and, where appropriate, State aid.

The legal representative:

- has the power to act and sign, on behalf of the Lead Partner, and is responsible for the signature of contractual documents with the Managing Authority.

b) Project partners

Who can be partner?

Partners can be:

- Public bodies or bodies governed by public law (according to the definition of the Directive 2014/24/EU).
- Private organisations
- International organisations acting under national or international law (under the condition that the Programme's control systems and audits are respected).

Project partners other than the LP are legally based in one of the eligible regions of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme cooperation area or in a region outside the cooperation area belonging to an EU Member State.

/!\ Important point

- Private companies whose main activity, including their role in the project, is solely limited to supporting actions (project coordination, management, communication, etc) cannot be involved as project partners. Indeed, their participation could fall within the scope of public procurement, and usually do not contribute to the overall project activities.

  Compliance with this requirement will be checked during the quality assessment of each project proposal and through the partnership relevance and transnationality analysis.

  If such a situation happens, the result of the JS analysis held during the assessment phase would be presented to the Programme Committee and could lead to the exclusion of the concerned partner.
- Only a legal person with legal capacity can participate in a project as beneficiary of the Interreg funds, physical persons cannot take part in a project as project partner.

Role and obligations of the project partners

- sign a Partnership Agreement with the LP and all partners involved in the project;

- comply with all the rules and obligations stated in the Programme contractual documents;
- have the financial and administrative capacities to implement project activities and anticipate the payment of project costs;
- are responsible for communication with their national representative within the Programme, namely the National Authority (NA), the National Contact Points (NCP),the Authority in charge of the national control system;
- contribute to project activities under the direction of the LP and in cooperation with the rest of the project partnership in line with sound financial[13] and project management principles;
- contribute to a functional and permanent communication flow within the partnership to ensure an efficient exchange of information that enables the successful delivery of the project results;
- ensure the timely submission via Jems (deadlines agreed with LP) of the elements related to the reporting on finances and activities to the Lead Partner.

Expected staff profiles of the project partners

Partners should have the following profiles within their team:

- the legal representative who has the power to act and sign is responsible for the signature of the project partnership agreement with LP and the other project partners,
- Dedicated team to the project that must speak and read fluently English and/or French depending on the project working language chosen (in order to comply with the assigned project obligations and to ensure efficient communication within the partnership and possibly with the Programme authorities) and able to manage all project-related tasks (about content but also administrative and financial parts).

Additional staff profiles are required in the project and can be either part of the Lead Partner or partner team

NB: a same person can also cover different profiles in the same project

[13] The principles of sound financial management are defined in Financial Regulation 2018/1046 art 2 and detailed in the present Manual, chapter "Drawing up my budget"

The communication officer:

- is responsible for the whole project communication activities;
- must have experience in communication;
- must work in close collaboration with the thematic community of projects they belong to and with the Programme;
- attends external events, when justified and useful for the project, other than the events and seminars of the thematic community of projects they belong to.

The coordinator for result amplification[14]:

- is assigned to actively participate in the activities of the Governance projects of the Mission they belong to;
- has a good grasp of the Results Amplification Strategy of the Programme;
- ensures that project outputs are designed in a transferable way;
- mobilises within the partnership the relevant partners to perform joint activities related to the implementation of the Results Amplification Strategy (at project and Programme level).

The coordinator for carbon footprint[15]:

- defines the strategy for the reduction of the project's carbon footprint.
- ensures that all partners implement the methodology;
- ensures that project activities are designed to minimise emissions;
- supports the full project partnership in using the carbon footprint monitoring tool;

The Data Controller and Data Protection Officer for the project:[16]

c) Associated Partners

Public, private or international institutions willing to be involved in the project without financially contributing to it are to be considered as "associated partners" (AP).

[14] results-amplification-strategy.pdf (interreg-euro-med.eu)
[15] https://carbonfootprint.interreg-euro-med.eu/
[16] Please refer to chapter IV. A. "General Data Protection Regulation".

Associated partners can be partners located in any EU Member state or in a third country.

Associated partners do not receive any Interreg funding from the Programme and must participate with their own funds. In justified cases, expenditures related to associated partners participation to project activities, can be borne by a financing partner (generally the one they are linked to, in the approved Application Form) and in compliance with the applicable eligibility rules (reimbursement of expenditure incurred by these bodies should in principle be limited to travel and accommodation costs related to their participation in the project activities).

Associated partners are not considered for the fulfilment of the minimum partnership requirements.

Projects shall develop a strategy for the selection and involvement of associated partners, considering their nature and their roles in the project. Three main roles for associated partners are identified:

- Advisory (provide expertise in the theme tackled),
- End-users/takers/final beneficiaries (use the outputs delivered)
- Observers/supporters (for endorsement)

Role and obligations of the associated partners

- Must appear in the approved Application Form and be attached to a financed project partner;
- Must sign an associated partner declaration (template provided by the Programme);
- Should agree in advance, with the project partner it is attached to, on any costs that may incur during project implementation;
- The involvement of associated institutions must not be in conflict with public procurement rules. Sub-contracting between associated partners and any partner of the project they are participating to is prohibited.

ii. Eligibility and legal status

The project partners located in the Interreg Euro-MED Programme cooperation area (69 regions)[17] or in the European Union can be co-financed by the Interreg Funds.

[17] See the Programme cooperation area map here

Eligible partners shall be the following:

1. National, regional and local public bodies (including EGTCs as defined in Article 2(16) of Regulation (EU) No 1302/2013)
2. Public equivalent bodies[18] :
    - are established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character;
    - have a legal personality;
    - 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.

3. Private organisations, including private companies:
    - have a legal personality;
    - are not financed, for the most part, by the state, regional or local authorities, or other bodies governed by public law; or are not subject to management supervision by those bodies; or not having 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.

In Interreg Euro-MED projects, private structures cannot take on the role of a Lead Partner.

4. International organisations acting under the national law of any EU Member State or under international law (see restriction below).

International organisations, acting under national law of an EU Member State or under international law cannot act as LP. International organisations can participate in projects only upon their explicit acceptance of all requirements deriving from the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the regulations, as well as the control systems and audits, applicable in the framework of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme.

As for any other activities supported by the Programme, activities implemented by international organisations are subject to management verifications and audits. During the assessment phase, a formal confirmation of acceptance of **the partner's** participation will be requested to the competent National Authorities where the

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

participating office/branch of the organisation is located. Failure to do so will result in the exclusion of the partner from the project.

The explicit acceptance of all above requirements shall be mentioned in an ad-hoc document which must be signed by the international organisation and the hosting country and forwarded to the Joint Secretariat afterwards.

Focus: Partner (public or private) legally based in a region out of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme cooperation area[19].

Partner legally based in a Region outside the Programme cooperation area but belonging to one of the 14 Interreg Euro-MED Programme States: (e.g: partner located in Lille, Paris, Oporto, Santander, etc):

1. They can be project partner (co-financed by the Interreg funds) and participate in a project under all missions and irrespective of the legal status of the partner but they cannot act as LP.
2. Concerning management tasks (certification of expenditures, audits, etc), no difference is made between an "Interreg Euro-MED region" and "the rest of the National territory of a State participating in the Programme". Control, management verifications and audit responsibilities are already covered by the Agreement signed between the Programme and the State.
3. Their participation in the project brings added value and expertise to its implementation and benefits the Programme cooperation area.

Partner legally based in a Region outside the Programme cooperation area and belonging to an EU Member State other than the 14 Interreg Euro-MED Programme States (e.g: partner located in Brussels, Berlin, etc.):

1. They can be project partner (co-financed by the Interreg funds) and participate in a project under all missions and irrespective of the legal status of the partner but cannot act as LP.
2. During the assessment phase, a confirmation of the eligibility and of the legal status of the partners located within the EU but outside the Programme cooperation area will be requested to the competent national authorities. The responsible authority of the respective EU Member State shall provide a written communication to the MA/JS[20] confirming aforementioned information and, in accordance with Art 22 of the ETC Regulation, its formal acceptance to

[19] Interreg Euro-MED Programme cooperation area is composed of 69 regions of 14 countries: 10 EU Member States and 4 EU candidate or potential candidate countries. See the cooperation area map here.
[20] Compulsory template provided by the Programme and to be completed and signed by the concerned Authority during the assessment phase of project proposals and at the latest before signature of the subsidy contract

reimburse any amounts unduly paid for each one of those partners, in accordance with Article 52(2) of ETC regulation. Failure to do so may result in the exclusion of the partner from the project, in all events this situation will be tackled in a case-by-case basis by the MA/JS.

3. Their participation in the project brings added value and expertise to its implementation and benefits the Programme cooperation area.

NB: as of the date of this document ONLY Austria and the State of Bavaria (Germany) sent a communication to the MA/JS prohibiting the participation of entities based in their respective territory. Those partners are invited to participate to Interreg Euro-MED projects as associated partners.

For each call, and in case of potential restrictions related to the partnership, the Terms of Reference (ToR) provide a list of types of partners admitted for the call as well as information on suitable expected partnership.

List of types of partners

Main categories	Examples[21]
Local public authority	municipality, etc.
Regional public authority	regional council, etc.
National public authority	ministry, etc.
Sectoral agency	local or regional development agency, environmental agency, energy agency, employment agency, etc.
Infrastructure and (public) service provider	public transport, utility company (water supply, electricity supply, sewage, gas, waste collection, etc.), airport, port, railway, etc.
Interest groups including NGOs	international organisation, trade union, foundation, charity, voluntary association, club, etc.
Higher education and research	university faculty, college, research institution, RTD facility, research cluster, etc.
Education / training centre and school	primary, secondary, pre-school, vocational training, etc.

[21] More examples can be found in the relevant Terms of Reference.

Enterprise, except SME	
SME[22]	micro, small, medium enterprise
Business support organisation	chamber of commerce, chamber of trade and crafts, business incubator or innovation centre, business clusters, etc.
EGTC[23]	
International organisation, EEIG[24]	under national law, under international law

[22] According to Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium size enterprise.
[23] European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation.
[24] European Economic Interest Grouping.

In brief

	LOCATED IN EU MEMBER STATE	LOCATED IN A EURO-MED IPA STATE	CAN BE LEAD PARTNER
National, regional and local public bodies	✓	✓	✓ *Only located in the Programme cooperation area*
Public equivalent bodies (bodies governed by public law as defined in Article 2(1) of Directive 2014/24/EU)	✓	✓	✓ *Only located in the Programme cooperation area*
Private organisations	✓	✓	✗
International organisations	✓	✓	✗

iii. Partnership relevance

Transnational aspects

Projects co-funded by the Programme must have a transnational dimension.

As a minimum requirement, the partnership of any Interreg Euro-MED project must involve:

- at least 4 financing partners;
- from regions of at least 4 different countries, belonging to the Programme cooperation area[25] and
- among which, at least two partners are based in an EU region of the Programme cooperation area.

The size of any project partnership should reflect the scope of the project and remain manageable. The Terms of Reference of each call for proposals may set different limit for the size for the partnership and specific additional requirements regarding the partnership.

Relevance

The quality of a project depends largely on an adequate composition of its partnership. The setting up of a relevant partnership is essential. 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, namely those set for the chosen category of project.

When building a partnership, the following general aspects should be considered:

- Focus your partnership on relevant institutions to reach 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 with target groups addressed by the project;

[25] Interreg Euro-MED Programme cooperation area is composed of 69 regions of 14 countries: 10 EU Member States and 4 EU candidate or potential candidate countries. See the cooperation area map here

- Apply a result-oriented approach by involving institutions who are supposed to develop 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 also be balanced with regards to the project objective;
- 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, even indirectly;
- 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 the Terms of Reference of each call for proposals);
- Ensure the commitment of all partners from the very beginning. Once the project is approved, partner changes should remain exceptional cases, creating a strain on the entire project;

EU institutions legally based outside the Programme cooperation area should be involved in justified cases. Their involvement should bring a clear benefit to the Programme cooperation area adding a clear, tangible value to the partnership.

C. Designing the project activities

This section aims to present the context in which each applicant must position themselves when choosing to participate in the Interreg Euro-MED Programme.

In its structure and objectives, each project must indeed consider, beyond its own activities, the ambitions of the Commission for the 21-27 Cohesion Policy, the choices made by the Programme Participating States for the implementation of these ambitions within the Programme cooperation area and finally, the architecture of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme.

All those components must be reflected through project activities and partnership. Interconnection between these different aspects is hereafter detailed.

i. Intervention logic

The Programme aims to "*Contribute to the transition towards a climate-neutral and resilient society*".

To reach this ambition, 4 missions have been identified:

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

Each project shall meet one of the missions, pursuing one of the specific objectives (SO) selected by the Programme[26].

Each mission addresses one or several SOs according to the targeted themes and can therefore groups together projects targeting different SOs.

These groupings aim to facilitate the exchange and sharing of solutions within the project community sharing the same mission. Moreover, the missions push

[26]SO 1.1 Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies
SO 2.6 Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy
SO 2.4 Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience, taking into account eco system-based approaches
SO 2.7 Enhancing protection and conservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution
SO 6.6 other actions to support better cooperation governance

the results of single projects beyond their initial ambitions to address issues of greater importance.

FIGURE 1: CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAMME MISSIONS / PROGRAMME SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Link between Programme and project intervention logic

With the mission objective in mind, when elaborating the project content, applicants shall strictly adopt a result-oriented approach.

Applicants must clearly define the results and the changes the project is striving for, linking them with the territorial challenges and common needs 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 shall facilitate the assessment of its contribution to the "achievement of the specific objectives and results of the relevant priority", in line with Article 22(4) (a) (EU) 2021/1059 of the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR).

To do so, the project needs to establish its intervention logic mirroring the Programme intervention logic.

A project should demonstrate through its intervention logic that it:

- Is in line with one of the **Programme's mission**;
- Targets one single Programme priority specific objective;
- Contributes to the respective Programme results and results indicators;
- Links in a logic sequence the project activities and outputs to the specific objective target.
- Will achieve an envisaged change.

The specific objectives of the project ought to be as precise as possible and relevant for the Programme and the involved regions. They must be ambitious but also realistic with regard to the duration of the project (way of implementation to be demonstrated).

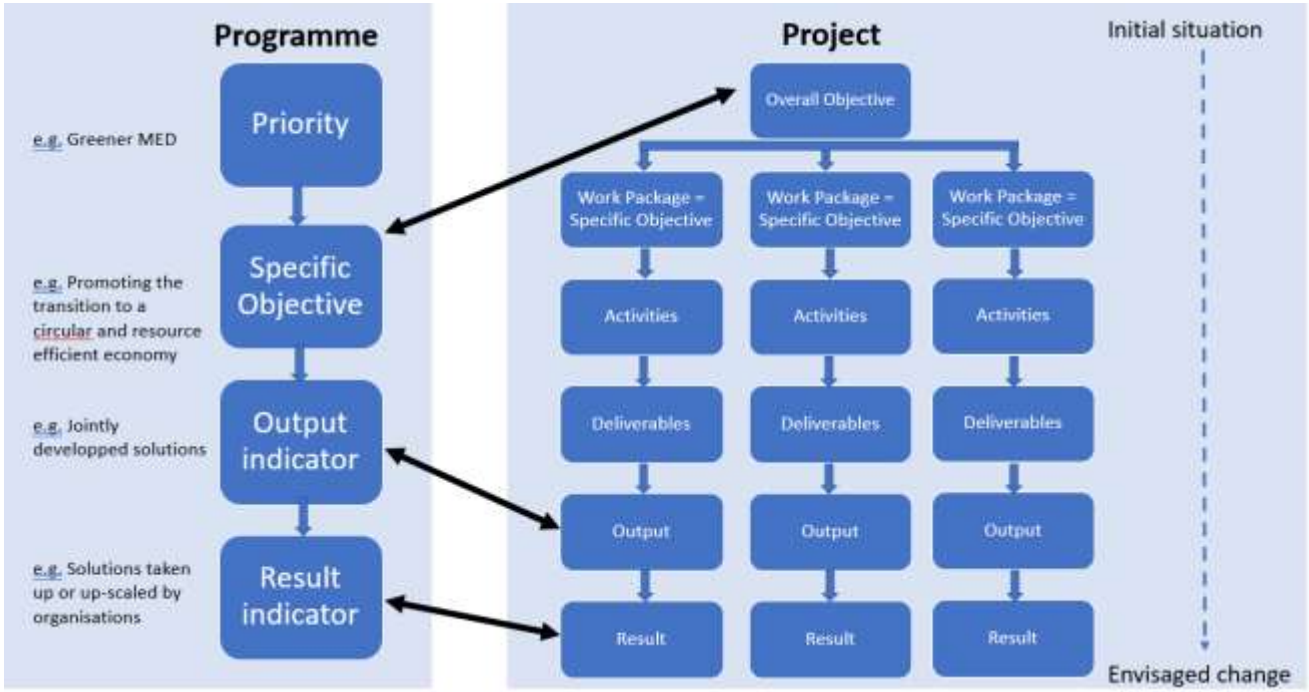


FIGURE 2: MIRRORING INTERREG EURO-MED PROGRAMME-PROJECT INTERVENTION LOGIC

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

- Programme priority -> thematic area which reflects the most relevant needs and potentials of the Programme cooperation area
- Programme specific objective -> what the Programme wants to change for its inhabitants in this thematic area

- 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 the change brought by the project and the contribution to the Programme cooperation area.

This attempted change must be result-oriented. It should thus reflect the current situation (e.g. a problem), its underlying causes and the change which the project seeks to achieve through its activities.

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 outputs and results. These results have to reflect the desired change and need to be translated into project specific objectives.

Link between Programme Results Amplification Strategy and project intervention logic

Additionally, the project intervention logic shall be closely linked to the Results Amplification Strategy of the Programme. This link allows the improvement of its capitalisation and governance approaches, thus ensuring a stronger impact of project results.

The Strategy is based on three general objectives (and a related action plan):

- Facilitate the exploitation, sharing and reuse of knowledge, experiences and project results by other Interreg Euro-MED projects or other programmes and foster the production of relevant work;
- Encourage the transfer of practices and results to other actors and territories and their integration in the development of local, regional, national and European (mainstream) policies and strategies;

- Increase coordination between stakeholders acting on the Mediterranean (multi-level, transnational) on the basis of this acquired knowledge, experience and results.

In this context, a difference of involvement is made between the two types of Interreg Euro-MED projects:

- The Governance Projects (Thematic Community and Institutional Dialogue Projects) will implement and support the main actions described in the Strategy;
- The Thematic Projects (Study, Test, Transfer, Test+Transfer projects and Strategic Territorial projects) will facilitate and benefit from this support to maximise the weight of their results.

After setting the intervention logic (starting from the initial situation and ending with the envisaged change), the project must draft a work plan, including activities and outputs necessary to reach its objectives and results.

ii. Composition of a project

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

This section aims to:

- clarify the concepts,
- explain the Work Packages structure,
- define the outputs and their related indicators
- specify the mandatory activities that projects must implement

a) Concepts

"Work Package" (WP)	Group of related project activities required to produce project main outputs.
"Activity"	A process, done for a particular purpose. Each Work package is divided into activities. Each activity can lead to none, one or several deliverable(s).
"Output"	"Product" of an activity or a set of activities carried out. Project outputs are the outcomes obtained following the implementation of project activities.
"Deliverable"	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.

b) Types of work packages

For 2021-2027 programming period, the Work Packages are not predefined by the Programme. Therefore, projects are free to structure their work packages according to their specific objectives.

Project management and communication activities are directly integrated in the work packages.

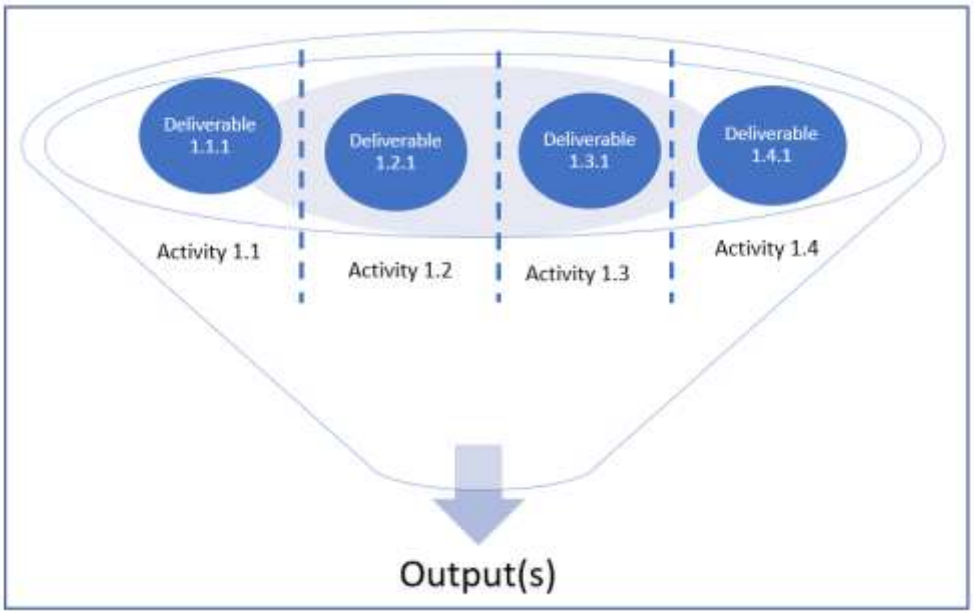


FIGURE 3: COMPOSITION OF A WORK PACKAGE

To keep consistency with the delivery of limited outputs, projects must limit the number of activities per WP.

Depending on the project typology, each activity can have none, one or more deliverables contributing to the development of (a) project output(s).

For an indicative (non-exhaustive) list of possible activities and deliverables, please refer to Annex A of this Manual.

c) Types of Outputs and related Indicators

Outputs are defined by each project, bearing in mind that every project works in a transfer and mainstream perspective. Thus, any output developed must be in a "mainstreaming format": reusable and ready to be transferred.

NB: 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. Not every work package must have one or several main outputs (in fact, a project may have only one main output).

Following the Programme and project intervention logics, project outputs and activities should also contribute to the Programme output and result indicators:

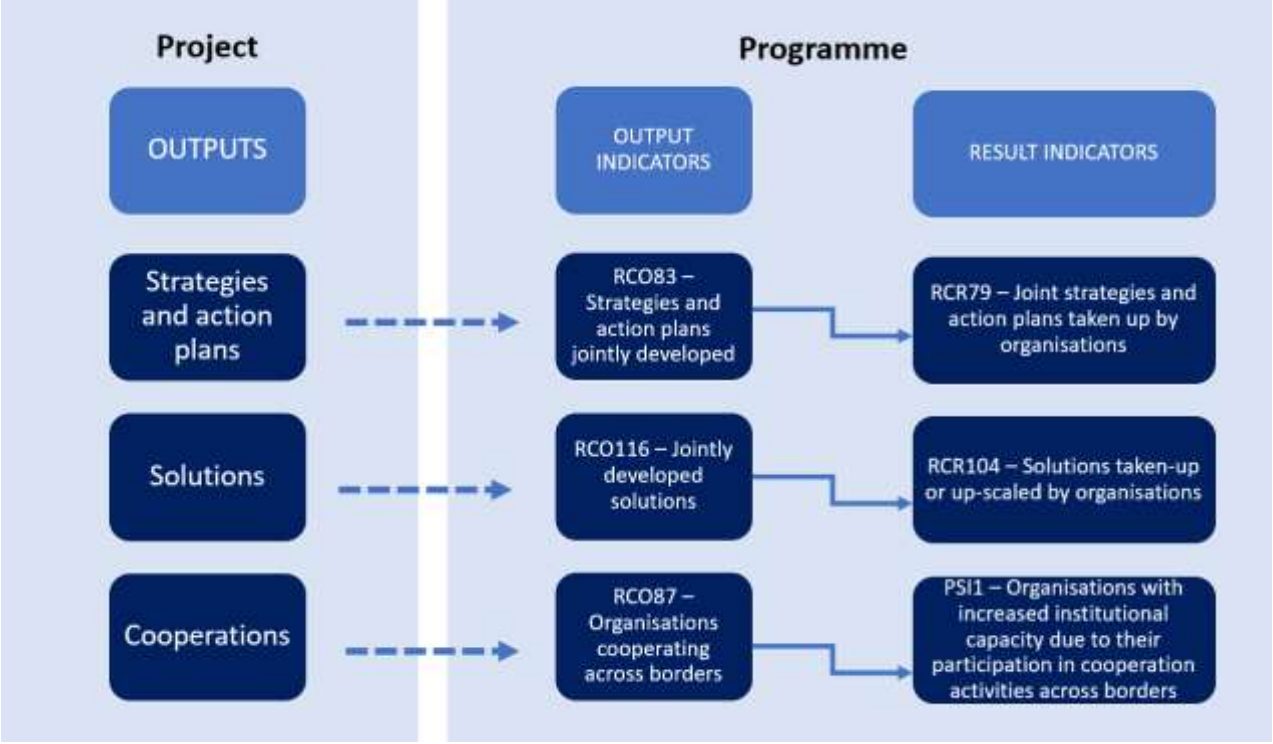


FIGURE 4: CONTRIBUTION OF OUTPUTS TO PROGRAMME INDICATORS

For a better understanding, you will find below the definition of the Programme output indicators, as well as some examples:

Programme output indicators	Examples
Strategies and action plans jointly developed: A strategy describes a specific course of action designed to achieve a long-term goal, aiming at establishing a targeted way to achieve a goal-oriented process in a specific domain. An action plan translates an existing jointly developed strategy into actions, outlining in detail actions needed to reach the defined long-term goal.	Climate Change Adaptation Strategies/action plans, Clean Energy Transition Agendas, Strategies/action plans to implement a sustainable tourism model…
Jointly developed solutions: Methodologies, tools, technologies, services, processes, partnership/cooperation agreements. Acceptable solutions should be jointly developed, tested in real life conditions, easily transferable to further territories of the Programme (include a list of actions needed for it to be taken up or upscaled by further organisations).	Observatories, Early warning systems, Climate Change Adaptation modelling, Low carbon mobility services, Tools to leverage funds for energy transition, Methodology for value chain development…
Organisations cooperating across borders: Project partners and associated partners participating in approved projects (whether receiving funds or not).	Project partners and associated partners such as Regional/local/national authorities, Environmental agencies, tourism agencies, Energy agencies, Universities/research centres, SMEs & Economic operators…

For the complete details of each Programme Indicator per Specific Objective (Outputs and Results), please refer to Annex B.

d) Concepts of Legacy and Capitalisation

The capitalisation of all Interreg and Neighbourhood Mediterranean Programmes legacy is a priority as well as a challenge knowing that a lot of work has already been produced in this area.

When building a project, and implementing activities, partners should therefore consider the results and outputs already achieved so far by the Programme, as well as in other Mediterranean Programmes or European schemes. The aim is to benefit from past experiences and to give continuity to the cooperation efforts in the targeted territories, which address common issues.

The results and outputs from the Interreg MED Programme to consider can be found in the Library of the 2014-2020 Programme website[27].

Applicants might also consider the KEEP database[28], the Interreg portal[29] and more broadly the EU-funded regional policy projects[30] for Interreg projects and Projects & Results (europa.eu) for Programmes directly managed by the European Commission.

Specific references to relevant projects and Programmes are available in the Terms of Reference of each Call for proposals.

e) Communication, management and investments activities

In parallel with the freedom in the choice of WPs, linked to the specific objectives of the project, some activities are still to be considered by applicants when elaborating their project[31]:

[27] https://interreg-med.eu/projects-results/project-deliverables/
[28] https://keep.eu/about-keep-eu/
[29] https://interreg.eu/
[30] https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/projects_en
[31] The way in which these mandatory activities should be integrated into the project budget is set out in part I. D. iii. f) "From activities to budget"

- Activities related to Communication

Communication is of strategic importance for Interreg projects. Communication activities are to support the achievement of the project objectives and therefore help transfer and capitalise the project results.

Project partners are therefore responsible for delivering information, transferring knowledge and expertise to a defined target audience (through digital or written communication, press conference, trainings, etc.) but also participating in the Programme communication activities (such as feeding the web platform or participating in ad hoc meetings)[32].

Given the importance of communication, project partners are required to describe their communication approach at application stage (Section C.7 of the Application Form). In this part, they must demonstrate how the communication objectives and activities as described in the work packages will help achieve the project results. They should also explain which channels they will use and why.

Please note that there is no specific communication work package in the Application Form. Communication activities and objectives must therefore be directly integrated in the work packages precisely to allow the communication strategy to be fully embedded in the project overall strategy.

- Management and coordination of project tasks

Administrative and financial management obligations[33] are not listed as mandatory activities as such, since they do not need to be listed in the Work plan of the Application Form, but they must nevertheless be considered in the implementation time and budget of each partner.

In addition, it is highly recommended to put in place certain procedures allowing to coordinate partners activities.

Hereafter some indicative examples of guidelines to be agreed and followed on partnership level:

- Procedures for administrative and financial management
- Procedures for internal communication
- Procedures for monitoring project activities
- Internal training material

[32] For more details, please refer to Section V the Annex A on activities and deliverables
[33] For more details, please refer to the Reporting section of the Programme Manual

- Activities related to investments:

For the correct implementation of the project activities, the partners may require the use of various equipment, materials and services. Within the meaning of the Programme, only the elements (technical or IT equipment, materials for the deployment of the pilot action, and related services etc.) necessary within the framework of the pilot project activities, and dedicated to the realisation of such activity, are considered as "investments"[34].

"Investments" as referred to in the Programme must appear under the section "investment" of the Application Form[35] and be associated with the relevant expenditure in the budget part (cost categories external expertise and services, equipment and/or infrastructure and works).

NB: Equipment used by a partner to support the realisation and implementation of other project activities (other than pilot activities) is not **considered as "fixed investment in equipment" and does not fall within the** scope of investments as referred to in the Programme.

- For each investment, the partners must specify in the Application form whether it is a productive investment[36] or not and present the location of the investment. The impacts deriving from an investment must be transnational by nature, contribute to the development of the Programme area and present a clear added value to achieve the project objectives.
- In the framework of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme, the expected investments are related to pilot activities with a limited budget and scale.
- When planning investment activities, partners should insist on the feasibility of the activities within the timeframe of the project and consider possible delays related to permitting, feasibility studies, environmental impact assessment, sustainability requirements,

[34] "Fixed investments in equipment" and "investments in infrastructure "that refer to outputs of the project, which remain in use by the partners and/or target groups after completion of the project.
[35] Each lead partner must define in the application form the investment implemented in the framework of the pilot activities of the projects. Each investment is expressly validated by the JS and this validation is formalised by the inclusion of this investment in the consolidated application form.
[36] Productive investment: investment in fixed capital or immaterial assets of enterprises, with a view to producing goods and services. In this way the investment contributes to gross capital formation and employment. (ERDF Regulation 2021/1058 – recital 38)

assessment of expected impacts of climate change[37], possible permit applications, ownership issues and horizontal principles...

- When planning investment activities partners should integrate monitoring activities with the objective of producing feedback and ensuring transferability and durability of project results.
- Each partner in charge of the implementation of an investment must confirm[38] that it has the necessary financial resources and mechanisms to cover operation and maintenance costs[39] of operations comprising investments in infrastructure or productive investments, so as to ensure their financial viability and compliance with the above principles.
- In case of investment in infrastructure or equipment intended to be installed/implemented on property not belonging to the partner, the latter must have entered into a legal agreement with the owner enabling him to meet the durability and audit obligations for all material financed under the project in accordance with art 65 of CPR Regulation 2021/1060 and Programme rules.
- A signed "*statement of capacity and compliance with the principles for investment to be applied in the context of the projects' pilot activities*" must be submitted to the JS by each partner in charge of the implementation of an investment for it to be accepted as a project activity[40].
- During the pre-contracting phase, an assessment of the climate and environmental objectives (DNSH[41]) is carried out by the lead partner and the partner(s) in charge of investment activities, in cooperation with the JS if deemed necessary.

/!\ Important point

Depending on the nature of the activities implemented and the investments made, the latter can sometimes be qualified as productive investments[42]. Within the framework of the Interreg Programmes, only SMEs are entitled to make productive investments and Programme rules on state aid must be respected.

[37] Interreg Regulation 2021/1059 (art 22(4) j); in the framework of the Programme the partners are responsible for this assessment.
[38] Template " Statement of capacity and compliance with the principles for investment " provided by the Programme.
[39] Interreg Regulation EU 2021/1059 (art 22(4) d)
[40] The statement must be provided, at the latest, during the pre-contracting phase and, in the event of a change in project activities, prior to express acceptance of the investment by the JS.
[41] EU Regulation UE 2020/852
[42] Definition :ERDF Regulation 2021/1058 – recital 38.

After the closure of the project, certain requirements regarding ownership and durability of investments must be fulfilled, and specific rules[43] apply for partners declaring costs related to productive investments and investments in infrastructure. Thus, within 5 years of the final payment to the project partner; it must not

make:

(a) a cessation or transfer of a productive activity outside the NUTS level 2 region in which it received support;

(b) a change in ownership of an item of infrastructure which gives to a firm or a public body an undue advantage;

(c) a **substantial change affecting the investment's nature, objectives or** implementation conditions which would result in undermining its original objectives.

In the event of non-compliance with this rule, the Programme will request reimbursement of the grant in proportion to the period of non-compliance[44].

Partners are required to inform the JS of any noncompliance with the above rule.

f) Mandatory activities to be integrated in each proposal:

Monitoring the project carbon footprint

The fact that the Interreg Euro-MED Programme focus is on the environment and mitigation of climate change on the Mediterranean, determines the inclusion and implementation of a targeted carbon footprint monitoring **activity** in all projects work plans. It is fully in line with the Programme strategy ensuring projects environmental sustainability.

As a general rule, projects must first think of reducing carbon footprint from the design phase of the project (e.g. by choosing activities with the lowest carbon footprint).

[43] EU Regulation 2021/1060 - Article 65 Durability of operations; NB: the 5 years period may vary if the project has been approved under certain exemption rules relating to State aid.
[44] This rule does not apply to a project partner which undergoes cessation of a productive activity due to a non-fraudulent bankruptcy.

In addition, projects must include one activity to calculate their carbon footprint.

To this end, projects shall use the methodology and tool proposed by the Programme.

The carbon footprint monitoring methodology and tool have been designed and tested within the Interreg MED 2014-2020 Programme[45]. It provides calculation method for all types of activities.

For sizing the activity, it is recommended that partners and carbon footprint coordinator allocate time for collecting and processing data. Yet the tool being provided by the Programme, no external expertise and services expenditures are considered necessary.

Further information will be provided to potential applicants during the events organised by the JS for each Call for proposals.

Contribution to the Results Amplification Strategy

All projects must foresee activities that will contribute to the Results Amplification Strategy of the Programme.

The activities of the different types of projects are interconnected and reinforce each other.

Thus, all materials produced by the Thematic Projects shall be reusable, combinable and valorised thanks to the synergies with other projects.

These synergies are facilitated by the Thematic Community Projects which foster the exchanges between the projects gathered under the same mission of the Programme and which allow the integration of their results in the practices and the public policies of the Interreg Euro-MED territories.

And these processes of result integration are able to rely on the Institutional Dialogue Projects. They support coordination and dialogue between stakeholders from all concerned sectors at national, transnational and international levels in the Programme cooperation area but also beyond.

The different interactions between Interreg Euro-MED projects therefore allow to amplify the impact of the Programme on the Mediterranean territories.

[45] Please refer to the 2 Interreg MED projects : http://wecaremed.interreg-med.eu, http://zeroco2med.interreg-med.eu

Namely, thematic projects (Study, Test, Transfer, Test+Transfer projects and Strategic Territorial projects) must foresee activities that:

- Produce, reuse, integrate and consolidate knowledge with the support of Thematic Community Projects and feed into governance projects;
- Bring together multi-level and multi-sectoral stakeholders to study, test and transfer practices and results, and benefit from the networks of Governance projects, including outside the Programme cooperation area.

Thematic Community projects must foresee activities that:

- Optimise the conditions for knowledge sharing of Thematic Projects, enhance the value of the results and amplify collectively, including outside the cooperation area;
- Mobilise regional, national and transregional actors to support the transfer and mainstreaming of the results of Thematic Projects, including those outside the cooperation area, supported by Institutional Dialogue Projects.

Institutional Dialogue Projects must foresee activities that:

- Amplify the dialogue with national and supranational authorities to integrate the results of the communities and improve multi-level, multi-sector and transnational coordination, in particular outside the cooperation area.

As a minimum, each project must foresee the participation in two events per year and regular exchange of information between projects and between project and Programme.

Moreover, the Programme supports the implementation of the Euro-MED Academy in coordination with Governance projects, and which serve as a training platform and as Library of the Programme to support the dissemination and transfer of knowledge and results. The Euro-MED Academy platform thus aims to host:

- training/learning sessions provided in the frame of the projects
- the most qualitative projects outputs and key deliverables

In this framework, all thematic projects are expected to participate in the joint elaboration of pedagogical material. .

Mandatory communication activities

Project communication is a fundamental element, and the fact that there is no dedicated work package is dictated precisely by the ambition to see the communication objectives and activities included in the thematic work-packages to support the dissemination and capitalisation of project outputs and results in a timely and meaningful manner. For communication to be truly effective, however, it is necessary to have a clear overview of the objectives and how to achieve them.

In other words, each project must have a communication strategy, namely:

Governance projects are required to have a communication strategy per mission (the two projects develop one coordinated communication strategy). This communication strategy is supplemented by an annual communication plan that also considers the key actions of the thematic projects under the mission.

Timing: Governance projects are requested to provide a first version of their communication strategy including an annual communication plan (or activity plan) together with the first reporting package (9th month since the start of the project).

Thematic projects are required to have a communication strategy per project.

The communication strategy requested to thematic projects is simplified compared to the one asked to governance projects. However, in any case, the strategy must be a document that guides the communication choices to support the project's objectives and actions.

Timing: thematic projects are requested to provide a communication strategy with their first reporting package (9th month since the start of the project).

To better draft your communication strategy, please refer to the section on **"v. Designing your communication strategy"**

Moreover, all thematic projects must produce at least a short (1 minute) video presentation to be published. The creation of this video is framed by the JS to ensure a common harmonised approach.

The activities listed above are therefore mandatory in the drafting of any Interreg Euro-MED project. Then the Terms of Reference of each call may establish specific additional compulsory activities to be considered by applicants when drafting their proposal.

iii. Principles governing activities and productions

The principles to follow for the planning and implementation of activities undertaken by the projects are:

- Coordination
- Transnationality
- Transferability
- Sustainability and durability
- Synergies between projects

a) Coordination

Coordination is fundamental in transnational projects and must be supported by strong organisational skills. It takes a lead partner to build common understanding, provide guidelines and monitor the process to ensure its effectiveness. The modalities of work must be planned, agreed with and communicated to the whole partnership on time.

From the beginning of the project, all partners in charge of activities must:

- Have a complete overview of the development of the activity (partners individual and common responsibilities and workload, timetable, expected results, deliverables, etc.)
- Provide other partners with precise instructions on the implementation

Therefore, it is recommended to elaborate a methodology or practical instructions for the implementation of the main activities that will ensure their proper coordination.

Hereafter some indicative examples of guidelines to be agreed and followed on partner level:

- Procedures for monitoring project activities
- Practical instructions for conducting a study
- Practical instructions for conducting a pilot activity
- Protocol for testing a tool, a service

- Communication, dissemination and transferring plans
- Evaluation of project outputs and results

b) Transnationality

All actions of a cooperation project should have a transnational scope. This implies that the project approach, the actions and the results overcome the limits of partners' boundaries. Shared approach and complementarity of the actions are essential for the benefit of the results. Interreg Euro-MED project partners are expected to work in a collective and coordinated manner with a transnational perspective, that should prevent projects from being limited to a patchwork of local or individual initiatives.

Therefore, the actions must meet the following criteria:

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

c) Transferability

All protocols and results must be transferable within the Programme cooperation area and therefore, the deliverables, including outputs and results, should be replicable 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
- Replicable format
- Clear definition of target

It is recommended that the projects come up with a methodology for the achievement of key deliverables, outputs and results and transfer it to the Programme. This process will ensure the quality of activities, outputs and deliverables, but as well will facilitate the evaluation by the Programme.

The availability of raw data is therefore fundamental. The format of all productions should ensure the maximisation of their potential for reuse. Open data approach must be considered when compiling or delivering information.

d) Sustainability and durability

Sustainability and durability of the project results is another key element. A transnational cooperation project might have a "start-up" function: 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 considered during the whole project lifecycle, from the conception until the closure phase. Communication is an important factor to achieve further life of the results, as well as strategic liaising and mainstreaming activities. This principle is part of the qualitative assessment criteria of project applications.

e) Synergies among projects

Synergies between the activities and the results of the different projects of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme and/or of other ETC/thematic EU/national/ regional Programmes are to be sought during the project conception, implementation and beyond closure. They should be supported with the goal of achieving complementarity and greater impact on the territory or on the tackled topic. They should be prioritised as they increase the quality of the results. This principle is taken into consideration in the qualitative assessment of project applications.

f) Principles behind productions

In transnational cooperation projects, any type of output, result and deliverable requires the development of a common understanding of the different types of productions. It is recommended, for the common understanding of the deliverables, that they are based on guidelines/methodology for implementation and delivery, agreed within the partnership. Regarding the principles for the output and result indicators, the Programme provides a comprehensive methodology explaining in detail the process of accounting for the achievement of indicators (see Annex B).

Criteria for outputs and results contributing to the Programme output and result indicators

The achievement of project outputs and results is directly contributing to the fulfilment of Programme objectives and indicators. It is crucial that the project indicators match the Programme expectations in terms of standards and quality. For this reason, during the project reporting procedure, the quality and the reporting of outputs and results will be closely checked and supervised.

The quality criteria for the output and result indicators are included in the indicators methodology and factsheets provided by the Programme (please refer to Annex B). The project partners should report contribution to an output and/or result indicator in the project final report. They should as well provide proof of the achievement by attaching the completed templates (provided by the Programme) on output and/or result indicators for each achieved output and result indicator. If the information is not sufficient, the quality of the outputs and results will be discussed between the project partners and the JS during the verification procedure of the final reporting package.

Only output and result indicators that will fulfill the quality criteria will be validated and computed for the values of the output and result indicators at Programme level.

The projects are requested to complete the indicator templates on each reported and achieved output and result indicator contributing to the achievement of the Programme output and result indicators. As such, the information provided on the indicators will follow a standard methodology, be complete and comparable. The consolidated information on the execution of the output and result indicators by the Programme will be reported to the European Commission on a regular basis.

iv. Horizontal principles and Greening

For Interreg Euro-MED, it is crucial that horizontal principles are integrated in the planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the project activities.

During the whole life cycle of the projects, partners are requested to consider actions cross-cutting project activities, taking into account the horizontal principles of the EU.[46]

More precisely, actions should be planned, implemented and reported considering the following horizontal principles:

1. respecting fundamental rights and complying with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights[47]
2. ensuring the promotion of gender equality
3. preventing all kind of discrimination and particularly promoting accessibility for persons with disabilities
4. promoting sustainable development, in line with UN Sustainable Development Goals[48], the Paris Agreement[49] and the "do no significant harm" principle (DNSH)[50].

Full respect of the Union environmental *acquis* should be ensured by the projects.

Applicants shall describe in their applications how they particularly consider and promote the above-mentioned horizontal principles in their activities and which specific actions are implemented in reference to them. During the assessment of applications, consideration is given to the project adherence to the horizontal principles and the quality of the planned specific actions. Approved projects will report regularly to the Programme on their achievements.

Finally, the contribution and consideration of horizontal principles in projects will be examined in the framework of the Programme evaluation.

[46] Horizontal Principles as per Article 9 of the REGULATION (EU) 2021/1060 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy,

[47] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12012P%2FTXT

[48] https://sdgs.un.org/goals

[49] https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement

[50] EU Taxonomy Regulation, https://finance.ec.europa.eu/sustainable-finance/tools-and-standards/eu-taxonomy-sustainable-activities_en and https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32020R0852

All project partners cooperating under any Programme mission should comply with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[51], as well as the respective national sustainable development strategies.

The environmental and social dimension of sustainability should be an integral part of each project activity since its conception and until its closure. Partners are requested to assess potential harmful effects of their actions and prevent from planning actions leading to significantly impact the environment and climate, or actions impacting on the well-being of the citizens. Contribution to nature-based solutions, climate mitigation and neutrality as well as social solidarity are to be promoted.

The Programme strives to reduce the environmental impact of activities in all funded projects. To this end, carbon footprint reduction, and monitoring) actions will be applied by all approved projects (please refer above to Mandatory activities paragraph and section: Drawing up my budget here below).

With regards to greening, some of the Thematic Community projects of the Interreg MED 2014-2020 Programme developed a list of indicative preventive actions that are recommended to be followed by all Interreg Euro-MED projects so as to reduce their environmental impact. These actions refer to communication activities – dissemination of products and the organisation of project events (please refer to Annex C of this Manual)

[51] https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E

v. Designing your communication strategy

The Interreg Euro-MED Programme has adopted a communication approach that focuses on the effective results of the projects and the Programme as a whole. Therefore, the communication of each project is part of a global approach that focuses on the mission, rather than on the identity of the project itself.

Indeed, each Interreg Euro-MED project is attached to one of the missions established for the entire duration of the Programme and to which it must contribute on a regular basis. The development of this "collective" and cooperative spirit is based on the projects/partners, on the exchanges between the different actors but also on the articulation of their activities/objectives. This approach enables a coordinated communication between the project partners and representatives of the different Programme bodies this is why the communication strategy of each of the parties involved is fundamental.

a) Guiding principles

When designing their communication strategy, both Governance and Thematic projects should carefully take into consideration three interactive levels that must continuously communicate and cooperate with each other:

- Transnational/Programme level;
- Mission level;
- Project level.

Each level should find means of coordination and define their degree of intervention, as well as the roles and responsibilities of each in terms of communication activities and support, definition of the communication strategy and media communication. A clear conception of this system will enable complementarity to be reinforced and will help to avoid overlap.

/!\ Important point: Governance projects are requested to provide a first version of their communication strategy including an annual communication plan (or activity plan) together with the first progress report.

Thematic projects are requested to provide a simplified communication strategy with their first progress report.

Specific guidelines for Governance projects

The communication strategy of the Institutional Dialogue projects and Thematic Community projects (herein as "Governance projects") should take into account the Programme communication strategy and the Result Amplification Strategy and be completed with annual communication plans.

The annual communication plans of the Governance projects should ideally be coordinated with the Thematic projects of the mission. The objective is to grant them the coherence and adherence of every thematic project to develop a clear understanding of mutual tasks and coordination methods.

Governance projects are the representatives of their Mission and should speak as a single voice. Therefore, the Programme recommends the Governance projects under a same mission to draw a single external communication strategy for the mission[52] with specific objectives for the Thematic Community project and the Institutional Dialogue project. These specific objectives should be in line with the projects' role and purpose. A single external communication strategy will allow for a more coherent and consistent promotion of the mission "brand".

The communication responsibilities of both Thematic Community and Institutional Dialogue projects can be summed up as the following:

- Draw a communication strategy in accordance with their role and purpose within the mission;
- Implement this communication strategy through annual communication plans;
- Coordinate this communication strategy between all partners.

Specific guidelines for Thematic projects

After approval, Thematic projects will be associated with a Thematic Community and an Institutional Dialogue project. Both Governance projects of a mission are in charge of the communication strategy of the mission to which they belong. This means that, alongside the communication strategy / plan of their project, all thematic projects must foresee communication coordination roles and tasks to facilitate cooperation not only between their partners and but also with the Governance projects:

[52] Should this approach be too complicated or irrelevant, the communication strategy of each project must have as a MINIMUM one or two general communication objectives in common.

- At their own project level, they must ensure that they involve all their partners in every communication action.
- At the mission level, they should give an active contribution to the strategy-set/update/realisation of the related Governance projects. They should provide input and participate in the proposed activities of the Governance projects.
- Thematic projects are also requested to provide and share regular information with Governance projects and the Programme in format and deadlines to be defined (for thematic publications, events, etc.), mainly through the web portal that the Programme will provide to the projects (please consult the section on the web portal) and other tools and forms of participation, decided in the Thematic Community project strategy.

b) Drawing up your Communication Strategy

For any type of projects, project partners are strongly advised to follow the recommendations detailed hereunder to draft their communication strategy and that should be based on discussions and decisions involving all project partners. The communication strategy shall be short and precise and at least include the following main sections:

1. Strategic overview and situation analysis
2. Objectives
3. Target groups
4. Tailored messages
5. Communication channels and tools
6. Key activities
7. Timeline
8. Financial and human resources
9. Evaluation

Strategic overview and situation analysis

Project partners are strongly advised to perform a SWOT analysis prior to designing their Communication Strategy. For this purpose, partners in charge of the Communication Strategy design must list all the project's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in terms of communication. A SWOT analysis will help them look realistically at the project's communications

environment and plan accordingly. Project partners can answer the following questions to undertake their SWOT analysis:

- STRENGTHS: What are the strengths of your project?
- WEAKNESSES: What are the potential weaknesses of your project? What could be damaging or negative?
- OPPORTUNITIES: What communications opportunities are there? Is there anything new, different, interesting or unique in your project that you could capitalise upon for publicity?
- THREATS: Are there any potential threats that your project could face? What might go wrong? How could this affect your communications and PR activities?

Objectives

Communication needs to be goal driven. We communicate to achieve or change something.

The communication objectives derive from the project objectives. Project partners are advised to build-up their communication strategy on the same grounds as their project strategy, to achieve better results and coherence.

Project's overall communication objectives can 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.

Target groups

All projects need to communicate with a number of people/organisations who are – or might be – interested in their project and can have an influence on their ability to achieve their goals rapidly and efficiently.

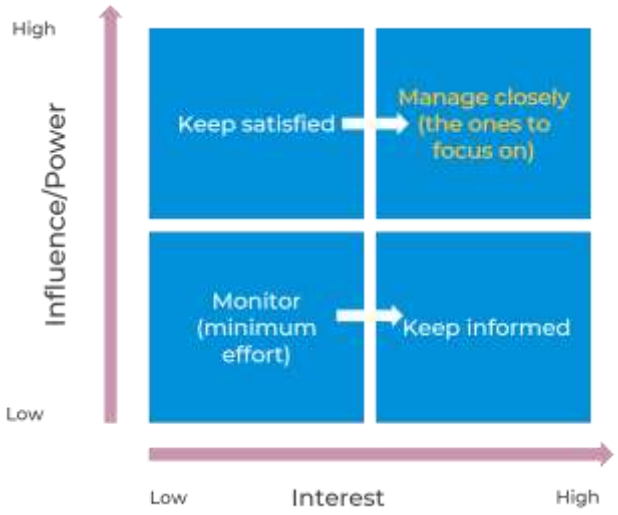
Knowing your "target audience" is the main starting point of a communication strategy. Meeting their different needs, perceptions and expectations is in fact a critical success factor of any effective communication strategy.

"Who is our target audience in the project?" and more precisely "which target audience do I have to reach in order to achieve the project goals?" are the first questions that project partners should ask themselves. The target groups need to be identified as accurately as possible to ensure that the key messages are transferred to the right audience. For this purpose, it is advisable to list and map all the groups or segments of public and analyse their interest, their attitude and the best channels to reach this group to adapt their communication activities accordingly.

A stakeholder mapping will help prioritise stakeholders in terms of the strength of their interest and the degree of their influence. A good way to create a stakeholder map is the grid below, which shows at a glance which categories of stakeholders demand priority attention.

After listing the concrete target groups, this grid is used by inserting the names of groups and significant individuals in the four quadrants. There should be between five and ten individuals in each quadrant. The individuals in the upper-right box are the ones that project partners should be focusing on. However, projects should also try and therefore adapt their communication activities accordingly to make the groups of individuals located in the left-hand box move into the right-hand box.

Figure 1: Mendelow's matrix



Tailor messages

Projects need to tailor their messages to their target audience in order to meet their interests and expectations. The messages have to be easily understood. The wording should be carefully crafted to be appealing to the public.

What is a good message? A “good” message is distinctive, consistent (your target groups need to hear the same message from different sources and on different occasions), concise, clear, and simple.

Communication channels and tools

Project partners need to define the channels that they will use in order to achieve their objectives and set in place a work plan. The choice of the channels must address the targets in an effective manner.

The Programme provides a web platform (please refer to the Web Tools section: Documents & tools - Programme Interreg Euro-MED (interreg-euro-med.eu). Each mission and project have their own website on which they publish information about their outputs, results, news and events, deliverables and any other relevant information. However, this tool should be completed with other tools. It is up to the project to decide which channels other than the Interreg Euro-MED Programme web platform are the most appropriate to reach their target audience.

There is a wide variety of channels, each with different purposes.

Key activities

Once the channels selected in the communication strategy, project partners may define the key activities that will help them achieve their communication objectives.

The details of the activities will be further elaborated on the occasion of the annual communication plan.

You will find a list of mandatory minimum communication activities for each type and category of project in Chapter I. B “Building my consortium” and C "Designing the project activities" of this manual.

All activities mentioned in this part of the manual must comply with EU and Programme publicity and information rules[53].

[53] Cf part III. A. viii “Project branding and information and publicity rules” of this manual

Timeline

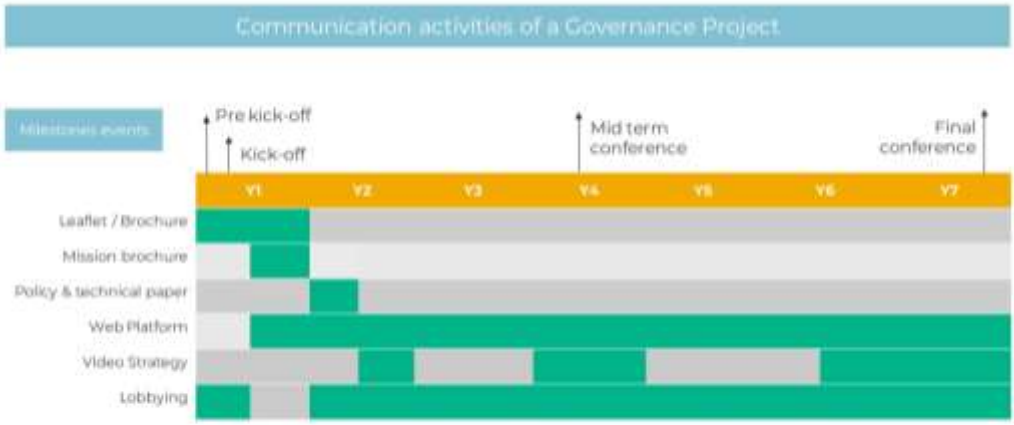
It is advisable to create a timeline that identifies when each activity will take place. This will help to ensure that deadlines and opportunities are not missed. Taking the minimum activities as reference, the calendar allows to set in place the main milestones of the communication strategy and the coordination tasks.

The calendar for Thematic project communication activities should be in line with the Governance projects ones, in order to better set up the coordination between all levels of the Programme architecture.

For Governance projects, the calendar should be further developed taking into account key events and milestones of the thematic projects belonging to their mission.

To the possible extent, each year, projects shall keep the Programme informed about the planned activities for the following year, to better frame complementarities of communication actions and avoid repetitions and waste of resources.

Figure 2: Model of calendar for communication activities of Governance projects



Financial and human resources[54]

First and foremost, all projects (Thematic and Governance) should not allocate resources to the development of a website and a logo as those are provided by

[54] Cf. part III. A. iv. "Non-eligible costs" of this manual

the Programme. However, financial and human resources should be assigned to develop communication content and regularly update the project web portal[55].

- Governance Projects

Being the coordination of communication activities rather complex, resources must be assigned to follow up the strategy from the conception, up to the evaluation, in order to guarantee the follow-up and connection at all levels.

Likewise, financial and human resources must be allocated to ensure the project participation in external events, promoted by other Governance projects or by the Programme or thematically relevant specific transnational events[56].

In terms of human resources, the communication officer appointed by the Governance project shall potentially have additional tasks given that he/she may also be responsible for some of the advocacy and transfer activities.

[55] Cf. part I.D. iii. f) "From activities to budget" of this manual
[56] Cf. Terms of Reference of Governance projects: SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS sections

- Thematic projects

Thematic project partners should allocate resources for their own communication activities and to establish a regular work relationship with the Governance projects and with the Programme.

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

Financial and human resources can be allocated to ensure the project participation in external events (organised by Governance projects but also by European or Mediterranean organisations), when justified and useful for the project.

Evaluation

It is highly important to assess the effectiveness of a communication strategy so as to know whether the objectives have been met, which activities were successful and which ones should be improved or left aside. Evaluation also creates useful feedback to share with other projects and the Programme, so one can learn from each other's' experience.

The communication evaluation criteria, indicators, measures, and methods, during the operation and at its closure have to be defined in line with the project specific and communication objectives. If it is an operation of long-term duration, a mid-term evaluation should be foreseen.

The Programme can provide the necessary knowledge to support and frame the evaluation of communication activities.

Evaluation of communication activities should be included in the global project evaluation.

Here is a set of possible indicators:

Qualitative indicators:

- Satisfaction level of activities implemented (questionnaires for conferences, publications etc.);
- Identification and communication with target groups (distribution lists developed, number of direct mailings to number of persons, how is the

feedback within interactive web tools developed (how many 'likes' on FB, how many comments in discussion forum etc.);
- Further analyses of web statistics: where are most of the hits (after a press article, conference, newsletter);
- Hits on different sections.

Quantitative indicators:

- Number of downloaded publications, number of printed and actually distributed publications;
- Number of participants to events;
- Number of press articles.

Project partners are asked to provide the Programme with a set of data / analytics regarding the performance of their project communication. In the Reporting chapter of the Programme manual, you will find detailed information about the type of data requested and how the Programme intends to collect them.

D. Drawing up my budget

i. Co-financing of operations

European Territorial Cooperation projects are projects co-financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds.

In the framework of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme, the Interreg grant (ERDF and IPA) represents 80% of the total eligible budget of the project; the remaining 20% of the budget is therefore borne by the partners who must ensure the co-financing of their activities by other sources of funding (own funds, private funds or national public funds).

The co-financing rate is the same for all partners (80%) regardless of their status and regardless of the possible State-aid scheme in which they choose to participate.

The part of the expenditures not reimbursed by the Interreg grant (20%) must be financed by each Lead Partner and project partner through a co-financing, which can take the following forms:

Public co-financing source:

- Own public contribution: national, regional, or local public funding provided directly from the public partners own funds or public equivalent;
- Automatic public contribution: national, regional, or local public funding, obtained through co-financing mechanisms specifically established by some Member States (Italy, Greece, Bulgaria[57]);
- Other public contribution: national, regional or local public funding provided by public or public equivalent institutions.

Private co-financing source:

- Private own contribution: private financing based on the private partners own funds;
- Other private contribution: private funding provided by private institutions not involved in the partnership;

[57] Concerned partners should contact their National Authority for more information on these co-financing mechanisms.

The nature and amount of the contribution of each Lead Partner and project partner, whether public/public equivalent or private, must be specified in the Application Form. All co-financing partners of the project (including the LP) must fill in and sign their own declaration (to be annexed to the Application Form, see application procedure).

ii. Costs to be paid in advance by project partners.

The Interreg Euro-MED Programme does not provide any advance of funds and operates according to a principle of reimbursement of costs which must first be committed and paid[58] by the partners and finally certified (controlled) by independent controllers. When an organisation decides to participate in an Interreg Euro-MED project, it must first ensure that it has sufficient cash flow to advance the funds to be received later. It must also ensure the implementation of the initial activities, using its own funds, so that the project can start effectively.

Once the funds have been paid out, the partners will have to consider unavoidable delays related to the expenditure reporting process (entry into the system, validation of the costs by the LP, certification by the various competent authorities and declaration to the Programme accounting authority) before receiving the effective reimbursement of expenditures on the bank account[59] indicated in Jems.

iii. Guiding principles

a) Project budget developed in close cooperation with partners.

Before writing the proposal, the Lead Partner must consult its partners in order to agree with them on the different aspects related to the budget. The budget distribution must reflect the transnationality of the project and allow each

[58] The amounts reimbursed by the Programme correspond to 80% of the costs declared by the partners, which, except for lump sums and flat-rates amounts, must all have been previously incurred AND paid by the partners.

[59] In order to reduce payment times as much as possible, the Interreg MED Programme has opted since 2014 for a payment of funds directly to project partners. The Lead Partner receives only the amounts corresponding to its own expenditure, the rest is paid directly to the partners by the Accounting Authority, on the bank account indicated in Jems.

partner to have enough budget to implement their activities according to the distribution of tasks as foreseen in the Application Form.

Before filling in the form on the system, each partner must agree individually, and at least with the LP (in charge of data entry in the monitoring tool), on:

- the origin and amount of co-financing provided by their institution,
- their share of the preparation costs,
- the method for reporting travel costs chosen for their staff and which will apply for any participation in subsequent Interreg Euro-MED projects. In accordance with the eligibility rules of the Programme presented in the dedicated chapter, each partner must choose a method for the reporting of travel and accommodation costs which will not be possible to change after the start of their first project and will remain effective for all Interreg Euro-MED projects in which they will participate. No change of method will be accepted after the start of the first project. The JS will check this point during the assessment of applications.
- the results of State-aid analysis, i.e. a self-assessment on State-aid, is foreseen in Jems and must be compiled by the LP in close cooperation with the partner. Where appropriate, the State-aid scheme applicable to the organisation is agreed with the partner.

The JS strongly recommends that Lead Partner applicants agree on these 4 points with each of their partners. The content of the Application Form should be re-checked by them as soon as the budget is entered on Jems and before validation of the proposal. Indeed, all data related to the above-mentioned elements will be locked once the Application is submitted, and part of those elements are included in the Partner Declaration signed by each applicant.

If the project is approved, any changes in these elements after the decision of the Programme Committee would have a significant impact on the project start-up phase.

b) Economy, Efficiency, Effectiveness

As set out in the Financial Regulation 2018/1046, certain key principles govern the use of EU funds and must be considered when preparing proposals and implementing projects:

- The principle of economy which requires that the resources used by the organisation to deliver their activities shall be made available in due time, in appropriate quantity and quality, and at the best price.
- The principle of efficiency which concerns the optimal balance between the resources used, the activities undertaken and the achievement of objectives.
- The principle of effectiveness which concerns the extent to which the objectives pursued are achieved through the activities undertaken.

Keeping these three principles of sound financial management in mind when drawing up the project budget (and incurring expenditure) is essential to build a reasonable and realistic budget.

Indeed, the total project budget must be in line with the work plan: the planned activities, deliverables, outputs and results, as well as the duration of the project and the number of partners.

/!\ Important point: the budget breakdown between the reporting periods in the Application Form (spending forecast included in the project spending plan in Jems in section D.3 of the application Form), must be elaborated by considering the actual spending capacity of the project (generally exponential) as well as the time needed for paying out and certifying costs incurred.[60]

c) Budget in Euros

The project budget must be drawn up in euros, as well as any declarations of expenditure that are sent to the MA/JS if the project is approved[61].

[60] See chapter III. D. "Financial flow and project financial performance"
[61] Details of how to convert expenditure in currencies other than euros are provided in the "Financial Issues" section of this Manual.

d) Cost categories to be considered.

The project budget must be structured around the 6 cost categories eligible for the Programme, the contents of which are detailed in the "Eligibility of expenditure" chapter of this Manual.

/!\ Important point: not too many external expertise and services costs

The Programme does not set a formal limit for "external expertise and services" costs. It is however recommended not to exceed 50% of the partner total eligible budget for this line, as the project is supposed to be implemented directly by the partners.

Project partners should also bear in mind that costs related to invited speakers, experts, target audience, etc; costs related to the travel and accommodation costs of associated partners also fall under this budget category.

e) Location of activities

It is expected that the activities implemented by the project are mainly targeted on the Interreg Euro-MED territory for a better impact on the cooperation area. Nonetheless:

- Travel made and activities carried out (including equipment located and operating) outside the Programme cooperation area but in an EU Member State are possible as long as they are in line with the project objectives.
- Travel made and activities carried out (including equipment located and operating) outside the Programme cooperation area and outside the EU are eligible only if they are expressly accepted by the JS.
- Infrastructures located outside the Programme cooperation area are not allowed.

f) Activities to budget

Communication component: no dedicated work package (WP) for communication is foreseen in the Application Form. However, communication activities must be budgeted for. Please note that you should not foresee any budget for the creation of a project logo; a subscription to a collaborative

project management tool; the development, hosting, and maintenance of your project website[62]. Indeed, the Programme provides the following services for free to all selected projects: logo, collaborative project management tool (Basecamp), website (WordPress). Nonetheless, the human resources needed to manage the website, the social networks and the Basecamp account management should be budgeted. Be careful not to underestimate them.

Management component: no WP dedicated to project management is foreseen in the Application Form, however, management activities must be budgeted for. The human resources needed for the implementation and coordination of project activities must be considered, as well as the reporting activities (content/progress and finances) or the implementation/development of any tools needed to monitor these elements.

Please note: *When working on your project proposal, please keep in mind that when applicable, the following activities should be included in the category "external expertise and services": audits to be carried out by partners (National Controller), project evaluation, subcontracting of management and communication activities, translation, organisation of project events and meetings, travel and accommodation of speakers, target audience institutional representatives, and associated partners.*

In addition, mandatory activities to be carried out by projects are mentioned in the dedicated section of the Manual[63]. These activities must be known by the partners and LP to be properly budgeted and foreseen in the work plan. It should be noted that additional elements may also appear in the Terms of Reference of each call.

- Carbon footprint monitoring: a tool for calculating the carbon emissions of activities is available to projects to calculate the carbon footprint of their activities. Costs dedicated to carbon footprint monitoring activities shall be budgeted.
- Contribution to the Results Amplification Strategy and to the Programme activities: each project must foresee the resources necessary for their contribution to the Results Amplification Strategy and to the Programme activities, according to the type of project to which they belong. As a minimum, each project must foresee the participation in two events per year and regular exchange of information between

[62] See part III. A. iv "Non-eligible costs" of this Manual
[63] See part I. C. ii. f) "Mandatory activities to be integrated in each proposal" of this Manual

projects and between project and Programme, as well as the creation of a short promotional project video.

g) VAT

According to Article 64 of Regulation (EU) No 2021/1060, Value Added Tax (VAT) is not eligible, except:

- for operations the total cost of which is below EUR 5 000 000 (including VAT);
- for operations the total cost of which is at least EUR 5 000 000 (including VAT) where it is non-recoverable under national VAT legislation;

In the framework of Interreg Euro-MED projects with a total cost of less than EUR 5 000 000 (including VAT), VAT is therefore eligible as part of project expenditure and all partners can foresee their expenditure with VAT.

Independently from the rule above mentioned, Partners participating to the project with an aid granted under GBER Art 20 cannot, under any circumstances, report value added tax (VAT) if it is refundable under their applicable national tax law.[64]

[64] See Chapter III. B. "State aid" of this Manual:

E. Submitting my application

This chapter outlines the main principles to be followed when submitting an application to the Interreg Euro-MED 21-27 Programme.

Please be aware that the Programme Monitoring Committee may propose different modalities for the submission of an application depending on the calendar, available envelop and objectives of the call; the specific elements of each call relating in particular to the expected partnership, the available budget, the priorities covered, the compulsory annexes as well as the modalities for the selection of proposals are detailed in the Terms of Reference of each call.

i. Jems: the Programme online monitoring tool

Applications to the Programme calls for projects are 100% dematerialized and must be submitted via the Programme online monitoring tool, Jems[65] (Joint Electronic Monitoring System), accessible at the following address: https://jems.interreg-euro-med.eu/.

The Application Form is completed and submitted on Jems. Similarly, the supporting documents required for the application must be completed (and scanned, when an original version manually signed exist) and uploaded as separate files to the monitoring tool. The submitted documents must be named clearly in English or French and cannot exceed 50Mb in size.

The content of the templates provided by the Programme and, where applicable, generated via Jems may not 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 by the Programme as long as it is recognised at national and European level; in case of doubt regarding the format, it is recommended to contact your National Authority (or the one of the partner concerned) to ensure the validity of the documents before submitting them to the Programme.

[65] In particular, Jems will be used for project administrative follow-up, for entering expenditure and reporting activities (at partner and project level), checking expenditure and certifying it. Each of the chapters of the Manual involving the use of Jems contains the necessary indications on the functionalities of the tool that must be activated. In addition, you will find a general presentation of Jems and its functionalities in Appendix D; in parallel, guides are available on the Programme's web page for each of the above-mentioned steps.

NB: in case of delegation of signature (proxy) and for any document, a proof of delegation must be uploaded with the signed document.

If applicable, the original paper version of the documents (signed and stamped where required) must be kept by the signatory in the project archive file.

ii. Submission of proposals

The Lead Partner is responsible for the application procedure on behalf of the whole project partnership. In order to access the Application Form, he/she must have access to the monitoring tool, Jems. This access is created by the Lead Partner[66] or provided by the Joint Secretariat depending on the type of call concerned (open or targeted).

/!\ Important point: It is important to ensure that the email address used for the creation of the account is easily accessible by the applicant(s) since this address will automatically be used by the system to receive any notification, confirmation, etc.

The application procedure generally consists of two main steps: the submission of an Application Form, to be filled in and validated in the Jems monitoring system, and, in a second step, the production of several compulsory annexes, which will be uploaded in the system. Therefore, please note that for each call two different deadlines must be respected.

a) Application Form

The Application Form must be filled in on the Jems monitoring tool in one of the two languages of the Programme, i.e. English or French.

For each call, a courtesy version (Word format) of the Application Form is made available to the public for information. This document specifies the content expected in the different sections of the form and can in no way be considered as a valid document for the submission of an application by the Lead Partner. In addition, a Jems guide containing indications and recommendations for completing and submitting the Application Form can be downloaded from the Programme website[67].

[66] Once you have entered your first and last name, email address and password, a confirmation link will be sent to the email address you have entered to activate your account. You will then be able to access the call for proposals for which you wish to apply. It is strongly recommended to use only one email address for all Interreg Euro-MED projects.

[67] Documents & tools - Programme Interreg Euro-MED (interreg-euro-med.eu)

A "pre-submission check"[68] is provided by the system. This check is activated by the Lead Partner and provides an overview of any missing or inconsistent data.

- A green tick indicates that the chapter has no anomalies;
- A red exclamation mark indicates chapters that need to be corrected by Lead Applicants before submission.

The Lead Partner should ensure that the check is run after validation of each key chapter of the form: if anomalies are identified, the relevant sections of the form should be modified, and the check should be re-run; major blocking points affecting the application may be flagged and would require significant revision and correction work in case of erroneous or missing elements.

It is important to bear in mind that an application cannot be submitted on Jems until the pre-submission check is valid.

When all sections of the Application Form have been corrected and completed, the Lead Partner can launch a last pre-submission check.

Once the pre-submission check is validated, the Lead Partner must submit the application on Jems before the deadline set for the call. The submission will only be effective after pressing the "Submit project application" button.

When the submission is made, a confirmation e-mail is automatically sent by Jems to the contact person entered in the Application Form (it is therefore imperative to ensure that the e-mail address is correct before final validation of the Application Form).

If the Lead Partner encounters any problem in filling in or validating the Application Form on Jems, they should contact the Joint Secretariat (programme@interreg-euro-med.eu) before the deadline for the submission of applications (Brussels time CET/CEST).

After submission, it is no longer possible to modify the Application Form.

Lead Partners are invited to keep the e-mail sent by the system confirming the time of submission of the Application Form (Brussels time CET/CEST).

[68] The pre-submission check is a feature set up on Jems, to flag, before validation, any missing information or information requiring significant revision or correction. This feature should be activated by the LP when drafting the proposal.

b) Annexes

Each LP and project partner must download from Jems[69] a declaration[70] generated via the online tool, sign it and upload it as an annex to the submitted Application Form. Before completing/signing the partner declarations, partners must check the information contained in the document.

The Lead Partner must ensure that the signed documents are provided by all project partners and comply with the Programme templates and signature standards.

Associated partners must sign an "associated partner declaration" generated via Jems confirming their willingness to take part in project activities according to the conditions of their status.

In the case of projects including investments[71], a Statement of Capacity and Compliance with the Principles for Investment[72], generated via Jems, must be signed by each project partner in charge of the implementation of the so-called investment(s) and submitted as an annex to the Application Form

Please be aware that the Programme Monitoring Committee may propose different modalities for the submission of an application depending on the calendar, available envelop and objectives of the call; the specific elements of each call, the compulsory annexes as well as the modalities for the selection of proposals are detailed in the Terms of Reference of each call.

[69] Documents should be generated directly from Jems once the application form appears under the status submitted.
[70] Courtesy version of the declarations (provided for information ONLY) are available on the Programme website.
[71] "Investment" as referred to in the Programme: part I. C. ii "Composition of a project" of this Manual
[72] Courtesy version of the statement (provided for information ONLY) is available on the Programme website.

F. Assessment of proposals and results

This section presents a summary of the main stages for processing your proposal once it has been presented to the Joint Secretariat.

The elements that are more specific to each call and that relate to the eligibility criteria as well as to the modalities of selection of the proposals are detailed in the technical datasheet integrated in the Terms of Reference of each call for proposals.

i. Appraisal of proposals

After submission, each Interreg Euro-MED proposal is subject to an appraisal procedure consisting of at least two stages, guaranteeing the principles of transparency and equal treatment, described below:

- Administrative and eligibility check of the Application (Annex I of the Terms of Reference of the different calls)
- Quality assessment phase (in one or two phases depending on the elements provided in Annex III of the Terms of Reference of the different calls)

Each of these stages may lead to the final elimination of the proposal. The Programme Committee is responsible for the decision concerning each stage.

ii. Project selection and communication of results

Decisions on project selection are taken by the Interreg Euro-MED Programme Committee on the basis of the results of the appraisal phase described above and the availability of the budget for each call.

After validation of the Programme Committee decision, the Lead Partner receives a communication from the Managing Authority[73] indicating whether the proposal is *eligible, ineligible*, and then *approved*, *approved with conditions* or *rejected*.

In case of disagreement with the decision of the Programme Committee and for information on the appeal procedure available to applicants, please refer to

[73] The communication from the Managing Authority is sent through email by the JS,

the Section "Legal Mechanisms", Chapter "Handling of complaints and disputes" of this Manual.

II. Implementing my project

A. Pre-contracting phase

After receiving the Managing Authority notification concerning their "approval", selected projects enter a pre-contracting phase, aiming to correct administrative issues and consolidate the project before the signature of the Subsidy Contract by the Lead Partner.

During this phase, the Lead Partner, in cooperation with the Joint Secretariat, makes the necessary adjustments to the Application Form to fulfil the potential conditions established by the Programme Committee and to correct any technical inconsistencies detected in the assessment phase.

The pre-contracting phase is based on Annex II "List of pre-contracting criteria" of the Terms of Reference of each call for proposals. "–This phase focuses as a minimum on the following points:

- Provide or update the name and contact details of project partners:
  - For each partner: legal representative and project coordinator
  - For the project as a whole: communication officer, finance officer, contact persons for monitoring of Result Amplification Strategy and for carbon footprint and a Data Controller and Data Protection Officer
- Enter or update the bank account details of all partners
- Provide or update compulsory documentation (upload the updated version of the declarations submitted during the application phase, if needed)
- Provide missing documentation
- For the lead partner and the partner(s) in charge of investment activities, carry out in cooperation with the JS the Climate and Environmental Objectives Assessment (DNSH)[74]
- Modify the Application Form to solve any minor technical issues and/or to integrate the adjustments[75] resulting from the assessment phase or from the Programme Committee recommendations/conditions.

[74] EU Regulation 2020/852

[75] This step includes the identification of the project's key productions (i.e. project key deliverables, investments and outputs) in cooperation with the JS, as well as the possible adjustment of the budget breakdown between the reporting periods in the Application Form (spending forecast included in the project

The fulfilment of the pre-contracting criteria is a condition for the signature of the Subsidy Contract. On completion of the pre-contracting phase, the "consolidated" application form becomes the new "approved version" of the Application form.

If two months[76] after the selection of the project, the issues highlighted during the pre-contracting phase and conditions are not fulfilled, the Programme Committee may decide to cancel the project or to withdraw the partner concerned.

i. Additional documentation

a) State Aid

All approved projects with partners applying under the "de minimis" State Aid regulation must provide an updated de minimis declaration, if the declared amounts have changed since the submission of the proposal.

b) International organisations acting under international law

Ad-hoc declaration accepting the requirements deriving from the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the regulations as well as the control systems and audits, applicable in the framework of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme as mentioned in section "Building your Consortium" of this manual. No template is provided by the Programme.

c) Partner located in a Region outside the Programme cooperation area and belonging to an EU Member State

In the case of partners located in a Region outside the Programme cooperation area and belonging to an EU Member State other than the 14 Interreg Euro-MED Programme States (e.g. partner located in Brussels, Berlin, etc.) additional documents may be requested by the Programme and must be provided in any case before signature of the Subsidy Contract between the LP and the MA.

spending plan in Jems in section D.3 of the application Form) considering the actual spending capacity of the project as well as the time needed for paying out and certifying costs incurred.

[76] 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 Programme Committee decision.

d) Investments activities foreseen by the partners or detected during project assessment:

In the case of projects including investments[77], a Statement of Capacity and Compliance with the Principles for Investment[78], generated via Jems, must be signed by each project partner in charge of the implementation of the so-called investment(s) and shall be at the latest, annexed to the Consolidated Application Form.

B. Contracting phase

The Programme's contractual documents are compulsory templates whose content cannot be modified under any circumstance. They are provided to each Lead Partner by its responsible project officer after validation of the consolidated application form and define the legally binding conditions relating to the funding, implementation and management of projects.

i. Contractual documents

a) Subsidy Contract

Once the information of the Application Form is consolidated in Jems, a Subsidy Contract is signed between the Conseil Régional Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur acting as the Managing Authority of the Programme and the Lead Partner of the approved project. The Subsidy Contract sets out the rights and responsibilities of the Lead Partner and the Managing Authority, as well as the main activities to be carried out and general conditions of the financing.
The Subsidy Contract is issued by the Joint Secretariat. A courtesy version of the template is available on the website of the Programme (www.interreg-euro-med.eu) and provided for information purposes only.

The Lead Partner must keep an original version of the Subsidy Contract signed by both parties as part of the audit trail of the project. The document is uploaded to Jems and made available to all project partners, along with any amendments if applicable.

[77] "Investment" as referred to in the Programme: part I. C. ii "Composition of a project" of this Manual
[78] PDF template available in the Programme website

b) Partnership Agreement

The Partnership Agreement formalises the organisation of the partnership and establishes the responsibilities of the partners between each other and towards the Lead Partner for the implementation of the project, in accordance with the approved Application Form. The Partnership Agreement is concluded between the Lead Partner and each partner involved in the project.

The Partnership Agreement is issued by the Joint Secretariat. A courtesy version of the template is available on the website of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme (www.interreg-euro-med.eu) and provided for information purposes only.

If the project Steering Committee decides in the internal rules to specify clauses in addition to the Partnership Agreement, it must be done without prejudice of the Partnership Agreement content.

The Partnership Agreement clearly states the so-called "Lead Partner Principle" for the operational management and coordination of the project and allows the Lead Partner to extend the liabilities of the Subsidy Contract to the level of each partner.

One copy of the Partnership Agreement is signed by the legal representative of each partner and the Lead Partner.

To speed up the signing of the Partnership Agreement, it is highly recommended that the Lead Partner sends by e-mail to each partner the Partnership Agreement to be signed by the legal representatives.

Once the document has been signed, the partner must send it to the Lead Partner.

If the document is signed by hand, the partner could send first the scanned version by email and then the original by post to the Lead Partner, who will keep it. The Programme recommends that, in the case of a document signed by hand, the Lead Partner ensures that a document attesting to the identity of the signatory and/or his ability to sign exists.

If the document is signed electronically, the dematerialization chain must imperatively be respected by retaining the original signed version thanks to a process that complies with the provisions of Regulation (EU) "eIDAS" (Electronic Identification and Trust Services Regulation) n°910/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of July 23, 2014 on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions within the internal market and repealing Directive 1999/93/EC.

Finally, the compilation of all the pages signed by each partner and countersigned by the Lead Partner will make up the validated Partnership Agreement.

In the event of litigation, the Lead Partner, in compliance with its national legislation, must be able to produce original handwritten signatures, scanned handwritten signatures accompanied by documents attesting to the identity of the signatory and/or his ability to sign, and original electronic signatures proving the use of a process complying with the provisions of the aforementioned Regulation (EU) "eIDAS" n°910/2014.

The Lead Partner must keep the full original version of the Partnership Agreement as part of the audit trail of the project. The document must be uploaded to Jems and made available to all project partners, along with any amendments if applicable.

ii. Preparation costs

When a part of the fix and compulsory preparation costs lump sum[79] is foreseen for determined partners in the Application Form, the corresponding amount is paid directly to the partners according to the breakdown agreed by the partners and indicated in the Application Form. The payment is ordered by the MA as soon as the Subsidy Contract is signed by both the Lead Partner institution and the Managing Authority.

In practice: after notification of the contract signed by both parties, the JS will formalise the request for reimbursement of project preparation costs,

[79] See part III A. ii. b) "Simplified cost options (SCOs)" of this Manual

according to the subdivision established in the approved Application Form, and submit the document directly to the Accounting Authority.

The payment corresponding to the amount of the preparation costs (€ 37,000 of total eligible budget) will be paid by the Accounting Authority to partners as indicated in the Application Form and according to the approved co-financing rate for each partner.

In case a project is not implemented or started, the Programme Monitoring Committee reserves the right to recover the Interreg funds already paid based on this lump sum.

C. Starting the project

i. Setting up the Project Steering Committee

Each project must set the necessary procedures for decision-making and coordination between the partners. For this reason, projects are requested to set up a Project Steering Committee, an internal body of the project, composed of representatives of all project partners.

The tasks of the Project Steering Committee include as a minimum:

- Monitoring and validating the project contents: verifying that the project implementation is in line with activities and outputs defined in the approved Application Form, and validating the quality of main project outputs and the progress towards achieving set objectives;
- Monitoring of project finances: monitoring the project budget and project spending;
- Review of the management performance and of the quality of progress reports 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 jeopardises 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 partnership change to the Programme Authorities;

- 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.

The setup of the project Steering Committee and the organisation of the first meeting must be ensured as early as possible, in order to be able to send the minutes to the JS, within three months after the project start date at the latest. The following points should be addressed:

- Approval of the rules of procedure of the Steering Committee, including the possibility to make decisions through written procedure;
- Establishment of management and coordination structures in charge of ensuring a sound management and coordination of the project; and confirmation of the contact persons for each partner (project coordinator for each partner, and communication officer, finance officer, contact persons for Result Amplification and for carbon footprint and a Data Controller and Data Protection Officer,);
- Clarification of obligations mentioned in the contractual documents to all the partners;
- Presentation of the main elements related to the qualitative aspects of the implementation of the project as well as of the sound administrative and financial management, eligibility of expenditure, control procedures, calendar of submission of payment claims and progress reports, and use of Jems.

The minutes of the first Steering Committee of the project establish the Steering Committee rules of procedures whilst describing in detail the management structure that guarantee the proper implementation of the project and mark the launch of project activities.

The approved minutes must be submitted within three months from the starting date of the project by the Lead Partner to the Joint Secretariat. The Programme also suggests that partners send the document to their National Contact Points.

ii. Creating partners account on Jems

This step may have already been completed during the application phase.

Each partner must access the Jems portal and create a profile on the platform. Once the contact has been created, they will automatically receive an email from Jems to activate their profile. It is then up to each partner to confirm their contact email to the Lead Partner in order to be attached to the project by the latter.

During the pre-contracting phase, the emails and bank details of each partner must be confirmed and, if necessary, updated or added in the system.

iii. Setting up the control process

In accordance with the terms and functions mentioned in Articles 74 (1a) of Regulation (EU) 1060/2021 and 45 (3) of Regulation (EU) 1059/2021, the "controller" (hereinafter national controller or NC) verifies the existence of the co-financed products and services, that the project complies with applicable law, and ensures the control of expenditures declared by the project partners. Each participating state (Member State or partner country) is responsible for the appointment of the national controllers and the controls on their territory and may have chosen either a centralised or a decentralised national control system.

At this stage, each partner should get in touch with their National Authority as soon as possible, to get informed about the procedures to be followed, i.e. the designation of a national controller for centralised systems, or the selection, appointment and approval of the national controller for decentralised systems.

Delays in this first contact can lead to delays in the reporting procedures which might have a negative impact on the financial flow of the project.

D. Events and training to support project partners and controllers:

After decision of the Monitoring committee on project selection, different types of events are organised by the Programme for each call for proposals. These events aim to inform and support partners of all approved projects[80] and their

[80] These events are also accessible to the coordination team of eventual projects approved under conditions.

controllers during project starting and providing them with the main skills necessary to implement their respective tasks.

In some cases, National Contact Points are organising meetings aiming to animate the national partnership and contributing to exchange of experience, transfer results etc. PPs may contact relevant NCPs and/or follow it on social media to stay tuned.

i. Lead Partners seminar:

A LP seminar is systematically organised by the Programme after the final selection phase to provide participants with key milestones to be considered when launching and implementing the project. During this event, the JS (and NCPs) give an overview of Programme organisation and inform participants about available tools and documents useful for project implementation. The JS also provides the projects coordination teams with general principles to be integrated in project management, and tips for monitoring project activities and partnership.

The seminar can be held online or on site and is always presented in one of the Programme official languages (French or English). This informative session is to be attended upon invitation (from the Programme or the national authorities). The participation to the Lead Partners Seminar is compulsory for the lead partner team and strongly recommended for project partners in charge of the coordination of project activities/tasks. Other project partners are free to attend the seminar as well. During this/these meetings, a time slot is scheduled for JS presentation and another time slot can be dedicated to participant interaction.

ii. National Controllers training:

a) Training organised by the JS

The JS can organise National Controller trainings; after the signature of the project subsidy contracts, while projects start their implementation phase. The training can be held online or on site and is always presented in one of the Programme official languages (French or English).

In that frame, an overview of Programme tools is provided by the JS who presents the reporting and certification processes as well as the role of each actor within them. On this occasion a presentation of the main

Programme rules and key documents is done based on projects contractual documents and Programme Manual. Finally, the National Controller training is also the occasion to have exchange on Jems and Basecamp functionalities.

Before the meeting, it's highly recommended that NCs have a look at the Programme Manual and get access to Jems to enrich the exchange of information during those sessions.

The JS is not habilitated to give any input on the applicability and content of national rules on eligibility, in that sense, NCs are invited to contact their NCP or their National Authority to clarify their doubts on specific national issues.

b) NCs trainings organised in the Euro- MED area:

In the framework of the Interreg Programmes, participating states are responsible of their national control system[81]. In that sense, trainings can also be organised by the National Authority or responsible authority in charge of National Control (with the optional participation of the JS) for each country to the attention of the National Controllers based in their territory.
Depending on each national system, the NC trainings can be organised on a regular basis during the whole programming period, or after selection of new projects by the Monitoring Committee. The training can be held in one of the Programme official languages (French or English) or in the participating national/country language.
From one programme to another, tools and practices can vary, in that sense, the participation to these trainings is strongly recommended for any National Controller in charge of the verification of costs for partners participating to an Interreg Euro-MED project.

/!\ Important point: in some cases, the participation of Controllers to these training is compulsory to obtain/keep valid their national agreement. Please contact your National Authority in charge of National control for more information: National Controllers - Programme Interreg Euro-MED (interreg-euro-med.eu)

[81] Art 46 of ETC regulation + Who we are?

E. Project reporting and Joint Secretariat monitoring

The implementation of an Interreg Euro-MED project is structured around project activities, key deliverables and outputs delivery according to a workplan agreed within the partnership and with the JS following reporting periods of 6 months[82]. The reporting schedule[83]. and all main steps of projects implementation are integrated on Jems in agreement with the JS during the pre-contracting phase. Through the signature of the project contractual documents, project partners commit themselves to implement the activities on a timely and accurate way.

The payment of the Interreg fund is conditioned by the monitoring held by the JS. It will be based on project's progress and formalised through project reports submitted via Jems , at the latest by 3 months after the end of each reporting period, based on the reporting schedule settled for each project (except for the last reporting period, see point i.a) here after).

i. Project reporting

The reporting procedure is an obligation settled in the project's contractual documents and a key element for monitoring the implementation of projects and comparison of the project's progress and achievements in coherence with the approved application form. A timely and complete reporting is mandatory and the first step to get the project's expenditure reimbursed in time.

a) General framework

Project partners are responsible for implementing their activities and for contributing to Project Report (PR) completion by informing the LP on their achievements (through, among other means, Partner Reports)[84]. This chapter details reporting procedures for expenditures and activities and the procedure foreseen by the Programme to review the project performance.

The LP is responsible for the sound implementation of activities and to gather the partners' reports and productions to guarantee timely and complete

[82] Please note that depending on the project duration, the last reporting period can be shorter or longer than 6 months.
[83] Reporting periods (reporting schedule) are established on Jems under section "contracting> project reporting schedule".
[84] Cf to the Partnership Agreement signed by all project partners.

submission of the PR and related material) to the JS. The LP has a 3-month timeframe,[85] following the end of the reporting period to:

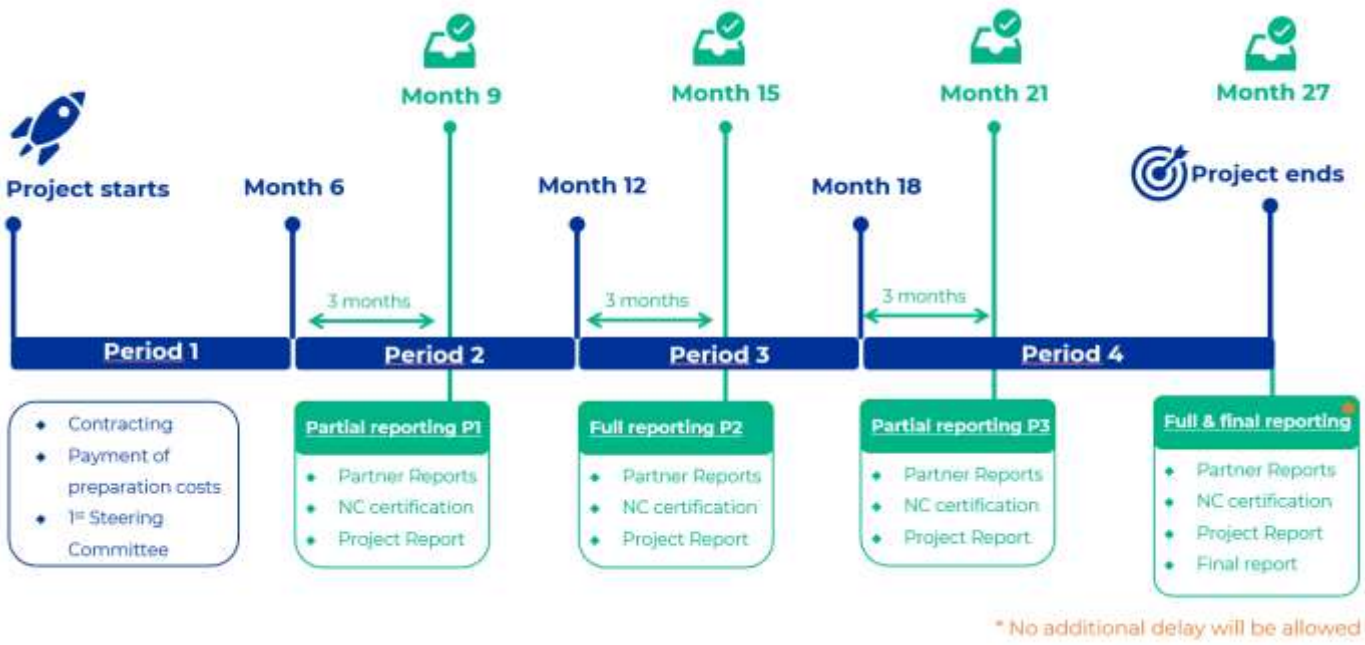
- Collect information regarding activities implemented and key deliverables produced at partners and project level,
- Verify that partners' expenditures are certified in time (incl. LP own expenditures),
- Check the conformity of reported activities and certified expenditure with the forecast integrated in the Application Form,
- Accept (or reject) the partner's Control certificate and Report through Jems and fill-in, when necessary, the ineligible expenditures report with the list of costs to be corrected by the JS (see point iv here below: Project reporting package)
- Ensure the availability of signed national Control Certificates and Reports of the partners (with national validations if required[86]) in Jems,
- Fill in the Project Report through Jems, including, during full reporting, the upload of outputs and key deliverables.
- Fill in the Payment claim through Jems,
- Submit the Reporting Package to the JS.

In that context each LP must establish in advance and in agreement with the whole partnership the intermediary deadlines for the reception of partners contribution[87]. All reporting templates are embedded in Jems and courtesy versions of the documents are available on the Programme website[88] . Technical information on the use of Jems concerning the declaration of expenditure, certification and completion of the reports is provided in the dedicated guidelines[89].

[85] The three months' timeframe foreseen for the preparation of PR does not apply to the last reporting period and project final reporting package must be submitted on Jems no later than the project end date: see figure 1 here below) + Chapter II. H. "Closing my project" of the present manual.
[86] National validation is a compulsory requirement foreseen by the National Control system in Spain
[87] As a good practice, PPs should try to provide their contribution (partner report and signed certificate and report) to the LP within one month before the deadline in order to allow LP time to synthesize the data and prepare the reporting package.
[88] https://interreg-euro-med.eu/en/documents-tools/
[89] Link to Jems guideline

Figure 1: Project reporting timeline

Project implementation (example of a 27 months project)



ii. Partner report

Project partners are provided with the access to the reporting section on Jems after approval of the project by the Monitoring Committee and upon signature of the Subsidy Contract between the LP and the MA.

The first step is the information inserted at partner level about both the progress made concerning the delivery of activities and the related expenditures. This information entry is formalised through a "partner report" completed in Jems.

The Partner report is a document redacted in the Programme working language: English or French and composed of two parts, a first one dedicated to activity reporting and a second one related to partners expenditures. This document would provide the National Controller (here after as NC) and then the LP with relevant information on partner activities during the reporting period and related list of expenditures.

a) Activity reporting

Project partners (including the LP) reports on-line on the progress made in the relevant reporting period compared to what was agreed in the project consolidated application form and within the partnership. The Partner Report is compulsory for any partner reporting costs in a related reporting period. In such a case, project partners must at least complete the **"Report identification" section** in Jems to highlight eventual problems or deviations. The LP may request additional information if agreed at project level.

b) Financial Reporting

- External Contracts and public procurements[90]

Before reporting any expenditure related to an external contract the project partner must create the corresponding external contract in a dedicated tab in Jems on the partner report. When introducing costs in the list of expenditures, each cost related to an external contract must be assigned to its corresponding contract.

- List of expenditures

As part of the partner report, each single partner must fill-in in Jems a list of expenditures coherent with the developed activities and submit them to the NC through Jems. The supporting documents constituting the financial audit trail of the project must be provided to the controller but retained by the partners and made available in the event of a subsequent audit. Each controller agrees with the controlled partner on the modalities of transferring the information in agreement with the concerned national Authority (when applicable) and, where appropriate, in accordance with the applicable IT security rules (in the expenditure list in Jems, through other secure platform, email transmission, video conference). The original version[91] of any supporting document is kept at the partner premises.

Partner's NC verifies the eligibility of declared expenditures[92] and includes them in a National Control certificate and Report.

[90] Section external Contract on Jems must be filled-in as soon as a formal contract is signed between a PP and an external provider. (not needed for limited amount only justified by a bill/ticket)
[91] The concepts of electronic signature and original version of a document are detailed in the present manual under section I. E. i. "Jems: the Programme online monitoring tool" of this Manual
[92] See chapter III.E "Controls, audits and verifications" of this Manual.

Throughout the reporting period, each partner is recommended to regularly enter expenditures in Jems. This allows an easy tracking of the progress made while reducing bottlenecks before the deadline for submission of the reports to the NC.

IMPORTANT: Reporting according to the deadlines and adhering to spending targets are contractual obligations that concern all project partners. Projects and partners lagging behind their spending plan risk losing their funds if there is insufficient spending on Programme level (see information on chapter III. D. ii "Decommitment ").

Should a partner not be able to produce a National Control certificate and Report in time, expenditures can be submitted in the following Reporting package.

iii. National Control certificate and report

After the partner has submitted the partner report in Jems, the NC assigned can start the verification work. This process is formalised in Jems though the COMPULSORY completion of the Controller checklist and the signature of the Controller certificate and control report.

The control must be finalised in Jems and related Control certificate and report must be generated by the controller, signed[93] and made available to the partner (and national authority in charge of the validation if required) through section Control Report of the corresponding Partner Report of Jems.

In the case of Spanish partners an additional step is to be considered when issuing the finalised certificate. The national control system requires a national validation issued by the relevant ministry, which must be attached to the certificate for it to be considered valid (see chapter III. E. "Controls, audits and verifications" of the present Manual).

iv. Project reporting package: Project Report and payment claim

[93] Electronic signature is accepted by the Programme, please refer to chapter I. E "Submitting my application" of this Manual.

Every 6 months[94], the LP must draw up a reporting package, based on the material provided by the partners. The reporting package consists of the following elements:

- A Project Report (PR) submitted on Jems
- The Payment Claim (PC) document downloaded from Jems in PDF version and uploaded as an annexe to the PR
- An ineligible expenditure report template filled-in by the LP (in case of ineligible costs detected by the LP)
- All partners control certificates (with the control checklist filled-in and validated by the NC + any eventual MS checklist) uploaded on Jems

The Reporting Package must be submitted by the LP through Jems within 3 months after the end of the reporting period[95].

The Project Report (here after PR) is filled in by the LP based on the information gathered from the aforementioned single partner reports.

The LP is responsible for the PR and should report the completed activities, key deliverables and outputs produced during the concerned period through a summary approach, reporting the situation of the project progress as a whole.

Jems contains one single model of Project Report but depending on the reporting phase ("full reporting" or "partial reporting" phase) the quantity of sections to be completed by the LP concerning project activities varies.

For each reporting period, the Lead partner must complete the "**Report identification" section** of the Project Report in Jems.

The entire PR (i.e all sections of the document) shall be completed only in the framework of the full reporting phase and for the last reporting period of the project. The main information requested during the "**partial reporting**" concerning project's implementation is the Project report Identification tab:

- Highlights of main achievements
- Justification of possible deviations from original plan (where relevant) and eventual problems that occurred during the reporting period
- Expenditure profile of the partner(s)

During the "**full reporting**" additional information is expected:

[94] Please note that depending on the project duration, the last reporting period can be shorter or longer than 6 months, reporting periods are established on Jems under the "reporting schedule" settled for each project

[95] The three months' timeframe foreseen for the preparation of Reporting package does not apply to the last reporting period see figure 1 here above + see Chapter II. H. "Closing my project" of the present manual

- Target groups reached
- Level of achievement of the project specific objectives
- Level of achievement of the project communication objectives
- Progress towards the project outputs and results
- Description of activities and partners involvement per work package
- Key deliverables finalised, progress towards outputs achievement[96] and finalised outputs.
- Level of achievement of Horizontal Principles

Information provided should be clear and concise but exhaustive and in line with the Application form. A report of good quality allows a more efficient and smoother assessment by the JS and speeds up the reimbursement process.

Any deviation from the initial work plan should be explained. Deviations from the AF may be possible if they comply with the Programme rules[97] and provided they are duly justified in the relevant sections of the report. The LP fill-in through Jems the PR that gathers the information from each single partner's Control certificate and report and allows a summary information to be delivered to the JS. Any incoherence compared to the project financial objectives as set out in the Subsidy Contract should be explained and justified by the LP.

After validation of the PR, a payment claim document must be generated through the system and attached as an annex to each PR in order to formalise the request for reimbursement from the LP, on behalf of the partnership. The document contains a statement from the LP concerning the accuracy and completeness of the documents presented and should be generated through Jems[98] and uploaded again among Project Report annexes.

/!\ Important point: By validating the Payment Claim, the LP undertakes to have checked all the points and documents stated in the declaration for its partner report and for all the partner reports included in the reporting package.

[96] During project's implementation, a description of the progress toward outputs achievement is expected but the number corresponding to the reached outputs should be filled in only ONCE and during the final reporting period.
[97] Cf chapter II. G. "Amending my project" of this Manual.
[98] Electronic signature is accepted by the Programme, please refer to section I chapter E of this Manual.

After the project's completion, the reporting process is finalised through the submission of a last PR on Jems by the Lead Partner[99].

v. Reporting on deliverables, outputs and results

In addition to the reporting procedure in Jems, the project must provide evidence of implemented activities.

The reporting process is completed by the deposit on Jems of finalised key productions[100] at each full report. Evidence of finalised project outputs, results and key deliverables are assessed by the JS in the framework of the Reporting package assessment and validated (or sent back) to the partnership depending on the quality and coherence of the material with the AF. Once validated, and if they have been modified, the final versions of projects key productions can be re-uploaded in Jems The most valuable outputs and key deliverables will be promoted in the Programme Library after JS assessment.

Project's key productions should be self-sufficient, include some metadata information and follow visibility requirements[101] in line with the Programme rules (Euro-MED programme logo, EU logo/flag, EU funding indication, etc.)

For each production, projects should follow reporting requirements and criteria set by the Programme[102].

As a reminder, the chosen indicators to reflect the actions of this programming period are:

Outputs indicators:	RCO83: Strategies and action plans jointly developed
	RCO116: Jointly developed solutions
	RCO87: Organisations cooperating across borders
Results indicators:	RCR79: Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations
	RCR104: Solutions taken up or up scaled by organisations

[99] Courtesy version will be made available on the programme website + see Chapter II. H. "Closing my project" of this Manual.
[100] Programme "key productions" are identified and agreed with the JS during the precontracting phase. The consolidated version of the application form only includes project "key productions".
[101] See part III. A. viii. "Project branding and information and publicity rules" of this Manual
[102] The reporting requirements and criteria set by the Programme are detailed in Annex G of the present Manual

PSI1: Organisations with increased institutional capacity due to their participation in cooperation activities across borders

At project completion, the LP will have to fill-in, in Jems, the number corresponding to the reached outputs and achieved results.

In this framework, partners shall fill-in the Programme compulsory output validation factsheet for RCO116 solutions, RCO83 strategies and action plans, RCR 104 solutions uptaken/upscaled, RCR79 joint strategies and action plan uptaken.

vi. Reporting on communication activities

In order to measure the Programme's communication impact, the project performance in terms of communication is included in the Programme communication strategy. Project partners are requested to draft a communication strategy (see related Chapter) and to implement the compulsory communication activities foreseen by the Programme to promote their project.

In this context, project partners are requested to provide the Programme with a series of data[103] that will help the Programme evaluate its global impact.

These data must be provided once a year by means of an online form to be completed[104]. The respect of the rules of branding and communication established by the European regulations and the Programme must always be ensured by the partners in order to avoid any risk of ineligibility[105].

vii. Reporting on carbon footprint:

The EU aims to be climate-neutral by 2050 (European Council endorsement dated Dec. 2019). This objective, at the heart of the European Green Deal and the 2030 climate and energy framework, is regularly revised upwards, setting new emission reduction targets by 2030.

[103] The list of data that project partners shall collect and send is available in Annex G of the present Manual
[104] The online form for data collection will be made available by the Programme once a year and a notification will be sent to Lead partners, with a link toward the form
[105] See part III. A. viii. "Project branding and information and publicity rules" of this Manual

In this perspective the Programme intends to promote a systematic approach to measure and reduce carbon emissions and provides a tool for the calculation and monitoring of emissions.

To provide a continuous carbon footprint assessment of the project activities, all partners participating in project activities must contribute to the carbon footprint calculation. Thus, under the responsibility of the coordinator for carbon footprint appointed for each project, the project partners are asked to assess for each reporting period the carbon footprint balance of their project activities by using the tool provided by the Programme.[106] For each reporting period from 2024 onwards, the CO2 report generated online by the tool should be uploaded on Basecamp under the responsibility of the carbon footprint coordinator.

Furthermore, during the full reporting the carbon footprint coordinator provides the JS with an analysis of the compiled partners data stating the evolution of the project carbon footprint emissions since the begin of the project and providing an outlook on follow-up measures foreseen, which should be in line with the recommendations provided by the carbon footprint tool. (https://carbonfootprint.interreg-euro-med.eu/).

viii. Joint Secretariat monitoring

a) Assessment and acceptance of the reporting package

Assessment made in a two-step process

After receiving the notification concerning the submission of the complete Project Report by the LP, the JS carries out a first administrative check on submitted documents, to ensure that the procedure for costs reporting by project partners has been done in conformity with the Programme rules and respect the national control system of each participating State and that compulsory sections of the activity report are completed.

The administrative check of the control documentation by the JS is performed on each Reporting Package.

A payment claim is receivable only if the signed[107] NC certificates and checklists (and eventual national validation) have been submitted and correctly filled-in ,

[106] https://carbonfootprint.interreg-euro-med.eu/
[107] The electronic signature is accepted by the programme, please refer to chapter I. E. "Submitting my application" of this manual.

and uploaded on Jems when preparing the financial part of the PR. Should a Certificate not be available at the time of submitting a Project Report on Jems, it can always be included in the following Reporting Package, except in the case of the final Reporting Package.

Then the JS proceeds with a coherence check, held on a risk-based approach and based on the available list of expenditure of each project partner and including a focus on reported activities. In this step, the control certificates and report are checked together with the checklist issued by controllers and the list of expenditure.

In case of incomplete information or eventual incongruency with the Work Plan, the JS informs the LP of any necessary revision or need of further information and respective documents. LP are notified by the JS and must provide missing information or material within 15 working days. In principle only 2 submissions (first and completed) are foreseen in this phase. In case of persisting incompleteness, the report, partner certificate or cost can be rejected and postponed until the next reporting deadline. They shall be submitted together with the following PR considering the revisions requested by the JS. Reporting deadlines cannot be postponed.

After this check confirming the respect of programmes rules and circuits, the coherence of all supporting documents and the respect of the reporting procedure timeframe, the JS closes the checking procedure.

Assessment of key deliverables, outputs and results:

The project's key productions are reviewed by the JS on a continuous basis in order to allow the smooth development of projects activities. To this aim, the key deliverable/output is officially "validated" and uploaded in Jems during the nearest full report assessment after finalisation of the key deliverable/output. However, it is recommended to share final versions with the JS prior to formal submission to verify its compliance with the Programme communication principles and minimum content requirements, by using, , the following link Request for an express approval of the JS - Programme Interreg Euro-MED (link active only after being logged on the Programme website)

Validation and payment procedure

The MA validates the JS verifications, prepares the payment order, and addresses it to the AcA that carries out the payments directly to each partner.

b) Project daily monitoring

To guarantee an optimal execution of the project, the JS is regularly in contact with the project LP and monitors project performance and partnership cohesion during the implementation phase on a continuous basis. This daily monitoring is part of the risk-based approach adopted by the JS and relies on:

- JS interaction with the LP and within the project partnership
- Material provided through the Project's website
- Interaction between thematic and Governance projects

In that sense, a smooth flow of information between LPs and project officers within the JS is essential for a successful project implementation. This contact is developed through regular exchanges regarding all aspects of the project life. This flow of information requires a good level of responsiveness to the eventual JS requests and close cooperation on the resolution of any pending issue.

In project daily management, the interaction takes form at different levels: bilateral contacts LP-JS, ad-hoc meetings with the whole partnership, or specific LP-JS meetings with the participation of any other project partner concerned by the subject.

The National Contact Points (NCPs) play a central role in the Interreg Euro-MED Programme, particularly when addressing any national issues that arise. They serve as pivotal intermediaries, facilitating communication and problem-solving. For instance, if the Lead Partner faces a problem involving a specific partner, the Joint Secretariat (JS) and the relevant NCP are engaged in the discussions to ensure a coordinated and effective resolution. The involvement of the NCP ensures that national perspectives and regulations are considered, fostering smoother collaboration and enhancing the overall success of the Programme. Their expertise and local knowledge are valuable in navigating complex national contexts and ensuring the Programme's objectives are met efficiently

c) Online tools for day-to-day follow-up of project progress

Basecamp is provided by the Programme as a free platform to be used for deliverables storage, project management and it also constitutes an essential tool for monitoring and control purposes and to consider possible adjustments to the project's work plan. Thus, it's a responsibility of the LP to ensure the

regular upload of relevant material and the consistent use of Basecamp by the full partnership.

The JS access on a regular basis the Basecamp platform, to check project material, and general progress.

Basecamp aims to be a key tool for the implementation of the project since it allows internal communication and exchange of working documents in the project. Accurately recorded information contributes to speed up the PR check and payment process.

The implementation of activities by the partnership should be legible on Basecamp, as this space is regularly checked by the JS for monitoring purposes. The Basecamp should include all relevant documents needed by the Programme as the Steering Committee meetings minutes, the express approvals from the JS, the modification requests, working documents, photos of project equipment and infrastructures, etc.

In parallel, the LP shall ensure the regular upload of relevant material and key deliverables and outputs on the project website that is regularly consulted by the JS.

d) Interaction between thematic and Governance projects

The interaction of a project within the mission it belongs to is another indicator of good project management; in that sense thematic projects and governance projects must keep each other regularly updated about their respective implementation and collaborate closely. Thematic projects must be responsive to requests from the Governance projects and try to contribute to their activities. The JS must be informed of any problem or blocking issue.

In that framework, the JS monitors closely all flows of information, and the lack of effective interaction could be considered a risk factor for the success of the project.

e) Project performance and monitoring of project risks

During the implementation phase of the project, the JS evaluates the level of **risk in the project's performance**, based on some pre-defined risk factors:

- Project composition (partnership dimension and total awarded budget)

- Difficulties on the project day to day management or in partnership functioning
- Absence of Payment Claims, (if expenses were foreseen in the AF)
- Persistent under-consumption[108] respect to the financial plan of the AF
- Lack of expenses from a Partner in a recurrent way and without justification in view of the work plan
- Lack of participation or contribution to the activities of the Governance projects when such participation or contribution has been required
- Major delays in the implementation of activities
- Website not regularly updated (project description, news, events, media kit)
- Underperformance in the communication indicators with respect to the pre-defined objectives
- Existence of investment in the AF

In case one or more of those factors are noticed, the JS may organise an ad-hoc interview with the project. In this meeting, the main achievements and problems, as well as eventual modifications, may be discussed.

For the Governance projects, this interview takes place every two years in connection with the Work Plan update and, regardless of the presence or not of any of the factors listed above.

In presence of high level of risk, these interviews can take place at any moment of project's implementation.

Should it become evident that a project will not spend the maximum amount of subsidy granted by the Programme within the conditions and timeframe initially foreseen and according to the communication obligations stated in the Regulation[109], the JS may propose to the Monitoring Committee to reduce the amount granted accordingly. In such a case, the LP, in cooperation with the JS, would propose a project modification and once validated by the MC, an official communication is sent to the LP and, when applicable, an amendment is prepared and signed.

[108] Project financial performance will be based on section D.3 of the consolidated AF, in Jems and measured exclusively based on accepted payment claim and certified costs (not yet included in a payment claim) minus the amount of irregularities and recoveries (if applicable). In case the LP requests fewer funds on behalf of the project, than the commitment indicated in the AF, the difference is to be considered under risk and in cases where the difference would be observed on more than one payment claim, the under consumption would be qualified as "persistent".
[109] Art 36.6 of ETC regulation

NB: to ensure a good budget performance and limit the risk of facing a budget reduction during project lifetime the following are to be kept in mind:

- The project partners shall be in permanent contact with their NC and NA so as to ensure that the expenditures can be certified in time;
- The financial performance of the project partners is strictly linked to project activities, and both shall be monitored closely and regularly by the LP and presented to the partnership in the framework of the project steering committee.
- Any adjustments (or when necessary, update of the AF) should be done in time and in cooperation with the JS in order to avoid last minute procedures.

ix. Additional aspects related to the monitoring of Governance Projects

In addition to the procedures applying to all projects, the monitoring of governance projects is based on some specific milestones and management steps stated in the ToRs and hereafter detailed. Those specific aspects, shared by all Governance projects are different from the usual reporting tasks and timeframes and a specific follow-up is setup by the JS. The basis for this follow-up stands in good cooperation expected between projects and the JS, as well as a good flow of information between projects within the same mission:

- Provided their transversal aspects, the total budget committed, their wide partnership dimension and the global structure of governance projects, these are considered as "risky operations" and will be systematically subject to the JS interview every two years as mentioned above.

- All Governance Projects must perform a co-assessment with the JS on the progress of implemented activities and update the work plans considering the work plans of the paired project. This co-assessment is held within the timeframe established by the JS and take the form of an interview. This co-assessment will lead to a project update that may result in a modification process and could lead, if applicable, to the

signature of an amendment. The work plan update may be an occasion for a change within the partnership and/or a budget adjustment.

- All Governance projects must consider contributing to the UfM (Union for the Mediterranean) semestrial report. Following the obligation drawn from the labelling of the governance projects this report is drafted and submitted by the JS with the contribution of the Governance projects.

- After the end of each semester, each Mission provides the JS with a summary of main activities and events performed and planned, based on a template provided by the JS.

- Thematic Community projects (TCP) are expected to report on the Contribution of the Thematic Projects to the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. To this aim TCPs must agree on a methodology to collect and report on this contribution.

- All Governance Projects must participate in the data collection needed to perform the assessment of the Results Amplification Strategy (RAS) of the Programme (perform surveys, provide statistical data, etc.) Among the data the JS intend to collect and process in the framework of the RAS, the Governance Projects should assist in the collection of the data[110] through a questionnaire sent by the JS once a year (together with Communication related data) or through the analysis of data collected via the Euro-MED Academy that will be co-managed between the JS and the governance projects.

F. Project websites and tools

i. The Interreg Euro-MED web platform

The communication approach focuses on (expected) results rather than on processes or simple outputs. Each project is part of a Mission to which they contribute. The Programme developed a single web platform where all project websites including Missions and Programme websites are hosted. Once their project approved, project partners will receive a ready-to-use website they will

[110] the list of data that Governance projects shall collect and analyse is available in Annex G iii of the present Manual

be able to customise and edit as they wish. For this reason, no website development nor hosting costs should be foreseen by project partners.

NB: A checklist with compulsory items and features (project description, news, events, media kit…) is provided upon delivery of the website.

a) Architecture

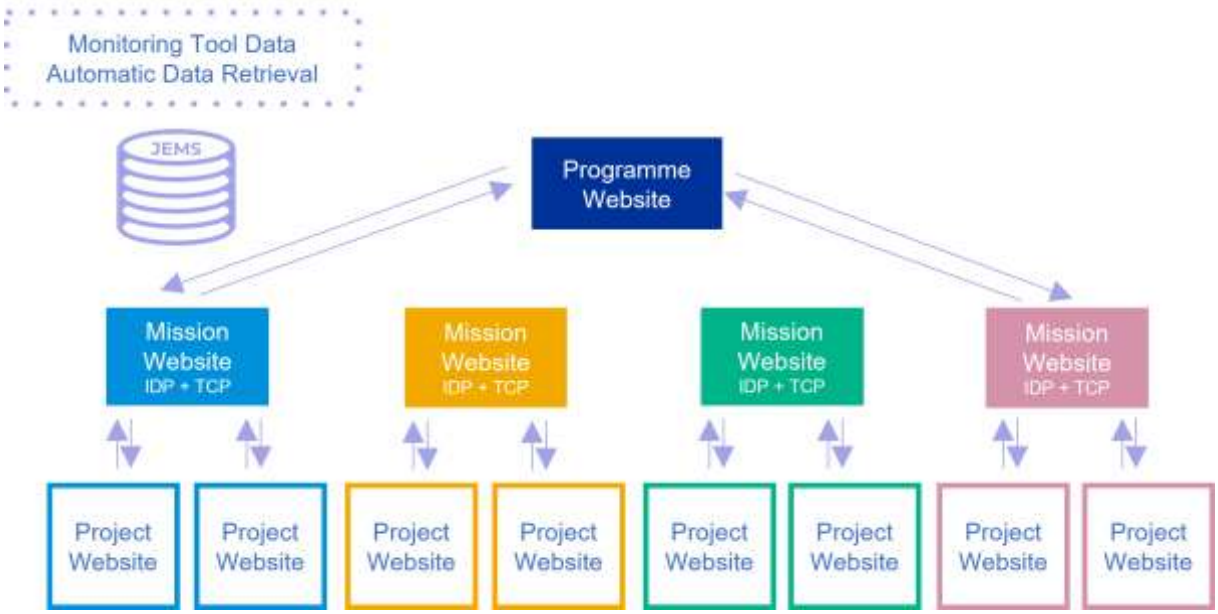
What does the web platform consist of?

The web platform is the main communication hub and promotional tool for the Programme, in that sense, a special attention should be paid to its frequent updating and layout.

The web platform is structured in order to reflect the Programme architecture and integrate the following elements:

- The Interreg Euro-MED Programme website;
- 4 websites, one dedicated to each of the four Programme Mission: Innovative Sustainable economy, Natural resources, Green living areas and Sustainable tourism.
  Important : Governance Projects from a same mission share a single website in order to gather in a single place the comprehensive information regarding a mission, be it technical or policy related.
- Project websites (each one being linked to a related “mission” website);

FIGURE 1: Architecture of the Web Platform



All websites are hosted on a single web platform to guarantee a homogeneous approach. They all share the same features as well as a similar design.

Projects websites are provided with a menu template and some contents and features that can be modified by the partners.

b) Main objectives:

With this common approach on design and implementation of the project's website and the "ready to use" websites delivered to the partners, the Interreg Euro-MED Programme intends to:

- Harmonise all websites of the Programme (organisation, layout, content, user interfaces and navigation experience);
- Facilitate the navigation from one website of the web platform to another for all Programme and external stakeholders;
- Help partners ensure compliance of their website with the European Commission and Programme publicity rules (main features appearing on all websites; publication of specific compulsory information according to the regulation, etc);
- Reduce website development and hosting costs by providing project partners with a standard website integrating the functionalities necessary for the project life and adaptable to project evolution and to each project type;

- Offer project technical tools to facilitate the transfer and analysis of data through common formats and technologies (calendar, directory, documents, etc.).

For the Programme the main objectives are to:

- Ensure the durability and transferability of projects' productions in their context and in time, even after the programming period;
- Facilitate and automatise the collection of data present in the project websites, spread information at Mission and Programme level and the production of statistics (directories, calendars, documents (maps, databases … etc.), news and events;
- Improve pedagogical materials and Programme support to project partners by providing them with similar tools as well as customised resources and technical support;
- Develop internal dashboards to the attention of JS and Programme key stakeholders (National Authorities, Controllers, National Contact Points, etc.) summarising data from the project websites and from the monitoring tool.

c) Technical specificities

All websites run on Wordpress, a user-friendly support known by the majority of the partners, and are based on the Divi template. A specific Divi template was designed for each type of websites: Programme, Mission and project, allowing for customisation.

The following features can be found on all websites:

- News
- Event calendar
- Event management tool
- Form Tool
- Page
- Multiple profile accounts (Administrator, contributor and subscriber)
- Deliverable library
- Open street map feature
- Forum
- FAQ and Glossary
- Directory of individuals and institutions
- Search

- Multimedia galleries
- Dashboards and monitoring tools
- Analytics
- Bug tracker

d) User manual and tutorials

Project partners are provided with guidelines, a user manual and video tutorials to help them manage their project website. All training materials are available for download on the Programme website[111].

ii. Basecamp

a) Objective

In order to ease the projects' day to day work and ensure a good communication and transfer of information between all Programme stakeholders and levels (programme authorities and projects under their missions), the Programme opted for the Basecamp.

Once approved, each project gets its own Basecamp workspace. To do so, the Communication Unit of the Programme ensures the creation of the Basecamp users and "Basecamp workspace", based on the contact information provided in Jems.

NB: The "Partner account" does not allow adding new users to a workspace nor creating new "Basecamp projects". During project implementation and in case of change among the staff appointed to a project, Jems must be updated, and partners shall inform the JS by using a dedicated form (https://interreg-euro-med.eu/en/basecamp-account-creation/)to add new users to their workspace.

Through Basecamp, project partners can exchange information, documents and draft deliverables. Basecamp is mostly provided as a working tool between project partners, and with the respective Governance projects; the JS does not intervene in the tool but use it to access to project documentation and implementation progress.

[111] Documents & tools - Programme Interreg Euro-MED (interreg-euro-med.eu)

b) Features

Once a partner is granted with a "Partner account", he has access to a workspace containing the following features:

- Message board,
- Shared agenda,
- To-do's,
- Group and private chats,
- Documents and file storage.

Other workspaces

For collaboration purposes, project partners may be invited by the JS to join more Basecamp workspaces other than the one of their projects (Mission workspace, Programme communication workspace or the Result Amplification Strategy workspace). In that case, an invitation is sent by the responsible person directly to the user identified as referent to the matter on Jems.

c) User manual

Guidelines to manage the Basecamp workspace are available on Reference Documents - Programme Interreg Euro-MED (interreg-euro-med.eu).

G. Amending my project

During the life of a project, the partnership may face some unforeseen events or identify new needs that suppose a deviation of project activities/budget. In this context PPs and LPs may have to get a formal "express approval" from the concerned project officer or to submit a "request for modification" of their application form (modification of key project dates, information relating to the partnership, addition of activities for which the express approval of the JS is required in accordance with the rules of the Programme [112] etc).

In accordance with the Subsidy Contract, it is the responsibility of the PPs and the LP to keep the JS informed upstream of any deviation relating to the implementation of activities and/or the budget to confirm the necessity or not to foresee a modification of the Application form. This consultation is made in line with the flexibility foreseen by the Programme rules (see below) and to anticipate any risk of ineligibility[113] of activities or expenditure not provided for in the consolidated version of the application form[114]. This information can be provided by email during the regular exchanges between each LP and its Project Officer or during ad-hoc meetings convened by the JS and depending on the extent of the deviation, may lead the LP/PP concerned, to submit a request for "express approval" or "project modification". In addition, the LPs are asked to summarise these deviations on a regular basis when submitting their reporting packages.

In this respect, **each type of request ("express approval" or "project modification")** should be formalised through the respective on-line form available on the Programme website[115].

Based on experience, it has been decided not to set maximum deadlines for submitting a modification claim during the implementation of the project. However, the partnership must be aware of the unavoidable delays associated with a request for modification. In that sense, partners will not be able to formulate any complaint concerning the rejection of a request for reasons of "late submission" (whether in relation to the start of a new or modified activity, or in relation to the periods of implementation of the project itself or of the Programme).

[112] CF eligibility of expenditure section: list of ineligible expenditure.
[113] CF manual parts III. A. iii. "General eligibility criteria" and iv "Non-eligible costs" under the Programme rules:
[114] In accordance with the rules of the Programme, any expenditure relating to an activity not provided for in the consolidated form, and for which the express approval of the JS is not available, will be deemed ineligible.
[115] Documents & tools - Project implementation - Programme Interreg Euro-MED "amending my project"

Regarding the closure of projects, any changes must be concluded, at the latest, at the time of validation of the final reporting package by the MA/JS.

Important point: PPs are fully responsible for the composition of their budget to implement the activities foreseen within the project and each partner has a 100% flexibility on the use of his budget.

In that sense, there is no need to submit any request of modification of the Application Form related to the budget composition.[116]

The flexibility applies:

- between the budgeted cost categories AND
- within the limit of the amount of the budget approved for each partner.

i. Three types of modification

When a request for modification is made, and depending on the scope of the envisaged change, the project will fall into one of the following three types of modification:

• Complex modification: update of the Application form and update of one or more of the project's contractual documents (Subsidy Contract or Partnership Agreement) > Formal approval by the Monitoring Committee of the Programme
• Formal modification: update of the Application form (other than relating to administrative information) > Approval by the JS and the concerned NA, if applicable
• Administrative modification: update of administrative information for one or more partners > information to the JS

ii. Modification procedure

Regardless of the type of modification envisaged, the modification procedure is divided into 8 stages:

/!\ Important point: In case of a "fast lane" procedure, which is understood as a complex modification, the specificities of the modification stages are defined in

[116] Because of this flexibility neither the LP nor the NCs have to check the compliance of the declared amount by cost category with the amount budgeted for each cost category.

the Test + transfer framework document approved by the Programme Monitoring Committee.

1. Before submitting a request for modification affecting the full project activity and partnership, the LP and its partners must agree on the scope of the modification. When applicable (see table here after) this "approval by the project Steering Committee" is formalised through a written procedure or meeting minutes approved by the Steering Committee[117]. It is recommended that the JS be consulted on the mandatory elements to be included in the Steering Committee's decision in order to guarantee the quality and completeness of the information,
2. The request for modification is submitted to the JS via an online form made available to the LP on the Programme website (secure online form[118]): it is also the responsibility of the partner(s) concerned to ensure that the LP transmits the modification claim to the JS timely,
3. Decision: Agreement of principle by the JS[119] of the modification claim and opening of Jems for modification. On receipt of the completed form, the JS assesses the claim and may request additional information from the LP.
   At the end of its assessment, the JS will specify whether the claim is accepted or not, what type of modification the claim falls into and will confirm the sections of the Application form to be modified as well as the planning to be followed,
4. Modification of the application form on Jems by the LP in the version with "IN_MODIFICATION" status on Jems, modifying only the sections agreed with the JS Project Officer. Upon completion of the modification the project is switched to "MODIFICATION_SUBMITTED" status,
5. Assessment of the modified Application form by the JS: during this assessment, additional information may be requested by the JS (if necessary, the A.F may be returned to the LP for modification, in which case the project goes back to step 4 and will once again appear with the status "IN_MODIFICATION"),
6. Approval of the request for modification (by the Programme Monitoring Committee, the concerned NA or the JS, depending on the type of modification),

[117] in accordance with the procedures for approving decisions as set out in the rules of procedures of the aforementioned project Steering Committee

[118] https://interreg-euro-med.eu/en/request-for-modification-of-an-approved-project/

[119] The "agreement of principle" given by the JS after processing the claim presented online does not imply approval of the request for modification, which will only take place at stage 7. If a specific NA is concerned by the request for modification, this will be entered at stage 3.

7. Validation of the new consolidated A.F on Jems by the JS; once the Application form has been approved, it changes to "CONTRACTED" status[120] the LP then receives automatic notification in the Jems dashboard,
8. Generation via Jems of updated declarations/contractual documents on receipt of the notification, the LP has 15 working days to upload to Jems any updated document (partner declarations, associated partner declarations, de minimis, investment, or contractual documents)

A modification (complex or formal) is considered approved only once formalised through the aforementioned procedure and after validation of the AF in Jems.

Once the modification has been completed, the approved AF constitutes the new consolidated AF and becomes an annex to the project's contractual documents.

/!\ Important point: the JS reserves the right to reject any request for modification that is untimely, inappropriate, modifying the nature or objectives of the project, or not complying with the rules of the Programme.

iii. Level of approval of the modification and attached documentation

Please note that all modifications of project data require the insertion of the updated information on Jems by the LP. Upon acceptance of the modification request, the JS open the application form on the system for its modification. The correctness of the data inserted on Jems is a necessary condition for the approval of the modification and will be checked by the JS.

In case a partner declaration or an amended version of the contracts is needed as part of the modification request, it has to be generated by the project on Jems after the submission of the new version of the application form, once the project appears under the status “contracted”.

[120] If the Monitoring Committee rejects the request, the LP will be informed by its project officer, the version of the form currently being modified on Jems will be switched to "MODIFICATION_REJECTED" status and the consolidated version of the application form will remain the last approved version.

Type of modification	Scope of the modification	Documents	Approval
Complex	Partner withdrawal with budget taken over by one or several of the remaining partner(s) (resulting project budget inferior or equal to the consolidated one)	• Decision of the project's Steering Committee • Letter of withdrawal[121] • New consolidated AF • Updated partner declaration for the partners whose budget is increasing • New PDF version of the Partnership agreement consolidated (after MC's approval)	Programme Monitoring Committee
Complex	Partner withdrawal with a budget not taken over by another partner (resulting budget inferior to the consolidated one)	• Decision of the project's Steering Committee • Letter of withdrawal[122] • New consolidated AF • New PDF version of the Partnership agreement consolidated (after MC's approval)	Programme Monitoring Committee
Complex	Partner withdrawal with replacement by a new partner (resulting budget inferior or equal to the consolidated one)	• Decision of the project's Steering Committee • Letter of withdrawal[123] • New consolidated AF • New partner declaration • De-minimis declaration (if relevant) • New PDF version of the Partnership agreement	Programme Monitoring Committee

[121] In exceptional cases, the Joint Secretariat may decide to enact the approval procedure without a letter of withdrawal.
[122] In exceptional cases, the Joint Secretariat may decide to enact the approval procedure without a letter of withdrawal.
[123] In exceptional cases, the Joint Secretariat may decide to enact the approval procedure without a letter of withdrawal.

		consolidated (after MC's approval)	
Complex	Addition of new project partner(s) taking over budget of remaining partner(s) (resulting budget inferior or equal to the consolidated one)	• Decision of the project's Steering Committee • New partner declaration • New consolidated AF • De-minimis declaration (if relevant) • New PDF version of the Partnership agreement consolidated (after MC's approval)	Programme Monitoring Committee
Complex	Addition of new project partner(s), increasing the total budget of the project	• Decision of the project's Steering Committee • New partner declaration • De-minimis declaration (if relevant) • New consolidated AF • New PDF version of the Partnership agreement consolidated (after MC's approval) • Signed Amendment to the Subsidy Contract (after MC's approval)	Programme Monitoring Committee
Complex	Increase of project total budget	• Decision of the project's Steering Committee • New consolidated AF • Signed Amendment to the Subsidy Contract (after MC's approval) • Updated partner declaration for the partners whose budget is increasing	Programme Monitoring Committee
Complex	Addition of the transfer phase to test projects	• Decision of the project's	Programme Monitoring Committee

		Steering Committee • New consolidated AF • Available outputs and related output validation factsheet • Partner declarations for new partners • Updated partner declaration for the partners whose budget is increasing • De-minimis declaration (if relevant) • Signed Amendment to the Subsidy Contract (after MC's approval) • New PDF version of the Partnership agreement consolidated (after MC's approval)	
Formal	Redistribution of the budget between project partners or formal reduction imposed by the Programme (resulting budget inferior or equal to the consolidated one)	• Decision of the project's Steering Committee • If applicable, audit/control report/ official notification from the MA reducing the total eligible budget • Updated partner declaration for the partners whose budget is increasing • New consolidated AF	Joint Secretariat
Formal	Addition of new investment(s), new activity or new associated partner (resulting budget inferior or equal to the consolidated one)	• Decision of the project's Steering Committee • New consolidated AF	Joint secretariat

		• Signed "statement of capacity and compliance with the principles for investment to be applied in the context of the projects' pilot activities "(after JS approval) • DNSH assessment grid completed, if relevant • Signed new associated partner declaration (after JS approval) if relevant	
Formal	Modification of existing investment(s) (resulting budget inferior or equal to the consolidated one)	• Decision of the project's Steering Committee • New consolidated AF • Signed "statement of capacity and compliance with the principles for investment to be applied in the context of the projects' pilot activities" (after JS approval) • DNSH assessment grid completed, if relevant	Joint Secretariat
Formal	Extension of project duration (resulting budget inferior or equal to the consolidated one)	• Decision of the project's Steering Committee • New consolidated AF	Joint Secretariat
Formal	Partner(s) undergoing procedure for legal change (absorption, merging and legal succession) process (resulting budget inferior or equal to the consolidated one)	If required by the NA/ JS: • Official document stating the merging • Written validation/approval from the concerned NA confirming in FR or EN the document content and the formal aspect of the modification	Joint Secretariat and relevant National Authority (ies),

		• New consolidated AF • Resulting new partner declaration • De-minimis declaration (if relevant) • If relevant according to the NA: New PDF version of the Partnership agreement consolidated (after approval)	
Formal	Modification of the name of the partner(s) organisation	• Official document stating the name change • Written validation/approval from the concerned NA confirming in FR or EN the document content and the formal aspect of the modification • New consolidated AF	Joint Secretariat and relevant National Authority (ies)
Formal	Modification of the contact person of the partner(s)/associated partner(s) or its contact details or modification of the partner address	• New consolidated AF (if applicable)	Joint Secretariat
Formal	Modification of the Legal representative of the partner(s) or its contact details	• Official document of designation of the new legal representative • New consolidated AF	Joint Secretariat
Formal	Change of the legal status of the partner(s)	• Official document proving the change of legal status • New consolidated AF	Joint Secretariat and relevant National Authority (ies)
Administrative	Change of the "project managers" section or "partners details" (bank account data)	• Update of the dedicated section(s) on Jems • New bank account financial Identification document (if applicable)	Joint Secretariat for information

/!\ Important points:

- Modifications including budget reallocation should always be calculated on the basis of the remaining budget for a partner (difference between approved budget and certified expenditures) and respecting the fixed flat rates of CC2 and CC3.
- Please regarding the eligibility of costs concerning a modification affecting the partnership composition refer to part *III. A. v b) eligibility period > implementation* of this Manual.
- In case of budget redistribution, the amount not awarded to any partner is automatically decommitted and no more available for the project

H. Closing my project

The aim of this chapter is to guide LP and partners through the closure phase of their activities. It reviews the technical and administrative steps to be taken when a project comes to an end and recalls the obligations of the partners once the project is closed.

i. Steps prior to formal closure of the project

During the last reporting period of a project, the LP must, in cooperation with the project partners, anticipate a certain number of measures aimed at facilitating the closure of activities and the correct implementation of mandatory administrative tasks. This final period must also enable the partnership to organise itself as well as possible in order to anticipate any audits that may take place after the end of the project and up to 5 years after the last payment by the MA to each of the partners[124].

For the purposes of controls[125], the LP and the PPs must make sure that the necessary documents and information are accessible on their premises regardless of the support on which they are stored, and access to project-related sites.

To this end:

- At least one member of staff from each partner entity (including the lead partner) is identified and will remain available for the project beyond the official end date of the project indicated in the application form. This person's up-to-date contact details must be communicated to the LP, which should be able to contact him/her in the event of a future audit, and this person should have adequate knowledge of the project, its content, archives, IT systems and files.
- A communication channel is maintained between the LP and all the partners after the end of the project.
- The documentation relating to the project is complete, accessible and is stored on standard storage mediums. It is organised clearly enough for

[124] In accordance with article 82 of regulation 2021/1060, checks may be carried out within a period of 5 years from 31 December of the year of the last Programme payment to the project; this point is included in the closure letter sent to the Lead Partner by the Programme.
[125] Audits may be carried out after the end of the project by the MA, the JS, the Accounting Authority, the Audit Authority, the competent National Authorities, authorised representatives of the EC, the European Anti-Fraud Office, the European Court of Auditors, the Auditors Group and any external auditor appointed by these institutions or bodies.

a person with no knowledge of the project to be able to contribute to the implementation of a control without difficulty by the competent bodies.

- Within each partner entity, the obligations to be complied with after the end date of the project (particularly concerning investments)[126] and after its administrative closure, are known and understood. These obligations and their consequences are known by the hierarchy and by all responsible persons, beyond the staff usually involved in the implementation of the project.

ii. Last reporting period and eligibility of expenditure

Interreg Euro-MED projects are implemented according to a timetable set out in the application form and annexed to the Subsidy Contract.

The eligibility period for expenditure is defined in the Programme Manual[127] and appears in the project data and in the subsidy contract[128].

With regard to the reporting periods, it should be remembered that the end date of the project corresponds to:

- the end date for eligibility of expenditure,
- the closing date for activities, and
- the final deadline for submitting the last reporting package to JS[129].

In this sense, the three-month deadline for preparing the Reporting Package does not apply to the final reporting period.

Important point: For partners withdrawing during the project implementation through a formal project modification, should report all expenditure as soon as possible after the project modification. The end date for the eligibility of their expenditures is included in the project modification documents.

The Programme recommends that activities relating to the implementation of activities should be completed 3 months before the end date of the project. However, it is up to each partner to plan internally and in cooperation with its LP AND its controller in order to:

- ✓ incur and pay all expenses during the eligibility period of the project
- ✓ complete its activities within a reasonable timeframe, taking into account everyone's capacity to enter, justify and document expenses in Jems,

[126] CF investment sections, and eligibility of expenditure of this Manual
[127] CF Chapter III. A "Eligibility of expenditures" of the Programme Manual
[128] CF Article 3 of the subsidy contract
[129] The Interreg Euro-MED Programme has opted for the concept of a single end date for the project, so the three months required for closure have been included in the initial total duration of the project.

- ✓ submit these, together with the supporting documents and key deliverables and outputs relating to the project's activities, on time,
- ✓ Enable the verification of expenditure and activities by the NC, taking into account the extra workload generated by the closing periods,
- ✓ facilitate the integration of the elements verified in the final reporting package by the LP, who must submit it to the JS by the end of the project at the latest[130]

a) Final adjustment

In accordance with the rules of the Programme, the LP and the partners benefit, during the implementation of the project, from total autonomy over the use of their budget (distribution between cost categories, within the maximum budget allocated for each and in line with the activities planned).

If, to meet the needs of the partners at the end of the project, a budget transfer between partners and/or an extension to the duration of the project were deemed necessary, the modification request would have to be made as early as possible in the implementation of the project and in accordance with the procedure set out in the Programme Manual[131]. In all cases, the LP must bear in mind that the modification would be formalised through an update of the application form, or even an update of the project's contractual documents if necessary.

Lastly, it is assumed that any changes must be concluded, at the latest, at the time of validation of the final reporting package by the MA/JS.

Important point: Whatever the identified needs, we strongly recommend that you contact your JS project officer well before the contractual closing date of your project.

iii. Final reporting

The reporting procedure presented in the Manual[132] applies in the same way for the project reporting periods during project implementation and for the submission of the final project reporting package, which should end in full

[130] The end date of the project appears in the Contracting / Contracts and key dates section of the "contracting" part of Jems.
[131] Cf chapter II. G "Amending my project" of this manual
[132] CF chapter II.E."Project reporting and Joint Secretariat monitoring"

reporting. However, for this final reporting package, the following specificities must be considered:

- At the latest by the time the last certificate is validated, the NC must have carried out and documented any specific checks and/or on-the-spot visits required by EU, national regulations or by the Programme[133] and which must be carried out before the end of the project. If this is not the case, the final certificate may be suspended by the SC until the situation has been cleared,
- The controllers' certificates must be in their final version,
- The "final" project report (full reporting) for the last reporting period must be validated on Jems by the LP and the additional "project closure" section duly completed,
- All the documents composing the reporting package (partner reports, NC certificates, any national validation and the final project report including the closure section) as well as their annexes (supporting documents justifying the indicators, key productions, etc) concerning the last reporting period must be presented and validated on Jems no later than the end date of the project.

No extension of the project end date will be granted for the submission of the final reporting package.

a) Last project reporting package

In accordance with the provisions of the Programme Manual, the reporting periods are established on Jems in the "contracting project reporting schedule" section. The project report and the payment claim relating to the last reporting package must be submitted by the LP via Jems no later than the date mentioned in the "reporting schedule" corresponding to the end date of the project.

The JS will assess the last project report and the last payment claim, in accordance with the usual reporting procedure.[134]

The main objectives of the last project report are as follows:

- Assess the project final performance
- Collect evidence of contribution to Programme and project commitments

[133] CF compulsory On the spot visit related to investment (part III.E i d "how to implement the control work/on the spot control" of this Manual)
[134] detailed in the section "Project reporting and monitoring by the Joint Secretariat".

- Understand the potential for durability and transferability and the level of achievements of outputs and results at both project, Programme and policy levels
- Enable capitalisation activities, at project and Programme level, in the current or successive programmes.
- Communicate the results of the project at Programme level
- Grasp the added value of transnational cooperation in and for territories in the Mediterranean area.

The last project report contains the cumulative indicators for the entire duration of the project[135] , it must provide information on the actual outputs, results and impacts of the project as a whole.

As for the rest of the reporting periods, the final project report is compiled by the LP in close cooperation with the rest of the partners; certain parts must be redacted for external communication purposes (possible publication on the Mission or Programme website).

When writing the report, the LP is expected to remain concise, sincere and realistic, as the answers to the specific questions in the last report will enable the Programme to communicate about the project and improve the conditions, tools and practices for future projects.

b) Eventual additional questionnaires (DG Regio, carbon footprint, COM)

The Programme is part of the measures implemented at European level concerning all the programmes co-financed by the ETC. It means that the JS may have to ask the LP to complete specific forms at the request of the EC, or Interact[136] in order to register online information relating to the project on the DG REGIO "projects" database Inforegio[137] or the European Kohesio or Interact KEEP databases. In this case, the JS will inform the LP and help to provide the information required.

c) Closing letter

Once the final payment to all project partners has been made by the AcA, the MA issues a closure letter to the LP, formalising the closure of the project.

[135] Detailed in part II.H. iii "Final reporting" of this manual
[136] INTERACT link to the website
[137] https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/projects/projects-database_en

iv. Partners' obligations after project closure

a) Project website and internet tools

The Programme ensures the compulsory maintenance of project websites hosted on the Programme Web platform, however Lead Partners are responsible for entering updated information if this is established to be necessary.

If a tool (or any external website produced by the project with the agreement of the JS) is not already hosted by the Programme on one of its platforms, the Lead Partner must contact the Programme to transfer the tool before submitting the final reporting package. Classical tools developed using Web standards (PHP, HTML, MySQL, etc.) can be hosted directly. In all other cases, the project must provide the Programme with a container in Docker format containing the latest source code and data of the tool.

The external tool/site will remain hosted by the Programme for 5 years starting on 31 December of the year of the last Programme payment to the project and will thereafter be stored locally and kept available for any subsequent checks.

b) Elements of the audit trail

With regard to the conservation of documentation, projects must take account of both national and Community regulations. The strictest rule must be applied. All project partners must retain all available supporting documents relating to their expenditure and activities, as well as to the key audit trail of the project, for up to 5 years from 31 December of the year of the last Programme payment to the project. A longer retention period may apply in the case of State aid or in accordance with national rules.[138]

The following main documents must be kept available by each of the project partners (including the lead partner) for control purposes:

- Consolidated application form approved
- Partnership Agreement (and its amendments)

[138] Cf. article 6 paragraph 2 of the Subsidy Contract and in case of GBER 20 Such records shall be kept for 10 years from the signature of the subsidy contract article 1 (10) 2021/1237

- Subsidy contract (and amendments)
- NC certificates (original version for each partner in case of wet ink signature)
- Each invoice and accounting document with evidential value relating to project expenditure (originals to be kept at the premises of the partner concerned)
- All original supporting documents relating to project expenditure (payslips, bank statements, public contracts, documents, etc.) must be kept on the premises of the partner concerned.
- If relevant, documentation concerning on-the spot visits by the MA/JS and national authorities.

The financial documentation must be accessible in its original form or its equivalent in accordance with national legislation and must include proof of delivery of services and supplies.

The technical documentation must include all the supporting documents and, at the very least, photographs proving all the activities financed during the implementation of the project, both tangible and intangible.

In accordance with the project's contractual documents, the Lead Partner and all project partners undertake to ensure that all original documents or copies thereof certified in accordance with national legislation relating to the implementation of the project are made available until the above-mentioned deadline for any verifications and until the end of any audit, verification, complaint, dispute or legal action in progress, in accordance with the regulatory provisions.

c) Key productions, equipment and investments [139]

The partners must keep available all the tools and material known as "key productions"[140] of the project for a period of 5 years from 31 December of the year of the last Programme payment to the project.

All investments financed as part of the project must be operational and maintained for 5 years from 31 December of the year of the last Programme payment to the PP concerned[141] or at least until the end of their lifespan. At the

[139] "Investment" as referred to in the Programme: part I. C. ii "Composition of a project" of this Manual
[140] Manual chapter II. A. " Pre-contracting phase"
[141] Manual part III.A. vii.e) Equipment costs (CC5) is the equipment is related to an investment, full purchase costs could be regarded as eligible and any change of property by the partner (transfer or sale) or change affecting the nature or the objective of the equipment is prohibited within 5 years of the final payment to the beneficiary

end of its lifespan, all equipment (e.g. obsolete computers) must be removed from the organisation's inventory in accordance with documented procedures which must be retained as part of the project's audit trail and kept available for 5 years from 31 December of the year of the last Programme payment to the project.

In accordance with art 65 of CPR regulation[142] 2021/1060, a project with investments may have to repay the Interreg contribution if, within five years from 31 December of the year of the last Programme payment to the PP concerned or within the period of time set out in State aid rules where applicable, it is subject to any of the following:

- the productive activity ceases or is relocated outside the NUTS2 region in which it received support,
- a change in ownership takes place, giving a firm or a public body an undue advantage,
- a substantial change affecting its nature, objectives, or implementation conditions, undermining the original objectives.

Project partners are obliged to inform the Joint Secretariat and their National Authority IN WRITTEN where any of the above situation occurs.

Any unduly paid sums will be recovered by the Programme in proportion to the period for which the requirements are not fulfilled. In the event of a non-fraudulent bankruptcy of a partner, this measure will not be applied

Project partners may prioritise keeping the ownership of project investment and foresee a free disposal agreement with end-users if needed. However, in case of investment that would be subject to a change in ownership by a project partner (within the limits established by the regulations for the purposes of durability of operations), the latter must have established a legal agreement with the (new) owner enabling him to meet the durability and audit obligations for all material financed under the project in accordance with above-mentioned obligations and obtained the *express approval for change in ownership from the JS.*

[142] EU Regulation 2021/1060 - Article 65 sustainability of operations / Manual C ii e "5 years from the final payment to the beneficiary or within the period laid down in the rules applicable to State aid,".

III. Financial issues

A. Eligibility of expenditures

This chapter aims to define the main financial requirements of the Programme regarding the expenditure of project Lead partners and partners. These elements must be considered in the preparation of project proposals[143], the implementation of projects and the expenditure declaration process.

i. Hierarchy of rules on eligibility of expenditure

The general framework for the management of European funds applicable to projects financed by the Interreg Euro-MED Programme is set by the Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 2018/1046 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014 and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012;

In the framework of Interreg Programmes, three additional levels of rules must be considered by project partners and their controllers concerning the eligibility of expenditure:

a) The EU rules

- Regulation (EU) n° 2021/1060 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those, and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy (Common Provisions Regulation - CPR);
- Regulation (EU) n° 2021/1058 on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund (ERDF Regulation);

[143] Information on how to prepare the budget for your project proposal can be found in the chapter I. D. "Drawing up my budget" in this Manual

- Regulation (EU) n° 2021/1059 on specific provisions for the European territorial cooperation goal (Interreg) supported by the European Regional Development Fund and external financing instruments (Interreg Regulation);
- Regulation (EU) n° 2021/1529 establishing the Instrument for Pre-Accession assistance (regulation IPA III) ;
- The financing agreements signed between the European Commission and the government of each IPA Participating State.

In case of amendment of the above-mentioned legal norms and documents, the latest version applies.

b) The Programme rules

The Programme rules constitute additional rules on the eligibility of expenditure for the Programme as a whole and are set out in this document. Unless otherwise specified, the Programme rules apply equally to public and private partners from EU and IPA territories.

c) National eligibility rules

National eligibility rules apply to issues that would not be covered by the above-mentioned EU or Programme eligibility rules and must be checked, prior to the execution of the expenditure, with the relevant National Authority.

ii. Forms of reimbursement

a) Real costs

The project partners commit and pay the expenditures. They evidence expenditure by means of invoices or any other equivalent accounting document. They ensure that expenditure is referenced in an accounting system, and is based on the delivery of works, services or supplies.

b) Simplified cost options (SCOs)

Predefined unit costs, lump sums or flat rates are used as the basis for calculating a partner's expenditure. Under the Programme the following SCOs apply:

- Lump sum for project preparation costs, TOTAL amount 37.000€: This lump sum is mandatory for all projects. This simplified cost option exempts project partners from presenting any evidence of the existence or payment of expenditure related to the preparation of the proposal.
- Flat rate for the calculation of office and administrative expenditure, 15% of eligible staff costs: This flat rate is mandatory for all partners. This simplified cost option exempts project partners from presenting any evidence of the existence or payment of expenditure covered by the category.
- Flat rate for the calculation of travel and accommodation expenditure, 15% or 22%[144] of eligible staff costs: The applicable flat rate varies according to the location of the partners. This simplified cost option exempts project partners from presenting any evidence of the existence or payment of expenditure covered by the category.

iii. General eligibility criteria

Expenditure on approved projects (with the exception of flat rates or lump sums) may be eligible for reimbursement provided that they meet all of the following general eligibility criteria, which must be checked and guaranteed by the authorised national controllers[145]:

- They are related to the implementation of the project according to the latest approved version of the Application Form;
- They are essential for the implementation of the project and would not have been incurred if the project was not implemented;

[144] The flat rate for the calculation of travel expenditure varies according to the country in which the project partner is based (15% Partner from an EU Member State territory; 22% Partner from an IPA State)

[145] The National Controller (formerly called "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 national control system to be applied in each participating state please refer to Chapter III. E "Controls, audits and verifications"

- They respect the principle of real costs;
- They respect the principle of sound financial management;
- They are incurred and paid directly by a co-financed partner of the project, with the exception of flat rates or lump sums;
- They are justified by proof of payment;
- They are incurred and paid during the eligibility period of the project;
- They are recorded in the accounts of the project partner through a separate accounting system, or an appropriate accounting code set up specifically for the project;
- They respect the eligibility rules of the EU, the Programme and the country in which the partner is located;
- They respect the applicable rules on public procurement;
- They are related to costs that are not financed by other European funds, as this would constitute double financing;
- They respect the rules of branding and communication established by the European regulations and the Programme.

Please be aware that expenditure which do not comply with the applicable eligibility rules cannot be claimed, even if they are included in the approved Application form.

iv. Non-eligible costs

The list of non-eligible expenditure for the Programme is as follows:

Non-Eligible expenditure for Partners participating to the project with an aid granted under GBER Art 20.[146]

- Value Added Tax (VAT) if it is refundable under the partner applicable national tax law

Non-eligible expenditure according to the CPR Regulation Article 64 (1)

- Interest on debt;
- The purchase of land for an amount exceeding 10 % of the total eligible expenditure for the operation concerned; for derelict sites and for those

[146] See Chapter III B Financial issues > State aid of this Manual:

formerly in industrial use which comprise buildings, the limit shall be increased to 15 %.

- Value added tax ('VAT'), except:
    - for operations the total cost of which is below EUR 5 000 000 (including VAT);
    - for operations the total cost of which is at least EUR 5 000 000 (including VAT) where it is non-recoverable under national VAT legislation.

Non-eligible expenditure according to ERDF Regulation:

- the actions mentioned in article 7 of the ERDF Regulation cannot be financed by the Programme (exhaustive list);

Non-eligible expenditure according to Interreg Regulation Article 38 (3):

- Fines, financial penalties and expenditure on legal disputes and litigation;
- Costs of gifts;
- Costs related to fluctuation of foreign exchange rate[147].

Non-eligible expenditure according to Programme rules:

- In-kind contributions[148] (including unpaid voluntary work);
- Fees for national financial transactions;
- Purchase of land;
- Specialised interventions (e.g. soil remediation, mine-clearing)
- Shared costs[149];
- Costs of gifts;
- Ad-hoc bonuses on salary related to project's approval;

[147] See part I.D.iii.c) "Budget in Euro" of this Manual

[148] Definition: Contributions in the form of the provision of works, goods, services, land and buildings for which no cash payment, supported by invoices or documents of equivalent probative value, has been made. Personnel costs for staff working in one of the partner institutions on the basis of an employment contract and receiving a regular salary do not count as a contribution in kind, but as a cash contribution, as the staff costs are indeed paid by the partner institution.

[149] Cost sharing is defined as a pro rata allocation of certain project expenditure incurred by one project partner and shared among various other project partners

- Activity-related investments, as described by Directive 2011/92/EU (Annex I);
- Activity-related investments, as described by Directive 2011/92/EU (Annex II), except those implemented in the framework of pilot activities;

- Where the "real costs" method is used for travel and accommodation costs of project partners (CC3) and for the travel and accommodation costs of invited persons and associated partners (CC4): costs exceeding the national threshold for daily allowances where this threshold is applicable to the partner under the national eligibility rules[150];

- When using the "real costs" method for travel and accommodation costs of project partners (CC3) and for travel and accommodation costs of invited persons and associated partners (CC4) : Unused transport tickets, regardless of the reason for cancellation;

- When using the "real costs" method for travel and accommodation costs of project partners (CC3) and for travel and accommodation costs of invited persons and associated partners (CC4): travel costs for travel from/to airports and ports not internationally recognised;

- Expenditure related to activities outside the Programme cooperation area and outside the EU[151] which have not been expressly accepted by the Joint Secretariat (JS);

- Subcontracting between partners and/or associated partners of the same project for services, expertise, equipment and works carried out within the project;

- Monetary awards for competition winners;

- Non-monetary awards not expressly accepted by the JS, for competition winners;

- Contractual advance payments[152];

- Costs in the category of infrastructure and works relating to a structure located outside the Programme cooperation area;

[150] Regardless of the legal status of the partners, it is the responsibility of each partner and National Controller to check with their NA whether the obligation to respect a national threshold applies to the partner organisation or not (applicable for travel costs of project staff, or guests, external experts, declared as real costs).
[151] Activities also include "equipment located and operated outside the cooperation area and outside the EU".
[152] Contractual advances established in accordance with the law and normal commercial practice, stipulated in a contract between the partner and the external provider, proven by receipted invoices can be carried forward but can only be declared as eligible expenditure for reimbursement by the Programme, after confirmation that the contractual obligation has been completed / service delivered correctly and on time.

- Costs (all categories) relating to an investment[153] that does not appear in the consolidated application form;

- Costs related to promotional items not expressly accepted by the JS[154];
- The creation of logos other than those expressly accepted by the JS, as being intended to become a label or a brand;

- A subscription to a communication and project management tool limited to the same functionalities as those offered by the Basecamp tool already provided by the Programme;

- The development, hosting and maintenance of a project website providing similar functionalities to those of the website provided by the Programme.

v. Eligibility period

From a timing perspective, expenditure is eligible according to the following periods of time:

a) Preparation

The costs for the preparation and contracting phase of an approved project are covered by a lump sum of 37 **000€ (Total amount)** established by the Programme and indicated in the approved Application Form. This lump sum is fixed and mandatory for all projects and must be shared between project partners in proportion to their participation in the preparation of the proposal.

b) Implementation

Expenditure related to the implementation of an approved project is eligible from the date of approval of the project by the Programme Committee[155] until its official ending date, as established in the most recent version of the approved Application Form.

[153] "Investment" as referred to in the Programme: section Designing my project and submitting my application, chapter Designing project activities, composition of a project of this Manual
[154] To be eligible, the costs of promotional items must comply with the Programme rules available in section 8 below and be expressly accepted by the JS.
[155] The date of approval of a project refers to the Programme Committee decision and is mentioned in the Managing Authority notification sent by the JS and available on Jems

Important point: In case of project modification relating to project partnership composition, the starting/ending date for the eligibility of expenditure of the concerned partner(s) corresponds to the date of approval of the modification by the project Steering Committee[156].

In the specific case of Test + transfer project, the eligibility period is as follow:

- for the new partners the starting date corresponds to the start date of the transfer phase and the end date corresponds to the end date of the new version of the test + transfer project
- for partners not participating to the transfer phase, the starting date remains unchanged, and the end date corresponds to the initial end date of the test project

Expenditure related to the implementation of the project and to closure activities, must be paid[157] by the end date of the eligibility period of each partner. Any expenditure paid after this date, whatever the nature of the activity concerned, is ineligible. It is up to each partner to organise, in cooperation with the LP, the reporting of the expenses related to the closure considering the deadline for the payment of the invoices, the certification and reporting deadlines.

In order to facilitate the closure process, the Programme recommends completing the activities related to the implementation of the activities 3 months before the end date of the project

N. B. The starting date of eligibility of expenses is the same for all partners participating in the Programme (from EU or IPA territories), but for partners from IPA countries, no claim for reimbursement can be presented before the signature of a Financing Agreement between the European Commission and the government of each IPA country[158].

[156] In the case of fast lane procedure, the framework document can state specific rules concerning project modification and eligibility of costs for new partners.
[157] i.e debited from the bank account of the project partner
[158] The signature of the Financing Agreement for each participating IPA State concerned took place on the following dates: Albania on 10/10/23; Bosnia and Herzegovina on 26/03/2024; North Macedonia on 29/12/23; and Montenegro on 09/06/23.

vi. Conversion into euro[159]

All expenditure made in a currency other than the euro must be converted into euro, according to the monthly accounting exchange rate of the European Commission in force in the month in which the expenditure was submitted by the partner to the National Controller for verification.[160]

Please note that the Programme online monitoring tool, Jems, will perform this calculation automatically and in accordance with the regulations. However, in the case of "parked" expenditure, the National Controller is responsible for verifying that the conversion has been carried out correctly when the expenditure is certified.

vii. Categories of costs[161]

The project budget must be structured according to the following cost categories (CC) provided for in the Regulation:

a) Staff Costs (CC1)

Staff costs expenditure consists of the gross employment costs of staff employed by the project partner (Lead partner or partner) for implementing the project (already employed staff by the project partner or contracted specifically for the project). Eligible costs in this category are limited to the following[162] :

A. Payment of gross salaries fixed in an employment document[163](or in an appointment decision/employment contract) or by law relating to responsibilities specified in the job description of the staff member concerned. Staff costs claimed under the project must relate to activities which the project partner would not carry out if the concerned project was not undertaken.

[159] Art 38.5 of the Interreg Regulation (EU) 2021/1059, and by derogation of Article 76(1)(c) of the Regulation (EU) 2021/1060

[160] The European Commission publishes monthly exchange rates on the first day of each month at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/procedures-guidelines-tenders/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-inforeuro_en

[161] Depending on the type of call and project selected, one or more cost categories may be prohibited by the Programme, the information is then included in the Budget section of the Courtesy version of the Application Form.

[162] Article 39 of Regulation (EU) No 1059/2021

[163] The term "employment document" refers to an employment contract or other equivalent legal agreement that defines the employment relationship with the partner organisation.

B. Other costs directly linked to salary payments incurred and paid by the employer (such as employment taxes and social security including pensions as provided for in Regulation (EC) N°883/2004), considering that they are:

- Provided for 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 or the organisation where the individual staff member is currently working;
- Not recoverable by the employer.

NB: Staff costs cover costs actually incurred and paid out based on a payslip or a document of equivalent probative value. Data from the organisation's accounting system can be accepted, in line with the controllers' professional judgement regarding the reliability of the system[164]

Method for reporting costs

Staff costs are reimbursed according to a real cost approach based on the monthly working time dedicated by a staff member to the project (full time or part time on the project[165]) without the obligation to establish a separate working time registration system (e.g. timesheets). The proportion of the working time dedicated to the project per month is fixed in the task assignment template made available to the partners by the Programme. The assignment template is a compulsory document which must be completed, signed and kept up to date for each employee declaring staff costs in the framework of an Interreg Euro-MED project.

- full-time assignment to the project (100%)
- part-time assignment with a fixed percentage of time worked on the project per month (<100%)

The staff costs claimed must be calculated individually for each staff member working on the project and for each month of project implementation by

[164] In some countries, controllers are not allowed to see payslips because of data protection rules (GDPR). If an extract from an accounting system of the partner organisation is provided, it is the responsibility of the partner to demonstrate the effective payment of salaries and that staff costs do not include costs covered under office and administration (e.g., telephone bills), travel and accommodation (e.g., daily allowances), or any other costs that are considered ineligible under the staff costs category.

[165] It should be noted that the notions of full-time and part-time refer to the relationship of the employee to the project and not to the employer.

applying a fixed monthly percentage of the working time spent on the project to the actual gross monthly salary costs paid by the partner organisation.

Even in the case of occasional and limited staff participation, a fixed percentage can be applied.

The monthly percentage of participation should be determined on the basis of a realistic estimate considering the amount and frequency of participation of each staff member in the project activities per month.

This method aims to simplify the declaration of expenditure, but the adequacy of staff costs must always be ensured. The principle of proportionality must always be respected and checked in the process of reporting and certifying expenditure. If the staff costs claimed are not adequate in quality and/or quantity in relation to the production of the deliverables and outputs for the project, a correction must be applied on the basis of this proportionality principle.

The Staff Task Assignment Template (STAT)

The task assignment template is the basis to prove the plausibility of the time allocation:

- It is issued individually for each staff member (not a group) per project.
- It is usually issued at the beginning of the (reporting) period to which it applies.
- It is signed by the employee and the employer/ a line manager/ supervisor.
- It must contain the percentage of working time dedicated to the project per month and a description of the project-related role, responsibilities and tasks. The level of detail for the tasks should be proportionate to the involvement. It is expected that for higher percentages of involvement, task descriptions are correspondingly detailed, whilst for little involvement a more general description will be sufficient.

Applying the fixed percentage method for staff does not require to have a dedicated time recording system (i.e. timesheets) at the level of the individual staff member or the organisation. No additional periodic staff reports to verify staff costs should be asked and provided.

/!\ Important point

In principle, the fixed percentage could cover the whole duration of the project, it shall AT LEAST cover a full reporting period[166].

The time allocation (fixed percentage) and description of tasks could be reviewed on a regular basis (e.g. annual staff appraisal) and adjusted if needed (e.g. due to changes in tasks and responsibilities in the project). Should the percentage change, the respective amendments should be introduced in the task assignment template and the new percentage will apply from the entry into force date and to the costs of a concerned staff for the complete reporting period not yet validated by the controller.

Only from one reporting period to the other, the percentage of working time dedicated to the project may change, especially in the cases described below:

- Changes in the team working on the project (adding or removing staff members);
- Changes in the tasks and responsibilities of the staff member, e.g. changes in the employment contract and/or assignment decision;
- Changes in the level of participation of the partner in the project activities, based on the approved Application Form/a project modification approved by the Programme;

EXAMPLE 1

Staff contracted for the implementation of an Interreg Euro-MED project or devoting 100% of their working time to the project

[166] the reporting periods are established on Jems in the "contracting> project reporting schedule" section

Staff member whose task assignment template indicates that 100% of his/her working time is spent on an Interreg Euro-MED project.

Calculation of staff costs:

Total monthly salary (gross salary[167]): EUR 3.000

Staff costs claimed : 3.000 EUR

EXAMPLE 2

One member of staff works part-time on the project, with a fixed proportion of the time worked on the project per month

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Staff member whose task assignment template indicates that 60% of his/her working time is spent on an Interreg Euro-MED project.

Calculation of staff costs:

Total monthly salary (gross salary[168]): EUR 3.000

% of time worked on the Interreg Euro-MED project established: 60%

Staff costs claimed: ***3.000 EUR * 60% = 1.800 €***

[167] monthly salary cost (gross salary, including employer's charges and other costs directly related to the payment of salaries)

[168] monthly salary cost (gross salary, including employer's charges and other costs directly related to the payment of salaries)

Natural persons[169] working for the partner institution:

Payments to natural persons working for the Interreg partner under a contract other than an employment or work contract may be treated as salaries[170] and such costs are eligible if:

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

If all the above conditions are not met, this expenditure must be allocated to the Cost category External expertise and services costs.

Audit trail

The following key documents should be available for control purposes:

- Employment document (Employment/Working Contract and/or Assignment Decision), including the name of the project or any other equivalent legal agreement that defines the employment relationship of concerned staff member with the partner organisation. Where standard practice in the partner organisation does not require the use of specific assignment decisions, the Programme document will be sufficient to demonstrate participation.
- Task assignment document signed, MANDATORY template provided by the Programme, describing the involvement of the employee in the Interreg Euro-MED project,) signed by the employer and the employee. The task assignment document must be available for the implementation of the partner's expenditure control work and must be submitted to the JS via Jems as part of the submission of the first certificate of the national

[169] As national regulations on this issue differ from country to country, the Programme does not provide a definition of natural person. Partners and national controllers are required to clarify this notion at the very beginning of the project in cooperation with their National Authority and in accordance with their institutional regulations, and it is advisable to keep track of the conclusions reached on the subject as part of the project audit trail.

[170] Only employment contracts (and such ones comparable to employment contracts) fall under the labour law and are therefore to be considered as staff costs, which have to be reported under this cost category. All other contracts like contracts for services are subject to procurement law and consequently they have to be reported under the cost category "external expertise and services"

controller including staff costs. The documents can be updated in the cases described above for each new reporting period prior to the submission of the expenditure for verification by the national controller.

- Payslips or other documents of equivalent probative value related to the staff expenses declared for the current year and where the gross salary, employer's social contributions and other compulsory payments are clearly identifiable.
- Proof of payment of salaries and employer's contributions and other costs related to the staff costs declared for the current financial year.
- No recording of working time (e.g. timesheets or similar documents) is required.

b) Office and administrative costs[171] (CC2)

Office and administrative costs cover operating and administrative expenses of the project partner that are necessary for the implementation of the project.

The eligible expenditure items under this cost category 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 (such as fire or theft insurance);
c) Utilities (such as electricity, heating, water);
d) Office supplies;
e) Accounting ;
f) Archives ;
g) Maintenance, cleaning and repairs;
h) Security;
i) IT systems;
j) Communication (such as telephone, fax, internet, postal services, business cards);
k) Bank charges for opening and administering the account or accounts where the implementation of an operation requires a separate account to be opened;

[171] Article 40 of Regulation (EU) No 1059/2021 and Article 54 (b) of Regulation (EU) No 1060/2021

l) Charges for transnational financial transactions.

None of the expenditure items included in the above list can be declared as real cost under any other cost category and direct costs under this cost category are not eligible for the Programme.

Method for reporting costs

No detailed budget is required for this cost category. The amounts for Office and administrative costs corresponding to each partner are calculated by the online monitoring tool according to a flat rate of 15% of the eligible staff costs. The flat rate mechanism applicable to this cost category is mandatory for all project partners and the 15% rate is fixed.

The calculation is done automatically by the online monitoring tool:

- when creating the category "staff costs" in the Application Form (estimation)
- when declaring expenditure under the staff costs category (eligible expenditure)

Administrative and office costs are thus automatically reimbursed by the Programme on the basis of eligible staff costs. The controller does not need to check anything regarding office and administrative expenditure, their control focuses on the correct reporting of staff costs and should ensure that no expenditure related to office and administration is included in any other cost category.

/!\ Important point

If among the direct staff costs (used as a basis for calculating administrative and office costs) all or part is deemed ineligible, the determined amount of administrative and office costs will automatically be recalculated and reduced accordingly.

Audit trail

The flat rate of 15% of staff costs for the determination of the amounts related to office and administrative costs is a simplified cost option foreseen by Art. 54(b) CPR (EU) 2021/1060. Thus, partners do not have to document or prove that the expenditure has been incurred and paid, and no documents confirming that the flat rate corresponds to the reality of the costs can be requested by the different levels of control.

c) Travel and accommodation costs[172] (CC3)

The costs under this category refer to travel and accommodation expenses of the staff of the project partner institution for missions essential to the effective implementation of the project.

The eligible expenditure items under this budget line are (exhaustive list):

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

Any item of expenditure listed under a) to d) already covered by a daily allowance should not be reimbursed in addition to the daily allowance.

Method for reporting costs

The Programme provides for two methods of declaring travel and accommodation costs.

1. as a fixed flat rate of 15% or 22%[173] of eligible staff costs
2. as real costs only in case the flat rate is not an appropriate method for the partner for justified reasons

/!\ Important point

[172] Article 41 of Regulation (EU) No 1059/2021 and Article 54 (b) of Regulation (EU) No 1060/2021
[173] Percentages are fixed and partners using the flat rate method must stick with 15% or 22% rates; no other percentage will be accepted

It is up to each partner to decide which declaration method for travel and accommodation costs they wish to use - please bear in mind that from the first participation in a Euro-MED application, partners should choose one declaration method and it will not be possible to modify it after the starting of the first project, i.e. it will apply for the implementation of all the Interreg Euro-MED projects in which the partner organisation will participate.

The chosen calculation method will be checked by the JS during the assessment of the applications and corrected if necessary, during the pre-contracting phase.

No deviation from this rule will be accepted and no change of method will be accepted after the start of the partner's first project.

Travel and accommodation costs are reimbursed at a fixed flat rate of eligible staff costs (method 1):

- 15% for partners based in EU territories,
- 22% for partners based in territories of IPA countries.

By choosing this method, it is not necessary to set a detailed budget for travel and accommodation as the calculation is done automatically by the online monitoring tool Jems:

1. when creating the category "staff costs" in the Application Form (estimate)
2. in the process of declaring expenditure under the category staff costs (eligible expenditure).

Travel and accommodation expenses are automatically reimbursed by the Programme based on the eligible staff costs declared to the project. The controller does not have to check anything regarding travel expenditure; their control focuses on the correct reporting of staff costs and should ensure that no expenditure related to travel and accommodation is included in any other cost category.

The flat rate mechanism for this cost category must be foreseen in the Application Form and is an option open to any project partner. The

indicated rate of 15% or 22% is fixed and depends on the location of the project partner.

/!\ Important point

If all or part of the direct staff costs (used as a basis for calculating travel and accommodation costs) are found to be ineligible, the determined amount of travel and accommodation costs will automatically be recalculated and reduced accordingly.

Audit trail

The flat rate of 15% or 22% of staff costs for the determination of amounts related to travel and accommodation costs is a simplified cost option provided in the Interreg Regulation Article 41 (5). Partners do not have to document or prove that the expenses have been incurred and paid, and no documents confirming that the flat rate corresponds to the reality of the costs can be requested by the different levels of control.

Real costs

In exceptional and duly justified cases, it is also possible to opt for the declaration of travel and accommodation costs as real costs (method 2)[174].

/!\ Important point

- Travel and accommodation costs must be clearly linked to the project and be essential for the implementation of the project activities.
- Travel and accommodation costs must be covered by the partner organisation. Direct payment by a staff member of the partner organisation must be supported by proof of reimbursement by the employer to the staff member.
- Cost-effectiveness should be ensured, taking into account the full cost of the mission (travel costs, travel-related staff costs, etc.).

[174] A note indicating the reasons justifying the use of the real costs method should be provided at the time of application and attached to the Application Form for formal approval by the Programme.

- The maximum daily rate for hotel and daily allowances must be respected, in accordance with national eligibility rules[175]. NB: the applicability of these thresholds is not linked to the legal status (public or private) of the project partners. In case of doubt the partner/controller must refer to the relevant National Authority.

Audit trail (real costs)
When using the real cost method, the following key documents must be available for control purposes:

- Signed mission request/authorisation indicating the name of the employee, date/duration, location and scope of the mission (according to the internal policy of the partner organisation, e.g. mission assignment)
- Agenda (or similar) of the meeting / seminar / conference
- In case of travel outside the cooperation area and outside the EU, the express approval of the JS
- Invoices paid directly by the project partner institution, original tickets and any other evidence confirming the reality and the amount of the declared costs
    - Proof of payment
    - Daily allowance claims (if applicable)
    - Employee's claim for reimbursement, either based on the per diem or on the real cost (in the case of costs incurred by a staff member of the partner organisation)
- Travel invoices paid by a staff member claiming reimbursement on the basis of real costs, tickets and any other evidence documents (e.g. metro/bus tickets, meal invoices, personal car claim with mileage sheet, according to national procedures and agreed values)
- Proof of actual reimbursement to the staff member (if applicable)
- Any other documents that the National Controller may request in order to verify eligibility of expenditures and their compliance with national legislation.

Specific cases:

[175] Please note that for the same partner the threshold to be respected may vary according to the country where the travel occurs. For specific information on the threshold to be respected for each partner, please contact your National Authority, your National Contact Point or visit the national information page on the Interreg Euro-MED Programme website.

- Travel and accommodation costs of an employee not declaring staff costs

Travel and accommodation costs of a staff member belonging to the partner organisation, (e.g. decision-makers, administrators, management etc.) invited to participate in events connected with or organised by the project fall under the present category of costs.

- Travel and accommodation costs of External Experts

Travel and accommodation costs for external experts (including speakers and invited experts) and service providers, as well as those related to associated partners[176], target audience foreseen in the application form and/or in-house bodies, can only be claimed under the cost category External expertise and services.

- Travel outside the Interreg Euro-MED cooperation area[177] :

Travel and accommodation costs related to activities taking place outside the Programme cooperation area but in an EU Member State (e.g. Brussels, etc.), are possible if they are in line with the project objectives.

Travel and accommodation costs related to activities taking place outside the Programme cooperation area and outside the EU are only eligible if they are foreseen in the approved Application Form or expressly accepted by the JS.

It is recommended that travel outside the Programme cooperation area and the EU be limited as it is expected that project activities will be mainly focused on the Interreg Euro-MED territory for a better impact on the cooperation area.

d) External expertise and service costs [178] (CC4)

The costs in this category correspond to external expertise and services provided by a public or private entity, or by a natural person not declared as staff of the partner organisation. External experts and service providers are contracted to carry out certain tasks and activities essential to the

[176] Definition of associated partner: Public, private or international institutions wishing to participate in the project without contributing financially See Part I.B.i.c) of the Manual
[177] The Interreg Euro-MED Programme cooperation area is composed of 69 regions from 14 countries, see Cooperation area (https://interreg-euro-med.eu/en/where-we-work/)
[178] Article 42 of Regulation (EU) No 1059/2021

implementation of the project. The costs of external expertise and services shall be paid on the basis of contracts or written agreements of equivalent value, supported by tangible and documented invoices or claims issued by the providers of goods/services (or the persons mentioned in point o) of Article 42 of ETC Regulation 1059/2021).

Eligible expenditure under this cost category is as follows (exhaustive list):

a. Studies or surveys (e.g. evaluations, strategies, concept notes, design plans, handbooks);
b. Training;
c. Translations;
d. Development, modifications and updates to IT systems and website[179];
e. Promotion, communication, publicity, promotional activities and objects or information related to an operation or programme as such;
f. Financial management;
g. Services related to the organisation and implementation of events or meetings (including rent, catering and 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 national controllers;
l. Provisions of guarantees by a bank or other financial institution where required by EU or national law or in a programming document adopted by the Monitoring Committee;
m. Travel and accommodation for external experts, speakers, chairpersons of meetings and service providers;
n. Other specific expertise and services needed for the project.

[179] With reference to points d) and e) and in the framework of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme the project website is provided free of charge by the Programme and is therefore not eligible as such, however the costs related to the management of the project website provided by the Programme as well as the development or purchase of specific functionalities for the website provided are eligible under CC4 under point d) as well as the development of tools or platforms constituting the very core of the project or serving to achieve an objective of the project.

Method for reporting costs

Costs related to the use of expertise and services are reimbursed by the Programme based on real costs.

/!\ Important point

External expertise and services should be necessary specifically for the effective implementation of project activities.

- The eligibility of external expertise and service costs is subject to full compliance with EU, Programme and national procurement rules (including institutional regulations if stricter) or principles of competitive tendering, and must comply with the principles of transparency, non-discrimination and equal treatment[180].
- In principle, and for project assessment purposes, the external expertise and services should be indicated in the Application Form describing at least the nature of the expertise/service, and the corresponding budget. During project's implementation, unforeseen contracts should be justified and necessary for project implementation.
- Costs corresponding to project activities subcontracted to "in-house" bodies, related travel and accommodation costs, as well as costs corresponding to cooperation between public entities, must be included in this cost category. They must be declared as real costs (without any margin) and respect the applicable provisions on public procurement (depending on the legal status of the subcontracted body). [181]
- Non-monetary awards for competition winners are eligible provided that the connection to the project is well justified and that the award is necessary for the successful implementation of the project. The JS should expressly accept such costs in order to assess their relevance and provide guidance to partners on this point.
- Activities complementary to events (e.g. site visits) are eligible under this category as long as they are directly connected to the project.
- Travel and accommodation costs related to associated partners or, if justified by the project activities and approved in the application form,

[180] For more information, please refer to Chapter III.C of this Manual the section of this Manual related to Public Procurement, and external contracting

[181] For further information on national requirements and the definition of an in-house organisation, partners are invited to contact their National authority.

target audience meeting the criteria stemming from Article 42(o) of ETC Regulation 1059/2021, must be claimed under this category[182] and should preferably be borne by the project partner. Otherwise, the project partner should be able to prove in a tangible and documented way the reimbursement of these expenses to external persons and keep all supporting documents related to the costs (invoices, tickets, proof of payment of expenses generated by the associated partner, guests, etc).

- Concerning the location of activities related to CC4, project partners and controllers should refer to Chapter I.D point iii.e of this Manual. i.e costs related to external expertise or services concerning activities located outside the Programme cooperation area but in an EU Member State are possible as long as they are in line with the project objectives. Costs related to external expertise and services concerning activities located outside the Programme cooperation area and outside the EU are eligible only if they are expressly accepted by the JS considering the related activity and the impact on the Interreg Euro-MED area.

[182] Travel and accommodation costs for external experts, speakers etc. must comply with ALL the general principles and the audit trail of expenses mentioned in the travel and accommodation cost category (real costs) and applicable to the partner bearing the expenses.

Audit trail

The following key documents should be available for audit purposes:

- Evidence of the selection process of the supplier of goods or services in accordance with the principles of competitive tendering and, when applicable, the procurement rules.
- A written contract or agreement detailing the goods or services that have to be provided and their pricing and including a clear reference to the project. Any changes to the contract must comply with the rules related to public procurement and must be documented.
- Invoice or claim providing all relevant information in accordance with the applicable accounting rules.
- In case of costs related to external expertise and services concerning activities outside the Programme cooperation area and outside the EU, the express approval of the JS
- In the case of costs for expertise and external services, related to investments[183], the mention of the investment in the consolidated application form.
- In the case of expertise and external services costs, related to investments[184], the Template " Statement of capacity and compliance with the principles for the investment " signed by the Partner
- Proof of completion of external experts' work or service deliverables
- Proof of payment
- Regardless of the amount of the goods, services or supplies contracted and the legal status of the project partner purchaser, it is recommended that a document be formalised to trace compliance with the basic principles on which the procurement standards are based and that it be made available in the event of an audit.
- Any other document that the National controller may request in order to verify compliance with EU and/or national legislation.

[183] Investment" as referred to in the Programme: section Designing my project and submitting my application, chapter Designing project activities, composition of a project of this Manual

[184] Investment" as referred to in the Programme: section Designing my project and submitting my application, chapter Designing project activities, composition of a project of this Manual

e) Equipment costs[185] (CC5)

Costs in this category relate to equipment purchased, rented or leased by the project partner that is not already covered by the cost category "office and administrative costs", and necessary for the delivery of project activities. This includes the costs of equipment purchased (new or second-hand[186]), rented or leased[187] by the project partner or already owned by the partner institution and used to carry out the project activities.

This category also covers the costs of "fixed investments in equipment" and the costs of equipment that is part of an "infrastructure investment"[188].

Eligible expenditure under this cost category is as follows (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;
g) Vehicles[189];
h) Other specific equipment needed for the project

/!\ Important point

An investment related to a pilot activity may include elements that belong to cost categories 5 "Equipment" and 6 "Infrastructure and works".

➔ The equipment must be strictly necessary for the effective implementation of the project activities.

➔ Any equipment must be included in the consolidated application form.

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[185] Article 43 of Regulation (EU) No 1059/2021

[186] For second-hand equipment and in accordance with Article 43.2 of the Interreg Regulation (EU) No 1059/2021: costs related to second hand equipment may be eligible under the following conditions :
(a) no assistance has been received for the original purchase of that equipment from the Interreg funds or the Funds listed in the CPR25;
(b) the price does not exceed the generally accepted price on the market in question;
(c) it has the technical characteristics necessary for the operation and complies with all applicable norms and standards.

[187] For rented or leased equipment, no transactions between project partners (or associated partners) are possible

[188] See part I.C.ii "Composition of a project" of this Manual

[189] Without prejudice to the provisions laid down in art. 7.1.h) iii of ERDF Regulation (EU) No 1058/2021

➔ Any expenditure on equipment related to an investment[190] must be identified as such in the consolidated form.

Method for reporting costs

Costs related to the use of equipment are reimbursed by the Programme based on real costs.

/!\ Important point

- The eligibility of equipment costs is subject to full compliance with EU, Programme and national procurement rules (including institutional regulations if stricter) or principles of competitive tendering and must comply with the principles of transparency, non-discrimination and equal treatment[191]
- Partners should declare the costs on a pro-rata based on their use and/or according to a clear and transparent depreciation plan, considering the timeframe of the equipment use on the project and the applicable national regulations.
- If non-depreciable equipment (e.g., low-value asset) is purchased, the full purchase cost of the equipment should be reported only where the equipment is used 100% on the project.
- If the depreciation period of the equipment is longer than the duration of the project, only the amounts depreciated during implementation can be reported under the project
- It is advisable that any potential equipment used for project management is (i.e not related to an investment[192]) purchased at the beginning of the project. The use of such equipment and related costs declared should be in line with the staff declared as working on the project.
- The equipment declared to the project (total cost, pro rata, rental, leasing or depreciation) cannot be financed (partially or totally) by other EU funds.

[190] Investment" as referred to in the Programme: section Designing my project and submitting my application, chapter Designing project activities, composition of a project of this Manual
[191] For more information, please refer to the section of this Manual on Public Procurement and outsourcing contracts
[192] Investment" as referred to in the Programme: section Designing my project and submitting my application, chapter Designing project activities, composition of a project of this Manual

- Concerning the location of activities related to CC5, project partners and controllers should refer to Chapter I.D point iii.e of this Manual i.e: costs related to equipment located and operating outside the Programme cooperation area but in an EU Member State are possible if they are in line with the project objectives. Costs related to ANY equipment located and operating outside the Programme cooperation area and outside the EU can be deemed eligible but must be expressly accepted by the JS considering the related activity and the impact on the Interreg Euro-MED area.

When the equipment is related to an investment[193]:

- Full purchase costs could be regarded as eligible
- Project partners must ensure that all regulatory requirements relating to "fixed investments in equipment" and "investments in infrastructure and works" (European, national and local) are met.
- Durability and ownership requirements after the project end may apply (see chapter related to project closure) and to this aim project partners may prioritise keeping the ownership of project equipment and foresee a free disposal agreement with end-users if needed.
- In specific cases and after assessment of the JS (express approval), transfer of ownership may be considered within the limits established by the regulations for the purposes of durability of operations.

Audit trail

The following key documents should be available for audit purposes:

- Evidence of the selection process of the supplier of goods or services in accordance with the principles of competitive tendering and, where applicable, the procurement rules
- A written contract or agreement detailing the goods or services to be provided and their pricing and including a clear reference to the project. Any changes to the contract must comply with the rules related to public procurement and must be documented.

[193] Investment" as referred to in the Programme: section Designing my project and submitting my application, chapter Designing project activities, composition of a project of this Manual

- Invoice, claim or equivalent accounting document providing all relevant information in accordance with the applicable accounting rules.
- For any equipment located and operating outside the Programme cooperation area and outside the EU, the express approval of the JS
- In the case of costs of equipment related to investments, the mention of the investment[194] in the consolidated application form
- In the case of equipment costs related to investments[195], the template " Statement of capacity and compliance with the principles for investment " signed by the Partner
- Proof of existence of the equipment item respecting the branding and information and publicity rules of the Programme.
- Proof of payment
- Regardless of the amount of the goods, services or supplies contracted and the legal status of the project partner purchaser, it is recommended that a document be formalised to trace compliance with the basic principles on which the procurement standards are based and that it be made available in the event of an audit.
- Any other document that the National controller may request in order to verify compliance with EU and/or national legislation.

f) Costs for infrastructure and works[196] (CC6)

The costs in this category relate to the investment in infrastructure and works, necessary to achieve the objectives of the project. Within the Programme, costs for infrastructure and works are eligible only in the framework of pilot activities. This category includes the costs of "fixed investments in infrastructure"[197].

The eligible expenses for the Programme under this heading are the following (exhaustive list):

b) building permits

[194] Investment" as referred to in the Programme: section Designing my project and submitting my application, chapter Designing project activities, composition of a project of this Manual
[195] Investment" as referred to in the Programme: section Designing my project and submitting my application, chapter Designing project activities, composition of a project of this Manual
[196] Article 44 of Regulation (EU) No 1059/2021
[197] See part I. C. ii "Composition of a project" of this Manual.

c) building material;

d) labour;

/!\ Important point

➔ Any investment in infrastructure must be included in the consolidated Application form.

➔ All expenditure on infrastructure and works must be included in the consolidated Application form.

➔ Costs related to infrastructure located outside the Programme cooperation area are ineligible.

Method for reporting costs
Costs related to the use of infrastructure and works are reimbursed by the Programme based on real costs.

/!\ Important point

- All costs related to meeting standards and obligations related to the nature of the investment (e.g. feasibility studies, environmental impact assessments and assessment of expected impacts of climate change, building permits, etc.) must be included in the category of external expertise and service costs, unless they are already integrated in an infrastructure procurement contract.
- The full eligible costs of infrastructure and works can be claimed as project expenditure.
- The project partner must own the land on which the financed infrastructure activities and works are carried out or the project partner must, at a minimum, have established a legal agreement enabling it to meet the durability obligations[198] associated with the respective investment

[198] According to Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, Art. 65 "Durability of Operations

- Within 5 years of the final payment to the project partner,[199] specific rules apply to partners declaring costs related to productive investments and investments in infrastructure[200]
- The eligibility of costs of Infrastructure and works is subject to full compliance with EU, Programme and national procurement rules (including institutional regulations if stricter) or principles of competitive tendering, and must comply with the principles of transparency, non-discrimination and equal treatment
- Project partners must ensure that all regulatory requirements relating to "fixed investments in equipment" and "investments in infrastructure and works" (European, national and local) are met

Audit trail

Following key documents should be available for auditing purposes:

- Evidence of the selection process of the provider of works, goods or services in accordance with the principles of competitive tendering and, where applicable, the procurement rules.
- A written contract or agreement detailing the works, goods or services to be provided and their pricing and including a clear reference to the project. Any changes to the contract must comply with the rules related to public procurement and must be documented.
- Invoice or claim providing all relevant information in accordance with the applicable accounting rules.
- In the case of costs of infrastructure and works, the mention in the consolidated form of the investment[201] to which they relate.
- The template " Statement of capacity and compliance with the principles for investment"[202] signed by the Partner.
- Express approval
- Proof of existence of the actual infrastructure and/or works carried-out respecting the branding and information and publicity rules of the Programme.
- Proof of payment

[199] The date of the final payment to the beneficiary is indicated in JEMs and included in the closure letter sent by the MA to the LP.
[200] See part I. C. ii "Composition of a project" of this Manual
[201] Investment" as referred to in the Programme: section Designing my project and submitting my application, chapter Designing project activities, composition of a project of this Manual
[202] Investment" as referred to in the Programme: section Designing my project and submitting my application, chapter Designing project activities, composition of a project of this Manual

- Regardless of the amount of the works or services contracted and the legal status of the project partner purchaser, it is recommended that a document be formalised to trace compliance with the basic principles on which the procurement standards are based and that it be made available in the event of an audit.
- Any other document that the National controller may request in order to verify compliance with EU and/or national legislation.

viii. Project branding and information and publicity rules

All projects need to respect a series of mandatory publicity and communication rules laid down:

- in Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Union and of the Council of 24 June 2021, articles 47 and 50,
- in Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021, Article 36 and
    - in this Manual.
    - specific national rules may apply but they must not, under any circumstances, be in contradiction with the above provisions.

The fundamental principle is that project partners must inform the general public and all those involved in the operation about the support received from the European Union.

EU and Programme branding illustrative elements have to be clearly and visibly displayed "on documents and communication material relating to the implementation of the Interreg operation attended for the general public and participants".

Obligations stand for (non-exhaustive list):

- printed publications: reports, promotional handouts;
- audio-visual: videos, audio podcasts, channels;
- digital or electronic materials (websites, web tools, videos, podcast, etc.);

- events (e.g. on PPT presentations, agendas, bags and other conference material);
- Stationery and office materials;
- Equipment (computers, cameras, etc).

EU illustrative elements

According to the Article 47 of the Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 and of the Article 36 of the Regulation (EU) 2021/1059, Interreg projects must use the following illustrative elements on all documents and materials described here above:

- The European Union emblem in accordance with Annex IX of the Regulation (EU) 2021/1060.
- The statement 'Funded by the European Union' or 'Co-funded by the European Union' written in full and placed next to the emblem.
- The term "Interreg" used next to the emblem of the Union.

Project logo

Interact together with the European Commission designed a logo template for all Interreg Programmes and projects in strict compliance with the EU regulations aforementioned.

The project logo therefore includes the following elements:

- The European Union emblem;
- The statement "Co-funded by the European Union";
- The Interreg logo;
- The Programme name ("Interreg Euro-MED");
- The project acronym.

To guarantee that project partners comply with the EU communication and visibility rules, and to prevent risk of ineligibility of costs (by cancelling up to 2% of the Interreg Funds)[203], a branding package is delivered to each approved project; this package contains a ready-to-use and compliant project logo in JPG and EPS files as well as a brand book explaining the rules of usage.

[203] The observance of these rules is critical for the eligibility of expenditure. As stated in the Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 art 36 where the project partner does not comply with these obligations and where remedial actions have not been put into place, "the Managing Authority shall apply measures, taking into account the principle of proportionality, by cancelling up to 2 % of the support from the Funds to the beneficiary concerned"

All Interreg Euro-MED projects must use the logo provided by the Programme and use it in accordance with the brand book. Failure to do so may result in ineligibility of expenses.

Only project logos aiming to become a label or brand can be developed in very specific and exceptional cases and shall be expressly accepted by the JS.

Please read carefully the Graphic identity guidelines in Annex F.

Project acronym

To identify the project on the Monitoring System Jems an ACRONYM is required. It is strongly recommended that this acronym does not exceed 14 characters. Indeed, due to the very structure of the logo enforced by the EC, an excessively lengthy acronym would make the use of the project logo complex. The choice of project acronym should respect a few guidelines:

- Be short and memorable;
- Do not 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;
- Preferably be in lowercase.

Poster

According to the Regulation (EU) 2021/1059, "each partner of an Interreg operation" must place a poster of a minimum A3 size or equivalent electronic display with information about the project including the financial support from the Union and the project logo at a location clearly visible to the public, such as an entrance area of a building. Therefore, ALL project partners must place this poster.

The Programme provides a Poster template available for download on the Programme website.

All projects should send a photographic evidence of this poster display together with the first activity report.

Billboards and plaques

In the case of an Interreg operation exceeding 100 000 euros and involving physical investment or the purchase of equipment, the display of durable plaques or billboards clearly visible to the public, presenting the project logo is mandatory for each partner claiming investment/equipment costs. The plaque or billboard must be placed as soon as the physical implementation of the operation starts, is purchased, or the equipment installed (Article 36 of the Regulation (EU) 2021/1059).

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

Project website

The Programme provides and hosts a complete ready-to-use website to each approved project (please see the related chapter).

Project websites must be updated on a regular basis and provide a short description of the project in English including its aim and results and highlighting the financial support from the Union as stated in the Regulation (EU) 2021/1060.

In addition, a media kit must be published on the project website and include:

· a description of the mission in one sentence

· a description of the mission in one paragraph

· the project logo (files in low and high resolution)

· one photo depicting the project of 300 dpi, and which is not of “abstract”

style

· one secondary photo or visual that can be abstract (300 dpi)

· the social media references.

As a reminder, only costs related to staff (for regular content updates) should be budgeted.

In case the project develops a specific web tool, a link to the project website must be placed in a clearly visible place and the update of the latter must not be overlooked.

Partner institutional website

All project partners must publish on their official institutional websites or social media sites ("where such website exists") a short description of the operation, as set forth in the Regulation (EU) 2021/1059.

This description should be proportionate to the level of support, including its aims and results, and highlighting the financial support from the Union. Partners should also include the project logo displayed in a visible place and complying with the rules of usage described in the brand-book. A link to the project website must also be displayed.

Events

The project logo shall be used on agendas, list of participants, related publications, promotional materials and presentations[204]. During the events, projects are encouraged to place the project poster or a project banner in a readily visible place (e.g. the front of the meeting room).

According to the Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, "operations of strategic importance and operations the total cost of which exceeds EUR 10 000 000" must organise a communication event or activity involving the Commission and the responsible Managing Authority in a timely manner.

The projects co-financed under the Interreg Specific Objective 1 (Interreg Euro-MED 1st call – Governance) are considered of strategic importance, therefore they must comply with this obligation.

Publications

All project publications, including brochures, newsletters, studies, articles and others must include the project logo. When this is not possible, for example, in scientific articles, conference proceedings or other publications, projects should explicitly mention the "contribution from the EU co-financing and the Interreg Euro-MED Programme".

[204] (Regulation (EU) No 2021/2060).

In addition, projects are strongly recommended to publish most essential results (or a summary of them) in the two official languages of the Programme: English and French in addition to the other languages.

Promotional items

All promotional items must be expressly accepted[205] by the JS and branded with the project logo.

Only promotional items meeting the following criteria may be produced:

- They are necessary to reach one of the defined target groups and objectives. Project partners must explain how and why.
- They are eco-friendly.

The JS will assess the compliance with those criteria on a case-by-case basis through the *assessment of the request for express approval* to be submitted to the Programme .

TIPS

➲ To avoid ineligibility of any activity or product, a countercheck with the Programme Communication Unit is recommended before printing any material.

➲ Please read very carefully the logo brand book explaining how partners should use the project logo.

[205] See above chapter "eligibility of costs, section "non eligible expenditure": promotional items.

B. State aid

i. 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 form whatsoever which distorts or threatens to distort competition by favouring certain undertakings or the production of certain goods[206].

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 recipient of the aid is an "**undertaking**", which is carrying out an economic activity in the context of the project;

2) The measure must confer a benefit or economic advantage on the recipient which it would not otherwise have received;

3) It must be granted by a Member State or through State resources (always the case of Interreg projects);

4) It must selectively favour certain undertakings or production of certain goods[207];

5) It must distort or threaten to distort competition and trade between Member States.

Comprehensive information on State aid can be found on the DG Competition website of the European Commission, where also a guideline on the notion of State aid is available[208].

The co-financing of activities falling under State aid rules is prohibited in the European Union, but some exemptions relevant for project partners participating in Interreg projects has been put in place by the regulation[209].

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[206] According to Article 107 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union, State aid is defined as "*any aid granted by a Member State or through State resources in any form whatsoever which distorts or threatens to distort competition by favouring certain undertakings or the production of certain goods*"

[207] 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

[208] https://ec.europa.eu/competition-policy/state-aid/legislation/notion-aid_en

[209] Notifications of aid or aid schemes to the European Commission should only be considered in cases where it is not possible to use an existing exempted or notified aid scheme, or in cases cannot be used, or where EU rules require individual notification, in particular because of the size of the project or the amount of aid envisaged.

In the case of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme, State aid relevant activities can be co-financed as project activities only if they are in strict compliance with Articles 20 and 20a of the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)[210] or in compliance with the *De minimis*[211] Regulation.

Relevant national or regional authorities may be consulted to obtain more specific information on rules and limitations concerning State aid (further information might be available on the web pages of the National Contact Points, on the Programme website).

ii. Who is concerned?

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

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, however, in some cases, local public or administrative bodies may be considered as undertakings.

Public institutions may perform economic activities (e.g. a regional council can implement a support scheme for SMEs) and such activities are State Aid relevant while, the participation of an SME in a project does not necessarily mean that its activities will be State aid relevant. In parallel, even if an entity provides the goods or services free of charge or is financed entirely by the State, it can be subject to State aid rules.

The concept of "**undertaking**" is very wide and may include public bodies, SMEs, large companies, NGOs, associations, universities, etc. The classification as an undertaking is specific to an activity and it is not linked to the status of an entity public or private.

[210] Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 as amended by Regulation (EU) No 2023/1315

[211] Commission Regulation (EU) No 2023/2831 of 13 December 2023 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to *de minimis* aid.

Undertaking - is any entity engaged in an economic activity, regardless of its legal status (it can be a public body, a charity, an NGO, an association or university, as well as a private firm) and regardless of whether it aims to make a profit or not.

In the evaluation of the existence of a potential State aid issue, the nature of the project partner is therefore not relevant; the main criterion to be considered here is the nature of the activity the partner and the project intend to carry out through the public funding, and the main question remains: is it, or not an economic activity?

Economic activity - is broadly defined as offering goods or services on a given market and therefore a comprehensive list of economic (and non-economic) activities does not exist. Please note that State aid applies only if a partner carries out activities in the project that can reasonably be assumed to be of economic nature. If the partner carries out non-economic activities in the project, there is no State aid even if this organisation normally (i.e. outside the Interreg project) carries out activities of an economic nature. The contrary (i.e. economic activities are performed in the project by an organisation that normally does not carry out economic activities) can also occur, thus resulting in State aid relevance.

iii. How to deal with State Aid?

Submitted Application Forms include a specific "State aid criteria self-check" focusing on the five criteria listed above, with particular attention to the assessment of the status as "undertaking" (Criterion 1) of the partners (i.e. the Lead Partner or any project partner) and of the existence of an economic advantage for the undertaking (Criterion 2).

After the project work plan is completed by the LP on Jems; each partner must carefully answer the self-check questions in Jems in cooperation with the Lead Partner in charge of submitting the proposal. The result of the check may lead to one or more of the following scenarios:

- NO: No State aid relevance. In this case no contractual conditions/changes are set concerning State aid.
- YES: Risk of State aid relevance, each partner should identify the perimeter of the risk:
    - Relevance can be removed. In this case, specific points should be included in the Application Form concerning the partner's activities, in order to eliminate the State aid relevance (e.g. wide dissemination, also to competitors, of certain project outputs); if not done before submission and in case of project approval, contractual conditions or budget reduction could be proposed.
    - Direct State aid confirmed for one or more partners. In this case the entire budget allocated to the concerned partner is regarded as State aid granted under the General Block Exemptions Regulation (GBER) or, in exceptional cases, under *de minimis*. In such a situation, contractual conditions and eventual budget reduction would be proposed.

Based on the result obtained by project partners from their self-assessment, different measures might apply.

- State aid relevance that can be mitigated

Here below some examples of possible solutions that could be included in the Application Form in agreement with the LP, in order to mitigate the State Aid relevance[212]

- Respect of Community and National public procurement rules for all activities co-financed in the framework of an Interreg Euro-Med project (even in case of public authority or if specific rules allow the organisation not to use public procurement rules).
- Wide dissemination of project outputs, results and deliverables to avoid selective advantages.
- Open source software, open training.

[212] Please be aware that not all kind of activities can be exempted by the state aid relevance. For more information on this point, please refer to the "Commission Notice on the notion of State aid as referred to in Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2016/C 262/01)"

a) Direct State aid granted to one or more partners (GBER/de minimis)

The decision on whether to apply the GBER or the *De minimis* Regulation is to be made by the applicant partners themselves, considering the information included in this chapter and in all relevant legislation.

Both instruments specify certain limits on the maximum amount of aid. Project partners should carefully consider the implications before opting for one of the two instruments and check the conditions and compulsory documentation related to each option.

Direct aid granted under GBER

As part of an administrative simplification, the European Commission adopted the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER) which includes exemptions for aid granted in the specific context of Interreg projects (GBER Article 20)[213].

The aid granted by the Programme amounts to the whole Interreg funds budget of the concerned partner(s), up to a ceiling of 2,2 million EUR of Interreg Funds per partner and per project.

Important point: Partners participating to the project with an aid granted under the GBER art 20 cannot, under any circumstances, report value added tax (VAT) if it is refundable under their applicable national tax law.

Partners receiving Interreg funds from the Programme with an aid granted under the GBER (art. 20) cannot receive any external public co-financing to their budget. The maximum rate of state aid that can be granted by the MA is 80% of the eligible costs. Partners wishing to apply for any external public co-financing scheme for their project budget will receive Interreg funds from the Programme under the *De minimis* Regulation.

The Interreg Euro-MED Programme strongly recommends adopting the Article 20 to all partners declared as undertakings. During the application phase, each partner has to fill in the "State aid criteria self-check" (Section B "Project partners") where stating that it applies for Interreg funds under the GBER.

[213] Article 20 of Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 as amended by Regulation (EU) No 2021/1237 and Regulation (EU) No 2023/1315.

Direct aid granted under the De minimis Regulation

During the application phase and additionally to their Partner declaration, organisations applying under the *De minimis* regulation must sign a *De minimis* self-declaration[214].

Granting aid under *de minimis* implies that a partner can receive Interreg funds from the Programme only if it did not receive De minimis aid by public bodies located in France, totalling more than 300.000 EUR within the previous three years from the date of granting the aid[215]. As a consequence, the Interreg fund may be reduced based on the De minimis declaration provided by the partner.

The *de minimis* thresholds counts per "single undertaking"[216] in case a project partner is part of a group, the entire group is therefore considered as one single undertaking and the *de minimis* threshold applies to the group.

This could be for example the case of a company owning (or controlling) one or more companies, or the different departments of a university.

When granting state aid under article 20 of the GBER or de minimis, the Programme Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat will:

- notify the project partner in writing of the maximum aid granted,
- deal with the reporting obligations established by the Regulations,
- keep records of all aid granted under article 20 of the GBER or De minimis Regulation[217] for at least 10 years from the signature of the subsidy contract.

b) Indirect State aid granted to third parties

Project activities might result in advantages granted to undertakings (final beneficiaries) that would not have received under normal market conditions.

This might be the case, for example, of free of charge services, training, or consultancy to companies. In such cases, the aid is granted to third parties who are the final beneficiaries of project activities.

[214] Template provided by the Programme
[215] Date of the signature of the Subsidy Contract by the two parties
[216] Article 2(2) of Regulation (EU) No 2023/2831 on *De minimis* aid precisely defines the principle of single undertaking
[217] 2023/2831 Article 6.(3) Member States shall keep records of the registered information on de minimis aid and GBER 9.4 for 10 years from the date on which the aid was granted.

This aid is granted under GBER Article 20a[218], referring to exemption for aid of limited amount in the context of Interreg.

The aid granted under Article 20a of the GBER to an undertaking which is the final beneficiary of the project activities may not exceed EUR 22 000 per undertaking per project.

This form of State aid can be identified during application phase but may also appear during project implementation.

In this case, the partners must identify the activity concerned by the risk. Additional conditions setting a threshold to the aid granted to third parties must be set (see guidelines "indirect State aid to third parties"). If the threshold is not respected, the project partner providing the support has to eliminate any State aid element.[219].

When such advantage is provided, project partners as well as third parties bear the responsibility to comply with State aid rules and this shall be checked by the relevant institutions (i.e., controllers and national authorities). [220]

iv. State aid follow-up

- Before the signature of the project Subsidy Contract:

On the basis of the State Aid self-assessment presented by project partners, the JS will perform a State Aid check.

If a State aid relevancy is confirmed, contractual conditions for project approval may be imposed by the Programme and compulsory programme documentation requested, duly filled-in by the concerned partner.

During the pre-contracting phase, the JS may ask partners to amend the selected exemption scheme or the AF content.

- During project implementation:

[218] Article 20 a of Regulation (EU) n° 651/2014, introduced by amended Reg (EU) n° 2021/1237
[219] Indicative methodology to identify Indirect State aid granted to third parties is provided in the Programme website Documents & Tools / State Aid section : https://interreg-euro-med.eu/en/documents-tools-project-applicants/
[220] Partners are advised to check national legislation and procedures related to aid to third parties, as these might apply even if the Programme applies Article 20a GBER.

The Lead Partner LP ensures that all partners apply the above-mentioned rules concerning direct and indirect State aid relevance.
In the same way and based on the scheme adopted during the pre-contracting phase and confirmed in the consolidated application form, National Controllers NC will verify that rules on State aid have been respected by the controlled partner.

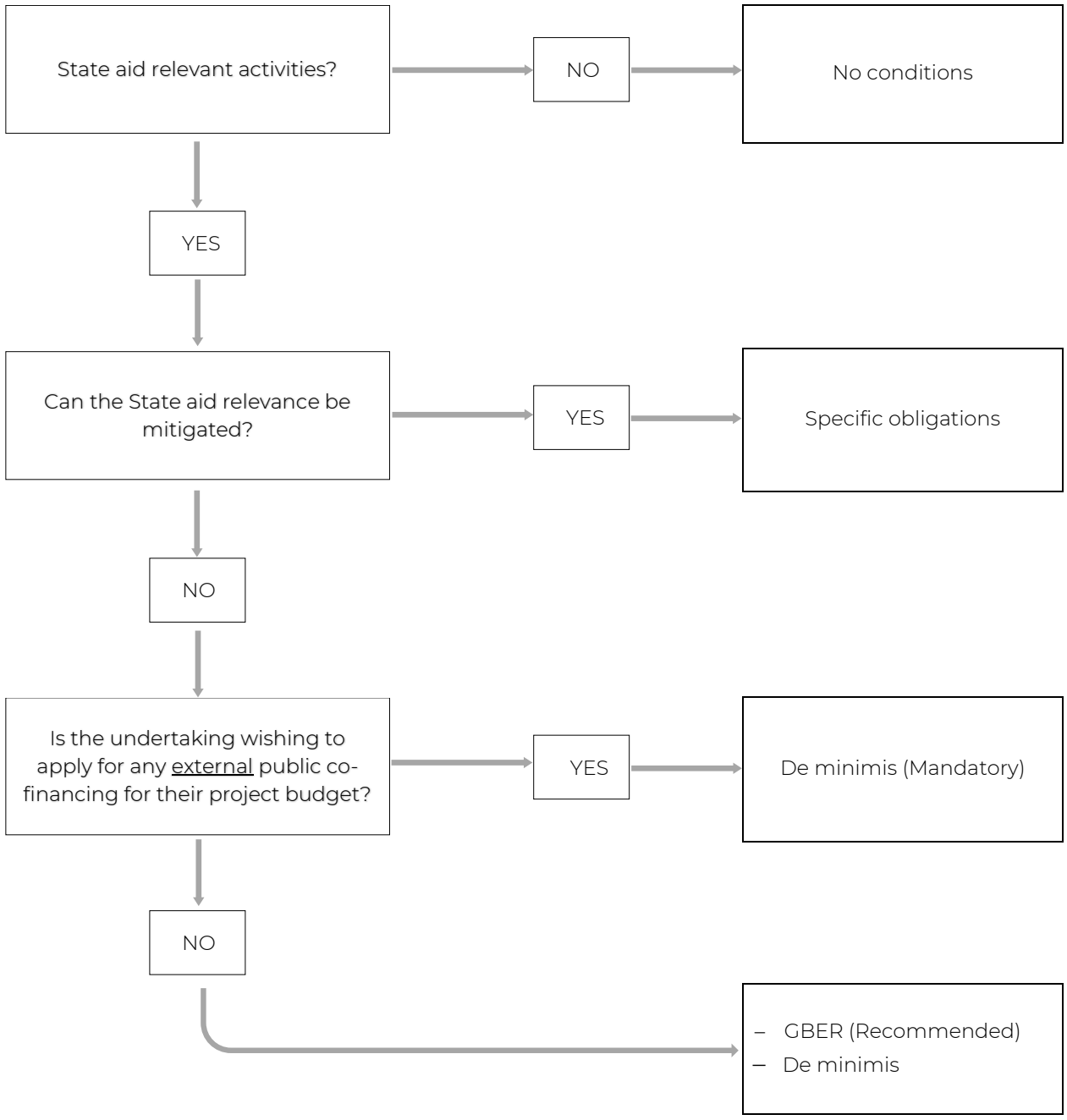
During the project lifetime, if any activity is assessed as State aid relevant the information must be raised to the JS.

Additional contractual conditions on State aid may be imposed to relevant partner(s) in case of project modifications assessed as State aid relevant.

In this sense, Lead Partners LP, National Controllers NC and project partners must keep specific attention to this issue as far as infringement to State aid rules can lead to major financial errors and irregularities.

v. State aid criteria self-check flow

(Section B.1.9 of the application form)



C. Public procurement and external contracting

During project implementation, any partner is likely to have recourse to an outsourcing contract to meet its needs for goods, services or works. These contracts concluded between one or more economic operators and one or more contracting authorities[221], are generally subject to public procurement rules.

In order to ensure transparent and fair conditions of competition in the common market, each contract must be awarded on the basis of objective criteria which ensure compliance with the principles of transparency, non-discrimination and equal treatment and which guarantee that tenders are assessed under conditions of effective competition.

Furthermore, when acquiring goods or services, the partners will activate levers that promote environmentally responsible purchasing and will integrate social components whenever possible.

Whatever the type of outsourcing (contracting with external auditors for control, external technical expert, catering and technical equipment for an event, etc.), **compliance with public procurement rules (or "principles"** if the partner does not fall under the scope of public procurement laws) is imperative to guarantee the eligibility of the expenses incurred.

To avoid any loss of funds, and in case of control, project partners must therefore be able to prove that the award of contracts complies with aforementioned principles and, when applicable, public procurement rules.

i. Three levels of rules for procurement procedures

The rules vary according to the qualification of the need, as well as the value of the purchase and the legal status of the entity performing the service. Three levels of rules have to be taken into consideration when preparing contracts:

- EU rules (i.e. public procurement directives[222] for ERDF partners; and PRAG rules Cf. Annex of the financing agreement of each country, for IPA partners)

[221] "Contracting authorities" means the State, regional or local authorities, bodies governed by public law or associations formed by one or more such authorities or one or more such bodies governed by public law (Directive 2014/24/EU).
[222] More information on EU procurement rules can be found here: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/public-procurement/rules-implementation_en

- National rules[223]
- Internal rules of the organisation

The strictest rules must always be applied and this principle may apply to all partners/awards falling under the scope of public procurement procedures (public or private partners, ERDF or IPA).

For example, when the partner is subject to internal rules that are stricter than national and European rules, the internal rules are applied.

Specificity for IPA partners

IPA partners participating in the Programme shall comply with the provisions of the financing agreement to be concluded between relevant IPA country, European Commission and the Managing Authority. They may contact their National Authority or National Contact Point to get informed on the regulation to be followed when awarding a contract to an external provider.

Due to the complexity of this matter, it is strongly recommended to get familiar with the rules applicable to public procurement and, if necessary, to obtain expert advice sufficiently in advance to launch a procurement procedure

/!\ Important point

Errors in public procurement procedures and award of external contracts are among the most common in Interreg projects[224]. For this reason, special attention must be given to external contracting by project partners and controllers.

In any case the Programme reminds that the various thresholds and related procedures and audit trail must be verified by each partner (independently from its status) with its NA/NC to guarantee the eligibility of costs.

[223] National rules include public procurement laws, corresponding delegated and implementing acts or any other generally applicable rules or legally binding decisions.
[224] For more information on preventing the most common errors in European Structural and Investment Fund projects, and financial correction for non-compliance with applicable rules please consult the Guidelines on Public Procurement for Practitioners (available at http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/publications/guidelines/2015/public-procurement-guidance-for-practitioners).and https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/fr/information/publications/decisions/2019/commission-decision-of-14-5-2019-laying-down-the-guidelines-for-determining-financial-corrections-to-be-made-to-expenditure-financed-by-the-union-for-non-compliance-with-the-applicable-rules-on-public-procurement

Partners must keep all documentation related to the project procurement procedures and award of contracts. This file is essential to ensure compliance with public procurement rules and usually include the following elements:

- Initial cost estimate made by the project partner to identify the applicable procurement procedure
- A copy of the procurement publication/advertisement
- A copy of the specifications
- Bids/quotes received from bidders
- Evaluation report of the offers received
- Information on acceptance or rejection of bidders
- Bidders' complaints submitted to the project partner, if any
- Contract signed with the selected provider, including amendments
- Invoices issued by the external provider and proof of payment
- Proof of delivery of the service
- Other information, if applicable

When checking the external contracts awarded by a partner, the National Controller will verify the partner's files during the expenditure audit and may request any additional information needed to confirm that:

- there has been no artificial splitting of the contract purpose or value in order to avoid a heavier public procurement procedure;
- in case of modification or extension of the original contract: there has been no significant change in the overall purpose, content or economy of the bid that would invalidate the original bidding process;
- in case no competitive bidding was carried out, there is a documented justification for this decision;
- in case an in-house was contracted or in the case of inter-municipal cooperation or similar, there is sufficient documented evidence to justify this choice, only the actual costs are charged to the project and correctly attached to the budget lines.

It is imperative that communication and publicity requirements are respected.

National controllers, second level auditors and further level of control will verify that the contracts are in line with the selected offers.

ii. Entities not subject to public procurement obligations

Entities not falling under the scope of public procurement laws (e.g., private companies for most of their procurement under EU regulations) are not required to follow public procurement procedures.

However, these organisations (e.g private organisations, non-governmental organisations, multinationals, etc.) must respect the basic principles on which procurement standards are based (principles of transparency, non-discrimination and equal treatment). As such, they must give preference to the best value or, where appropriate, the lowest price and, in any case, should prove the reasonable cost of their expenditure.

It is highly recommended that a document be formalised to track the respect of these principles and that it be made available for control purposes.

Please contact your national authority to refer to the relevant national rules and guidelines.

iii. Fraud Prevention when awarding external contracts

Particular attention must be paid to the risks of fraud in the field of public procurement or contract awarding.

In order to prevent and detect potential frauds, the Programme recommends Programme actors and especially the partners to:

- Ensure the proper application of their internal policy on conflicts of interest
- Ensure, through checks, that candidate companies do not present conflicts of interest with its own organisation
- Implement measures to detect abnormally low or high bids (e.g. comparison with a similar service on a public procurement platform)

It is recommended that an internal control system be established for public procurement/contract awarding, in order to avoid, in particular:

- Irregular splitting of purchases
- Unjustified direct awards
- Irregular extensions of contracts
- Improper amendments to existing contracts

- Overly restrictive specifications of requirements

It is recommended that contract awards or amendments to existing contracts be reviewed and approved by members of the organisation who did not contribute to the selection of the provider (e.g. management staff).

Similarly, if the partner organisation has an internal audit function, it is recommended that the relevant department/person regularly review compliance with public procurement rules or principles abovementioned.

The Programme Authorities also draw the attention of Lead Partners and project partners to situations where different members of the same consortium (i.e. project partners) might choose the same service provider and recommend the establishment of specific assessment and prevention mechanisms to ensure that potential conflicts of interests are avoided. Furthermore, in addition to the minimum requirements defined by the applicable European and national legislation on public procurement, the Programme recommends that partners ensure:

- The prevention of any potential conflict of interests through a specific mechanism (declaration of non-conflict of interests for staff awarding external contracts, or other)
- Full transparency in the awarding of contracts
- A transparent bid opening procedure (paper or dematerialised) to avoid manipulation of bid data.

D. Financial flow and project financial performance

i. Financial flow

Payments to projects partners are made on a reimbursement basis. The amounts reimbursed by the Programme correspond to 80% of the total certified eligible costs declared by the partners, which, except for lump sums and flat rates amounts, must all have been previously incurred and paid by the partners and certified by a national controller in conformity with the applicable Programme and national rules.

Every six months[225], and on behalf of whole partnership the LP presents to the JS a reporting package . The Reporting Package is composed of a project report and related payment claim available in Jems.

The Reporting package is assessed and validated by the JS and once accepted, the JS (on behalf of the Managing Authority) prepares a payment order corresponding to the validated amount and sends it to the Accounting Authority[226].

The Accounting Authority is a key player in the payment workflow as it's entitled to:

- receive the Interreg funds from the European Commission on behalf of the Programme
- establish the applications for payment before they are sent to the European Commission.
- pay the Interreg funds to the project partners[227]

[225] Please note that depending on the project duration, the last reporting period can be shorter or longer than 6 months and is established on Jems under the "reporting schedule" settled for each project. See chapter II. E. "Project reporting and Joint Secretariat monitoring";
[226] The Accounting Authority is the body in charge of the accounting function: Ministry of Finance of Spain
[227] The time between the reception of the reporting package by the JS and actual payments by the Accounting Authority can vary significantly from one project to another (or even from one package to another) and can take up from three months to a year, depending on the quality of the information provided by the lead partners and the responsiveness of all parties involved.

Important point: Unavoidable delays[228] should be considered by the partners before receiving the Interreg fund corresponding to the certified amounts. Upon receipt of the reporting package by the JS, the effective payment should take about 2 months as far as the information and material provided by the Lead Partner are complete.

[228] Article 74.1 (b) of the CPR Regulation establish a "deadline of 80 days to receive the amount due "from the date of submission of the payment claim, by the beneficiary […]that may be interrupted" if information submitted is not complete.

To reduce payment delays as much as possible, the Programme has opted for paying the Interreg funds directly to project partners. The Lead Partner receives only the amounts corresponding to its own expenditure, the rest is paid directly to the partners by the Accounting Authority, in the respective bank account indicated in Jems[229].

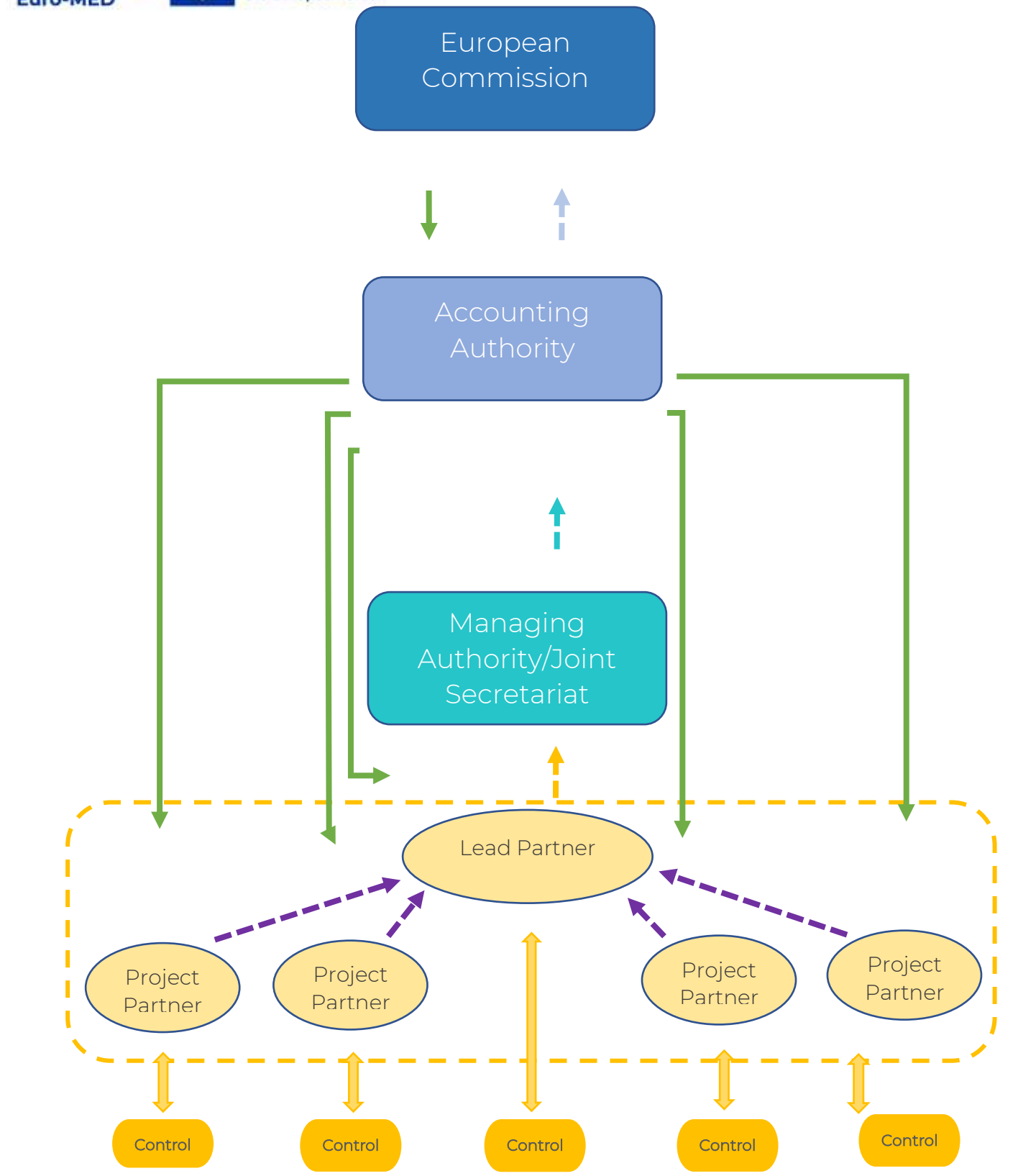
Payments are made in Euro only.

Single bank account principle:

Following the European Commission recommendations on transparency, combating fraud and money laundering, kindly be reminded that the single bank account principle applies. In other words, all Interreg Funds reimbursements linked to Interreg Euro-MED projects must be made to a single bank account of a project partner organisation, and even if a project partner is involved in several Interreg Euro-MED projects. In this respect, in the case of multi-participation in the Euro-MED Programme, regardless of the call, special attention should be paid so that only one bank account is declared in Jems.

The financial flows between the different Programme authorities, Lead Partners, partners and the Commission are presented schematically here below.

[229] Specificities for Spanish partners: In the case of Spanish partners, the bank account to which the reimbursement should be made has to be necessarily registered in a specific database of the Spanish Public Treasury. Spanish partners must verify that the bank information included in Jems complies with this requirement.
If this is not the case, concerned partners should register the account according to the registration procedure detailed on the Treasury website via the following link: http://www.tesoro.es/pagos-del-tesoro/como-dar-de-alta-o-de-baja-cuentas-bancarias-en-el-fichero-central-de-terceros


European Commission
Accounting Authority
Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat
Lead Partner
Project Partner
Project Partner
Project Partner
Project Partner
Control
Control
Control
Control
Control
National Controller Verification (costs and activities)
Partner report + Controller certificates
Reporting package (Project Report/Payment Claim)
Payment order from the MA
Application for payment to the EC
Payment of the Interreg funds in
Project partnership including partners from EU and IPA territories

a) Recovery of unduly paid amount

If during the project lifetime an overpaid amount or irregularity[230] is identified, the MA/JS must be immediately informed, and this amount must be reimbursed by the concerned partner to the Accounting Authority. This amount can be reduced from the total amount of the Interreg fund granted.

An irregularity can be identified in the following cases:

- as a result of any level of controls (National controller, programme bodies, National auditing bodies, Second level auditors, European Commission, OLAF, European Court of accounts, ...)
- the circumstances stated in art 12.1 of the project subsidy contract

Any unduly paid amount must be notified to the Programme by email via a dedicated template[231] and is corrected in Jems by the JS through a specific workflow.

NB: in case of irregularity affecting the staff cost category, related flat rate (CC2 and CC3) will be automatically and proportionally corrected.

The repayment can be done through the withdraw of the irregular amount from a pending payment (compensation) or, in case of closed projects, a formal recovery procedure.

In case of a formal recovery procedure[232], the MA sends by email a recovery order to the LP[233]. Within 5 days of receipt of the notification, the LP must transmit to the PP concerned the recovery order received. The JS is informed of this notification. The repayment is made directly by the concerned partner(s) to the Programme bank account (Accounting Authority); the **repayment is due within two months of the notification to the Lead Partner.**

[230] an irregularity is an ineligible amount certified by the controller (except for lump sums and flat rates amounts) and the MA and detected after having been declared to the EC.
[231] Template provided by the concerned project/finances officer upon NC, PP or LP request.
[232] Art 8 of the subsidy contract and 7 of the partnership agreement
[233] The email is addressed to the LP copying the concerned project partner and its national authority

In the case where the repayment from the concerned PP is not done in the established timeframe, the National Authority on whose territory the concerned partner is located will be officially informed to implement the adequate procedure and guarantee the full recovery of any amount unduly paid.

According to article 52 of Regulation (EU)1059/2021, the Member States, third countries, partner countries or OCTs participating in a given Interreg programme may decide that the lead or sole partner and the programme's managing authority are not obliged to recover an amount unduly paid that does not exceed EUR 250, not including interest, in contribution from any of the Interreg funds to an operation in an accounting year

Important point: According to article 103 (3) of Regulation (EU) 1060/2021, the part of the operation budget cancelled based on financial corrections according to individual or systemic irregularities may not be reused for the operation that was the subject of the correction and the Subsidy contract will be amended accordingly.

b) Project performance and budget absorption[234]:

If the project financial absorption is not on track with the defined schedule[235] or a partner fails to respect the contractual arrangements on timeliness budget absorption, visibility requirements and achievement of the deliverables, outputs and results as indicated in the project data, corrective measures may be put in place to ensure the project performance as well as minimise the impact at Programme level. As a result, the JS may propose to the Monitoring Committee to reduce the amount granted accordingly following the procedure indicated below.

The project performance and financial absorption will be assessed in the framework of the project report assessment[236], but also during the interview organised by the JS in case of detected project risk[237].

[234] See Art 2.8 and 2.9 of the Subsidy Contract
[235] spending forecast is included in the project spending plan in Jems section D.3 of the application Form
[236] See part II. E. viii. a) "Assessment and acceptation of the reporting package"
[237] See chapter project reporting and Joint Secretariat monitoring, point ii Joint Secretariat Monitoring/ Project performance and monitoring of project risks

In case of activity not respecting the expected work plan or persistent underconsumption[238], the JS would request a project modification to reduce the corresponding activities and budget or to make a transfer of tasks and budget between two or more partners. The LP, in agreement with the project steering committee, agrees on the modification and the application form is modified on Jems, and validated in agreement with the Programme MC decision.

When applicable, a formal addendum is prepared and signed.

ii. Decommitment[239]:

The European Commission shall automatically decommit any part of a budget commitment of a Programme that has not been used by 31 December of the third year following the year of budget commitment (s.c. N+3 rule[240]). This decommitment risk on Programme level is highly linked to projects financial absorption.

If the allocations set in the financial tables of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme are not translated into effective application for payment to the European Commission within the set timeframe, the part of the Programmes annuity not claimed (Interreg fund) is lost. Should this loss of Interreg funds result from projects lagging behind their payment targets (based on the spending forecast included in the project data), the decommitment would become replicable at projects level and the Programme might have to reduce contribution to these projects.

In that sense, according to the Subsidy Contract[241] where an annuity (Interreg fund) of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme is decommitted automatically by the European Commission [...] the Monitoring Committee may decide to reduce the subsidy of projects for expenditure not incurred in line with the timetable provided for in the project data.

[238] See definition of "persistent underconsumption in the part II. E. viii.e) "Project performance and monitoring of project risks".
[239] See Art 2.10 of the Subsidy Contract According to Article 105 of Regulation (EU) No 1060/2021
[240] First year of potential decommitment is 2025 for Interreg Euro-MED Programme
[241] Article 2.10 of the Subsidy Contract

E. Controls, audits and verifications

Within the framework of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme, project partners are subject to different types of regulatory controls during the implementation of projects and, possibly, after their closure. Four types of control conducted by the Programme Authorities can be distinguished, and vary in scope, frequency and objectives:

- Management verifications :

  -**"Controls**" or "national controls": this is the first level of control for the project partners and refers to the verifications carried out by the National Controller in accordance with Article 46 (3) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059. The National Controllers (hereafter "NC") designated or approved by the Participating States, must validate the expenditure declared by each of the beneficiaries participating in an operation before it is accepted by the LP for inclusion in a claim for reimbursement to the Programme.

  - **"Quality controls**": these are controls carried out by the Managing Authority, the Joint Secretariat and the Participating States in accordance with article 74 (2) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 and article 46(5) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059. These controls may take the form of administrative and/or on-the-spot verifications and aim to ensure that expenditure has been verified by a designated controller, that partners are complying with the Programme obligations and circuits set out in the contractual documents and the Programme Manual, and that operations are correctly implemented and in line with the planned activities.

-**" Audits** of operations": this refers to the work carried out annually by the Audit Authority in accordance with Articles 48 and 49 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 and Articles 77 and 79 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 on a sample of operations selected by the European Commission based on a single population established between all Interreg Programmes. In France (where the Managing Authority is located), the Autorité nationale d'Audit pour les Fonds européens – National Authority for Audits of European Funds (AnAFe) carries out this function. In this capacity, the AnAFe is responsible for the implementation of the Programme's audit work in cooperation with a Group of Auditors (GoA) composed of representatives from each of the Participating States.

- Controls held after project ending: the Programme is responsible to ensure the durability of operations comprising investment in infrastructure or productive investment, to this aim, within 5 years of the final payment to the beneficiary or within the period of time set out in State aid rules, where applicable controls will be held by the responsible National Authorities to ensure the compliance of art 65 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060

Other types of controls can be added to these four categories and can be conducted by regional, national or European bodies such as the European Commission, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) or the European Court of Auditors (ECA).

i. National control[242]

According to the terms and functions mentioned in articles 74 (1a) of Regulation (EU) 1060/2021 and 45 (3) of Regulation (EU) 1059/2021, the "controller" (hereinafter national controller or NC) verifies the existence of the co-financed products and services, that the project complies with the applicable law, and ensures the certification of the expenditure declared by the project partners[243] . According to article 46 (7) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059, it is the responsibility of each Participating State (Member State or partner country) to set up a national control system and to designate controllers[244] in charge of verifying and certifying that the expenditure declared by the beneficiaries[245] on their territory complies with the EU, Programme and national eligibility rules.

National controls include *administrative verifications* on expenditure submitted by beneficiaries and on-the-spot *verifications of operations*.

The scope of controls is based on the risks identified by the Programme.

Before the submission of each Payment Claim, the national controller carries out this regulatory and mandatory verification[246], which covers the expenditure of partners declared during the implementation of the project. Expenditure incurred and paid by partners can only be included in a Payment

[242] Formerly referred to as "first level control".
[243] Expenditure reporting flowchart section Implementing my project, chapter Reporting on project expenditure and activities (redaction ongoing)
[244] According to Article 46 (9) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059
[245] Section Implementing my project, chapter Reporting on project expenditure and activities)
[246] According to Article 74 (1a) and (2) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060

Claim after it has been verified by a national controller and then validated by the LP of each project.

For each new project in which it is involved a project partner must get a controller assigned according to the chapiter C. Starting the project iii. Setting up the control process of this Manual.

The verification is carried out by the NC on the basis of supporting documents and evidence provided by the partners and the data entered in the Jems Monitoring System

The objectives of the control are multiple:

- To provide the Managing Authority and the project itself with the guarantee that the costs for which reimbursement is requested are justified;
- Ensure that the reimbursement requested by the Lead Partners is in line with the legal and financial provisions set out in the Subsidy Contract, the EU, the Interreg Euro-MED Programme and the national rules;
- Guarantee the conformity of the project accounts with the legal and financial obligations of each organisation contributing to the co-financing of the operation, its legal status and the legislation in force in the State concerned.

a) Independence and qualification[247] of controllers

The controller must be qualified and independent[248] of the controlled entity, those points are ensured by the designation procedure carrying out by the national body in charge of approving the national controller.

To be considered independent, controllers must meet certain criteria:

- In case of an internal controller, where national rules allow it, must belong to a unit of a national or regional authority that is functionally separated from the units of the same organisation responsible for implementing the activities and the financial aspects of the project.
- In case of an external controller (national or regional authority, private body, natural person) is considered to be independent if no other

[247] : According to Article 46 (9) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059
[248] According to Article 46 (8) and (9) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059

contractual or personal relationship exists that could lead to a conflict of interest with the controlled organisation.

Regarding the qualification of the controller, the controller can be: a national or regional authority, a private law body or a natural person meeting the requirements of the Regulation.

Partners must comply with the regulatory requirements[249] and bear in mind that the control of expenditure of a project co-financed under the Interreg Euro-MED Programme goes beyond the classical controls of accounts as it also involves professional judgement regarding the implementation of project activities by the partner and compliance with EU, national and Programme rules.

Controllers must therefore have a thorough knowledge in the field of Structural Funds project controls. They must also have a good command of one of the two languages of the Programme[250] .

More information on the required qualifications of the NC can be found in the "National Information" section[251] of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme website.

b) Two types of control systems

Each participating State (Member State or partner country) is responsible for the appointment of national controllers and the quality of controls held on its territory and may have chosen a centralised or decentralised national control system[252]. The control systems can thus be organised as follows:

Centralised systems: National authorities are responsible for establishing a national control system, linking each project partner to a centralised control unit and informing beneficiaries of the procedure to be followed for the certification of their expenditure. Participating States designate a single entity

[249] According to Article 46 (9) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059

[250] All Programme documents as well as tools or templates provided by the Programme (Reports, Website, Jems, Programme Manual, contractual documents etc) are available in French and English language.

[251] Where we work - Programme Interreg Euro-MED (interreg-euro-med.eu) or National Controllers - Programme Interreg Euro-MED (interreg-euro-med.eu)

[252] The system description for each of the states participating in the programme is available on the programme's webpage,

to carry out national controls. In these States, beneficiaries submit their expenditure to this entity for certification.

In practice :

- Partners of approved projects established in a participating State where the control system is centralised must contact the organisation in charge of controls on their territory, or their National Contact Point, which will inform them about the control procedure to be followed for the certification of expenditure (name and contact details of the controller(s), timetable and deadlines, compulsory documents, etc.);
- The controllers designated by the competent authority create their user account in Jems, the Programme's online monitoring tool;
- After creating the account, the controller must contact the programme (support@interreg-euro-med.eu) and transmit his/her contact information (name, first name, email address used to create the account) to activate the profile;
- The national entity in charge of the controls then proceeds to assign the controller on Jems and attaches the designated controller to the beneficiaries whose expenditures he/she has to verify;
- Partners submit their expenditure to the national control entity via Jems[253] before the LP review for inclusion in a project payment claim;

Decentralised systems: National authorities are responsible for establishing a national control system and the national process, for the approbation of national controllers and for informing beneficiaries of the procedure to be followed for the selection of their controller. According to national rules, controllers can be internal (if these meet the abovementioned qualification and independency criteria) or external (auditors from independent private institutions, or natural persons selected according to procurement rules[254]). In some countries, beneficiaries have to select the controller from a pre-selected pool at national/regional level.

In all cases, in order to be entitled to carry out their verifications, the controllers selected by the beneficiaries must be "designated" by the responsible body

[253] In the framework of the Programme, supporting documents for expenditure (invoices, tickets, payslips, etc.) can be uploaded to the Jems system or on another secure platform according to the national control process and the originals must be retained by the partners. A copy must be sent to the controllers, as well as any other additional documents that may be required to enable control work to be carried out.
[254] In the case of an external controller, the partner shall make a selection in accordance with the public procurement rules (if applicable).

at national/regional level which will issue a document approving the controller identified to certify the partner's expenditure on the project.

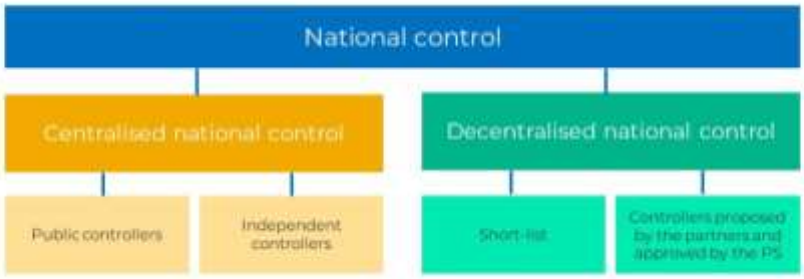
In practice :

- Immediately after project approval, partners from a Participating State with a decentralised system should contact the body in charge of approving the NC on their territory, or their National Contact Point, who will inform them of the procedure to be followed for the selection and approval of their controller (specific Terms of Reference for the selection of controllers, compliance with regulatory requirements[255], documents to be provided, …)
- After selection of the controller, the partners submit a request for approval to the competent body - the application procedure is regulated by each national/regional body - detailing the choice of the controller and its competences.
- Upon receipt, the national/regional control body assesses the information provided and makes a decision on the choice of controller (NB: a new approval must be issued if a new controller is identified during the implementation of the project);
- After approval by the competent body, the controller creates his/her user account on Jems, the Programme's monitoring tool, and informs the PP and the competent body;
- After the account has been created, the controller must contact the programme (support@interreg-euro-med.eu) and provide his or her contact information (last name, first names, email address used to create the account, requested profile type) to activate the profile;
- The body in charge of approving the controllers then proceeds to assign the controller on Jems and attaches him/her to the project partner/s whose expenditures he/she has to verify;
- Partners submit their expenditure to the controller in charge of the certification via Jems[256] prior to the review by the LP for inclusion in a project Payment Claim;

Figure 1. The two types of national control systems

[255] According to Article 46 (9) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059

[256] In the framework of the Programme, supporting documents for expenditure (invoices, tickets, payslips, etc.) are not uploaded to the system and must be retained by the partners. A copy must be sent to the controllers, as well as any other additional documents that may be required to enable control work to be carried out.



National control systems in the Participating States

Table 1. National control system of each Participating State in the Interreg Euro-MED Programme[257] :

Centralised systems	Decentralised systems
Albania	Cyprus
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Spain
Bulgaria	France[258]
Croatia	Italy
Greece	Malta
North Macedonia	Portugal
Montenegro	

[257] Further information on the NCs systems is available on the Programme website Where we work - Programme Interreg Euro-MED (interreg-euro-med.eu) or National Controllers - Programme Interreg Euro-MED (interreg-euro-med.eu) (i.e. contacts of the national authorities and contact persons for the national control as well as descriptions of the control system in force in each participating State) ; and on the website of each of the States participating in the Programme.

[258] In the case of French beneficiaries, a specific ad-hoc procedure foresees the signature of an agreement between each project PP and the NA in order to frame, for each project in which a partner participates, the selection and assignment procedure of the controller.

Slovenia	

Partners are invited to consult carefully and as soon as possible the provisions and procedures of their national framework.

Please note: In Spain and Portugal (decentralised national system), expenditure certified by controllers must also be validated at national level in order to be included in a project Payment Claim. A document called "national validation" is issued by the entity in charge of this validation and must be attached to the control certificate. In this case, the timetable for the certification process must be adjusted in cooperation with the concerned NA and the project Lead Partner in charge of submitting the payment claim to the Joint Secretariat. The national validation accompanying each certificate will be uploaded on Jems;

Partners based in a Region outside the Programme cooperation area and belonging to an EU Member State other than the 14 Interreg Euro-MED Programme States should contact the national/regional authority responsible for national controls in their country to obtain information on the selection and approval process of their controller. Project partners must inform the Joint Secretariat of this contact as soon as possible.

c) Scope of national control

In the framework of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme, and based on the risks identified by the MA, the partners must present all projects expenditures to the national control which should be implemented on a 100% basis. However, in the case where the participating State has an official national sampling method in place, this method and the risk assessment on which it is based are reviewed by the MA and the NC must conform to it.

In order to certify the expenditure, national controllers must check, as a minimum, the following points listed in the control certificate:

a) The expenditure complies with the EU, Programme and national eligibility rules and with the conditions for support and payment of the project[259], as described in the Subsidy contract;
b) The expenditure is incurred and paid during the project's eligibility period;
c) The supporting documents are sufficient and an adequate audit trail exists;
d) The expenditure is correctly recorded in a specific accounting system or identifiable with an accounting code dedicated to the project with the exception of cost calculated as flat rate and lump sum;
e) The expenditure in a currency other than the Euro has been converted using the correct exchange rate[260];
f) EU, national and institutional procurement rules were observed[261];
g) The products, services and works co-financed were actually delivered;
h) The expenditure has a clear/direct link to the project activities and cost categories of the budget, which are in line with the consolidated application form and the Subsidy contract;
i) Where applicable, the beneficiary has indicated the source and amounts of external national co-financing received;
j) The risk of double financing is excluded;
k) The SCOs are correctly used: respect of the method chosen in the AF, correct calculation of eligible costs.

d) How to implement the control work

The national authority in charge of approving NCs is responsible for the methods used to implement the controls.

The Programme sets out below a series of key principles to be followed and provides a control checklist via Jems on which NCs should base their work. However, controllers are required to refer the description of the national control

[259] See Chapter A. Eligibility of expenditure and Section B. State aid of this Manual)
[260] See Chapter A. Eligibility of expenditure of this Manual
[261] See Chapter C. Public procurement and external contracting of this Manual

system of their State, available on the Programme's website, for more details on how the control should be implemented.

The control of expenditure by the national controller can be carried out through administrative verifications (i.e. desk based checks) and on-the-spot verifications. In addition to the Programme and EU rules, the NC must comply with the applicable national rules and procedures in carrying out its work.

Important point:

It is essential that before starting work, each controller ensures that he/she has the most up-to-date information concerning the implementation of the project (latest consolidated Application form) as well as the eligibility of expenditure and the reporting process. Indeed, the Programme Manual is regularly updated (in particular to integrate the evolutions of the monitoring system or, in a more isolated way, to clarify the rules on eligibility of expenditure). A versioning of the Manual is integrated in the document to understand the scope of the modifications as well as the effective date of entry into force of these modifications.

Administrative control:

This is the most frequent method of implementing controls, the desk-based control or "administrative verification" is implemented by the NC from its headquarters and is based on documents and material provided by the project partners whose expenditure is being controlled. To carry out its work, the NC must have all the information necessary for the proper verification of expenditure and is based on:

- The elements entered by the partners in the Jems monitoring system for each of the cost presented to the verification,
- The regulatory supporting documents transmitted[262] (invoices, receipts, tickets, pay slips, bank statements, transport tickets, etc),
- Any additional material requested by the controller (deliverables, minutes, reports etc),
- A telephone or video conference interview.

[262] the supporting documents constituting the financial audit trail of the project must be provided to the controller but retained by the project partners and made available in the event of a subsequent audit. Each controller agrees with the controlled partner on the modalities of transferring the information and, where appropriate, in accordance with the applicable IT security rules (in the expenditure list in Jems, through another secure platform, email transmission, video conference)

On-the-spot control:

The Interreg Euro-MED Programme strongly recommends that an on-the-spot verification be carried out at least once during the lifetime of the project and one on-the-spot visit is mandatory in the case of projects involving investments[263].

It is recommended that controllers do not wait until the end of the project to schedule and carry out this visit.

The objective of an on-the-spot control is the same as that of an administrative control. However, it has a real added value, as it allows to focus on three additional aspects that contribute to ensuring the proper implementation of the project, i.e:

1. The proper functioning of internal processes and the reliability of the accounting system regarding the separation and identification of the expenditure claimed by the controlled beneficiary.
2. The existence of a complete audit trail (consistent with the information declared and the documents received) and kept in commonly established supports (supporting documents such as staff contracts, bank statements as proof of payment and procurement documents can be more easily examined and consulted and the interviews conducted during the on-the-spot controls allow these internal aspects of the organisation to be accurately addressed).
3. The existence and delivery of goods and services and the operation of investments whose costs are declared by the beneficiary.

Finally, an on-the-spot control makes the verification process smoother, as it avoids the need to send multiple documents and helps to reduce response times.

Certification of expenses in Jems:

At the end of the control work and for each reporting period, the controller must:

- Validate partner expenditure in the Jems monitoring system

[263] "Investment" as defined in the part I. C. ii. "Composition of a project" of this Manual

- Complete the compulsory control checklist provided by the Programme in the Jems monitoring system (specifying the modality of implementation of the documentary or on-the-spot control
- Complete and validate the Control certificate and report on Jems, including the amounts presented, validated and rejected (the complete document includes a formal statement from the controller to validate the expenditure, the control checklist and a list of controlled expenditure[264]).
- Sign (stamp, and scan if necessary) the control report and send it to the PP (and to the NA in the case of Spain) for inclusion in the partner's audit trail.

By signing the Control certificate and report which contains the validation of expenditure, the controller confirms all the elements mentioned in the document and the correct use of the funds.

e) Timeframe for the implementation of controls

Within 3 months after the end of the reporting period, the project Lead Partner must submit the complete project Reporting package (i.e: Project report and related payment claim) to the Joint Secretariat. In this sense, the controller must finalise his verifications on the expenditure presented by the beneficiary within a sufficient time[265] to allow the project Lead partner to accept the certified expenditure and to submit the project reporting package in accordance with the timetable that appears in the consolidated Application form[266].

In order to guarantee a timely submission, the work of the project partner's controls (of the national body in charge of validation for Spain and Portugal, if applicable) and the lead partner's verification must be carefully scheduled. It is recommended that partners enter their expenditure into Jems as early and

[264] A courtesy version of the NC model certificate is available (for information ONLY) on the Programme website. This document specifies the details of the verifications expected from the controllers and can in no way be considered as a valid document for the submission of a claim for reimbursement by a Lead Partner applicant
[265] According to Article 46 (6) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059
[266] Information available in Jems part contracting chapter reporting period.

as regularly as possible without waiting for the end of the reporting period in order to facilitate the work of the different stakeholders.

The Interreg Euro-MED Programme also recommends that projects establish a clear and precise timetable for the submission of the reporting packages in accordance with the information provided in the consolidated form.

In practice :

- The NC is in contact with the partners and is available at the end of the reporting period to start the control work;
- Before the end of the 3-month deadline[267] established in the consolidated form, the complete documentation of each partner (NC certificate + possible national validation) duly filled in and signed is transmitted to the lead partner;
- The lead partner collects documentation from all partners and accepts expenditure into the system in order to prepare the project report (finances and activities) for submission to the JS via Jems, within the deadlines.

NB: The controllers' certificates and the payment claim integrating these certificates must be submitted to the JS not later than 3 months after the end of the reporting period. After this deadline, the payment claim may be refused by the JS.

Important point: The three months' timeframe foreseen for the preparation of Reporting package does not apply to the last reporting period and project final reporting package must be submitted on Jems no later than the project end date (see chapter Project reporting and Joint Secretariat monitoring+ Chapter project closure of the present manual)

[267] The deadline of three month runs from the end of the reporting period and does not apply to the last reporting period and project final reporting package must be submitted on Jems no later than the project end date: see Chapter II. H. "Closing my project" of the present manual.

f) Control costs

The possible costs of the control which are covered by the partners constitute eligible expenses for the Interreg Euro-MED Programme. The partners concerned must therefore foresee a budget dedicated for carrying out these controls.

These costs should be included in the "external expertise and services" cost category on "Jems".

For the control costs of the last payment claim to be eligible, the activity (certification of expenditure) and the payment must be carried out before the official end date of the project (see chapters III. A.iii. and v.b).

ii. Quality controls carried out by the MA/JS or Participating State

a) JS administrative verifications[268]

Under article 74.1 of the CPR, the JS assess on behalf of the MA the projects "reporting packages" (activity reports and projects payment claims) and before transmission of the expenditure to the Accounting Authority, carries out management verifications on all payment claims submitted on Jems. The role of the JS is to ensure that the national control is properly implemented according to the modalities established by each State and that the rules of the Programme are respected by both beneficiaries and controllers.

This verification is formalised through a document drafted by the JS and transmitted to the lead partner. The administrative verifications carried out by the JS may lead to the formulation of recommendations or the identification of financial corrections and give rise to a follow-up process for the recommendations made

b) On-the-spot visits of the MA/JS

Under Article 74.2, the JS carries out on-the-spot visits the frequency and scope of which may vary during the programming period. The Monitoring Committee is informed of the list of structures and projects subject to the annual on-the-spot visits campaign.

[268] For more detailed information, on the project monitoring held by the Joint Secretariat, please refer to section section II.E Project reporting and JS monitoring

On the spot visits aim to ensure the correct implementation of the financed projects, the reality of the investments, the respect of the Programme's rules and processes, the guarantee of the audit trail and the correct execution of the work of the national controllers. In some cases, these visits may also be more focused on the positioning of the project/partner in relation to the Programme's strategy/community of projects.

At the end of each on-the-spot visit, a report is drafted by the JS and submitted to the beneficiary concerned in the framework of a contradictory process. An on-the-spot visit may lead to the formulation of recommendations or the identification of financial corrections. On-the-spot visits may also lead to a follow-up process of the recommendations made.

c) Management Quality Control eventually implemented by the participating States

The Management Quality Controls (hereafter MQC) may be implemented by the participating States, under Article 74 (2) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060.

The MQCs carried out by the Participating States may take the form of administrative and/or on-the-spot verifications. They are implemented according to a methodology and a specific annual work plan established by each participating State and according to different type of risks, identified by each of the 14 States. The MQCs may thus focus on the quality of a partner's participation in the Programme, on project activities or payment claims of the projects, or the quality of the national control system.

The results of these controls are transmitted to the JS to enable a follow-up of the implementation of recommendations or financial corrections.

iii. Audit of operations

The audits of operations, also called "second level" audits, constitute an additional control of the expenditure presented by the partners and intervene on expenditure already declared to the Commission. Audits can be totally or partially outsourced and are carried out under the responsibility of the Audit Authority (AA) of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme. The AA is assisted by the Group of Auditors (GoA) which is composed of representatives from each participating State of the Programme, in accordance with Article 48 (1) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059.

The AA and GoA are independent from the other bodies of the Programme (MC, MA, JS, NC), as well as from the co-financed projects.

The AA, in accordance with Articles 48(2) and 49 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 and Article 77 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, is responsible for carrying out audits of operations in order to provide the Commission an independent insurance as to the effective functioning of the management and control systems and the legality and regularity of expenditure integrated in the accounts forwarded to the Commission.

To meet this objective, the European Commission selects on an annual basis a sample of operations among several Interreg programmes. In the framework of the Interreg MED Programme, the AA and the GoA entrust the implementation of the audit work to an external provider(s). These auditors carry out their work in accordance with the audit strategy established by the AA and the GoA and under their responsibility.

Audits of operations are carried out once a year throughout the lifetime of the Programme.

The same partner may be audited several times if it is involved in different Interreg Euro-MED projects or in several Interreg programmes. The same beneficiary may also be audited several times for the same project.

For each audit of operation, a report is drafted by the auditor and submitted to the concerned beneficiary in the context of a contradictory process. An audit may lead to the formulation of recommendations or the identification of financial corrections. Audits may also lead to a follow-up process of the recommendations made.

The follow-up of audit results differs according to the type of identified finding:

- In case of findings with *financial consequences* (e.g. detection of irregular amounts), the amounts considered ineligible will be withdrawn from the next payment claim or will be recovered from the partner concerned if the project is closed or if the amount to be reimbursed is lower than the irregular amount;
- If the findings have *no financial consequence*, the concerned partner (and/or its controller where applicable) will have to prove that the recommendations made by the auditors have been followed.

As a precautionary measure, and in accordance with the provisions of the subsidy contract, the MA is entitled to suspend payment of the Interreg Fund for projects/partners subject to an audit until its conclusion.

The MA/JS are not directly involved in the implementation of the audits but facilitate the communication flows between all parties involved in the process, i.e. the AA, the GoA members, the audit firm(s) in charge of conducting the audits, the lead partners and partners of the audited projects.

The MA/JS also provide additional guidance to beneficiaries on the preparation of the audit and its follow-ups.

iv. Other levels of controls

In addition to the Programme bodies, the European Commission, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), the European Court of Auditors (ECA) and, in the areas under their responsibility, the audit organizations of the participating States or other national public audit bodies may implement controls to confirm the proper use of funds by the beneficiaries.

The concerned partners are informed in good time of any audit conducted by one of these bodies. They will then provide the information and documentation on the implementation of the project required by the body carrying out the audit. Access to the audited partner's premises will also be granted to the auditors.

This type of control may be carried out during the implementation of the project and until the end of the regulatory retention period for all supporting documents related to the implementation of the project and included in the subsidy contract[269] .

[269] Article 82 Regulation (EU) 2021/1060: all supporting documents related to an operation supported by the Funds are kept at the appropriate level for a 5 year period from 31 December of the year in which the last payment by the managing authority to the beneficiary is made

IV. Legal mechanisms

A. General Data Protection Regulation

The European Union General Data Protection Regulation (EU-GDPR) enforced on 25th May 2018, produces rules for Interreg Programmes and the projects regarding the management of private data collected for various purposes and in different stages of their implementation.

As a general principle, the regulation gives citizens the rights to access and control their private data obliging data keepers to implement a certain number of measures to meet such requirements. The Interreg Euro-MED Programme and the Project Partners are data controllers and processors[270], and therefore are required to abide by the GDPR.

This chapter briefly presents the GDPR regulation and its consequences for the Programme[271] and projects. It aims to answer the questions raised by projects about this topic during their implementation.

However, the Interreg Euro-MED Programme holds no responsibility or liability whatsoever regarding the personal data collected and processed by the Project Partners.

i. What is considered as personal data?

Personal data relates to any information about a natural person or 'Data Subject', which can be used to directly or indirectly identify the person. It can be anything from a name, a photo, an email address, bank details, and posts on social networks, medical information, or a computer IP address.[272]

ii. Who is concerned by the GDPR implementation?

The GDPR applies to organisations based in the EU and outside, if these organisations collect data from EU citizens. Therefore, the Interreg Euro-MED projects collecting data from IPA countries are also concerned by this regulation.

[270] See definition of « data controller » and « data processor » as stated in the GDPR Regulation (CE) nº 2016/679, Chapter 1, article 4(7)(8).
[271] For more detailed information, please refer to Privacy policy of the Interreg Euro MED Programme
[272] See definition in the GDPR Regulation (CE) nº 2016/679, Chapter 1, article 4 (1).

iii. What rights do data subjects have?

Data subject, e.g. someone registering for a project event or newsletter has the right to access the information defined as personal data, receive it "in a structured, commonly used and machine-readable format" rectify it, erase it, asks the restriction of its processing, etc.[273]

iv. What is data controller and processor(s)?

'Controller' means the natural or legal person, public authority, agency or other body which, alone or jointly with others, determines the purposes and means of the processing of personal data [...]".

"A 'processor' means a natural or legal person, public authority, agency or other body which processes personal data on behalf of the controller."[274]

In the case of an Interreg Euro-MED project, the data control and process are compulsory requirements[275] and should be taken on by the same **partner who will be then the "Data controller"**; any partner falling under the definition of "data controller" and "data processor" established by the regulation can be considered as such.

v. What are the responsibilities of the data controller?

A "Data Controller" must be appointed for each project and "shall implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure and to be able to demonstrate that processing is performed in accordance with this Regulation."[276]

Therefore, the Data Controller must ensure that institutions managing personal data implement systems that enable the inventory of databases, allow interested people to access their personal data, change it or deleted it.

These databases must be kept safe of any data breach. In the event such incident occurs, institutions have the obligation to communicate it within 72 hours to the respective national data protection authority.

[273] For a full description of the « data subject » rights, please check Chapter 3 of the GDPR Regulation (CE) nº 2016/679.
[274] Definition of a "data controller" and "data processor" according to the GDPR Regulation (CE) nº 2016/679, Chapter 1, article 4(7)(8).
[275] Please refer to part I. B. i. "Partnership architecture"
[276] Regulation (CE) nº 2016/679, Chapter 4, article 24(1).

The project must appoint where necessary[277] a data protection officer (DPO) that will "inform and advise the [Data Controller] and the employees who carry out processing of their obligations pursuant to this Regulation [...]; monitor compliance with this Regulation [...]; provide advice where requested [...]; cooperate with the supervisory authority; act as the contact point for the supervisory authority on issues relating to processing [of personal data]"[278], etc.

"Data subjects may contact the Data Protection Officer with regard to all issues related to processing of their personal data and to the exercise of their rights under this Regulation."[279]

Please note that according to the regulation, Public Bodies must appoint a DPO.

vi. What penalties in the case of infringement?

Organisations failing to comply with the GDPR can be fined up to 4% of their annual global turnover or €20 Million (whichever is greater). This is the maximum fine that can be imposed for the most serious infringements e.g. not having sufficient consent to process data or violating the core of Privacy by Design concepts.[280]

vii. Who is responsible for the data collected in projects websites and by other means?

The Programme Managing Authority (Provence-Alpes-**Côte d'Azur Region)** is only responsible (Data controller) for the data collected by the Joint Secretariat and stored in the Programme website and other IT or non IT systems, for the legal obligations to be fulfilled by the Programme (accounts data, project partner's contacts, webmasters lists, etc.).

The Interreg Euro-MED Programme cannot be held responsible for the **information contained on a project's website and Privacy Policy page**.

All data collected and stored by the projects, collected either through the Interreg Euro-MED web platform via the registration forms or surveys, or

[277] Please check the GDPR Regulation (CE) nº 2016/679, Chapter 4, article 37 to see in which cases a DPO must be appointed.
[278] For the detailed list of the DPO tasks, please see the GDPR Regulation (CE) nº 2016/679, Chapter 4, article 39.
[279] See GDPR Regulation (CE) nº 2016/679, Chapter 4, article 38(4).
[280] For detailed information, please refer to the GDPR Regulation (CE) nº 2016/679, Chapter 8, article 83.

through any other softwares and applications, are solely the responsibility of the project data controller.

viii. Subject consent

Please note that not all data is subject to consent. Absolute consent is needed in case of sensitive and risky data. If the data is collected under the framework of a legal contract or in compliance with legal regulations, the consent might not be necessary. However, in this regard, project partners have a duty of transparency and for that matter; they must explain for what purposes they use the information. In addition, they must grant consultation rights for a claimant requesting access to their own data.
As far as Newsletter contacts/mailings are concerned, the GDPR requires the express consent of the recipients. To do this, project partners must ask for the express agreement of their targets and grant them the right to access, change or delete their personal data.

Data subjects should always have the possibility to exercise their rights. An opt-out option should therefore always be available for newsletters and similar communication tools.

ix. What do project partners need to do: Check list

Several actions must be undertaken, in order to comply with the GDPR:

- First and foremost, project partners must agree on and appoint the partner institution that will act as the project Data Controller. This appointment will have to be made during the precontracting phase[281], and at the very latest, and in agreement with the JS, during the first Steering Committee meeting.
- The project partnership must then appoint a DPO for the project. The Joint Secretariat strongly recommends appointing a DPO within the data controller institution. As a consequence, the institution elected as data controller must have the capacity to take such responsibility and preferably already count with a DPO within its structure.
- The data controller must review regularly all the protection measures of the project partner databases and make an inventory to prevent data breaches.
- Have a personal data management system ready, to be able to quickly respond to any demands of access, deletion, modification or even complaints.

[281] Please refer to chapter II. A. "Pre-contracting phase"

- Have a privacy policy page on the project website, in full compliance with the GDPR.

  The Programme prepared a "Privacy Policy" template[282] available on the Websites provided to all Interreg Euro-MED projects. This template is not intended to address the specific circumstances of any particular project or entity

- Adapt the template provided by the Programme to your project specificities or where necessary, draft a new one.
- Add the contact of your DPO and your website manager.
- As for the registration forms and surveys, project partners need to add:
  - A paragraph informing about the purpose of the data collection and guaranteeing that the data is collected and processed in compliance with the GDPR;
  - A paragraph stating that anyone registering for an event or filling in a survey / form confirm having read the excerpt on GPDR and that by clicking on the "SUBMIT" button they give [ACRONYM'S] project partners their explicit consent for collecting and using your personal data.

Registration and survey form templates are provided together with the project website. The Programme strongly advises you to use it.

B. Conflict of interest and risk of fraud

The protection of the EU's financial interests is a shared responsibility between the European institutions, the EU Member States and the applicant and potential applicant countries. The MA of the Programme as well as the participating States have adopted a "zero tolerance" principle towards fraud and corruption. A series of measures involving the project partners but also the Programme authorities are put in place to prevent and discourage fraud and to best protect the interests and the budget of the Union.

i. Definitions

A conflict of interest[283] arises when the impartial and objective exercise of the functions of a financial actor or other person involved in a project is

[282] Template for privacy policy page available on each project website.
[283] Cf art 61.3 of financial regulation (EU) 2018/1046

compromised for reasons of family, emotional life, political or national affinity, economic interest or any other direct or indirect personal interest. A conflict of interest is a factor that exposes Programme and project actors to the risk of corruption. Tangible means must therefore be implemented to avoid any potential conflict of interest situation.

An irregularity[284] is an act that does not comply with the rules of the European Union (EU, State or Programme regulations) and has a potentially negative impact on the financial interests of the Union. It may result from errors committed in good faith by the beneficiaries of funds or the authorities responsible for their payment. If an irregularity is committed deliberately, it is fraud.

Fraud is defined[285] as any deliberate act or intentional omission related to an "act not in conformity with European Union (EU) rules (EU, State or Programme regulations) which has a potentially negative impact on the financial interests of the Union, namely:

" - The use or presentation of false, inaccurate or incomplete statements or documents resulting in the misappropriation or wrongful retention of funds from the general budget of the European Communities or budgets managed by them or on their behalf;

- Non-disclosure of information in breach of a specific obligation, with the same effect;

- The misuse of such funds for purposes other than those for which they were originally granted."

Corruption[286] is the act of promising, offering or giving, directly or through an intermediary, an advantage of any kind whatsoever to a person, for himself or for a third party, in order that that person should perform or refrain from performing an act within the scope of his duties or an act in the exercise of his duties which damages or is likely to damage the financial interests of the Union.

[284] Cf. art 1 of regulation n°2988/95 of the Council
[285] Cf. art 3.2 of directive (EU) 2017/1371 "the term fraud is commonly used to describe a wide range of misconducts including theft, corruption, embezzlement, bribery, forgery, misrepresentation, collusion, money laundering and concealment of material facts. It often involves the use of deception to make a personal gain for oneself, a connected person or a third party, or a loss for another – intention is the key element that distinguishes fraud from irregularity." (egesif_14-0021-00 – guidance on "fraud risk assessment and effective and proportionate anti-fraud measures"
[286] Cf. article 4, paragraphe 2 and 4, of directive (EU) 2017/1371

ii. Procedures to deal with the risks of illegal activities, fraud and corruption

The prevention of conflicts of interest is adopted as a working principle of the different decision-making bodies of the Programme, which calls for the same vigilance on the part of the lead partners and partners with regard to any situation of potential conflict of interest. Indeed, a conflict of interest, established or not, may represent a risk for the partners concerned. Therefore, the Programme encourages the implementation of prevention mechanisms and appropriate measures within projects and partnerships to avoid or remedy risks (preventive self-declaration in the framework of decision making, award of contracts, award of activities to external final beneficiaries, etc.). The integration of these concepts and principles in the rules of the Project Steering Committee is also recommended.

By signing the Subsidy Contract and the Partnership Agreement[287], all project partners commit themselves to take all necessary measures to "prevent any conflict of interest which could compromise the impartial and objective execution of the operation and to take immediate steps to remedy any situation which constitutes a conflict of interest or could lead to a conflict of interest".

Similarly[288], the LP and all partners undertake to respect the principle of "zero tolerance" for any illegal activity, fraud and corruption and to be particularly vigilant in this respect. They also undertake to denounce any professional behaviour of their staff that could constitute a serious breach of their obligations or any behaviour or action that could be considered as suspected fraud.

A situation of established conflict of interest as well as any suspicion or established case of illegal activity, fraud or corruption can be detected and reported by:

- A project beneficiary (Lead Partner, project partner or associated partner)
- The national controller as a result of his control of the project partners' activities and the validation of expenses
- Any other type of control (control of operation, European Court of Auditors, …)

[287] Article 7.8 of the Subsidy Contract and article 10.1(d) of the Partnership Agreement.
[288] Article 7.9 of the Subsidy Contract and article 10.1(e) of the Partnership Agreement

- A whistle-blower (anonymous or not)
- Members of the Monitoring Committee, other Programme Authorities (Managing Authority, Accounting Authority, Audit Authority), Group of Auditors (GoA) members and National Contact Points
- The European Commission Institutions (OLAF[289], EPPO[290] or other services)

If you detect or suspect a case of illegal activity, fraud or corruption (or a conflict of interest that could constitute a risk of fraud) you must report it. Various channels are available for this purpose, including the following:

- The official website of OLAF: European Anti-Fraud Office (europa.eu) which can be used in all 24 official EU languages.
- The official website of the European Public Prosecutor's Office[291]: Reporting a crime to the European Public Prosecutor's Office (europa.eu) usable in all 24 official EU languages. If the national rules provide for it, you can submit the alert directly to the Deputy European Public Prosecutor in your country.
- The dedicated email address of the Programme is managed by the JS Coordinator: alert_med@maregionsud.fr and can be used in one of the two languages of the Programme. The email should describe, as clearly and accurately as possible, the facts reported. The data transmitted must be relevant, adequate and measured. An alert from a person who wishes to remain anonymous may be processed provided that the seriousness of the facts mentioned is established and that the factual elements reported are sufficiently detailed, precise and evidenced to justify any administrative intervention by the Programme.

Whistle-blower protection:

The protection of whistle-blowers has been validated as a working principle by the Programme representatives. Therefore, any transfer of information between the authorities concerned will be limited to a small and relevant

[289] https://anti-fraud.ec.europa.eu/index_en

[290] European Public Prosecutor's Office The European Public Prosecutor's Office was established by Regulation (EU) 2017/1939 and is the first EU body empowered to conduct criminal investigations and prosecute fraud and corruption cases affecting the EU's financial interests.

[291] The EPPO is competent to bring to judgment crimes affecting the financial interests of the EU. These are intentional acts – the so-called 'PIF offences' such as fraud, corruption, money laundering and misappropriation – that may have a negative impact on EU taxpayers' money. These PIF offences are listed in Directive (EU) 2017/1371, as implemented by national law.

number of persons and the confidentiality of the whistle-blower will be ensured at all stages of the processing.

The National Authority is responsible for monitoring possible cases of fraud on its territory or concerning beneficiaries from its national territory. When a suspicion or established case of illegal activity, fraud or corruption is reported or in case of a suspected conflict of interest, the MA/JS examines the allegations and informs the competent programme and national authorities (Accounting Authority, Audit Authority and members of the Monitoring Committee if applicable) in order to implement adequate procedure so that national authorities can decide, in cooperation with their national OLAF correspondent, on the need to open an investigation.

The Programme authorities monitors the progress of the procedure and the correct implementation of follow-up measures[292] and possible recoveries.

Depending on the channel used by the whistle-blower to report, the whistle-blower is kept informed of the follow-up, except in the case of an anonymous report.

The MA/JS and the Programme authorities reserve the possibility to implement targeted checks on partners (via the anti-fraud tool made available by the European Commission[293] or specific national systems for fraud prevention set up by some countries in the Programme cooperation area).

C. Intellectual property

Intellectual property refers to all exclusive rights granted on intellectual creations. It is divided into two branches: industrial property, which includes inventions (patents), trademarks, industrial designs and geographical indications; and literary and artistic property, which includes copyright and related rights. Since the entry into force of the Treaty on the Functioning of the

[292] Examples of follow-up measures from the Programme: non-inclusion of the concerned paid amounts in the certification to the EC, suspension of any pending payment to the project partner concerned by the suspicion, recovery of any irregular amount etc.
[293] Information on ARACHNE risk scoring tool can be found here: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=325&intPageId=3587&langId=en. In this context, specific data available on Jems can be sent to EU managers in charge of data processing

European Union (TFEU) in 2009, the Union has had explicit competence in intellectual property rights (Article 118).[294]

In the spirit of cooperation and exchange, the LP and the PPs should ensure that all project outputs and results are of public interest and available free of charge. They should be made available to all in an easily usable format.

However, project partners own their work and may consider the possibility to protect it. It is up to them to determine the most suitable protection as long as it complies with the principles described herein. The Joint Secretariat recommends using the Creative Commons licences CC BY 4.0 and CC BY-SA 4.0 as they grant a protection to intellectual creations but also a free access to anyone with no commercial use. For more information about the Creative Commons licences, please refer to their website: https://creativecommons.org/.

1. Upon request, the LP and PPs must provide the MA/JS, European Union institutions, bodies, offices or agencies with all the outputs, communication and promotional materials produced by the projects. For this purpose, the LP enquires about pre-existing rights attached to the materials and ensure that a royalty-free, non-exclusive and irrevocable licence without significant additional costs or administrative burden to use such materials is granted to the aforementioned Programme and European Union bodies in accordance with Annex IX of Regulation 2021/1060.

2. The MA/JS is entitled to use any outputs as well as the communication and promotional materials produced by the project so as to showcase how the subsidy is used and guarantee a wide spread of the project deliverables and outputs in accordance with Article 49 of Regulation (EU) No 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021.

3. The LP and the PPs agree that the outputs as well as any communication and promotional materials are forwarded by the MA to other Programme authorities, as well as the countries participating in the Programme or to authorities of other Interreg programmes and the EC, to use this material to showcase how the subsidy is used, in accordance with Article 49 of Regulation (EU) No 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021.

[294] Website of the National Institute for Intellectual Property: https://www.inpi.fr/en/comprendre-la-propriete-intellectuelle/les-enjeux-de-la-propriete-intellectuelle/quest-ce-que-la-propriete-industrielle

4. The LP ensures that they have all rights to use any pre-existing intellectual property rights, if necessary, for the implementation of the project.

5. The LP must inform the MA if there is any sensitive or confidential information, or any pre-existing intellectual property rights related to the project that must be respected.

D. Handling of complaints and disputes

The procedures in place for handling complaints and disputes differ according to the object of the conflict. Following the finalisation of the proposals' appraisal and the decision of the Monitoring Committee of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme in charge of the selection of the projects, the MA informs the Lead Partners in writing of the final decision of the Monitoring Committee[295]. For project proposals that have been rejected (during the administrative and eligibility phase or the quality assessment phase), the reasons for the rejection are detailed in the notification or in the assessment grid sent with the decision.

Before submitting a formal complaint, and in the event of questions concerning the MC decision, the LP may request technical or legal explanations and, to do so, is encouraged to contact the MA/JS (by email to the Programme) to obtain additional information on the assessment and the reasons for the rejection of the project proposal (specifying in the email whether it would like a written reply or an interview).

The procedures in place for handling disputes and complaints differ according to the object of the conflict.

In case of complaint and disputes, two independent procedures are available for LPs: one handled by the Programme authorities and one by the Administrative Tribunal. Both procedures are described below.

[295] The MA notification is sent by email by the JS

i. Handling of complaints and disputes by the Programme Authorities

a) Complaints related to formal appraisal of proposals

The right to present a complaint applies to Lead Partners whose proposal has not been retained during the appraisal of the projects. This right may also apply to projects that are approved with conditions, if the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat and the Lead Partner fail to agree on the conditions during the pre-contracting process.

A complaint may be presented only on the following objective, formal and administrative aspects:

- The Lead Partner and its partnership consider that the appraisal of their proposal, according to the criteria approved by the Monitoring Committee, is based on inexact data and not on the information provided in the application form presented; and/or
- The Lead Partner and its partnership consider that the conclusion of the partner verification held in cooperation with the NAs (legal status, financial capacity ...) is not justified, and/or
- The Lead Partner and its partnership consider that the assessment and selection process of the proposal does not comply with the specific procedures established by the Programme, the Manual and the Terms of Reference of the call, and that this non-compliance had (or may have had) an impact on the decision.

Admissibility of the complaint:

To be admissible, any complaint regarding the appraisal of proposals has to respect the above principles and must be submitted in French or English by the Lead Partner, as representative of the consortium concerned by the funding decision. It is therefore the responsibility of the Lead Partner to collect the grounds for the complaint from all the project partners and to present them.

The complaint is sent by e-mail with acknowledgement of receipt and addressed to the Interreg Euro-MED Programme (programme@interreg-euro-med.eu). The Lead Partner has two months to present its complaint starting from the date of receipt of the email from the Joint Secretariat notifying the Monitoring Committee's decision subject to the complaint.

Any complaint presented after this deadline is excluded and will be classified as not acceptable.

The complaint must indicate:

- the name and address of the Lead Partner;
- the reference of the proposal which is subject to complaint;
- the grounds for the complaint clearly stated, including a list of all the elements of the appraisal that are contested and/or not in conformity with the procedures;
- the date, signature and (if applicable) stamp of the legal representative of the Lead Partner;
- any additional documents supporting the complaint. The documents should not modify the submitted Application Form, nor provide new information or correct errors identified during the assessment process of the proposal.

On receipt of the complaint, the Lead Partner concerned is notified by the Joint Secretariat whether the complaint is or not admissible.

Processing of the complaint:

If the complaint is admissible, the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat (staff who was not involved in the assessment of the proposal) examines it, based on the information presented by the Lead Partner and the supporting documents received.
The Monitoring Committee of the Programme is informed and may, if necessary, take part in the examination of the complaint.

NB : If an applicant from an EU territory outside the Programme cooperation area presents a complaint, the applicant's national authority will be kept informed by the MA of all the stages of the process.
After the complaint has been examined, the MA notifies the relevant LP of the outcome of the examination.

Two possibilities are then possible:

- Rejection of the complaint
- Acceptance of the complaint

The decision concerning this stage is communicated to the Programme Monitoring Committee for information.

In case of rejection, the decision subject to the complaint is maintained and the process related to the concerned complaint ends.

The conclusion of the admissibility of the complaint and of the processing of the complaint) will be communicated by email with acknowledgement of receipt to the Lead Partner within two months from the date of the acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint by the Programme.

Reassessment of the decision:

In case of acceptance of the complaint, the decision subject to the complaint is reassessed based on the elements provided by the LP.

The project proposal and the amended assessment proposal (if any) will be sent back to the Monitoring Committee to validate the outcome of the review.

The MA notifies the concerned LP of the outcome of the re-assessment.

b) Protests and disputes about decisions taken during project implementation

Dispute regarding a decision of the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat:

In accordance with the provisions of the Subsidy Contract (art. 11.3[296]), in case of dispute concerning the decisions of the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat on the basis of the Subsidy Contract or on the basis of the decisions of the Monitoring Committee of the Programme, the dispute must be notified in French or English to the Joint Secretariat by e-mail to the Programme (programme@interreg-euro-med.eu) with acknowledgement of receipt.

The request must be submitted by the Lead Partner, as representative of the consortium; if the protest is raised by one single partner, the complaining partner should provide all necessary information to the Lead Partner who will initiate the process with the Programme.

Upon receipt of the email, the JS will examine the request and respond within a reasonable time (in collaboration with the MC or National Controller if necessary). An amicable solution will always be sought by the parties.

Where the courts, the Public Prosecutor or other national institutions are competent with regard to the object of the claim, the Lead Partner is entitled to address also these authorities in France (i.e. the country where the MA is based).

[296] Art 11.3 of the Subsidy Contract: In case of dispute between the MA and the LP, amicable solutions or mediation procedures must be implemented before any legal proceedings

Disputes relating to the tasks of National ("First") and Second Level Controls:

Protests or disputes in relation to National ("First") and Second Level Controls and audits should be addressed to the Authority responsible for these matters in accordance with the relevant national regulations[297].

In this context, protests or disputes must be addressed by the concerned Partner and copied to the Lead Partner and to the Programme (programme@interreg-euro-med.eu).

ii. Complaints to the Administrative Tribunal

Independently from aforementioned procedures, any decision of the MC/MA or any dispute relating to the implementation of the Contract may be appealed to the Administrative Tribunal of Marseille, within two months from its notification. The Administrative Tribunal may also be approached via the "Télérecours citoyens" application accessible via the website www.telerecours.fr (available only in French).

[297] For more details on national procedures for handling disputes and complaints, please contact the relevant National Contact Point and check the information provided for individual countries at https://interreg-euro-med.eu/en/

V. Annexes

A. Activities and deliverables list

In the Application Form, for each work package, applicants have to describe the activities that will lead to the achievement of the targeted specific objective.

For each activity, applicants are likely to produce deliverables which they will need to plan and budget for. However, for the purposes of assessing the relevance of the project and monitoring its progress, it is not necessary to list them all in the Application Form.

It is highly recommended to keep all records of the project development, including methodologies, databases, reports, etc., necessary to fully understand the approach and to develop them in such a way that they can be shared in line with the Results Amplification Strategy. However, only those "key" deliverables directly related and meaningful to the results of the project and the ultimate goal and output of the activity or project shall be listed. This list is agreed with the Project Officer during the pre-contracting phase.

Depending on the type of project, an activity can have none, one or more deliverables that contribute to the development of a project output. Indeed, deliverables are optional.

This section defines some possible types of activities and respective examples of final deliverables that the project could produce:

- Possible examples to answer to the mandatory activities that are common to all types of projects:
  - ✓ Communication *(Chart 1)*
  - ✓ Monitoring of carbon footprint *(Chart 2)*
  - ✓ Contribution to the Results Amplification Strategy *(Chart 3)*
- Possible examples of activities specific to each type of project:
  - ✓ Study projects *(Chart 4)*
  - ✓ Test projects *(Chart 5)*
  - ✓ Transfer projects *(Chart 6)*

- ✓ Thematic community projects *(Chart 7)*
- ✓ Institutional dialogue projects *(Chart 8)*

Please note that the Strategic territorial projects can include all the suggested activities and deliverables listed for Study /Test /Transfer projects, as they will include all three study-test-transfer phases.

CHART 1: POSSIBLE COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES

As a reminder, the communication activities will be included into the different work packages, there is no work package dedicated to communication.

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES	EXAMPLES OF DELIVERABLES
Networking	Agreement Memorandum of Understanding Charter Protocol Booklet / Brochure Newsletter Proceedings Conference report E-learning platform Training course material Training report Training methodology Atypical / tailored event report Satisfaction survey (report) Website and social media analytics
Delivering information	
Exchanging information	
Transferring knowledge / know-how / expertise	
Participating in external events	

CHART 2: POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES TO MONITOR PROJECT CARBON FOOTPRINT

TYPE OF ACTIVITY	EXAMPLES OF DELIVERABLES

Monitoring Carbon footprint	Calculation of project carbon footprint

CHART 3: POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE RESULTS AMPLIFICATION STRATEGY FOR THEMATIC PROJECTS

INDICATIVE LIST OF ACTIVITIES TO BE CHOSEN DEPENDING ON THE TYPE OF PROJECT, BASED ON THE RESULTS AMPLIFICATION STRATEGY.

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES	EXAMPLES OF DELIVERABLES
✓ Exploring data published by projects and made available by the Programme (notably ToR and library) ✓ Implementing JS instructions to ensure data reuse ✓ Carrying out transfer feasibility studies ✓ Implementing pilot transfer activities ✓ Designing plans for transfer of results	Thematic data collection Stakeholders and beneficiaries database Good Practices e-learning platform Training course material Training report Seminar/Workshop/Meeting report Action Plan Strategy Model Policy paper Political recommendations Living Lab Forum/Blog Legal Act Protocol Labelling Agreement Memorandum of Understanding
✓ Consolidating the results of relevant projects ✓ Participating in the identification and mobilisation of potential targets for transfer and mainstreaming ✓ Consolidating or creating networks for dissemination and participation of stakeholders beyond the partnership ✓ Disseminating knowledge to stakeholders through dissemination activities including training ✓ Participating in the actions of their thematic community, benefiting from the experience and support of governance projects ✓ Implementing mainstreaming plans in collaboration with IDPs and with the support of TCPs ✓ Contributing to the Euro-MED Academy ✓ Coordinating with TCP, IDP and JS	
✓ Mobilising relevant multi-sectoral and multi-level decision-making actors ✓ Promoting interfaces with other initiatives and projects of other programmes	

CHART 4: POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES FOR STUDYING PROJECTS

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES	EXAMPLES OF DELIVERABLES
Studying field	State of the art SWOT Analysis Needs analysis Diagnosis
Compiling and organising information and data	Case study Comparative analysis Feasibility study Prospective study
Providing tools, methods and services	Benchmarking study Consultation report Technical workshop report Thematic data collection
Developing common approaches and strategies	Good practices Stakeholders and beneficiaries database Maps GIS Itinerary / routes Observatory Indicators list Methodology / toolkit Road map Guidelines Model Training material Decision tool Monitoring tool Strategy Action plan Tool

CHART 5: POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES FOR TESTING PROJECTS

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES	EXAMPLES OF DELIVERABLES
Preparing pilot activities	Preliminary or fine-tuning study for launching pilot activities Testing report Software Support / service Facilities Methodology Model Simulation report Evaluation report Evaluation tool Evaluation methodology e-learning platform Training course material Training report Training methodology
Testing (processes, techniques, models, tools, methods and services)	
Simulating (processes, techniques, models, tools, methods and services)	
Evaluating processes, techniques, models, tools, methods and services	
Transferring knowledge / know-how / expertise	

CHART 6: POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES FOR TRANSFERRING PROJECTS

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES	EXAMPLES OF DELIVERABLES
Transferring tested processes, techniques, models, tools, methods and services	Plan Model Protocol Tool e-learning platform Training course material Training report Training methodology Atypical / tailored event report
Transferring knowledge / know-how / expertise	

CHART 7: POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES FOR THEMATIC COMMUNITY PROJECTS

INDICATIVE LIST OF ACTIVITIES TO BE CHOSEN FROM THE RESULTS AMPLIFICATION STRATEGY.

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES	EXAMPLES OF DELIVERABLES
✓ Organising thematic data from past, current and shared projects ✓ Establishing a system of continuous and systematic peer review (sharing of results and peer review) ✓ Carrying out analyses according to criteria of reusability and adaptability ✓ Organising knowledge produced by modular and strategic territorial projects ✓ Inspiring linkages between thematic projects ✓ Organising exchanges between thematic projects by exploiting the administrative and technical data made available by the Programme ✓ Creating and maintaining partner networks in collaboration with the Institutional Dialogue Projects ✓ Organising the sharing of information on the implementation of projects ✓ Establishing a mechanism for constructive exchange between project partners addressing similar and complementary issues ✓ Producing analysis matrices to identify potential synergies ✓ Integrating/aggregating results for collective dissemination to support communication and valorisation of results (collective or individual valorisation) ✓ Developing a joint map/database of targets at Programme level in collaboration with the Institutional Dialogue Projects	Survey/ questionnaire/ collecting information tool e-learning platform Training course material Training report Training methodology Atypical / tailored event report Thematic data collection Good practices Stakeholders and beneficiaries database Tool Maps GIS Methodology Observatory Plan Model Protocol Political recommendation Thematic recommendation Agreement Memorandum of Understanding Charter Living Lab
✓ Carrying out analyses according to criteria of replicability, adaptability, transferability and integration ✓ Setting up activities to assemble, integrate and amplify the evaluated and proven results ✓ Consolidating or creating networks for dissemination and participation of actors beyond the partnership in collaboration with the Institutional Dialogue Projects ✓ Disseminating aggregated or consolidated knowledge to targeted actors in collaboration with Institutional Dialogue Projects ✓ Establishing national institutional networks to identify local and regional target actors to facilitate transfer and mainstreaming ✓ Developing and facilitating networks beyond the partners networks, bringing together multi-level and multi-sectoral potential donors and recipients in collaboration with the Institutional Dialogue Projects ✓ Contributing to the establishment of working relationships and a roadmap with relevant decision makers in collaboration with the Institutional Dialogue Projects – Liaising strategy	

✓ Organising seminars to share previous experiences and transfer and mainstream methodologies in collaboration with the Institutional Dialogue Projects ✓ Organising complementary transfer activities to reinforce the projects' approaches in collaboration with the Institutional Dialogue Projects ✓ Contributing to the Euro-MED Academy ✓ Coordinating with TCP, IDP and JS	
✓ Implementing actions to actively engage target actors in networks (created, enriched, maintained) in collaboration with Institutional Dialogue Projects (MoU, Charter, etc) ✓ Promoting interfaces with other initiatives and projects of other programmes to increase the coordination of actors to address a common problem targeted on a type of geographical area through Thematic Projects or Institutional Dialogue Projects	

CHART 8: POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES FOR INSTITUTIONAL DIALOGUE PROJECTS

INDICATIVE LIST OF ACTIVITIES TO BE CHOSEN FROM THE RESULTS AMPLIFICATION STRATEGY.

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES	EXAMPLES OF DELIVERABLES
✓ Creating and maintaining partner networks in collaboration with Thematic Community Projects ✓ Developing a joint map/database of targets at Programme level in collaboration with Thematic Community Projects	Agreement Memorandum of Understanding Charter
✓ Actively promoting the replication of successful activities to local, regional and national authorities ✓ Consolidating or creating networks for dissemination and participation of actors beyond the partnership in collaboration with Thematic Community Projects ✓ Disseminating aggregated or consolidated knowledge to targeted actors in collaboration with Thematic Community Projects ✓ Developing and facilitating networks bringing together multi-level and multi-sectoral potential donors and recipients in the project in partnership in collaboration with Thematic Community Projects ✓ Establishing working relationships and a roadmap with relevant decision makers in collaboration with Thematic Community Projects– Liaising strategy ✓ Deploying collective advocacy activities (including networking) with decision-makers for amplification and integration of results ✓ Pre-identifying tailor-made capitalisation actions for each level of governance	Protocol Roadmap Living Lab Action plan Strategy Plan Model Legal acts Political recommendations Policy paper Training material Training sessions report

✓ Establishing coordinated capitalisation mechanisms/bodies at micro, meso and macro levels ✓ Identifying and promoting complementarity with ongoing activities in mentoring cities (donors or recipients) ✓ Favouring legislative agenda that affects the thematic communities ✓ Organising seminars to share previous experiences and transfer and mainstream methodologies in collaboration with Thematic Community Projects ✓ Organising complementary transfer activities to reinforce the projects' approaches in collaboration with Thematic Community Projects ✓ Supporting capacity building of public institutions in the regions to design, implement and evaluate transformative policies necessary to achieve the objectives of the thematic missions ✓ Contributing to the Euro-MED Academy ✓ Coordinating with TCP,IDP and JS	Cross-cutting Working Groups Recommendations

✓ Implementing actions to actively engage target actors in networks (created, enriched, maintained) - MoU, Charter, etc - in collaboration with Thematic Community Projects ✓ Identifying links between legislative processes at regional and local/ and regional and national levels ✓ Facilitating cooperation and complementarity between regions and local authorities ✓ Analysing and drawing up the state of the art of cooperation and capitalisation processes linked to the Programme's missions in the MED area beyond the Programme ✓ Exchanging regularly on opportunities with the network of National Contact Points, National Hubs (WestMED), Thematic Steering Groups (EUSAIR) ✓ To setting up a mechanism for the analysis (national policies, conditions of evolution, etc.) of opportunities, favouring the matching between needs and projects orientation ✓ Creating / participating in cross-cutting working groups of Mediterranean actors ✓ Facilitating thematic exchanges with EU DGs ✓ Facilitating exchanges with EU Parliament committees and MEPs ✓ Establishing a communication and mainstreaming strategy according to the international and European agendas related to the Programme's mission and thematic priorities ✓ Promoting interfaces with other initiatives and projects of other programmes to increase the coordination of actors to address a common problem targeted on a type of geographical area through Thematic Projects or Institutional Dialogue Projects ✓ Offering common methodologies to approach ERDF managing authorities at national and sub-national level ✓ Coordinating events to take larger benefit from them ✓ Establishing a mechanism for the development of joint transnational action plans ✓ Consolidating or creating networks in order to strengthen the presence of the MED space at transnational and European level as well as cooperation within the participating States and beyond the Programme, for example with non-EU countries of the Eastern and Southern shores ✓ Liaising with administrative/political structures outside the Programme and with other Territorial Programmes to contribute to the shared objectives (with thematic and territorial programmes in the MED space and with strategies, notably the macro-regional strategies EUSAIR and EUSALP and the WESTMED initiative, and other initiatives in the Mediterranean) ✓ Including and capitalising on activities with Eastern and Southern neighbours	

B. Tables (indicators/deliverables/SO/activities) + methodology and indicators template

This annex describes the Programme's output and results indicators, the means of collection and calculation, and provides concrete examples[298].

The chosen indicators to reflect the actions of this programming period are:

Outputs indicators:

RCO83: Strategies and action plans jointly developed
RCO116: Jointly developed solutions
RCO87: Organisations cooperating across borders

Results indicators:

RCR79: Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations
RCR104: Solutions taken up or up scaled by organisations
PSI1: Organisations with increased institutional capacity due to their participation in cooperation activities across borders

The descriptions below are organized by Programme Specific Objectives.
Each Specific Objective, according to its theme, addresses different output and result indicators.
The outputs and results responding to the same indicator may vary according to the targeted SO.

[298] For more detailed information on the methodology for selecting Programme indicators, please refer to the "Euro-MED 21-27 Indicators framework".

i. Indicators for SO 1 (i): RCO87, RCO116, PSI1, RCR104

Indicator fiches - SO 1 i Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies	
GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title (EU)	**RCO87 - Organisation cooperating across border**
Definition (EU)	The indicator counts the organisations cooperating formally in supported projects. The organisations counted in this indicator are the legal entities including project partners and associated organizations, as mentionned in the financing agreement of the application. Organisations cooperating formally in small projects (for instance under Small project Fund) are also counted.
Measurement unit	Organisation
Type of indicator	Output
Milestone 2024	0
Target 2029	372
RELEVANCE	
Euro-MED 21-27 definition	RCO87 is selected for all Euro-MED 21-27 specific objectives. The indicator counts the organisations cooperating formally in supported projects. At programme level, organisations can be defined as project partners or associated participating in approved projects (whether receiving funds or not). Under this specific objective, main target groups are represented by: Local, regional and national authorities, in particular their sectoral agencies, SMEs and economic operators, clusters, Business support organisations, Universities and research centres, Civil society / NGOs / Local communities and associations, working in different thematic fields related to the innovation ecosystem, including business development, technology transfer, regional innovation strategies and policies.
Justification of selection	Cooperation between organisations across borders is essential to implement Euro-MED programme and achieve its main objective. Furthermore, cooperation is crucial to provide a common response to current challenges identified for the selected specific objectives. During 14-20, cooperation was not limited to organisations within projects, it was extended to cooperation within and across thematic communities of projects, leading to relevant results and demonstrating the added value of this kind of transnational cooperation. Within this specific objective a particular attention is paid to SMEs. The involvement and support provided to enterprises through project implementation is key for the achievement of programme objectives in terms of enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies and know-how. The enterprises are the drivers to ensure the elaboration, the testing and adopting of innovative processes and tools that could lead to green transformation of the economy sectors. As project partners and as targeted beneficiaries the enterprises will collaborate closely with research stakeholders, civil society and public institutions for the joint development of transnational solutions. They will benefit from the cooperation and further use and upgrade the piloted tools. It is important to reinforce and enlarge cooperation between stakeholders of the 4helix mainly at local and regional level, so as to break silos and integrate knowledge from different perspectives (government, society, university and industry), ensuring harmonious and sustainable development practices for the territory. The 4 helix stakeholders' co-working and cooperation will contribute to the establishment of the open innovation micro-dynamics, contributing to knowledge creation, product and services' development, green transition, trusting culture and sharing economy. Output indicator RCO87 will show the concrete joint commitment of the participating organisations in the innovation canvas.

Policy objective	PO1
Specific objective	(i) Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies
Type of projects concerned	Thematic projects
Associated result indicator	PSI1 - Organisation with increased institutional capacity due to their participation in cooperation activities across borders
Indicator level	Project
COLLECTION AND CALCULATION METHOD	
Calculation method for obtaining the value of the indicator	The value of the indicator is the total sum of projects' full and associated partners.
Means of data collection	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. Partners participating in funded projects will be automatically exported for the monitoring system and reported by specific objective.
Time measurement	At project completion
Aggregation issues	Removal of duplicates when the data is aggregated at programme level
Reporting	Rule 1: Reporting by specific objectives. Forecast for selected projects and achieved values, both cumulative to date (CPR Annex XII, Table 6). Frequence of reporting : twice per year (art.32.1 and 32.2.b Interreg Regulation)
Methods of traceability and reliability	Data are collected by the monitoring system
Proof of realisation	N/A
Focus points from 14-20	An efficient and accurate management of the partners database in the information system is required. In the communication of programme beneficiaries there is the need to insist on the added value of Associated partners and their real engagement in project activities.
Data management contact	Managing authority
EXAMPLES	N/A

Indicator fiches - SO 1 i Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title (EU)	**RCO116 - Joint developed solutions**
Definition (EU)	The indicator counts the number of jointly developed solutions from joint pilot actions implemented by supported projects. In order to be counted in the indicator, an identified solution should include indications of the actions needed for it to be taken up or to be upscaled. A jointly developed solution implies the involvement of organizations from at least two participating countries (for programmes falling under strands A, B, C as defined in the Interreg Regulation) in the drafting and design process of the solution or is developed in the scope of programmes within strands D or E as defined in the Interreg Regulation.
Measurement unit	Solution
Type of indicator	Output
Milestone 2024	0
Target 2029	27
RELEVANCE	
Euro-MED 21-27 definition	At programme level solutions can be defined as methodologies, tools, technologies, services, processes, partnership/cooperation agreements. To be counted for this indicator the solutions should be: - jointly developed: through the involvement of organizations from at least 2 programme countries - tested in real life conditions - easily transferable to further territories of the programme - the solution should include a list of actions needed for it to be uptaken or upscaled by further organisations. Solutions are developed at project level, therefore 1 to 2 transnational solutions are expected as direct output of a single project. Jointly developed solutions refer to solutions newly developed by the project partnership or solutions already developed, e.g. in territorial contexts other than the programme area, that are adapted to the Euro-MED 21-27 context and geographic area by the project partnership. Under SO i, targeted outputs should refer to innovative tools, methodologies and practices, resulting from cooperation and pilot activities within funded projects, that will benefit targeted end users in selected economy sectors. Types of targeted solutions include: - Solutions for the development of value chains and setting up transnational cooperation patterns within clusters - Solutions enhancing transnational cooperation among 4 helix stakeholders - Solutions for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of RIS3 strategies - Solutions for skills development and capacity building of public institutions for the implementation of RIS 3 - Solutions assisting SMEs in extroversion and transnational and/or international cooperation - Solutions and tools establishing sustainable business development practices for SMEs - Solutions for the acceleration of technology transfer to be applied in economy sectors - Solutions promoting climate friendly innovations - Solutions enabling SMEs to turn environmental challenges to opportunities - Solutions promoting social entrepreneurship and cultural and creative industries in sectors in transition - Solutions for the effective change in tourism practices promoting destinations' sustainability and 'responsible tourism' practices - Solutions for the management of tourism flows during high season
Justification of selection	Concrete solutions, resulting from transnational cooperation and pilot activities within funded projects, are needed to support sustainable innovation ecosystems and to foster the innovation capacities and cooperation among stakeholders of the quadruple helix. Most projects funded during the 2014-2020 programming period have produced solutions relevant to these challenges, mainly under priority axis 'Innovation', proving that joint developed solutions are a realistic and achievable project output. Jointly developed solutions are direct outputs of the following types of actions: - Elaboration and adoption of tools, methodologies and practices to support sustainable economy sectors and reinforce business competitiveness - Establishment of networks, coordination processes and agreements between stakeholders of the quadruple helix that includes the civil society engagement. These actions will lead to the achievement of the objectives of SO i: on the one hand to boost the innovation potential and accelerate the transition to green economy and society, and on the other hand to enhance the transnational cooperation of 4helix stakeholders and improve their skills. Expected results of undertaken actions refer to the reinforcement of the sustainability pillar in business practices and the increased capacity of public authorities and private stakeholders to implement a greener economy in the Mediterranean. The engagement of civil society in these processes is deemed crucial.
Policy objective	PO1
Specific objective	(i) Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies
Type of projects concerned	Thematic projects
Associated result indicator	RCR104
Indicator level	Project

COLLECTION AND CALCULATION METHOD	
Calculation method for obtaining the value of the indicator	The value of the indicator is the total sum of the number of solutions developed jointly by the funded projects
Means of data collection	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. The information of the achievement of the project output, including proof of realisation, are compiled by the beneficiaries in the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat.
Time measurement	At project completion
Aggregation issues	N/A
Reporting	Rule 1: Reporting by specific objectives. Forecast for selected projects and achieved values, both cumulative to date (CPR Annex XII, Table 6). Frequence of reporting: twice per year (art.32.1 and 32.2.b Interreg Regulation)
Methods of traceability and reliability	Data are verified by the Managing Authority upon submission of the final progress report and payment claim by the project beneficiary on the basis of provided supporting documents.
Proof of realisation	The documents provided for demonstrating the achievement of the output, i.e. the completed development of a joint solution should include: - Clear description of the challenge that the solution is adressing and how the solution developed contributes to tackle the mentioned challenge - Clear description of the solution and concrete project output: methodology, tool, technology, service or process, partnership agreement, including target groups involved, type of territory concerned - Description of the testing phase and its results - List of actions needed for the solution to be uptaken or upscaled in further territories, including financial resources to be mobilized Criteria for validation of the output: - The addressed challenge is relevant to the selected specific objective - The solution has been developed with the contribution of partners from at least 2 programme countries - The solution has been tested in real life conditions - results of the test are available - The solution demonstrates to be effective in tackling the mentioned challenge - Actions needed for the solution to be taken up or upscaled are clear and complete
Focus points from 14-20	Developed outputs and provided proofs of realisation are quite different among projects, therefore a need for increased standardisation has been identified: - Criteria for validation are clearly set in terms of defining the solution and what is expected as final product - A template for proof of realisation documents should be provided to the beneficiary, in order to get a homogeneus set of documents and ensure that all necessary information is provided for each of the outputs so to enable further analysis at programme level.
Data management contact	Managing authority
EXAMPLES	Type of solutions/examples - Tools for the development of innovation potential of SMEs - Methodology for value chain development, - Eco-innovation/ climate friendly innovation - Platforms for stakeholders 'engagement with ensured sustainability upon project's end, including civil -society representatives/ Toolkits for thematic cooperation - Thematic indexes and schemes for SMEs development and internationalization - Methodology for implementation and coordination of Regional Innovation Strategies - Processes for effective evaluation of Regional Innovation Strategies - Methodology for building up, developing and sustaining transnational clusters - Technology transfer processes - Processes to embed innovation in public procurement procedures

Indicator fiches - SO 1 i Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title Euro-MED 21-27	**PSI1 - Organisations with increased institutional capacity due to their participation in cooperation activities across borders**
Definition Euro-MED 21-27	This indicator measures the number of organisations that actively participated in cooperation activities of a project across borders and consequently increased their institutional capacity in the thematic field of the project. Institutional capacity is defined as an organisation's ability to set and achieve goals through knowledge, skills, systems and institutions. An organisation increases its institutional capacity by securing the resources (human or technical) and structures (organisational or governance) it needs to successfully perform its mandated tasks better. A cooperation activity across borders is defined as a process of exchanging knowledge and experience between participants from multiple countries. This process can lead to creating joint objectives and commitments and actions fulfilling these commitments. At programme level, organisations can be defined as project partners or final beneficiaries participating in cooperation activities (whether receiving funds or not) An organisation is to be counted if it has undergone this kind of learning process through project activities. This is defined as more than one instance of exchange in which the organisation played an active role. An organisation is to be counted only if its increased institutional capacity is in the thematic field of the project. Organisations targeted refer in particular to: - Organisations actively participating in the development of joint solutions and strategies and action plans - Organisations taking up joint developed solutions and strategies and action plans Types of organisations include, but are not limited to, International organisation, EEIG; National public authority; Regional public authority; Local public authority; Higher education and research; Interest groups including NGOs; SMEs; Enterprises; Business support organisation; Sectoral agency. Organisations specifically targeted under this specific objective are detailed in the relevant indicator fiche - RCO87 - Organisation cooperating across border
Measurement unit	Organisation
Type of indicator	Result
Baseline	0
Target 2029	260
RELEVANCE	
Justification of selection	This indicator was proposed by Interact following consultation and joint work among different transnational programmes. Increasing institutional capacity is one of the main objectives of the Interreg Euro-MED programme and at the core of transnational cooperation. This programme specific indicator is relevant to measure and showcase the achievement and impact of the programme for all selected specific objectives. Projects funded during the 2014-2020 programming period largely contributed to increase capacity of organisations within project partnerships and beyond, e.g. through joint development and adoption of strategies and solution. This result indicator will concretely reflect the change sought and achieved for final beneficiaries of the Euro-MED programme.
Policy objective	PO1
Specific objective	(i) Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies
Type of projects concerned	Thematic projects
Associated output indicator	RCO87
Indicator level	Project
COLLECTION AND CALCULATION METHOD	
Calculation method for obtaining the value of the indicator	The value of the indicator is the total sum of organisations that demonstrate to have increased their institutional capacity following their participation in cooperation activities of project across borders. Following the common methodology developed among several Interreg programmes, the indicator value will be calculated through a common survey.
Means of data collection	Data collection will be done through the programme Platform. The information of the achievement of the result at project level is compiled by the lead partnerin the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat, verifying information provided in the programme Platform
Time measurement	At project completion/At project closure
Aggregation issues	N/A
Reporting	Rule 1: Reporting by specific objectives. Forecast for selected projects and achieved values, both cumulative to date (CPR Annex XII, Table 6). Frequence of reporting: twice per year (art.32.1 and 32.2.b Interreg Regulation)
Methods of traceability and reliability	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. The information of the achievement of the result at project level is compiled by the beneficiaries in the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat.
Proof of realisation	Common survey
Focus points from 14-20	N/A
Data management contact	Managing Authority
EXAMPLES	<u>General examples of increased capacity :</u> - the organisation used knowledge or skills - the organisation adopted new tools - the organisation adopted new procedures or workflows - the organisation changed its organisational structure

Indicator fiches - SO 1 i Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title (EU)	**RCR104 - Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations**
Definition (EU)	The indicator counts the number of solutions, other than legal or administrative solutions, that are developed by supported projects and are taken up or upscaled during the implementation of the project or within one year after project completion. The organisation adopting the solutions developed by the project may or may not be a participant in the project. The uptake / up-scaling should be documented by the adopting organisations in, for instance, strategies, action plans etc.
Measurement unit	Solution
Type of indicator	Result
Baseline	0
Target 2029	24
RELEVANCE	
Euro-MED 21-27 definition	At programme level solutions can be defined as methodologies, tools, technologies, services, processes and partnership/cooperation agreements - jointly developed: through the involvement of organizations from at least XX programme countries - tested in real life conditions - easily transferable to further territories/organisations of the programme. Uptake refers to adoption or implementation of the solution. Upscale refers to: upgrade or improvement of the solution, or to extend the scope of the solution, e.g. from local to regional level or from the technical to the policy level. To be counted for this indicator the solution should have been effectively taken up or upscaled, or be at the initial stage of uptake/upscale, by a given organization. The take up/upscale should occur during the implementation of the project or at project closure. Initial stage of uptake/upscale is demonstrated by an official statement signed by the organisation proving the willingness to officially adopt the solution or to implement it in the organisation's usual practices and day-to-day activities, including time line for effective uptake. Effective uptake/upscale is demonstrated by e.g. signature of cooperation and partnership agreements, integration of the solution in regional or local strategies/action plans, implementation of pilots, launch of public procurements procedures/tenders To check the details about type of solutions expected under this specific objective, refer to the fiche for the indicator RCO116 - Joint developed solutions.
Justification of selection	Concrete solutions, resulting from transnational cooperation and pilot activities within funded projects, are key to support innovation practices leading to more sustainable economy. However, concrete uptake or upscale of developed solutions by relevant organisations is needed to have an impact on the territory. Indeed, in order to capitalize on the tested solutions, not to duplicate the efforts, and not to lose what proved to work for the Mediterranean territories, the logical continuation is to ensure effective implementation of these existing solutions. Therefore, the programme has decided to consider the uptake or upscale of developed solutions as expected results of supported projects. Several projects funded during the 2014-2020 programming period aimed at supporting SMEs and clusters which arrived at the stage of adoption of jointly developed solutions and application in their usual practices and day-to-day activities. For example, several SMEs were supported in the testing and adoption of thematic indicators and methodologies that included the social dimension (e.g. the agri-food PEF tool, the 3-pillar business model, the LCC tool). On the other hand, regional authorities, business and research organisations and civil society representatives actively participated in Living Labs that aimed at definition of community projects e.g. for marine energy exploitation, innovative procurement etc. All these examples prove that solutions taken up or upscaled by organisations are a realistic and achievable project output, that can contribute to achieve programme goals and realise the sought territorial impact.

Policy objective	PO1
Specific objective	(i) Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies
Type of projects concerned	Thematic projects
Associated output indicator	RCO116
Indicator level	Project
COLLECTION AND CALCULATION METHOD	
Calculation method for obtaining the value of the indicator	The value of the indicator is the total sum of the number of solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations
Means of data collection	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. The information of the achievement of the project output, including proof of realisation, are compiled by the beneficiaries in the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat.
Time measurement	At project completion/At project closure
Aggregation issues	N/A
Reporting	Rule 1: Reporting by specific objectives. Forecast for selected projects and achieved values, both cumulative to date (CPR Annex XII, Table 6). Frequence of reporting: twice per year (art.32.1 and 32.2.b Interreg Regulation)
Methods of traceability and reliability	Data are verified by the Managing Authority upon submission of the final progress report and payment claim by the project beneficiary on the basis of provided supporting documents.
Proof of realisation	The documents provided for demonstrating the achievement of the output, i.e. the uptake or upscale of solutions by organisations should include: - Identification of the solution - Proof of uptake or upscale of the solution by the organization, e.g: Memorandum of Unsterstanding, or Letter of Intent/ Agreement, Framework document demonstrating the adoption/implementation of the solution by the relevant organization Report on implemented pilot activities Cooperation and partnership agreements Criteria for validation of the output: - The solution is at initial stage of uptake/upscale or has been effectively taken up or upscaled by the organisation
Focus points from 14-20	Provided proofs of realisation are quite different among projects, therefore a need for increased standardisation has been identified: - A template for proof of realisation documents should be provided to the beneficiary, in order to get a homogeneous set of documents and ensure that all necessary information is provided for each of the outputs so to enable further analysis at programme level
Data management contact	Managing authority
EXAMPLES	NA

ii. Indicators for SO 2 (iv): RCO87, RCO116, RCO83, PSI1, RCR104, RCR79

Indicator fiches - SO 2 (iv) Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience, taking into account eco system-based approaches	
GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title (EU)	**RCO87 - Organisation cooperating across border**
Definition (EU)	The indicator counts the organisations cooperating formally in supported projects. The organisations counted in this indicator are the legal entities including project partners and associated organizations, as mentionned in the financing agreement of the application. Organisations cooperating formally in small projects (for instance under Small project Fund) are also counted.
Measurement unit	Organisation
Type of indicator	Output
Milestone 2024	0
Target 2029	466
RELEVANCE	
Euro-MED 21-27 definition	RCO87 is selected for all Euro-MED 21-27 specific objectives. The indicator counts the organisations cooperating formally in supported projects. At programme level, organisations can be defined as project partners or associated participating in approved projects (whether receiving funds or not). Under this specific objective, main target groups are represented by: Regional and local and national authorities, Environmental agencies, tourism agencies, Energy agencies, Universities/research centres, SMEs & Economic operators, NGOs/ local communities and associations.
Justification of selection	Cooperation between organisations across borders is essential to implement EURO-MED programme and achieve its main objective. Furthermore, cooperation is crucial to provide a common response to current challenges identified for the selected specific objectives. During 14-20, cooperation was not limited to organisations within projects, it was extended to cooperation within and across thematic communities of projects, leading to relevant results and demonstrating the added value of this kind of transnational cooperation. Cooperation and coordination between organisations across borders is essential to support the achievements of climate goals by 2030 in the Mediterranean. Public-private collaboration constitutes another milestone for achieving resilience and adaptation to climate change. Output indicator RCO87 will show the concrete joint commitment of organisations in promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention and resilience.
Policy objective	PO2
Specific objective	(iv) Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience, taking into account eco system-based approaches
Type of projects concerned	Thematic projects
Associated result indicator	PSI1 - Organisation with increased institutional capacity due to their participation in cooperation activities across borders
Indicator level	Project
COLLECTION AND CALCULATION METHOD	
Calculation method for obtaining the value of the indicator	The value of the indicator is the total sum of projects' full and associated partners.
Means of data collection	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. Partners participating in funded projects will be automatically exported for the monitoring system and reported by specific objective.
Time measurement	At project completion
Aggregation issues	Removal of duplicates when the data is aggregated at programme level
Reporting	Rule 1: Reporting by specific objectives. Forecast for selected projects and achieved values, both cumulative to date (CPR Annex XII, Table 6). Frequence of reporting : twice per year (art.32.1 and 32.2.b Interreg Regulation)
Methods of traceability and reliability	Data are collected by the monitoring system
Proof of realisation	N/A
Focus points from 14-20	An efficient and accurate management of the partners database in the information system is required. In the communication of programme beneficiaries there is the need to insist on the added value of Associated partners and their real engagement in project activities.
Data management contact	Managing authority
EXAMPLES	N/A

Indicator fiches - SO 2 (iv) Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience, taking into account eco system-based approaches

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title (EU)	**RCO116 - Joint developed solutions**
Definition (EU)	The indicator counts the number of jointly developed solutions from joint pilot actions implemented by supported projects. In order to be counted in the indicator, an identified solution should include indications of the actions needed for it to be taken up or to be upscaled. A jointly developed solution implies the involvement of organizations from at least two participating countries (for programmes falling under strands A, B, C as defined in the Interreg Regulation) in the drafting and design process of the solution or is developed in the scope of programmes within strands D or E as defined in the Interreg Regulation.
Measurement unit	Solution
Type of indicator	Output
Milestone 2024	0
Target 2029	24
RELEVANCE	
Euro-MED 21-27 definition	At programme level solutions can be defined as methodologies, tools, technologies, services, processes, partnership/cooperation agreements. To be counted for this indicator the solutions should be: - jointly developed: through the involvement of organizations from at least 2 programme countries - tested in real life conditions - easily transferable to further territories of the programme - the solution should include a list of actions needed for it to be uptaken or upscaled by further organisations. Solutions are developed at project level, therefore 1 to 2 transnational solutions are expected as direct output of a single project. Jointly developed solutions refer to solutions newly developed by the project partnership or solutions already developed, e.g. in territorial contexts other than the programme area, that are adapted to the Euro-MED 21-27 context and geographic area by the project partnership. Under SO iv, targeted outputs should refer to tools and practices for preventing and managing natural risks and risks linked to human activities, increasing climate protection and safeguarding the availability of fresh water. Types of targeted solutions: - Solutions to increase capacity in the monitoring and management of natural risks - Natured-based solutions to tackle risks caused by climate change, including floods, water scarcity, heat waves, extreme events, public health - Solutions for supporting climate-resilient, sustainable use and management of water - Solutions to increase resilience of urban areas and improve life quality - Solutions to reduce the impact of human activities on the environment, including reduction of CO2 emissions, increasing energy efficiency, deployment of renewable energy, promoting sustainable mobility - Solutions to trigger financing for energy transition and for rolling out nature-based solutions in urban areas - Solutions to implement a sustainable tourism model, with a more respectful use of environment and natural resources - Solutions to mitigate the negative impacts of mass tourism on the environment Solutions relevant for this indicator should not refer to strategies and action plans, which are relevant to RCO 83. Solutions developed for climate change adaptation should embed the form of a concrete tool, methodology or process and in this sense may be part of local Strategies/Action plan and therefore complementary to the Strategy/Action Plan indicator. For example, developed solutions bringing “increased resilience of urban areas” or “increased energy efficiency” can be included in climate change adaptation action plans at regional or local level. Delivered solutions should also contribute to the objectives of relevant European strategies (detailed in the Euro-MED Operational Programme).
Justification of selection	Most projects funded during the 2014-2020 programming period have delivered solutions relevant to these challenges, mainly under priority axis Low Carbon Economy and Environment protection, proving that joint developed solutions are a realistic and achievable project output. Delivered solutions refer for instance to tools to boost energy renovation/energy efficiency of the building stock, models for integrated planning and participatory processes in urban areas, low-carbon mobility planning. Concrete solutions, resulting from transnational cooperation and pilot activities within funded projects, are needed to promote climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention and resilience, taking into account eco system-based approaches. As stated in the New EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change, the “rolling out of physical solutions, such as creating more green spaces to reduce the impacts of heatwaves … is lagging behind”. Furthermore, as a consequence of climate change the number of extreme weather events is expected to significantly increase in the coming decades. Therefore, jointly developed solutions are crucial to effectively tackle mentioned challenges and represent expected outputs of supported projects. The development and adoption of tested and effective solutions will increase capacity of stakeholders, in particular public authorities, to prevent and manage disaster risks and to effective plan and finance climate change adaptation and energy transition, resulting in more resilient living areas and higher life quality for citizens.

Policy objective	PO2
Specific objective	(iv) Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience, taking into account eco system-based approaches
Type of projects concerned	Thematic projects
Associated result indicator	RCR104
Indicator level	Project
COLLECTION AND CALCULATION METHOD	
Calculation method for obtaining the value of the indicator	The value of the indicator is the total sum of the number of solutions developed jointly by the funded projects
Means of data collection	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. The information of the achievement of the project output, including proof of realisation, are compiled by the beneficiaries in the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat.
Time measurement	At project completion
Aggregation issues	In order to avoid double counting, the solutions relevant for this indicator should not refer to strategies/action plans, which are counted under RCO83
Reporting	Rule 1: Reporting by specific objectives. Forecast for selected projects and achieved values, both cumulative to date (CPR Annex XII, Table 6). Frequence of reporting: twice per year (art.32.1 and 32.2.b Interreg Regulation)
Methods of traceability and reliability	Data are verified by the Managing Authority upon submission of the final progress report and payment claim by the project beneficiary on the basis of provided supporting documents.
Proof of realisation	The documents provided for demonstrating the achievement of the output, i.e. the completed development of a joint solution should include: - Clear description of the challenge that the solution is adressing and how the solution developed contributes to tackle the mentioned challenge - Clear description of the solution and concrete project output: methodology, tool, technology, service or process, partnership agreement, including target groups involved, type of territory concerned - Description of the testing phase and its results - List of actions needed for the solution to be uptaken or upscaled in further territories, including financial resources to be mobilized Criteria for validation of the output: - The addressed challenge is relevant to the selected specific objective - The solution has been developed with the contribution of partners from at least 2 programme countries - The solution has been tested in real life conditions - results of the test are available - The solution demonstrates to be effective in tackling the mentioned challenge - Actions needed for the solution to be taken up or upscaled are clear and complete
Focus points from 14-20	Developed outputs and provided proofs of realisation are quite different among projects, therefore a need for increased standardisation has been identified: - Criteria for validation are clearly set in terms of defining the solution and what is expected as final product - A template for proof of realisation documents should be provided to the beneficiary, in order to get a homogeneus set of documents and ensure that all necessary information is provided for each of the outputs so to enable further analysis at programme level.
Data management contact	Managing authority
EXAMPLES	Type of solutions/Examples - Risk assessment, monitoring and management systems: observatories, early warning systems, information and communications technology (ICT) solutions for data/information sharing - Climate Change Adaptation modelling, increasing knowledge on adaptation, its costs, benefits and distributional effects - Climate-resilience decision support tools, based on the latest digital technologies and climate services to underpin decision-making - Tools/services for increasing water efficiency and for ensuring climate-resilient, sustainable use and management of water - Nature-based solutions for climate resilient living areas: e.g. green spaces, roofs and walls to reduce the impacts of heatwaves/ adapting sewerage systems to better cope with storm overflows, reduce climate risk and safeguard freshwater access/ adapting the built environment to increase energy and resources efficiency, resilience and comfort and life quality of citizens - Tools to leverage funds for energy transition, energy efficiency of the building stock and for rolling out nature-based solutions in urban areas - Low carbon mobility services to reduce congestion and air pollution and improve the connection of urban and inland/remote areas - Public-private partnerships for increasing resilience of living areas - Participatory models/processes, awareness raising for changing citizens behavior towards a sustainable and efficient use of natural resources, fostering the creation of a water-saving culture among the population - Tools/services to improve management of forests, reducing the incidence and extent of forest fires, increase the absorption of CO2 and enhance the capacity of the forest to restore ecosystem services - Tools/services to reduce the impact of tourism and implementing a sustainable tourism model

Indicator fiches - SO 2 (iv) Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience, taking into account eco system-based approaches	
GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title (EU)	**RCO83 - Strategies and action plans jointly developed**
Definition (EU)	The indicator counts the number of joint strategies or action plans developed by supported projects. A jointly developed strategy aims at establishing a targeted way to achieve a goal oriented process in a specific domain. An action plan translates an existing jointly developed strategy into actions. Jointly developed strategy or action plan implies the involvement of organizations from at least two participating countries (for programmes falling under strands A, B, C as defined in the Interreg Regulation) in the drafting process of the strategy or action plan or is developed in the scope of programmes falling under strands D or E as defined in the Interreg Regulation.
Measurement unit	Strategy/action plan
Type of indicator	Output
Milestone 2024	0
Target 2029	40
RELEVANCE	
Euro-MED 21-27 definition	At programme level strategies and action plans can be defined as follows: A strategy describes a specific course of action designed to achieve a long-term goal, aiming at establishing a targeted way to achieve a goal-oriented process in a specific domain. An action plan translates an existing jointly developed strategy into actions, outlining in detail actions needed to reach the defined long-term goal. Strategies/action plans are developed at territorial level (e.g. local or regional), therefore an average of 4 strategies are expected as direct output of a single project. In order to be counted for the indicator the methodology/approaches used to develop strategies/action plans should be easily transferable to further territories of the programme. Under SO iv, targeted strategies/action plans should be in line with and contribute to following EU strategies/directives and should be easily transferable to further territories of the programme. - EU Green Deal - - New EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change - - European Climate Law (achieving climate neutrality by 2050) - - European Climate Pact (citizen-oriented actions towards green living areas, transport, buildings and skills), as well as the New European Bauhaus - - Urban Agenda for the EU - - EU 'Renovation Wave' Strategy for the building sector - - EU recast Renewable Energy Directive - - EU Strategy on Energy System Integration - - Clean Energy for EU Islands Initiative - - EU Sustainable & Smart Mobility Strategy - - Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC - - New EU Forest Strategy Types of targeted strategies/action plans - Climate Change Adaptation Strategies/action plans - regional and local level - with three cross-cutting priorities: integrating adaptation into macro-fiscal policy, nature-based solutions for adaptation, local adaptation action - Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan - regional and local level - Long-Term Renovation Strategies for the building stock - regional and local level - Clean Energy Transition Agendas (for islands) - regional and local level - Urban Agendas - local level - Strategies contributing to a more effective implementation of existing policies and instruments, and improving access to funding/investment, for more climate-resilient urban/living areas - Strategies/action plans to implement a sustainable tourism model, with a more respectful use of environment and natural resources - Integrating climate change adaptation and resilience into further local/regional plans Overall the adopted strategy should support the EU's comprehensive plan to increase the EU 2030 climate target to at least 50% and towards 55% in a responsible way. Strategies/action plans relevant for this indicator should not refer to solutions, which are relevant to RCO 116. Although, complementarities between strategies and solutions can be highlighted and will be encouraged where possible.
Justification of selection	Strategies and action plans at regional and local level are needed to ensure the achievement of the long-term vision that in 2050, the EU will be a climate-resilient society, fully adapted to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. The development and adoption of effective strategies and action plans at regional and local level is key for improving climate change adaptation and resilience of Mediterranean living areas, while securing and improving environmental and living quality. Direct outputs of supported projects will contribute to realise the 2050 vision of a climate-resilient Union by making adaptation in the Mediterranean smarter, more systemic and swifter. During the 2014-2020 period, strategies and action plans developed for e.g. large-scale energy renovation of public buildings and the transition towards a sustainable tourism model, proved to be effective in tackling challenges related to climate change adaptation and resilience. Together with solutions, effective strategies/action plans defined by key consortium and decision-makers are essential to face this type of joint challenge. These type of instruments are needed in order to ensure long term impacts in the territory and the involvement of all relevant stakeholders. The action of supporting public authorities will result in climate change adaptation strategies/action plans developed and adopted as well as in the integration of adaptation and resilience principles/measures in existing strategies.

Policy objective	PO2
Specific objective	(iv) Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience, taking into account eco system-based approaches
Type of projects concerned	Thematic projects
Associated result indicator	RCR79
Indicator level	Project
COLLECTION AND CALCULATION METHOD	
Calculation method for obtaining the value of the indicator	The value of the indicator is the total sum of the number of strategies/action plans developed jointly by the funded projects
Means of data collection	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. The information of the achievement of the project output, including proof of realisation, are compiled by the beneficiaries in the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat.
Time measurement	At project completion
Aggregation issues	In order to avoid double counting, the strategies/action plans relevant for this indicator should not refer to solutions, which are counted under RCO116
Reporting	Rule 1: Reporting by specific objectives. Forecast for selected projects and achieved values, both cumulative to date (CPR Annex XII, Table 6). Frequence of reporting: twice per year (art.32.1 and 32.2.b Interreg Regulation)
Methods of traceability and reliability	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. The information of the achievement of the project output, including proof of realisation, are compiled by the beneficiaries in the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat.
Proof of realisation	The documents provided for demonstrating the achievement of the output, i.e. the completed development of a strategy/action plan should include: - Identification of the relevant EU strategy to which the developed strategy/action plans contributes to and in which way - Methodology for drafting the strategy action plan - Developed strategy/action plan, including mid-term and long-term objectives, target setting, actions needed to achieve the objective, including timeframe and financial resources needed - List of stakeholders actively involved in the drafting of the strategy/action plan, including description and results of the engagement process - Actions needed for the strategy/action plan to be effectively taken up by the relevant organisation Criteria for validation of the output: - Strategy/action plan contributes to the identified EU strategy - The strategy/action plan has been developed on the basis of a common transnational methodology - Content of the strategy/action plan is clear and complete (includes objectives, targets, actions needed to achieve the objective, involvement of stakeholders) - Actions needed for the strategy/action plan to be effectively uptaken are clear and complete
Focus points from 14-20	Developed outputs and provided proofs of realisation are quite different among projects, therefore a need for increased standardisation has been identified: - Criteria for validation are clearly set - A template for proof of realisation documents should be provided to the beneficiary, in order to get a homogeneous set of documents and ensure that all necessary information is provided for each of the outputs so to enable further analysis at programme level.
Data management contact	Managing authority
EXAMPLES	Type of strategies/examples - Climate Change Adaptation Strategies/action plans - regional and local level - Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan - regional and local level - Long-Term Renovation Strategies for the building stock - regional and local level - Clean Energy Transition Agendas (for islands) - regional and local level - Urban Agendas - local level - Strategies for improving access to funding/investment for more climate-resilient urban/living areas - Strategies/action plans to implement a sustainable tourism model, with a more respectful use of environment and natural resources - Planning tools: Maritime Spatial Planning, Integrated Coastal Zone Management, Drought Management Plans, Integrated urban and regional planning - Water management plans - river basin management plan, drought management plans, to ensure climate-resilient, sustainable use and management of water across sectors and borders by improving coordination of thematic plans and other mechanisms - Plans for sustainable soil management and land-use - Sustainable mobility plans, with focus on mitigating the impact of urban mobility on the environment and including adaptation measures

Indicator fiches - SO 2 (iv) Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience, taking into account eco system-based approaches

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title Euro-MED 21-27	**PSI1 - Organisations with increased institutional capacity due to their participation in cooperation activities across borders**
Definition Euro-MED 21-27	This indicator measures the number of organisations that actively participated in cooperation activities of a project across borders and consequently increased their institutional capacity in the thematic field of the project. Institutional capacity is defined as an organisation's ability to set and achieve goals through knowledge, skills, systems and institutions. An organisation increases its institutional capacity by securing the resources (human or technical) and structures (organisational or governance) it needs to successfully perform its mandated tasks better. A cooperation activity across borders is defined as a process of exchanging knowledge and experience between participants from multiple countries. This process can lead to creating joint objectives and commitments and actions fulfilling these commitments. At programme level, organisations can be defined as project partners or final beneficiaries participating in cooperation activities (whether receiving funds or not) An organisation is to be counted if it has undergone this kind of learning process through project activities. This is defined as more than one instance of exchange in which the organisation played an active role. An organisation is to be counted only if its increased institutional capacity is in the thematic field of the project. Organisations targeted refer in particular to: - Organisations actively participating in the development of joint solutions and strategies and action plans - Organisations taking up joint developed solutions and strategies and action plans Types of organisations include, but are not limited to, International organisation, EEIG; National public authority; Regional public authority; Local public authority; Higher education and research; Interest groups including NGOs; SMEs; Enterprises; Business support organisation; Sectoral agency. Organisations specifically targeted under this specific objective are detailed in the relevant indicator fiche - RCO87 - Organisation cooperating across border
Measurement unit	Organisation
Type of indicator	Result
Baseline	0
Target 2029	326
RELEVANCE	
Justification of selection	This indicator was proposed by Interact following consultation and joint work among different transnational programmes. Increasing institutional capacity is one of the main objectives of the Interreg Euro-MED programme and at the core of transnational cooperation. This programme specific indicator is relevant to measure and showcase the achievement and impact of the programme for all selected specific objectives. Projects funded during the 2014-2020 programming period largely contributed to increase capacity of organisations within project partnerships and beyond, e.g. through joint development and adoption of strategies and solution. This result indicator will concretely reflect the change sought and achieved for final beneficiaries of the Euro-MED programme.
Policy objective	PO2
Specific objective	(iv) Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience, taking into account eco system-based approaches
Type of projects concerned	Thematic projects
Associated output indicator	RCO87
Indicator level	Project
COLLECTION AND CALCULATION METHOD	
Calculation method for obtaining the value of the indicator	The value of the indicator is the total sum of organisations that demonstrate to have increased their institutional capacity following their participation in cooperation activities of project across borders. Following the common methodology developed among several Interreg programmes, the indicator value will be calculated through a common survey.
Means of data collection	Data collection will be done through the programme Platform. The information of the achievement of the result at project level is compiled by the lead partnerin the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat, verifying information provided in the programme Platform
Time measurement	At project completion/At project closure
Aggregation issues	N/A
Reporting	Rule 1: Reporting by specific objectives. Forecast for selected projects and achieved values, both cumulative to date (CPR Annex XII, Table 6). Frequence of reporting: twice per year (art.32.1 and 32.2.b Interreg Regulation)
Methods of traceability and reliability	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. The information of the achievement of the result at project level is compiled by the beneficiaries in the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat.
Proof of realisation	Common survey
Focus points from 14-20	N/A
Data management contact	Managing Authority
EXAMPLES	<u>General examples of increased capacity :</u> - the organisation used knowledge or skills - the organisation adopted new tools

Indicator fiches - SO 2 (iv) Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience, taking into account eco system-based approaches

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title (EU)	**RCR104 - Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations**
Definition (EU)	The indicator counts the number of solutions, other than legal or administrative solutions, that are developed by supported projects and are taken up or upscaled during the implementation of the project or within one year after project completion. The organisation adopting the solutions developed by the project may or may not be a participant in the project. The uptake / up-scaling should be documented by the adopting organisations in, for instance, strategies, action plans etc.
Measurement unit	Solution
Type of indicator	Result
Baseline	0
Target 2029	22
RELEVANCE	
Euro-MED 21-27 definition	At programme level solutions can be defined as methodologies, tools, technologies, services, processes and partnership/cooperation agreements - jointly developed: through the involvement of organizations from at least XX programme countries - tested in real life conditions - easily transferable to further territories/organisations of the programme. Uptake refers to adoption or implementation of the solution. Upscale refers to: upgrade or improvement of the solution, or to extend the scope of the solution, e.g. from local to regional level or from the technical to the policy level. To be counted for this indicator the solution should have been effectively taken up or upscaled, or be at the initial stage of uptake/upscale, by a given organization. The take up/upscale should occur during the implementation of the project or at project closure. Initial stage of uptake/upscale is demonstrated by an official statement signed by the organisation proving the willingness to officially adopt the solution or to implement it in the organisation's usual practices and day-to-day activities, including time line for effective uptake. Effective uptake/upscale is demonstrated by e.g. signature of cooperation and partnership agreements, integration of the solution in regional or local strategies/action plans, implementation of pilots, launch of public procurements procedures/tenders To check the details about type of solutions expected under this specific objective, refer to the fiche for the indicator RCO116 - Joint developed solutions.
Justification of selection	Concrete solutions, resulting from transnational cooperation and pilot activities within funded projects, are needed to promote climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention and resilience, taking into account eco system-based approaches. However, concrete uptake or upscale of developed solutions by relevant organisations is needed to have an impact on the territory. Indeed, in order to capitalize on the tested solutions, not to duplicate the efforts, and not to lose what proved to work for the Mediterranean territories, the logical continuation is to ensure effective implementation of these existing solutions. Therefore, the programme has decided to consider the uptake or upscale of developed solutions as expected result of supported projects, which will contribute to prevent and manage disaster risks and to effective plan and finance climate change adaptation and energy transition, resulting in more resilient living areas and higher life quality for citizens. Several projects funded during the 2014-2020 programming period aimed at engaging local and regional authorities through a written commitment for the adoption of developed methodologies/tools/services. For example, under SO Efficient buildings more than 200 local and regional authorities have committed in developing energy efficiency plans or strategies, proving that solutions taken up or upscaled by organisations are a realistic project output, that can contribute to achieve programme goals.

Policy objective	PO2
Specific objective	(iv) Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience, taking into account eco system-based approaches
Type of projects concerned	Thematic projects
Associated output indicator	RCO116
Indicator level	Project
COLLECTION AND CALCULATION METHOD	
Calculation method for obtaining the value of the indicator	The value of the indicator is the total sum of the number of solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations
Means of data collection	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. The information of the achievement of the project output, including proof of realisation, are compiled by the beneficiaries in the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat.
Time measurement	At project completion/At project closure
Aggregation issues	In order to avoid double counting, the solutions relevant for this indicator should not refer to strategies/action plans, which are counted under RCR79
Reporting	Rule 1: Reporting by specific objectives. Forecast for selected projects and achieved values, both cumulative to date (CPR Annex XII, Table 6). Frequence of reporting: twice per year (art.32.1 and 32.2.b Interreg Regulation)
Methods of traceability and reliability	Data are verified by the Managing Authority upon submission of the final progress report and payment claim by the project beneficiary on the basis of provided supporting documents.
Proof of realisation	The documents provided for demonstrating the achievement of the output, i.e. the uptake or upscale of solutions by organisations should include: - Identification of the solution - Proof of uptake or upscale of the solution by the organization, e.g: Memorandum of Unsterstanding, or Letter of Intent/ Agreement, Framework document demonstrating the adoption/implementation of the solution by the relevant organization Report on implemented pilot activities Cooperation and partnership agreements Criteria for validation of the output: - The solution is at initial stage of uptake/upscale or has been effectively taken up or upscaled by the organisation
Focus points from 14-20	Provided proofs of realisation are quite different among projects, therefore a need for increased standardisation has been identified: - A template for proof of realisation documents should be provided to the beneficiary, in order to get a homogeneous set of documents and ensure that all necessary information is provided for each of the outputs so to enable further analysis at programme level
Data management contact	Managing authority
EXAMPLES	NA

Indicator fiches - SO 2 (iv) Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience, taking into account eco system-based approaches

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title (EU)	**RCR79 - Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations**
Definition (EU)	The indicator counts the number of joint strategies and action plans (not individual actions) adopted and implemented by organisations during or after the project completion. At the time of reporting this indicator, the implementation of the joint strategy or action plan need not to be completed but effectively started. The organisations involved in take-up may or may not be direct participants in the supported project. It is not necessary that all actions identified are taken-up for a strategy/action plan to be counted in this context. The value report should be equal to or less than the value for "RCO83 Strategies and action plans jointly developed".
Measurement unit	Joint strategy / action plan
Type of indicator	Result
Baseline	0
Target 2029	32
RELEVANCE	
Euro-MED 21-27 definition	At programme level strategies and action plans can be defined as follows: A strategy describes a specific course of action designed to achieve a long-term goal, aiming at establishing a targeted way to achieve a goal-oriented process in a specific domain. An action plan translates an existing jointly developed strategy into actions, outlining in detail actions needed to reach the defined long-term goal. To be counted for this indicator the strategies/action plans should have been effectively taken up, or be at the initial stage of uptake, by a given organization. The uptake should occur during the implementation of the project or at project closure. Initial stage of uptake is demonstrated by an official statement signed by the organisation proving the willingness to officially adopt the strategy/action plan including time line for effective uptake. The initial stage of uptake can be demonstrated by e.g. signature of Memoranda of Understanding/letter of intent/agreements. Effective uptake is demonstrated e.g. official approval of the strategy/action plan, launch of public procurement/tenders or signature of contracts for the implementation of measures indicated in the strategy/action plan,... To check the details about type of strategy/action plan expected under this specific objective, refer to the fiche for the output indicator RCO83 - Strategies and action plans jointly developed.
Justification of selection	Strategies and action plans at regional and local level are needed to increase climate change adaptation and resilience of Mediterranean living areas. However, concrete uptake of developed strategies/action plans by relevant organisations is key to ensure territorial impact and contribute to the achievement of the long-term vision that in 2050, the EU will be a climate-resilient society. Therefore, the programme has decided to consider the take up of developed strategies/action plans as expected results of supported projects, which will contribute to Increase capacity of public authorities in effective planning and financing for climate change adaptation and energy transition and to reinforce citizens engagement for more sustainable living areas in the Mediterranean During the 2014-2020 period, a high number of stakeholders (mainly public authorities) adopted strategies and action plans developed for e.g. large-scale energy renovation of public buildings and the transition towards a sustainable tourism model. This proved to be effective in tackling challenges related to climate change adaptation and energy transition. Cooperation between key consortium and decision-makers are essential to face this type of joint challenge and provide expected results.
Policy objective	PO2
Specific objective	(iv) Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience, taking into account eco system-based approaches
Type of projects concerned	Thematic projects
Associated output indicator	RCO83
Indicator level	Project
COLLECTION AND CALCULATION METHOD	
Calculation method for obtaining the value of the indicator	The value of the indicator is the total sum of the number of strategies/action plans taken up by organisations
Means of data collection	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. The information of the achievement of the project output, including proof of realisation, are compiled by the beneficiaries in the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat.
Time measurement	At project completion/At project closure
Aggregation issues	In order to avoid double counting, the strategies relevant for this indicator should not refer to solutions, which are counted under RCR104
Reporting	Rule 1: Reporting by specific objectives. Forecast for selected projects and achieved values, both cumulative to date (CPR Annex XII, Table 6). Frequence of reporting: twice per year (art.32.1 and 32.2.b Interreg Regulation)
Methods of traceability and reliability	Data are verified by the Managing Authority upon submission of the final progress report and payment claim by the project beneficiary on the basis of provided supporting documents.
Proof of realisation	The documents provided for demonstrating the achievement of the output, i.e. the taken up of the strategy/action plan by organisations should include: - Identification of the strategy/action plan - Proof of uptake of the strategy/action plan by the organisation, e.g. Memorandum of Unsterstanding, or Letter of Intent Criteria for validation of the output: - The strategy/action plan has been taken up by the organisation.
Focus points from 14-20	Provided proofs of realisation are quite different among projects, therefore a need for increased standardisation has been identified: - A template for proof of realisation documents should be provided to the beneficiary, in order to get a homogeneous set of documents and ensure that all necessary information is provided for each of the outputs so to enable further analysis at programme level
Data management contact	Managing authority
EXAMPLES	NA

iii. Indicators for SO 2 (vi): RCO87, RCO116, RCO83, PSI1, RCR104, RCR79

Indicator fiches - SO 2 (vi) Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title (EU)	**RCO87 - Organisation cooperating across border**
Definition (EU)	The indicator counts the organisations cooperating formally in supported projects. The organisations counted in this indicator are the legal entities including project partners and associated organizations, as mentionned in the financing agreement of the application. Organisations cooperating formally in small projects (for instance under Small project Fund) are also counted.
Measurement unit	Organisation
Type of indicator	Output
Milestone 2024	0
Target 2029	359
RELEVANCE	
Euro-MED 21-27 definition	RCO87 is selected for all Euro-MED 21-27 specific objectives. The indicator counts the organisations cooperating formally in supported projects. At programme level, organisations can be defined as project partners or associated participating in approved projects (whether receiving funds or not). Under this specific objective, main target groups are represented by: Local, regional and national authorities, in particular their sectoral agencies, SMEs and economic operators, Business support organisations, Universities and research centres, Civil society / NGOs / Local communities and associations, working on the transition towards a circular and resource efficient economy.
Justification of selection	Cooperation between organisations across borders is essential to implement EURO-MED programme and achieve its main objective. Furthermore, cooperation is crucial to provide a common response to current challenges identified for the selected specific objectives. During 14-20, cooperation was not limited to organisations within projects, it was extended to cooperation within and across thematic communities of projects, leading to relevant results and demonstrating the added value of this kind of transnational cooperation. Within this specific objective a particular attention is paid to SMEs. The involvement and support provided to enterprises through project implementation is key for the promoting a transition to a circular and resource efficient economy. Enterprises, being responsible for resource consuming processes and activities, will be supported to implement solutions to reduce the environmental impact of the current production system, while applying waste prevention and reduction measures. As project partners and as targeted beneficiaries the enterprises will collaborate closely with research stakeholders, civil society and public institutions for closing the loops and support the transition to more sustainable and circular models. Entreprises are directly concerned and key stakeholders of the circular economy scheme and will contribute to the elaboration and adoption of tools and practices for reinforcing the circularity and resource efficiency of key economy sectors. Cooperation and coordination between organisations is essential to close the loops and shift to circular production systems and waste value chain, as well as for developing effective strategies/action plans, therefore this indicator has been selected. Output indicator RCO87 will show the concrete joint commitment of organisations in the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy in the Mediterranean.
Policy objective	PO2
Specific objective	(vi) Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy
Type of projects concerned	Thematic projects
Associated result indicator	PSI1 - Organisation with increased institutional capacity due to their participation in cooperation activities across borders
Indicator level	Project
COLLECTION AND CALCULATION METHOD	
Calculation method for obtaining the value of the indicator	The value of the indicator is the total sum of projects' full and associated partners.
Means of data collection	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. Partners participating in funded projects will be automatically exported for the monitoring system and reported by specific objective.
Time measurement	At project completion
Aggregation issues	Removal of duplicates when the data is aggregated at programme level
Reporting	Rule 1: Reporting by specific objectives. Forecast for selected projects and achieved values, both cumulative to date (CPR Annex XII, Table 6). Frequence of reporting : twice per year (art.32.1 and 32.2.b Interreg Regulation)
Methods of traceability and reliability	Data are collected by the monitoring system
Proof of realisation	N/A
Focus points from 14-20	An efficient and accurate management of the partners database in the information system is required. In the communication of programme beneficiaries there is the need to insist on the added value of Associated partners and their real engagement in project activities.
Data management contact	Managing authority
EXAMPLES	N/A

Indicator fiches - SO 2 (vi) Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title (EU)	**RCO116 - Joint developed solutions**
Definition (EU)	The indicator counts the number of jointly developed solutions from joint pilot actions implemented by supported projects. In order to be counted in the indicator, an identified solution should include indications of the actions needed for it to be taken up or to be upscaled. A jointly developed solution implies the involvement of organizations from at least two participating countries (for programmes falling under strands A, B, C as defined in the Interreg Regulation) in the drafting and design process of the solution or is developed in the scope of programmes within strands D or E as defined in the Interreg Regulation.
Measurement unit	Solution
Type of indicator	Output
Milestone 2024	0
Target 2029	18
RELEVANCE	
Euro-MED 21-27 definition	At programme level solutions can be defined as methodologies, tools, technologies, services, processes, partnership/cooperation agreements. To be counted for this indicator the solutions should be: - jointly developed: through the involvement of organizations from at least 2 programme countries - tested in real life conditions - easily transferable to further territories of the programme - the solution should include a list of actions needed for it to be uptaken or upscaled by further organisations. Solutions are developed at project level, therefore 1 to 2 transnational solutions are expected as direct output of a single project. Jointly developed solutions refer to solutions newly developed by the project partnership or solutions already developed, e.g. in territorial contexts other than the programme area, that are adapted to the Euro-MED 21-27 context and geographic area by the project partnership. Under SO vi targeted outputs should refer to: Tools and practices for reinforcing circularity and resource efficiency of key economy sectors and cooperation and coordination practices/agreements between stakeholders. Types of targeted solutions include: - Solutions for the development of circular value chains and setting up cooperation patterns among 4 helix stakeholders - Solutions for supporting SMEs in accessing innovative technologies and adopting circular practices - Solutions for improved product design - focus on plastic packaging - Solutions for reinforcing Green Public Procurement: enhanced integration of circular economy requirements, support public authorities to higher uptake including through training schemes - Solutions fostering water-efficiency measures, reuse of treated wastewater, water reuse in agriculture, raising water-saving requirements for products - Solutions fostering implementation of circular practices in the tourism sector - Solutions to prevent and reduce waste generation, to improve waste management and resource efficiency, and to promote economic recovery of waste - Solutions for triggering public and private sources of financing to scale up green and/or improved technologies and processes - Solutions for promoting shift in consumers and citizens behavior (including as tourists): awareness raising for the adoption of circular economy products and practices - Solutions for tourism facilities to include circular economy in their business model Solutions relevant for this indicator should not refer to strategies and action plans, which are relevant to RCO 83. Solutions developed for circular economy purposes should embed the form of a concrete tool, methodology or process and in this sense may be part of local Strategies/Action plan and therefore complementary to the Strategy/Action Plan indicator. For example, solutions involving a 4-helix approach, e.g. “development of circular value chains and cooperation patterns” rely on the adoption of local or regional circular economy action plans in order to be effective. In addition, such plans would also include waste management or water-efficiency measures, developed as solutions. Delivered solutions should also contribute to the objectives of relevant European strategies (detailed in the Euro-MED Operational Programme).
Justification of selection	Concrete solutions, resulting from transnational cooperation and pilot activities within funded projects, are needed to tackle the challenges of the transition towards a circular and resource-efficient economy, closing the loops through reinforced cooperation and capacities of stakeholders. Most projects funded during the 2014-2020 programming period have produced solutions relevant to these challenges, mainly under priority axis ‘Innovation and Environment’. Delivered solutions refer to: instruments to favour innovation of SMEs and instruments to enhance the development of sustainable and responsible tourism. These results prove that joint developed solutions are a realistic and achievable project output. Jointly developed solutions are direct outputs of the following types of actions: - Elaboration and adoption of tools and practices for reinforcing the circularity and resource efficiency of key economy sectors - Establishment of transnational networks, coordination processes and agreements between stakeholders These actions will lead to the achievement of the objectives of SO vi: to reduce the environmental impact of the current linear production system and of generated waste, and in parallel to strengthen cooperation of stakeholders, which is crucial for closing the loop and shift towards circular economic sectors. Expected results of undertaken actions refer to the improved sustainability of products and production systems, supported resilience of economic sectors and increased capacities of public and private stakeholders in transition towards circular economy. Engagement of civil society and awareness raising among citizens/consumers in these processes is deemed crucial.

Policy objective	PO2
Specific objective	(vi) Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy
Type of projects concerned	Thematic projects
Associated result indicator	RCR104
Indicator level	Project
COLLECTION AND CALCULATION METHOD	
Calculation method for obtaining the value of the indicator	The value of the indicator is the total sum of the number of solutions developed jointly by the funded projects
Means of data collection	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. The information of the achievement of the project output, including proof of realisation, are compiled by the beneficiaries in the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat.
Time measurement	At project completion
Aggregation issues	In order to avoid double counting, the solutions relevant for this indicator should not refer to strategies/action plans, which are counted under RCO83
Reporting	Rule 1: Reporting by specific objectives. Forecast for selected projects and achieved values, both cumulative to date (CPR Annex XII, Table 6). Frequence of reporting: twice per year (art.32.1 and 32.2.b Interreg Regulation)
Methods of traceability and reliability	Data are verified by the Managing Authority upon submission of the final progress report and payment claim by the project beneficiary on the basis of provided supporting documents.
Proof of realisation	The documents provided for demonstrating the achievement of the output, i.e. the completed development of a joint solution should include: - Clear description of the challenge that the solution is adressing and how the solution developed contributes to tackle the mentioned challenge - Clear description of the solution and concrete project output: methodology, tool, technology, service or process, partnership agreement, including target groups involved, type of territory concerned - Description of the testing phase and its results - List of actions needed for the solution to be uptaken or upscaled in further territories, including financial resources to be mobilized Criteria for validation of the output: - The addressed challenge is relevant to the selected specific objective - The solution has been developed with the contribution of partners from at least 2 programme countries - The solution has been tested in real life conditions - results of the test are available - The solution demonstrates to be effective in tackling the mentioned challenge - Actions needed for the solution to be taken up or upscaled are clear and complete
Focus points from 14-20	Developed outputs and provided proofs of realisation are quite different among projects, therefore a need for increased standardisation has been identified: - Criteria for validation are clearly set in terms of defining the solution and what is expected as final product - A template for proof of realisation documents should be provided to the beneficiary, in order to get a homogeneus set of documents and ensure that all necessary information is provided for each of the outputs so to enable further analysis at programme level.
Data management contact	Managing authority
EXAMPLES	Type of solutions/examples - Tools/practices for effective reuse and recovery of materials/ Industrial symbiosis (to allow waste or by-products of one industry to become inputs for another)/ partnerships between producers and plastics recyclers - Public-private partnerships for green and circular transition - Academic-government collaboration patterns/ Multi-level governance - Innovative and circular business models for SMEs - Innovative forms of consumption: e.g. sharing products or infrastructure (collaborative economy), consuming services rather than products - New technologies, services and business models to rethink our ways of producing and consuming and to transform waste into new products - Solutions for generating shift in consumers and citizens behavior, awareness raising for the adoption of circular economy products and practices - Technology transfer processes for closing loops - Methodology for transnational value chain development - Methodology for building up, developing and sustaining transnational clusters -Platforms for stakeholders 'engagement with ensured sustainability upon project's end, including civil society representatives/ Toolkits for thematic cooperation - Services/tools for triggering public and private sources of financing for circular transition - Models and protocols for integrating circular economy principles in public procurement - Eco-innovation/ Climate friendly innovation/ Reverse logistics for packaging, alternatives to disposable plastics - Processes to embed sustainability and circularity in public procurement procedures - Circular practices for the tourism sector - Information and communications technology (ICT) solutions - Sustainable consumption and production schemes (packaging, tourist infrastructure, etc.) - Tools/practices for waste prevention and reduction/ Zero waste protocols in economic sectors - e.g. agri-food and tourism - Tools/practices for increasing water efficiency, including wastewater treatment and reuse

Indicator fiches - SO 2 (vi) Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title (EU)	**RCO83 - Strategies and action plans jointly developed**
Definition (EU)	The indicator counts the number of joint strategies or action plans developed by supported projects. A jointly developed strategy aims at establishing a targeted way to achieve a goal oriented process in a specific domain. An action plan translates an existing jointly developed strategy into actions. Jointly developed strategy or action plan implies the involvement of organizations from at least two participating countries (for programmes falling under strands A, B, C as defined in the Interreg Regulation) in the drafting process of the strategy or action plan or is developed in the scope of programmes falling under strands D or E as defined in the Interreg Regulation.
Measurement unit	Strategy/action plan
Type of indicator	Output
Milestone 2024	0
Target 2029	29
RELEVANCE	
Euro-MED 21-27 definition	At programme level strategies and action plans can be defined as follows: A strategy describes a specific course of action designed to achieve a long-term goal, aiming at establishing a targeted way to achieve a goal-oriented process in a specific domain. An action plan translates an existing jointly developed strategy into actions, outlining in detail actions needed to reach the defined long-term goal. Strategies/action plans are developed at territorial level (e.g. local or regional), therefore an average of 4 strategies are expected as direct output of a single project. In order to be counted for the indicator the methodology/approaches used to develop strategies/action plans should be easily transferable to further territories of the programme. Under SO vi, targeted strategies/action plans should be in line and contribute to following EU strategies/directives and should be easily transferable to further territories of the programme. - EU Green Deal - - Circular Economy action plan - - Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste - - A European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy - - Waste Framework Directive - Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste and repealing certain Directives (Text with EEA relevance) - - Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe (COM(2011) 571) - - Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC - - EU's growth strategy for a sustainable future Types of targeted strategies/action plans - Local and regional Circular Economy Action Plans / Local and regional action plans to improve circularity in different economic sectors, value chains and services - Local and regional waste management strategies/action plans for increasing prevention and recycling and reducing the landfilling of waste, encouraging use of economic instruments to ensure coherence with the EU waste hierarchy - Resource Management strategies/action plans to increase resource efficiency and productivity and decouple economic growth from resource use and its environmental impact. Strategies/action plans relevant for this indicator should not refer to solutions, which are relevant to RCO 116. Although, complementarities between strategies and solutions can be highlighted and will be encouraged where possible.
Justification of selection	Strategies and action plans at regional and local level are needed to effectively implement the EU Circular Economy action plan and the Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe. The development and adoption of effective strategies and action plans at regional and local level is key for improving circularity in different economic sectors, value chains and services, enforcing prevention, reduction and economic recovery of waste and increasing resource efficiency with special focus on water. During the 2014-2020 period, strategies and action plans developed for e.g. large-scale energy renovation of public buildings and the transition towards a sustainable tourism model, proved to be effective in tackling challenges related to circular economy and resources efficiency. Together with solutions, effective strategies/action plans defined by key consortium and decision-makers are essential to face this type of joint challenge. These type of instruments are needed in order to ensure long term impacts in the territory and the involvement of all relevant stakeholders. The action of supporting public authorities will result in strategies and action plans developed and adopted on circular economy, waste and resources management and efficiency, as well as in the integration of circularity and resources efficiency principles/measures in existing strategies.

Policy objective	PO2
Specific objective	(vi) Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy
Type of projects concerned	Thematic projects
Associated result indicator	RCR79
Indicator level	Project
COLLECTION AND CALCULATION METHOD	
Calculation method for obtaining the value of the indicator	The value of the indicator is the total sum of the number of strategies/action plans developed jointly by the funded projects
Means of data collection	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. The information of the achievement of the project output, including proof of realisation, are compiled by the beneficiaries in the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat.
Time measurement	At project completion
Aggregation issues	In order to avoid double counting, the strategies/action plans relevant for this indicator should not refer to solutions, which are counted under RCO116
Reporting	Rule 1: Reporting by specific objectives. Forecast for selected projects and achieved values, both cumulative to date (CPR Annex XII, Table 6). Frequence of reporting: twice per year (art.32.1 and 32.2.b Interreg Regulation)
Methods of traceability and reliability	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. The information of the achievement of the project output, including proof of realisation, are compiled by the beneficiaries in the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat.
Proof of realisation	The documents provided for demonstrating the achievement of the output, i.e. the completed development of a strategy/action plan should include: - Identification of the relevant EU strategy to which the developed strategy/action plans contributes to and in which way - Methodology for drafting the strategy action plan - Developed strategy/action plan, including mid-term and long-term objectives, target setting, actions needed to achieve the objective, including timeframe and financial resources needed - List of stakeholders actively involved in the drafting of the strategy/action plan, including description and results of the engagement process - Actions needed for the strategy/action plan to be effectively taken up by the relevant organisation Criteria for validation of the output: - Strategy/action plan contributes to the identified EU strategy - The strategy/action plan has been developed on the basis of a common transnational methodology - Content of the strategy/action plan is clear and complete (includes objectives, targets, actions needed to achieve the objective, involvement of stakeholders) - Actions needed for the strategy/action plan to be effectively uptaken are clear and complete
Focus points from 14-20	Developed outputs and provided proofs of realisation are quite different among projects, therefore a need for increased standardisation has been identified: - Criteria for validation are clearly set - A template for proof of realisation documents should be provided to the beneficiary, in order to get a homogeneous set of documents and ensure that all necessary information is provided for each of the outputs so to enable further analysis at programme level.
Data management contact	Managing authority
EXAMPLES	Type of strategies/action plans/Examples - Local and regional Circular Economy Action Plans - Local and regional action plans to improve circularity in different economic sectors, value chains and services - Local and regional Zero Waste Plans - Inclusion of circular principles in further local and regional strategies/action plans - Local regional strategies/programmes for public financing of waste management, consistent with the goal of shifting upwards in the implementation of the EU waste hierarchy - Local and regional Resources' management strategies/action plans to ensure resources' efficiency and productivity and decouple economic growth from resource use and its environmental impact. - Local regional strategies/programmes on incentives and economic instruments to ensure that product prices better reflect environmental costs

Indicator fiches - SO 2 (vi) Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title Euro-MED 21-27	**PSI1 - Organisations with increased institutional capacity due to their participation in cooperation activities across borders**
Definition Euro-MED 21-27	This indicator measures the number of organisations that actively participated in cooperation activities of a project across borders and consequently increased their institutional capacity in the thematic field of the project. Institutional capacity is defined as an organisation's ability to set and achieve goals through knowledge, skills, systems and institutions. An organisation increases its institutional capacity by securing the resources (human or technical) and structures (organisational or governance) it needs to successfully perform its mandated tasks better. A cooperation activity across borders is defined as a process of exchanging knowledge and experience between participants from multiple countries. This process can lead to creating joint objectives and commitments and actions fulfilling these commitments. At programme level, organisations can be defined as project partners or final beneficiaries participating in cooperation activities (whether receiving funds or not) An organisation is to be counted if it has undergone this kind of learning process through project activities. This is defined as more than one instance of exchange in which the organisation played an active role. An organisation is to be counted only if its increased institutional capacity is in the thematic field of the project. Organisations targeted refer in particular to: - Organisations actively participating in the development of joint solutions and strategies and action plans - Organisations taking up joint developed solutions and strategies and action plans Types of organisations include, but are not limited to, International organisation, EEIG; National public authority; Regional public authority; Local public authority; Higher education and research; Interest groups including NGOs; SMEs; Enterprises; Business support organisation; Sectoral agency. Organisations specifically targeted under this specific objective are detailed in the relevant indicator fiche - RCO87 - Organisation cooperating across border
Measurement unit	Organisation
Type of indicator	Result
Baseline	0
Target 2029	251
RELEVANCE	
Justification of selection	This indicator was proposed by Interact following consultation and joint work among different transnational programmes. Increasing institutional capacity is one of the main objectives of the Interreg Euro-MED programme and at the core of transnational cooperation. This programme specific indicator is relevant to measure and showcase the achievement and impact of the programme for all selected specific objectives. Projects funded during the 2014-2020 programming period largely contributed to increase capacity of organisations within project partnerships and beyond, e.g. through joint development and adoption of strategies and solution. This result indicator will concretely reflect the change sought and achieved for final beneficiaries of the Euro-MED programme.
Policy objective	PO2
Specific objective	(vi) Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy
Type of projects concerned	Thematic projects
Associated output indicator	RCO87
Indicator level	Project
COLLECTION AND CALCULATION METHOD	
Calculation method for obtaining the value of the indicator	The value of the indicator is the total sum of organisations that demonstrate to have increased their institutional capacity following their participation in cooperation activities of project across borders. Following the common methodology developed among several Interreg programmes, the indicator value will be calculated through a common survey.
Means of data collection	Data collection will be done through the programme Platform. The information of the achievement of the result at project level is compiled by the lead partnerin the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat, verifying information provided in the programme Platform
Time measurement	At project completion/At project closure
Aggregation issues	N/A
Reporting	Rule 1: Reporting by specific objectives. Forecast for selected projects and achieved values, both cumulative to date (CPR Annex XII, Table 6). Frequence of reporting: twice per year (art.32.1 and 32.2.b Interreg Regulation)
Methods of traceability and reliability	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. The information of the achievement of the result at project level is compiled by the beneficiaries in the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat.
Proof of realisation	Common survey
Focus points from 14-20	N/A
Data management contact	Managing Authority
EXAMPLES	<u>General examples of increased capacity :</u> - the organisation used knowledge or skills - the organisation adopted new tools - the organisation adopted new procedures or workflows

Indicator fiches - SO 2 (vi) Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title (EU)	**RCR104 - Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations**
Definition (EU)	The indicator counts the number of solutions, other than legal or administrative solutions, that are developed by supported projects and are taken up or upscaled during the implementation of the project or within one year after project completion. The organisation adopting the solutions developed by the project may or may not be a participant in the project. The uptake / up-scaling should be documented by the adopting organisations in, for instance, strategies, action plans etc.
Measurement unit	Solution
Type of indicator	Result
Baseline	0
Target 2029	16
RELEVANCE	
Euro-MED 21-27 definition	At programme level solutions can be defined as methodologies, tools, technologies, services, processes and partnership/cooperation agreements - jointly developed: through the involvement of organizations from at least XX programme countries - tested in real life conditions - easily transferable to further territories/organisations of the programme. Uptake refers to adoption or implementation of the solution. Upscale refers to: upgrade or improvement of the solution, or to extend the scope of the solution, e.g. from local to regional level or from the technical to the policy level. To be counted for this indicator the solution should have been effectively taken up or upscaled, or be at the initial stage of uptake/upscale, by a given organization. The take up/upscale should occur during the implementation of the project or at project closure. Initial stage of uptake/upscale is demonstrated by an official statement signed by the organisation proving the willingness to officially adopt the solution or to implement it in the organisation's usual practices and day-to-day activities, including time line for effective uptake. Effective uptake/upscale is demonstrated by e.g. signature of cooperation and partnership agreements, integration of the solution in regional or local strategies/action plans, implementation of pilots, launch of public procurements procedures/tenders To check the details about type of solutions expected under this specific objective, refer to the fiche for the indicator RCO116 - Joint developed solutions.
Justification of selection	Several projects funded under the Innovation Axis during 14-20 aimed at supporting stakeholders and in particular SMEs in the adoption of developed methodologies/tools/services, resulting in increased capacity and cooperation in the fields of green, blue and social and creative innovation. The involvement and support provided to enterprises through project financing and implementation proved to be key for the achievement of programme goals. The uptake or upscale of solutions by organisations as projects' direct output will contribute to achieve programme goals. Concrete solutions, resulting from transnational cooperation and pilot activities within funded projects, are key to support the transition to circular and resource efficient economy. However, concrete uptake or upscale of developed solution by relevant organisations is needed to have an impact on the territory. Indeed, in order to capitalize on the tested solutions, not to duplicate the efforts, and not to lose what proved to work for the Mediterranean territories, the logical continuation is to ensure effective implementation of these existing solutions. Therefore, the programme has decided to consider the uptake or upscale of developed solutions as expected results of supported projects, which will contribute to reduce the environmental impact and increase circularity of key economic sectors ant to effectively promote prevention, reduction and economic recovery of waste
Policy objective	PO2
Specific objective	(vi) Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy
Type of projects concerned	Thematic projects
Associated output indicator	RCO116
Indicator level	Project
COLLECTION AND CALCULATION METHOD	
Calculation method for obtaining the value of the indicator	The value of the indicator is the total sum of the number of solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations
Means of data collection	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. The information of the achievement of the project output, including proof of realisation, are compiled by the beneficiaries in the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat.
Time measurement	At project completion/At project closure
Aggregation issues	In order to avoid double counting, the solutions relevant for this indicator should not refer to strategies/action plans, which are counted under RCR79
Reporting	Rule 1: Reporting by specific objectives. Forecast for selected projects and achieved values, both cumulative to date (CPR Annex XII, Table 6). Frequence of reporting: twice per year (art.32.1 and 32.2.b Interreg Regulation)
Methods of traceability and reliability	Data are verified by the Managing Authority upon submission of the final progress report and payment claim by the project beneficiary on the basis of provided supporting documents.
Proof of realisation	The documents provided for demonstrating the achievement of the output, i.e. the uptake or upscale of solutions by organisations should include: - Identification of the solution - Proof of uptake or upscale of the solution by the organization, e.g: Memorandum of Unsterstanding, or Letter of Intent/ Agreement, Framework document demonstrating the adoption/implementation of the solution by the relevant organization Report on implemented pilot activities Cooperation and partnership agreements Criteria for validation of the output: - The solution is at initial stage of uptake/upscale or has been effectively taken up or upscaled by the organisation
Focus points from 14-20	Provided proofs of realisation are quite different among projects, therefore a need for increased standardisation has been identified: - A template for proof of realisation documents should be provided to the beneficiary, in order to get a homogeneous set of documents and ensure that all necessary information is provided for each of the outputs so to enable further analysis at programme level
Data management contact	Managing authority
EXAMPLES	

Indicator fiches - SO 2 (vi) Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title (EU)	**RCR79 - Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations**
Definition (EU)	The indicator counts the number of joint strategies and action plans (not individual actions) adopted and implemented by organisations during or after the project completion. At the time of reporting this indicator, the implementation of the joint strategy or action plan need not to be completed but effectively started. The organisations involved in take-up may or may not be direct participants in the supported project. It is not necessary that all actions identified are taken-up for a strategy/action plan to be counted in this context. The value report should be equal to or less than the value for "RCO83 Strategies and action plans jointly developed".
Measurement unit	Joint strategy / action plan
Type of indicator	Result
Baseline	0
Target 2029	23
RELEVANCE	
Euro-MED 21-27 definition	At programme level strategies and action plans can be defined as follows: A strategy describes a specific course of action designed to achieve a long-term goal, aiming at establishing a targeted way to achieve a goal-oriented process in a specific domain. An action plan translates an existing jointly developed strategy into actions, outlining in detail actions needed to reach the defined long-term goal. To be counted for this indicator the strategies/action plans should have been effectively taken up, or be at the initial stage of uptake, by a given organization. The uptake should occur during the implementation of the project or at project closure. Initial stage of uptake is demonstrated by an official statement signed by the organisation proving the willingness to officially adopt the strategy/action plan including time line for effective uptake. The initial stage of uptake can be demonstrated by e.g. signature of Memoranda of Understanding/letter of intent/agreements. Effective uptake is demonstrated e.g. official approval of the strategy/action plan, launch of public procurement/tenders or signature of contracts for the implementation of measures indicated in the strategy/action plan,... To check the details about type of strategy/action plan expected under this specific objective, refer to the fiche for the output indicator RCO83 - Strategies and action plans jointly developed.
Justification of selection	Strategies and action plans at regional and local level are needed to support the transition to circular and resource efficient economy. However, concrete uptake of developed strategies/action plans by relevant organisations is key to ensure territorial impact and contribute to implementing the EU Circular Economy action plan and the Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe. Therefore, the programme has decided to consider the take up of strategies/action plans as expected results of supported projects, which will contribute to increase capacity of public authorities/stakeholders in the management of cooperation between stakeholders throughout production systems and the waste management value chain, and the effective adoption of circular economy strategies, including integration of circularity principles/practices into existing policies. During the 2014-2020 period, a high number of stakeholders (mainly public authorities) adopted strategies and action plans developed for e.g. large-scale energy renovation of public buildings and the transition towards a sustainable tourism model. This proved to be effective in tackling challenges related to circular economy and resources efficiency. Cooperation between key consortium and decision-makers are essential to face this type of joint challenge and provide expected results.
Policy objective	PO2
Specific objective	(vi) Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy
Type of projects concerned	Thematic projects
Associated output indicator	RCO83
Indicator level	Project
COLLECTION AND CALCULATION METHOD	
Calculation method for obtaining the value of the indicator	The value of the indicator is the total sum of the number of strategies/action plans taken up by organisations
Means of data collection	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. The information of the achievement of the project output, including proof of realisation, are compiled by the beneficiaries in the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat.
Time measurement	At project completion/At project closure
Aggregation issues	In order to avoid double counting, the strategies relevant for this indicator should not refer to solutions, which are counted under RCR104
Reporting	Rule 1: Reporting by specific objectives. Forecast for selected projects and achieved values, both cumulative to date (CPR Annex XII, Table 6). Frequence of reporting: twice per year (art.32.1 and 32.2.b Interreg Regulation)
Methods of traceability and reliability	Data are verified by the Managing Authority upon submission of the final progress report and payment claim by the project beneficiary on the basis of provided supporting documents.
Proof of realisation	The documents provided for demonstrating the achievement of the output, i.e. the taken up of the strategy/action plan by organisations should include: - Identification of the strategy/action plan - Proof of uptake of the strategy/action plan by the organisation, e.g. Memorandum of Unsterstanding, or Letter of Intent Criteria for validation of the output: - The strategy/action plan has been taken up by the organisation.
Focus points from 14-20	Provided proofs of realisation are quite different among projects, therefore a need for increased standardisation has been identified: - A template for proof of realisation documents should be provided to the beneficiary, in order to get a homogeneous set of documents and ensure that all necessary information is provided for each of the outputs so to enable further analysis at programme level
Data management contact	Managing authority
EXAMPLES	

iv. Indicators for SO 2 (vii): RCO87, RCO116, RCO83, PSI1, RCR104, RCR79

Indicator fiches - SO 2 (vii) Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution	
GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title (EU)	**RCO87 - Organisation cooperating across border**
Definition (EU)	The indicator counts the organisations cooperating formally in supported projects. The organisations counted in this indicator are the legal entities including project partners and associated organizations, as mentionned in the financing agreement of the application. Organisations cooperating formally in small projects (for instance under Small project Fund) are also counted.
Measurement unit	Organisation
Type of indicator	Output
Milestone 2024	0
Target 2029	359
RELEVANCE	
Euro-MED 21-27 definition	RCO87 is selected for all Euro-MED 21-27 specific objectives. The indicator counts the organisations cooperating formally in supported projects. At programme level, organisations can be defined as project partners or associated participating in approved projects (whether receiving funds or not). Under this specific objective, main target groups are represented by: regional and local and national authorities, environmental organization/agencies, protected areas management organisations/bodies, universities/research centres, SMEs & Economic operators, NGOs/ local communities and associations, authorities, managers of protected areas or experts from the southern shore of the Mediterranean.
Justification of selection	Cooperation between organisations across borders is essential to implement Euro-MED programme and achieve its main objective. Furthermore, cooperation is crucial to provide a common response to current challenges identified for the selected specific objectives. During 14-20, cooperation was not limited to organisations within projects, it was extended to cooperation within and across thematic communities of projects, leading to relevant results and demonstrating the added value of this kind of transnational cooperation. Cooperation and coordination between organisations across borders is essential to support the achievements of regional environmental targets by 2030 in the Mediterranean. Public-private collaboration constitutes another milestone for improving biodiversity management. Output indicator RCO87 will show the concrete joint commitment of organisations in the enhancement of the protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, as well as in the reduction of all forms of pollution
Policy objective	PO2
Specific objective	(vii) Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution
Type of projects concerned	Thematic projects
Associated result indicator	PSI1 - Organisation with increased institutional capacity due to their participation in cooperation activities across borders
Indicator level	Project
COLLECTION AND CALCULATION METHOD	
Calculation method for obtaining the value of the indicator	The value of the indicator is the total sum of projects' full and associated partners.
Means of data collection	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. Partners participating in funded projects will be automatically exported for the monitoring system and reported by specific objective.
Time measurement	At project completion
Aggregation issues	Removal of duplicates when the data is aggregated at programme level
Reporting	Rule 1: Reporting by specific objectives. Forecast for selected projects and achieved values, both cumulative to date (CPR Annex XII, Table 6). Frequence of reporting : twice per year (art.32.1 and 32.2.b Interreg Regulation)
Methods of traceability and reliability	Data are collected by the monitoring system
Proof of realisation	N/A
Focus points from 14-20	An efficient and accurate management of the partners database in the information system is required. In the communication of programme beneficiaries there is the need to insist on the added value of Associated partners and their real engagement in project activities.
Data management contact	Managing authority
EXAMPLES	N/A

Indicator fiches - SO 2 (vii) Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title (EU)	**RCO116 - Joint developed solutions**
Definition (EU)	The indicator counts the number of jointly developed solutions from joint pilot actions implemented by supported projects. In order to be counted in the indicator, an identified solution should include indications of the actions needed for it to be taken up or to be upscaled. A jointly developed solution implies the involvement of organizations from at least two participating countries (for programmes falling under strands A, B, C as defined in the Interreg Regulation) in the drafting and design process of the solution or is developed in the scope of programmes within strands D or E as defined in the Interreg Regulation.
Measurement unit	Solution
Type of indicator	Output
Milestone 2024	0
Target 2029	18
RELEVANCE	
Euro-MED 21-27 definition	At programme level solutions can be defined as methodologies, tools, technologies, services, processes, partnership/cooperation agreements. To be counted for this indicator the solutions should be: - jointly developed: through the involvement of organizations from at least 2 programme countries - tested in real life conditions - easily transferable to further territories of the programme - the solution should include a list of actions needed for it to be uptaken or upscaled by further organisations. Solutions are developed at project level, therefore 1 to 2 transnational solutions are expected as direct output of a single project. Jointly developed solutions refer to solutions newly developed by the project partnership or solutions already developed, e.g. in territorial contexts other than the programme area, that are adapted to the Euro-MED 21-27 context and geographic area by the project partnership. Under SO vii targeted outputs should refer to: - Tools and practices for improving the sustainable management of natural resources and restoring overused and polluted natural environments at land and sea, including wetlands and marshy areas. - Solutions able to enhance the management, monitoring and connection of natural environments, taking into account all the stakeholders involved. Types of targeted solutions includes: - Solutions to increase connectivity between natural ecosystems through effective management plans - Solutions to support the sustainable use of natural resources and consider the ecosystem services as an asset to promote - Solutions to restore degraded natural habitats, including in urban areas, allowing them to be more resilient - Solutions to protect and preserve biodiversity thanks to the coordination and cooperation between key-networks and initiatives in the Mediterranean on this topic - Solutions to manage protected areas, providing a framework for economic operators Solutions relevant for this indicator should not refer to strategies and action plans, which are relevant to RCO 83. Solutions developed for biodiversity protection purposes should embed the form of a concrete tool, methodology or process and in this sense may be part of local Strategies/Action plan and therefore complementary to the Strategy/Action Plan indicator. For example, the solution "shared management of tourism data and automation of data exploitation" can be included in the sustainable tourism development strategy of a Region. Delivered solutions should also be in line with the objectives of relevant European strategies (detailed in the Euro-MED Operational Programme).
Justification of selection	Concrete solutions, resulting from cooperation and pilot activities within funded projects, are needed to tackle the challenges of: - improving management of natural resources; - ensuring the connection of natural ecosystems; - enhancing resilience of natural habitats and restoration of degraded ecosystems. As shown during the 2014-2020 programming period, the development and adoption of joint solutions are the most effective instruments to tackle environmental protection challenges in the MED basin. The use of joint management tools, the adoption of common practices, the participation in transnational networks, allow the managers of protected areas to strengthen their skills while contributing to the preservation and resilience of marine and terrestrial habitats. Solutions delivered by 14-20 projects refer to: joint monitoring protocols for Floating and Ingested Marine Litter, Water Quality Monitoring Systems to be used for monitoring of rivers, Small-Scale Fisheries Governance toolkit to be used for reduction of overfishing impact, Climate change monitoring protocols to be used by managers of marine protected areas, Governance tool as wetland contracts for effective wetlands management. Jointly developed solutions are direct outputs of the following type of action: Elaboration, implementation and adoption of tools and practices for protection, preservation and restoration of natural ecosystems

Policy objective	PO2
Specific objective	(vii) Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution
Type of projects concerned	Thematic projects
Associated result indicator	RCR104
Indicator level	Project
COLLECTION AND CALCULATION METHOD	
Calculation method for obtaining the value of the indicator	The value of the indicator is the total sum of the number of solutions developed jointly by the funded projects
Means of data collection	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. The information of the achievement of the project output, including proof of realisation, are compiled by the beneficiaries in the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat.
Time measurement	At project completion
Aggregation issues	In order to avoid double counting, the solutions relevant for this indicator should not refer to strategies/action plans, which are counted under RCO83
Reporting	Rule 1: Reporting by specific objectives. Forecast for selected projects and achieved values, both cumulative to date (CPR Annex XII, Table 6). Frequence of reporting: twice per year (art.32.1 and 32.2.b Interreg Regulation)
Methods of traceability and reliability	Data are verified by the Managing Authority upon submission of the final progress report and payment claim by the project beneficiary on the basis of provided supporting documents.
Proof of realisation	The documents provided for demonstrating the achievement of the output, i.e. the completed development of a joint solution should include: - Clear description of the challenge that the solution is adressing and how the solution developed contributes to tackle the mentioned challenge - Clear description of the solution and concrete project output: methodology, tool, technology, service or process, partnership agreement, including target groups involved, type of territory concerned - Description of the testing phase and its results - List of actions needed for the solution to be uptaken or upscaled in further territories, including financial resources to be mobilized Criteria for validation of the output: - The addressed challenge is relevant to the selected specific objective - The solution has been developed with the contribution of partners from at least 2 programme countries - The solution has been tested in real life conditions - results of the test are available - The solution demonstrates to be effective in tackling the mentioned challenge - Actions needed for the solution to be taken up or upscaled are clear and complete
Focus points from 14-20	Developed outputs and provided proofs of realisation are quite different among projects, therefore a need for increased standardisation has been identified: - Criteria for validation are clearly set in terms of defining the solution and what is expected as final product - A template for proof of realisation documents should be provided to the beneficiary, in order to get a homogeneus set of documents and ensure that all necessary information is provided for each of the outputs so to enable further analysis at programme level.
Data management contact	Managing authority
EXAMPLES	Type of solutions/examples - Nature-based solutions for sustainable management of natural resources - Co-management approaches/model for effective management of natural resources - Green and blue infrastructures solutions for integrated management of natural ecosystems - Decision-support tools to protect and preserve natural habitats - Protocols for monitoring of polluted areas - Services/tools to ensure ecological corridors - Services/tools/technology to restore polluted/degraded areas - Sustainable Tourism services - Participatory models/processes targeting conservation and biodiversity protection - Public-private partnerships to leverage and stimulate biodiversity related purposes - Multi-stakeholders governance mechanisms/models to protect biodiversity, also at local level - Science-based, robust ecosystem restoration and management that helps minimise risks, improves resilience, and ensures the continued delivery of vital ecosystem services and features (food provision, air and water purification, flood protection, biodiversity, and climate mitigation) - Standard for Mediterranean Ecotourism products

Indicator fiches - SO 2 (vii) Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title (EU)	**RCO83 - Strategies and action plans jointly developed**
Definition (EU)	The indicator counts the number of joint strategies or action plans developed by supported projects. A jointly developed strategy aims at establishing a targeted way to achieve a goal oriented process in a specific domain. An action plan translates an existing jointly developed strategy into actions. Jointly developed strategy or action plan implies the involvement of organizations from at least two participating countries (for programmes falling under strands A, B, C as defined in the Interreg Regulation) in the drafting process of the strategy or action plan or is developed in the scope of programmes falling under strands D or E as defined in the Interreg Regulation.
Measurement unit	Strategy/action plan
Type of indicator	Output
Milestone 2024	0
Target 2029	29
RELEVANCE	
Euro-MED 21-27 definition	At programme level strategies and action plans can be defined as follows: A strategy describes a specific course of action designed to achieve a long-term goal, aiming at establishing a targeted way to achieve a goal-oriented process in a specific domain. An action plan translates an existing jointly developed strategy into actions, outlining in detail actions needed to reach the defined long-term goal. Strategies/action plans are developed at territorial level (e.g. local or regional), therefore an average of 4 strategies are expected as direct output of a single project. In order to be counted for the indicator the methodology/approaches used to develop strategies/action plans should be easily transferable to further territories of the programme. Under SO vii, targeted strategies/action plans should be in line and contribute to following EU strategies/directives/conventions and should be easily transferable to further territories of the programme. - EU Green Deal - - EU Biodiversity Strategy - - EU Maritime Spatial Planning Strategy - - EU Marine Strategy Framework directive - - Zero Pollution Action Plan - - New EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change - - Urban Agenda for the EU - - Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC - - European Habitats Directive - - Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development - - Barcelona Convention - -Convention on Biological Diversity - - Ramsar Convention Targeted strategies and action plans should address the improvement, implementation and enforcement of environmental policies/legislations, ensuring the links between environmental protection, sustainable development and citizens health. Protection, conservation and restoration of natural resources have to be integrated into territorial strategies as pillar towards a long term and sustainable growth. Strategies/action plans relevant for this indicator should not refer to solutions, which are relevant to RCO 116. Complementarities however, between strategies and solutions can be highlighted and will be encouraged where possible.
Justification of selection	The protection and preservation of biodiversity requires effective enforcement of environmental strategies at regional and local level. Integration of biodiversity into territorial strategies requires activities of capacity building towards the public authorities and coordination /cooperation among different stakeholders, both public and private. During the 2014-2020 period, recommendations on how to reduce human footprint of economic activities in maritime environment (as fisheries, maritime traffic and ports...) have demonstrated the importance to identify at territorial level integrated strategies/action plans for the management of natural habitats. Notably, a common Mediterranean Declaration for an Ecosystem based approach to biodiversity protection and management has been promoted by the Biodiversity protection thematic community. Together with solutions, effective strategies/action plans defined by key consortium and decision-makers are essential to face this type of joint challenge. These type of instruments are needed in order to ensure long term impacts in the territory and the involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

Policy objective	PO2
Specific objective	(vii) Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution
Type of projects concerned	Thematic projects
Associated result indicator	RCR79
Indicator level	Project
COLLECTION AND CALCULATION METHOD	
Calculation method for obtaining the value of the indicator	The value of the indicator is the total sum of the number of strategies/action plans developed jointly by the funded projects
Means of data collection	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. The information of the achievement of the project output, including proof of realisation, are compiled by the beneficiaries in the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat.
Time measurement	At project completion
Aggregation issues	In order to avoid double counting, the strategies/action plans relevant for this indicator should not refer to solutions, which are counted under RCO116
Reporting	Rule 1: Reporting by specific objectives. Forecast for selected projects and achieved values, both cumulative to date (CPR Annex XII, Table 6). Frequence of reporting: twice per year (art.32.1 and 32.2.b Interreg Regulation)
Methods of traceability and reliability	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. The information of the achievement of the project output, including proof of realisation, are compiled by the beneficiaries in the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat.
Proof of realisation	The documents provided for demonstrating the achievement of the output, i.e. the completed development of a strategy/action plan should include: - Identification of the relevant EU strategy to which the developed strategy/action plans contributes to and in which way - Methodology for drafting the strategy action plan - Developed strategy/action plan, including mid-term and long-term objectives, target setting, actions needed to achieve the objective, including timeframe and financial resources needed - List of stakeholders actively involved in the drafting of the strategy/action plan, including description and results of the engagement process - Actions needed for the strategy/action plan to be effectively taken up by the relevant organisation Criteria for validation of the output: - Strategy/action plan contributes to the identified EU strategy - The strategy/action plan has been developed on the basis of a common transnational methodology - Content of the strategy/action plan is clear and complete (includes objectives, targets, actions needed to achieve the objective, involvement of stakeholders) - Actions needed for the strategy/action plan to be effectively uptaken are clear and complete
Focus points from 14-20	Developed outputs and provided proofs of realisation are quite different among projects, therefore a need for increased standardisation has been identified: - Criteria for validation are clearly set - A template for proof of realisation documents should be provided to the beneficiary, in order to get a homogeneous set of documents and ensure that all necessary information is provided for each of the outputs so to enable further analysis at programme level.
Data management contact	Managing authority
EXAMPLES	Type of strategies/action plans/Examples - Strategies/action plans for the process of designation of new protected areas; - Strategies/action plans with the aim to integrate ecosystem services into territorial strategies; - Strategies/action plans supporting the capacity building and coordination of different stakeholders (public/private) - Strategies/action plans for the management of natural resources in which public/private interests interfere; - Strategies/action plans intending to decline at territorial level EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030, Marine Strategy Framework directive… - Strategies/action plans for restoration of degraded and polluted areas at land and sea

Indicator fiches - SO 2 (vii) Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title Euro-MED 21-27	**PSI1 - Organisations with increased institutional capacity due to their participation in cooperation activities across borders**
Definition Euro-MED 21-27	This indicator measures the number of organisations that actively participated in cooperation activities of a project across borders and consequently increased their institutional capacity in the thematic field of the project. Institutional capacity is defined as an organisation's ability to set and achieve goals through knowledge, skills, systems and institutions. An organisation increases its institutional capacity by securing the resources (human or technical) and structures (organisational or governance) it needs to successfully perform its mandated tasks better. A cooperation activity across borders is defined as a process of exchanging knowledge and experience between participants from multiple countries. This process can lead to creating joint objectives and commitments and actions fulfilling these commitments. At programme level, organisations can be defined as project partners or final beneficiaries participating in cooperation activities (whether receiving funds or not) An organisation is to be counted if it has undergone this kind of learning process through project activities. This is defined as more than one instance of exchange in which the organisation played an active role. An organisation is to be counted only if its increased institutional capacity is in the thematic field of the project. Organisations targeted refer in particular to: - Organisations actively participating in the development of joint solutions and strategies and action plans - Organisations taking up joint developed solutions and strategies and action plans Types of organisations include, but are not limited to, International organisation, EEIG; National public authority; Regional public authority; Local public authority; Higher education and research; Interest groups including NGOs; SMEs; Enterprises; Business support organisation; Sectoral agency. Organisations specifically targeted under this specific objective are detailed in the relevant indicator fiche - RCO87 - Organisation cooperating across border
Measurement unit	Organisation
Type of indicator	Result
Baseline	0
Target 2029	251
RELEVANCE	
Justification of selection	This indicator was proposed by Interact following consultation and joint work among different transnational programmes. Increasing institutional capacity is one of the main objectives of the Interreg Euro-MED programme and at the core of transnational cooperation. This programme specific indicator is relevant to measure and showcase the achievement and impact of the programme for all selected specific objectives. Projects funded during the 2014-2020 programming period largely contributed to increase capacity of organisations within project partnerships and beyond, e.g. through joint development and adoption of strategies and solution. This result indicator will concretely reflect the change sought and achieved for final beneficiaries of the EURO-MED programme.
Policy objective	PO2
Specific objective	(vii) Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution
Type of projects concerned	Thematic projects
Associated output indicator	RCO87
Indicator level	Project
COLLECTION AND CALCULATION METHOD	
Calculation method for obtaining the value of the indicator	The value of the indicator is the total sum of organisations that demonstrate to have increased their institutional capacity following their participation in cooperation activities of project across borders. Following the common methodology developed among several Interreg programmes, the indicator value will be calculated through a common survey.
Means of data collection	Data collection will be done through the programme Platform. The information of the achievement of the result at project level is compiled by the lead partnerin the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat, verifying information provided in the programme Platform
Time measurement	At project completion/At project closure
Aggregation issues	N/A
Reporting	Rule 1: Reporting by specific objectives. Forecast for selected projects and achieved values, both cumulative to date (CPR Annex XII, Table 6). Frequence of reporting: twice per year (art.32.1 and 32.2.b Interreg Regulation)
Methods of traceability and reliability	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. The information of the achievement of the result at project level is compiled by the beneficiaries in the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat.
Proof of realisation	Common survey
Focus points from 14-20	N/A
Data management contact	Managing Authority
EXAMPLES	General examples of increased capacity : - the organisation used knowledge or skills - the organisation adopted new tools - the organisation adopted new procedures or workflows - the organisation changed its organisational structure

Indicator fiches - SO 2 (vii) Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title (EU)	**RCR104 - Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations**
Definition (EU)	The indicator counts the number of solutions, other than legal or administrative solutions, that are developed by supported projects and are taken up or upscaled during the implementation of the project or within one year after project completion. The organisation adopting the solutions developed by the project may or may not be a participant in the project. The uptake / up-scaling should be documented by the adopting organisations in, for instance, strategies, action plans etc.
Measurement unit	Solution
Type of indicator	Result
Baseline	0
Target 2029	16
RELEVANCE	
Euro-MED 21-27 definition	At programme level solutions can be defined as methodologies, tools, technologies, services, processes and partnership/cooperation agreements - jointly developed: through the involvement of organizations from at least XX programme countries - tested in real life conditions - easily transferable to further territories/organisations of the programme. Uptake refers to adoption or implementation of the solution. Upscale refers to: upgrade or improvement of the solution, or to extend the scope of the solution, e.g. from local to regional level or from the technical to the policy level. To be counted for this indicator the solution should have been effectively taken up or upscaled, or be at the initial stage of uptake/upscale, by a given organization. The take up/upscale should occur during the implementation of the project or at project closure. Initial stage of uptake/upscale is demonstrated by an official statement signed by the organisation proving the willingness to officially adopt the solution or to implement it in the organisation's usual practices and day-to-day activities, including time line for effective uptake. Effective uptake/upscale is demonstrated by e.g. signature of cooperation and partnership agreements, integration of the solution in regional or local strategies/action plans, implementation of pilots, launch of public procurements procedures/tenders To check the details about type of solutions expected under this specific objective, refer to the fiche for the indicator RCO116 - Joint developed solutions.
Justification of selection	Concrete solutions, resulting from transnational cooperation and pilot activities within funded projects, are key to support the protection, preservation and restoration of natural resources. However, concrete uptake or upscale of developed solution by relevant organisations is needed to have an impact on the territory. Indeed, in order to capitalize on the tested solutions, not to duplicate the efforts, and not to lose what proved to work for the Mediterranean territories, the logical continuation is to ensure effective use of these existing solutions. Therefore, the programme has decided to consider the uptake or upscale of developed solutions as expected results of supported projects. Several projects funded during the 2014-2020 programming period aimed at engaging local and regional authorities through a written commitment for the adoption of developed methodologies/tools/services. For example, under SO Biodiversity Protection, managers of protected areas committed to use toolkit/standard protocols/practices to improve their management and networking skills, proving that Solutions taken up or upscaled by organisations are a realistic and achievable project output, that can contribute to achieve programme goals. Solutions proposed by the projects have demonstrated to be of concrete support for environmental protection.
Policy objective	PO2
Specific objective	(vii) Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution
Type of projects concerned	Thematic projects
Associated output indicator	RCO116
Indicator level	Project
COLLECTION AND CALCULATION METHOD	
Calculation method for obtaining the value of the indicator	The value of the indicator is the total sum of the number of solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations
Means of data collection	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. The information of the achievement of the project output, including proof of realisation, are compiled by the beneficiaries in the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat.
Time measurement	At project completion/At project closure
Aggregation issues	In order to avoid double counting, the solutions relevant for this indicator should not refer to strategies/action plans, which are counted under RCR79
Reporting	Rule 1: Reporting by specific objectives. Forecast for selected projects and achieved values, both cumulative to date (CPR Annex XII, Table 6). Frequence of reporting: twice per year (art.32.1 and 32.2.b Interreg Regulation)
Methods of traceability and reliability	Data are verified by the Managing Authority upon submission of the final progress report and payment claim by the project beneficiary on the basis of provided supporting documents.
Proof of realisation	The documents provided for demonstrating the achievement of the output, i.e. the uptake or upscale of solutions by organisations should include: - Identification of the solution - Proof of uptake or upscale of the solution by the organization, e.g: Memorandum of Unsterstanding, or Letter of Intent/ Agreement, Framework document demonstrating the adoption/implementation of the solution by the relevant organization Report on implemented pilot activities Cooperation and partnership agreements Criteria for validation of the output: - The solution is at initial stage of uptake/upscale or has been effectively taken up or upscaled by the organisation
Focus points from 14-20	Provided proofs of realisation are quite different among projects, therefore a need for increased standardisation has been identified: - A template for proof of realisation documents should be provided to the beneficiary, in order to get a homogeneous set of documents and ensure that all necessary information is provided for each of the outputs so to enable further analysis at programme level
Data management contact	Managing authority
EXAMPLES	

Indicator fiches - SO 2 (vii) Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title (EU)	**RCR79 - Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations**
Definition (EU)	The indicator counts the number of joint strategies and action plans (not individual actions) adopted and implemented by organisations during or after the project completion. At the time of reporting this indicator, the implementation of the joint strategy or action plan need not to be completed but effectively started. The organisations involved in take-up may or may not be direct participants in the supported project. It is not necessary that all actions identified are taken-up for a strategy/action plan to be counted in this context. The value report should be equal to or less than the value for "RCO83 Strategies and action plans jointly developed".
Measurement unit	Joint strategy / action plan
Type of indicator	Result
Baseline	0
Target 2029	23
RELEVANCE	
Euro-MED 21-27 definition	At programme level strategies and action plans can be defined as follows: A strategy describes a specific course of action designed to achieve a long-term goal, aiming at establishing a targeted way to achieve a goal-oriented process in a specific domain. An action plan translates an existing jointly developed strategy into actions, outlining in detail actions needed to reach the defined long-term goal. To be counted for this indicator the strategies/action plans should have been effectively taken up, or be at the initial stage of uptake, by a given organization. The uptake should occur during the implementation of the project or at project closure. Initial stage of uptake is demonstrated by an official statement signed by the organisation proving the willingness to officially adopt the strategy/action plan including time line for effective uptake. The initial stage of uptake can be demonstrated by e.g. signature of Memoranda of Understanding/letter of intent/agreements. Effective uptake is demonstrated e.g. official approval of the strategy/action plan, launch of public procurement/tenders or signature of contracts for the implementation of measures indicated in the strategy/action plan,... To check the details about type of strategy/action plan expected under this specific objective, refer to the fiche for the output indicator RCO83 - Strategies and action plans jointly developed.
Justification of selection	Strategies and action plans at regional and local level are needed to increase protection, conservation and restoration of natural resources. However, concrete uptake of developed strategies/action plans by relevant organisations is key to ensure territorial impact and contribute to the achievement of long-term challenges such as achieving Biodiversity targets by 2030 and a climate-resilient society by 2050. Therefore, the programme has decided to consider the take up of strategies/action plans as expected results of supported projects, which will contribute to Increase capacity of public authorities in effective improvement and adoption of environmental strategies as a driver for a sustainable economic development in the Mediterranean During the 2014-2020 period, a high number of stakeholders (mainly managers of protected areas) adopted strategies and action plans developed for e.g the sustainable management of posidonia oceanica in beaches or adoption of ecosystem-based approaches. This proved to be effective in tackling challenges related to biodiversity protection and preservation. Cooperation between key consortium and decision-makers are essential to face this type of joint challenge and provide expected results.
Policy objective	PO2
Specific objective	(vii) Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution
Type of projects concerned	Thematic projects
Associated output indicator	RCO83
Indicator level	Project
COLLECTION AND CALCULATION METHOD	
Calculation method for obtaining the value of the indicator	The value of the indicator is the total sum of the number of strategies/action plans taken up by organisations
Means of data collection	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. The information of the achievement of the project output, including proof of realisation, are compiled by the beneficiaries in the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat.
Time measurement	At project completion/At project closure
Aggregation issues	In order to avoid double counting, the strategies relevant for this indicator should not refer to solutions, which are counted under RCR104
Reporting	Rule 1: Reporting by specific objectives. Forecast for selected projects and achieved values, both cumulative to date (CPR Annex XII, Table 6). Frequence of reporting: twice per year (art.32.1 and 32.2.b Interreg Regulation)
Methods of traceability and reliability	Data are verified by the Managing Authority upon submission of the final progress report and payment claim by the project beneficiary on the basis of provided supporting documents.
Proof of realisation	The documents provided for demonstrating the achievement of the output, i.e. the taken up of the strategy/action plan by organisations should include: - Identification of the strategy/action plan - Proof of uptake of the strategy/action plan by the organisation, e.g. Memorandum of Unsterstanding, or Letter of Intent Criteria for validation of the output: - The strategy/action plan has been taken up by the organisation.
Focus points from 14-20	Provided proofs of realisation are quite different among projects, therefore a need for increased standardisation has been identified: - A template for proof of realisation documents should be provided to the beneficiary, in order to get a homogeneous set of documents and ensure that all necessary information is provided for each of the outputs so to enable further analysis at programme level
Data management contact	Managing authority
EXAMPLES	

v. Indicators for ISO 1 (vi): *RCO87, RCO116, PSI1, RCR104*

Indicator fiches - ISO 1 vi Other actions to support better cooperation governance	
GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title (EU)	**RCO87 - Organisation cooperating across border**
Definition (EU)	The indicator counts the organisations cooperating formally in supported projects. The organisations counted in this indicator are the legal entities including project partners and associated organizations, as mentionned in the financing agreement of the application. Organisations cooperating formally in small projects (for instance under Small project Fund) are also counted.
Measurement unit	Organisation
Type of indicator	Output
Milestone 2024	0
Target 2029	91
RELEVANCE	
Euro-MED 21-27 definition	RCO87 is selected for all Euro-MED 21-27 specific objectives. The indicator counts the organisations cooperating formally in supported projects. At programme level, organisations can be defined as project partners or associated participating in approved projects (whether receiving funds or not). Under this specific objective, main target groups are represented by: regional and national authorities, networks of decision makers, protected areas, energy and environmental agencies, business management organisations/agencies, Universities/research centres, NGOs/ local communities and associations, which work on enhancing synergies and coordination between thematic projects and supporting institutional coordination towards the Programme missions.
Justification of selection	Cooperation between organisations across borders is essential to implement Euro-MED programme and achieve its main objective. Furthermore, cooperation is crucial to provide a common response to current challenges identified for the selected specific objectives. During 14-20, cooperation was not limited to organisations within projects, it was extended to cooperation within and across thematic communities of projects, leading to relevant results and demonstrating the added value of this kind of transnational cooperation. Cooperation between organisations across borders is essential to ensure the optimisation of resources for greater positive impact on territories, the harmonisation of policies for a better territorial cohesion. Output indicator RCO87, computing both project partners and associate partners, will allow the measurement of cooperation between organisations not only within the Programme area but also in the wider Mediterranean area, mainly with Eastern and Southern Mediterranean countries.
Policy objective	ISO1
Specific objective	(vi) Other actions to support better cooperation governance
Type of projects concerned	Governance projects
Associated result indicator	PSI1 - Organisation with increased institutional capacity due to their participation in cooperation activities across borders
Indicator level	Project
COLLECTION AND CALCULATION METHOD	
Calculation method for obtaining the value of the indicator	The value of the indicator is the total sum of projects' full and associated partners.
Means of data collection	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. Partners participating in funded projects will be automatically exported from the monitoring system and reported by specific objective.
Time measurement	At project completion
Aggregation issues	Removal of duplicates when the data is aggregated at programme level
Reporting	Rule 1: Reporting by specific objectives. Forecast for selected projects and achieved values, both cumulative to date (CPR Annex XII, Table 6). Frequence of reporting : twice per year (art.32.1 and 32.2.b Interreg Regulation)
Methods of traceability and reliability	Data are collected by the monitoring system
Proof of realisation	N/A
Focus points from 14-20	An efficient and accurate management of the partners database in the information system is required. In the communication of programme beneficiaries there is the need to insist on the added value of Associated partners and their real engagement in project activities.
Data management contact	Managing authority
EXAMPLES	N/A

Indicator fiches - ISO 1 vi Other actions to support better cooperation governance

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title (EU)	**RCO116 - Joint developed solutions**
Definition (EU)	The indicator counts the number of jointly developed solutions from joint pilot actions implemented by supported projects. In order to be counted in the indicator, an identified solution should include indications of the actions needed for it to be taken up or to be upscaled. A jointly developed solution implies the involvement of organizations from at least two participating countries (for programmes falling under strands A, B, C as defined in the Interreg Regulation) in the drafting and design process of the solution or is developed in the scope of programmes within strands D or E as defined in the Interreg Regulation.
Measurement unit	Solution
Type of indicator	Output
Milestone 2024	0
Target 2029	53
RELEVANCE	
Euro-MED 21-27 definition	Under ISO1, jointly developed solutions refer to outputs that are distinctive of projects funded under the governance priority. The indicator computes the number of jointly developed solutions between the governance projects themselves or with external stakeholders that contribute to improve cooperation governance for the area. In order to be accounted for the indicator, an identified solution will have to include indications on the type of cooperation and engaged projects or stakeholders. A jointly developed solution implies the involvement of organizations from at least two projects or one project and one external organisation in the drafting and design process of the solution. Solutions are developed at project level. The ambition for the average number of jointly developed solution per governance project is set at 7. Under ISO 1, solutions can be defined as initiatives, approaches, methodologies, tools, services, processes, partnership/cooperation agreements. Jointly developed solutions are needed to support better cooperation governance and to: - optimise the conditions for synergy and coordination between thematic projects - support mainstreaming strategies in local, regional, national and European policies in partnership with relevant institutions - support institutional coordination between regional, national and European authorities/networks and between ETC managing authorities, initiatives and strategies in the Mediterranean - set up long-lasting conditions for a permanent institutional dialogue.
Justification of selection	Improving cooperation governance requires the joint development of effective solutions, such as initiatives, approaches, methodologies, tools, services, processes, partnership/cooperation agreements. Activities of coordination /cooperation among different stakeholders are crucial to achieve the objective of better cooperation governance. In this sense, concrete solutions represent outputs that are distinctive of projects funded under ISO1, as result of the Programme architecture, the capitalisation strategy of the programme and its governance focus. During 14-20, cooperation activities implemented within and across thematic communities of projects led to relevant results, demonstrating the added value of this kind of transnational cooperation. Furthermore, horizontal and Axis 4 projects during 14-20 have implemented such joint actions to a great extent resulting in increased cooperation and better governance. This demonstrated that that Joint developed solutions are a realistic and achievable project output, that can largely contribute to ISO1 specific objective and to programme goals.

Policy objective	ISO1
Specific objective	(vi) Other actions to support better cooperation governance
Type of projects concerned	Governance projects
Associated result indicator	RCR104
Indicator level	Project
COLLECTION AND CALCULATION METHOD	
Calculation method for obtaining the value of the indicator	The value of the indicator is the total sum of the number of solutions developed jointly by the funded projects
Means of data collection	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. The information of the achievement of the project output, including proof of realisation, are compiled by the beneficiaries in the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat.
Time measurement	At project completion
Aggregation issues	N/A
Reporting	Rule 1: Reporting by specific objectives. Forecast for selected projects and achieved values, both cumulative to date (CPR Annex XII, Table 6). Frequence of reporting: twice per year (art.32.1 and 32.2.b Interreg Regulation)
Methods of traceability and reliability	Data are verified by the Managing Authority upon submission of the final progress report and payment claim by the project beneficiary on the basis of provided supporting documents.
Proof of realisation	The documents provided for demonstrating the achievement of the output, i.e. the completed development of a joint solution should include: - Description of participating projects/actors and roles. Identification of one coordinating project. - Clear description of the challenge that the solution is adressing and how the solution developed contributes to tackle the mentioned challenge - Clear description of the solution and concrete project output: initiatives, approaches, methodologies, tools, services, processes, partnership/cooperation agreements. - Follow-up actions foreseen or description of expected long-term effects Criteria for validation of the output: - The addressed objective is relevant to improved cooperation governance - The solution has been developed with the contribution of partners from at least 2 Interreg Euro-MED projects/ or 1 Interreg Euro-MED project and one project from another programme/ or 1 Interreg Euro-MED project and an external organisation / intiative - The solution demonstrate to be effective in tackling the mentioned challenge
Focus points from 14-20	Developed outputs and provided proofs of realisation are quite different among projects, therefore a need for increased standardisation has been identified: - Criteria for validation are clearly set in terms of defining the solutions and what is expected as final product - A template for proof of realisation documents should be provided to the beneficiary, in order to get a homogeneous set of documents and ensure that all necessary information is provided for each of the outputs so to enable further analysis at programme level.
Data management contact	Managing authority
EXAMPLES	Type of solutions/examples - Solutions related to the drafting of common solution-oriented documents contributing to achieve the Programme missions (e.g. Common Key Policy Paper, Positioning paper, etc.) - Solutions related to upscaling results (e.g. merging of tools, networks, etc.) - Solutions related to joint outreach/advocacy/lobbying processes (e.g. shared dissemination, advocacy campaign, strategies) - Solutions related to the implementation of transferring and mainstreaming processes of projects (e.g. share of methodological approach, practices, networks) - Solutions related to support institutional coordination between programmes / initiatives / strategies (e.g. MoU, organisation of specific meetings, etc.) - Solutions related to the design of coordinated approaches (e.g. coordination of calls, etc.) - Solutions related to the enhancement of liaising activities (e.g. joint analysis, workshops, etc.)

Indicator fiches - ISO 1 vi Other actions to support better cooperation governance

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title Euro-MED 21-27	**PSI1 - Organisations with increased institutional capacity due to their participation in cooperation activities across borders**
Definition Euro-MED 21-27	This indicator measures the number of organisations that actively participated in cooperation activities of a project across borders and consequently increased their institutional capacity in the thematic field of the project. Institutional capacity is defined as an organisation's ability to set and achieve goals through knowledge, skills, systems and institutions. An organisation increases its institutional capacity by securing the resources (human or technical) and structures (organisational or governance) it needs to successfully perform its mandated tasks better. A cooperation activity across borders is defined as a process of exchanging knowledge and experience between participants from multiple countries. This process can lead to creating joint objectives and commitments and actions fulfilling these commitments. At programme level, organisations can be defined as project partners or final beneficiaries participating in cooperation activities (whether receiving funds or not) An organisation is to be counted if it has undergone this kind of learning process through project activities. This is defined as more than one instance of exchange in which the organisation played an active role. An organisation is to be counted only if its increased institutional capacity is in the thematic field of the project. Organisations targeted refer in particular to: - Organisations actively participating in the development of joint solutions and strategies and action plans - Organisations taking up joint developed solutions and strategies and action plans Types of organisations include, but are not limited to, International organisation, EEIG; National public authority; Regional public authority; Local public authority; Higher education and research; Interest groups including NGOs; SMEs; Enterprises; Business support organisation; Sectoral agency. Organisations specifically targeted under this specific objective are detailed in the relevant indicator fiche - RCO87 - Organisation cooperating across border
Measurement unit	Organisation
Type of indicator	Result
Baseline	0
Target 2029	64
RELEVANCE	
Justification of selection	This indicator was proposed by Interact following consultation and joint work among different transnational programmes. Increasing institutional capacity is one of the main objectives of the Interreg Euro-MED programme and at the core of transnational cooperation. This programme specific indicator is relevant to measure and showcase the achievement and impact of the programme for all selected specific objectives. Projects funded during the 2014-2020 programming period largely contributed to increase capacity of organisations within project partnerships and beyond, e.g. through joint development and adoption of strategies and solutions. This result indicator will concretely reflect the change sought and achieved for final beneficiaries of the Euro-MED programme.
Policy objective	ISO1
Specific objective	(vi) Other actions to support better cooperation governance
Type of projects concerned	Governance projects
Associated output indicator	RCO87
Indicator level	Project
COLLECTION AND CALCULATION METHOD	
Calculation method for obtaining the value of the indicator	The value of the indicator is the total sum of organisations that demonstrate to have increased their institutional capacity following their participation in cooperation activities of project across borders. Following the common methodology developed among several Interreg programmes, the indicator value will be calculated through a common survey.
Means of data collection	Data collection will be done through the programme Platform. The information of the achievement of the result at project level is compiled by the lead partner in the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat, verifying information provided in the programme Platform
Time measurement	At project completion/At project closure
Aggregation issues	N/A
Reporting	Rule 1: Reporting by specific objectives. Forecast for selected projects and achieved values, both cumulative to date (CPR Annex XII, Table 6). Frequence of reporting: twice per year (art.32.1 and 32.2.b Interreg Regulation)
Methods of traceability and reliability	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. The information of the achievement of the result at project level is compiled by the beneficiaries in the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat.
Proof of realisation	Common survey
Focus points from 14-20	N/A
Data management contact	Managing Authority
EXAMPLES	General examples of increased capacity : - the organisation used knowledge or skills - the organisation adopted new tools - the organisation adopted new procedures or workflows - the organisation changed its organisational structure

Indicator fiches - ISO 1 vi Other actions to support better cooperation governance

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Title (EU)	**RCR104 - Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations**
Definition (EU)	The indicator counts the number of solutions, other than legal or administrative solutions, that are developed by supported projects and are taken up or upscaled during the implementation of the project or within one year after project completion. The organisation adopting the solutions developed by the project may or may not be a participant in the project. The uptake / up-scaling should be documented by the adopting organisations in, for instance, strategies, action plans etc.
Measurement unit	Solution
Type of indicator	Result
Baseline	0
Target 2029	27
RELEVANCE	
Euro-MED 21-27 definition	Under ISO1, Jointly developed solutions can be defined as initiatives, approaches, methodologies, tools, services, processes, partnership/cooperation agreements jointly developed by the governance projects themselves or with external stakeholders, which contribute to improve cooperation governance for the area. Uptake refers to adoption or implementation of the solution. Upscale refers to: upgrade or improvement of the solution, or to extend the scope of the solution, e.g. from local to regional level or from the technical to the policy level. To be counted for this indicator the solution should have been effectively taken up or upscaled, or be at the initial stage of uptake/upscale, by a given organization. The take up/upscale should occur during the implementation of the project or at project closure. To check the details about type of solutions expected under this specific objective, refer to the fiche for the indicator RCO116 - Joint developed solutions.
Justification of selection	Concrete solutions, resulting from transnational cooperation among governance projects and with external stakeholders, are key to increase cooperation and better governance in the Mediterranean. However, concrete uptake or upscale of developed solutions by relevant organisations is needed to have an impact on governance processes in different territories. Indeed, in order to capitalize on the tested solutions, not to duplicate the efforts, and not to lose what proved to work for the Mediterranean territories, the logical continuation is to ensure effective implementation of these existing solutions. Several projects funded during the 2014-2020 programming period aimed at engaging authorities through a written commitment for the adoption of developed methodologies/tools/services. For example, the greener events guidelines developed by the Green Growth thematic community together with other horizontal projects have been adopted by several institutions. Therefore, the programme has decided to consider the take up or upscale of developed solutions as expected result of supported projects, which will reflect the impact of the programme on the territories' governance.
Policy objective	ISO1
Specific objective	(vi) Other actions to support better cooperation governance
Type of projects concerned	Governance projects
Associated output indicator	RCO116
Indicator level	Project
COLLECTION AND CALCULATION METHOD	
Calculation method for obtaining the value of the indicator	The value of the indicator is the total sum of the number of solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations
Means of data collection	Data collection will be done through the MA monitoring system. The information of the achievement of the project output, including proof of realisation, are compiled by the beneficiaries in the monitoring system and validated by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat.
Time measurement	At project completion/At project closure
Aggregation issues	N/A
Reporting	Rule 1: Reporting by specific objectives. Forecast for selected projects and achieved values, both cumulative to date (CPR Annex XII, Table 6). Frequence of reporting: twice per year (art.32.1 and 32.2.b Interreg Regulation)
Methods of traceability and reliability	Data are verified by the Managing Authority upon submission of the final progress report and payment claim by the project beneficiary on the basis of provided supporting documents.
Proof of realisation	The documents provided for demonstrating the achievement of the output, i.e. the uptake or upscale of solutions by organisations should include: - Identification of the solution - Proof of uptake or upscale of the solution by the organization, e.g: Memorandum of Unsterstanding, or Letter of Intent/ Agreement, Framework document demonstrating the adoption/implementation of the solution by the relevant organization, Cooperation and partnership agreements Criteria for validation of the output: - The solution is at initial stage of uptake/upscale or has been effectively taken up or upscaled by the organisation
Focus points from 14-20	Provided proofs of realisation are quite different among projects, therefore a need for increased standardisation has been identified: - A template for proof of realisation documents should be provided to the beneficiary, in order to get a homogeneous set of documents and ensure that all necessary information is provided for each of the outputs so to enable further analysis at programme level
Data management contact	Managing authority
EXAMPLES	

C. Recommendations for Green events

i. Project publications and dissemination products - greening

- Publications can be disseminated electronically. Printing of publications should be envisaged only if strictly necessary and only if following a specific dissemination plan.
- Publications should be printed for external communication purposes (if needed only) on both sides and on recycled paper. For electronic publications, an "eco-friendly" version (less colours, more compact text, less pages) should be made available.
- Publications should be printed where they are going to be distributed or close enough in order to minimize transport distances.

ii. Checklist for organising green and inclusive events

Before the event

- Consider if a phone or a video conference could be organised instead of a meeting
- in case of a smaller meeting, prefer the World Café procedure
- green public procurement procedures are applied

Setting up and running the event

- Electronic means (e.g. e-mail, website) are used rather than printed materials for pre-meeting and follow-up communications.
- Participants are encouraged to use sustainable ways of travelling for example
    - For short trips favour train to bus/plane and if train is not an option, favour car/bus to plane.
    - Participants are encouraged to share the transport means with other participants: the organisers of the event can provide a platform for them to communicate and organise ride-sharing. Otherwise the participants are encouraged to use the existing car-sharing and car-pooling platforms
    - Walking and cycling are promoted as well

- Information on the greening efforts made at the event is provided electronically before and after the meeting.
- Participants' bags/packs are avoided or produced locally using recycled material and are reusable.
- Pens are provided only upon request, are made of a high content of recycled material, and are refillable.
- In case participant's packs cannot be avoided, only strictly necessary material is included. Copying/printing is available upon request at the location of the event.
- All material produced for the event is designed and produced in a generic way (no date or location mentioned) to allow them to be reused for other events.
- The start and end of the meeting are adjusted to the schedules of public transport.
- The caterer is informed on the exact number of participants and is able to re-evaluate the quantities needed to avoid waste.
- A dedicated area is provided for participants to return material that can be re-used (such as badges).

In the sense of "full accessibility for all", accessibility for all participants is ensured, guidelines for accessibility are met and the venue is adapted for people with reduced mobility (e.g. access to buildings and stages with low ramps, acoustics appropriate for hearing aid users and working loop systems in theatres and reception desks).

- A variety of seating space allocation is provided (e.g. space for deaf people to sit next to sign language interpreter, hearing-aid users to benefit from the use of an induction-loop).
- A system that allows all guests to access the catering service is put in place: long queues for food are avoided, enough chairs for people to sit down are available, people with disabilities or special needs are provided with the necessary facilities

Other socially inclusive considerations

The organisers of the event may:

- Consider the representation of diversity in event literature and among hosts/speakers to reflect that of the target audience

- Provide personal assistants if a large number of persons with disability are attending
- Promote local attractions and amenities to the participants to benefit the local economy and give the necessary information to participants

Food and drinks, catering

The organisers of the event take into account the following[299]:

- Locally grown and produced food and drinks are used and menus reflect the seasonal products of the region.
- The quantity of meat products offered is minimized and at least one vegetarian option is offered (as the production of meat involves considerably more CO2 than non-meat products).
- Tap water is used and served in jugs instead of in single-use bottles.
- In case fish or other marine or aquaculture products are served, it is certified that they have been caught or produced using sustainable measures. More info can be sought on the WWF website or on www.seafoodchoices.com
- The use of reusable dishes, cutlery, glassware and linens is ensured and aluminium foil avoided.
- The use of single-use bottles for beverages is avoided. The use of any plastic decoration is avoided as well.
- The surplus of edible food should not be wasted but rather donated.

Local transport

Clear instructions are provided to participants on appropriate public transport and/or walking arrangements from point of arrival or departure (railway station, airport) to the venue, accommodation, town centre, etc. This is provided by e-mail shortly before the event and can be additionally displayed at the venue.

Location and accommodation

Priority is given to locations available in the premises of one of the project participants in order to reduce the need for staff to travel. The hotels are located near public transportation and as close as possible to the conference facilities (preferably within walking distance or reachable by public transport).

[299] always considering health and hygiene regulations in force

Links

UNEP publications and website

https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7834/-Green%20Meeting%20Guide%202009_%20Roll%20out%20the%20Green%20Carpet%20for%20your%20Participants-20094067.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

The EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme – EMAS

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/index_en.htm

ICLEI publications and website

https://iclei-europe.org/publications-tools/?c=search&uid=OrjABsOy

https://iclei-europe.org/publications-tools/?c=search&uid=bYzvvh0R

European green office website

https://www.eugreenoffice.eu/

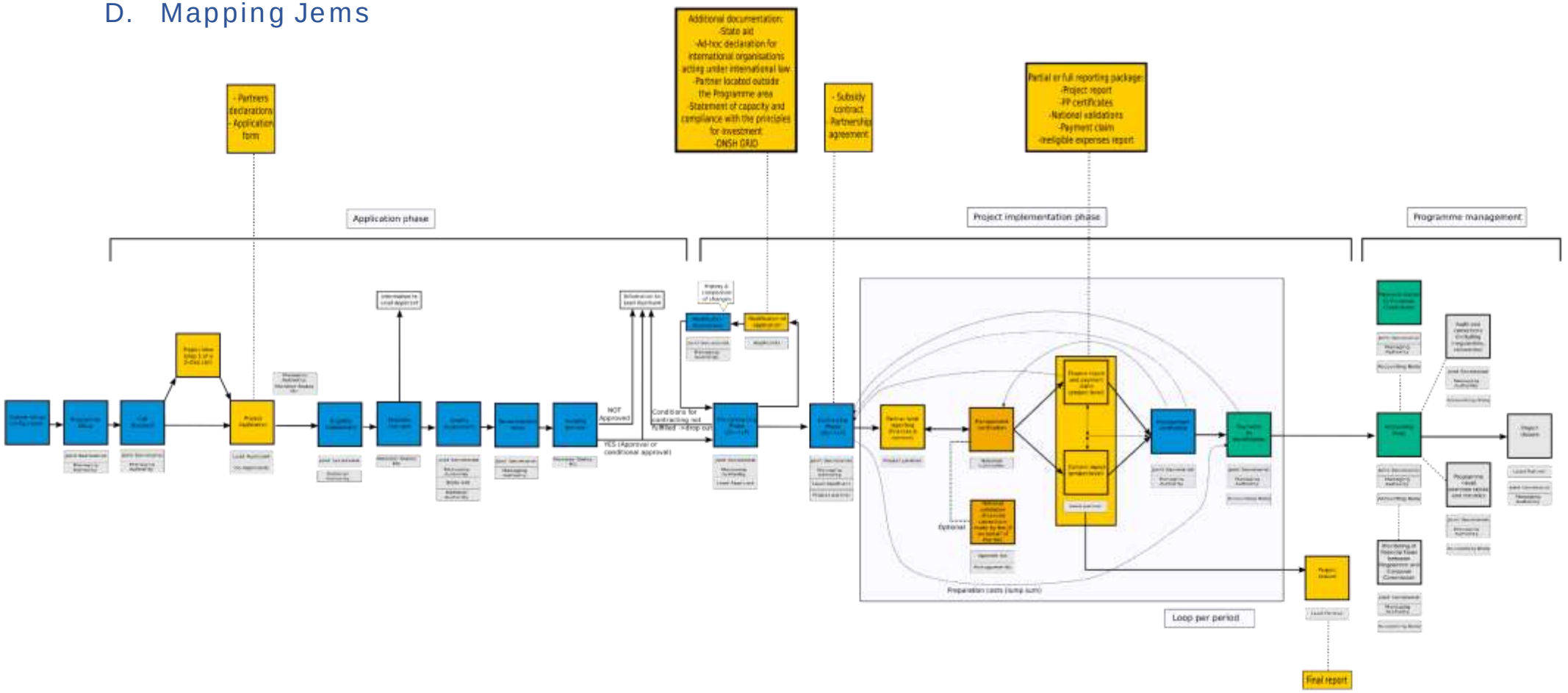
Alternatives to Skype

http://www.pocket-lint.com/news/131512-5-best-alternatives-to-skype-apps-with-im-video-calls-and-file-sharing

Ecolabels by product

http://ec.europa.eu/ecat/

D. Mapping Jems



E. Mapping Platform (drafting ongoing)

F. Graphic identity of projects

1. GOVERNANCE PROJECTS

Branding

Please READ CAREFULLY the 🗁🗁 Mission brand book before using your communication visuals.

Logos & pictograms

The logos & pictograms of the 4 missions for Governance projects are available here below for download as well as on our website:

🗁🗁 Mission: Innovative sustainable economy
🗁🗁 Mission: Natural heritage
🗁🗁 Mission: Green living areas
🗁🗁 Mission: Sustainable tourism

🗁🗁 Download mission pictos
🗁🗁 Download the Programme icon (leaves)

UfM label

Since governance projects are labelled by the Union for the Mediterranean, all external communication materials must include the UfM logo with the text "A project labelled by the UfM".

Check the 🗁🗁 guidelines on how to use the UfM label (by clicking on it).

🗁🗁 Download the UfM label
🗁🗁 All versions of UfM logo

Poster template

Before using the poster template, please read the poster guidelines.
The following poster templates are dedicated to governance projects as labelled with the UfM logo (select the mission by clicking on it):

🗁🗁 Mission: Innovative sustainable economy
🗁🗁 Mission: Natural heritage
🗁🗁 Mission: Green living areas
🗁🗁 Mission: Sustainable tourism

2. THEMATIC PROJECTS

Branding

Please READ CAREFULLY the 🗁🗁 Thematic Project brand book before using your communication visuals.

Logos

Project logos are provided by the Programme to each project in all the available versions and must not be changed under any circumstances.

NB: Logos will be sent individually to each lead partner.

Poster template

Before using the poster template, please READ CAREFULLY the 🗁🗁 poster guidelines to know how to draft it and use it correctly.

Download the project poster template:

🗁🗁Mission: Innovative sustainable economy
🗁🗁Mission: Natural heritage
🗁🗁Mission: Green living areas
🗁🗁Mission: Sustainable tourism

Important: Please feel free to contact the Communications unit for any questions you may have.

G. Requirements for data collection, productions delivery and activity reporting

i. Format requirements and criteria for key project productions

All productions identified as a key deliverable or output can either be reported in the format in which they were produced (document), or as a report (pilot activity or event).

1. Productions that can be reported in original format

Some of your productions can be directly uploaded in original format, as the production equals the deliverable (e.g. a SWOT analysis produced is reported as a SWOT Analysis document).

In this case, different formats are possible, depending on the type of production:

- Upload of production in original or digital format (ex.: Word document, PPT, PDF, a printed poster, a printed book, a brochure …)
- Upload of link to online format production (ex.: online device like a decision support tool, specific website)

When productions in original or digital format are documents, the latter should have:

- A page including at least:
  - Title of document
  - Project logo
  - URL to project website
- Another page including the following information:
  - Project full title, mission, priority, and specific objective
  - Deliverable number and title (as identified in Jems)
  - Work package number, name of Work Package
  - Activity number, name of activity

- Partner in charge (author)
- Partners involved
- Date(s) of production

- Minimal presentation requirements
  - Table of contents if applicable
  - List of abbreviations and terms if applicable
  - Executive summary and abstract if applicable

When productions in original format are online tools

- The link to the online tool should be uploaded. Classical tools developed using Web standards (PHP, HTML, MySQL, etc.) can be hosted directly on the project website. In all other cases, the project must provide the Programme with a container in Docker format containing the latest source code and data of the tool.
- The production should be accompanied by any material or information needed for its transferability and reuse.
- All online productions should be developed in a format freely accessible for use and reuse, ideally in an open-source format.
- Only the final production that constitutes the key deliverable itself must be uploaded on Jems and is published on the website after the approval of the related deliverable.

2. Reporting productions that cannot be reported in original format since they are activities, complex productions (such as pilots or events)

When the productions are identified as a key deliverable or output, the project must upload a specific report on the activity that occurred or the complex production. This report has to meet the format requirements for documents specified above.

What reports on organised events should contain

In order to facilitate the understanding of the events that took place and of their outcomes, and in addition to the information necessary to easily identify the deliverable, when reporting an event, it is appreciated that all

description, explanation and supporting documents are listed in one single comprehensive document.

- The report should include an introductory list with the following information:
    - Objectives of the event and expected results
    - Target audience for the event
    - Location of the event and justification
    - Time of the event
    - Methodology to reach objectives
    - Short report on outcomes
    - Results of the critical evaluation of the event (strengths, weaknesses, ideas to improve)

- The partners may be requested to provide supporting documents such as:
    - invitations
    - agenda
    - lists of participants (with the minimum required information requested by the Programme[300])
    - minutes
    - pictures
    - supporting material
    - promotional material developed for the event (and pictures in case of promotional gifts)
    - etc...

To complete the activity report, it is appreciated that the supporting documents are scanned and included in the reporting document. This way, the full picture of the event is made available to any interested beneficiary and its promotion is facilitated.

[300] A registration form template is provided together with the project website, it includes all requirements needed from the Programme.

ii. Format requirements and criteria for promotional material

The deliverables (eg goodies, posters, flyers, videos, podcasts, ...) should be edited following the project branding and information and publicity rules of the Programme.

iii. Requirements for the reporting on communication activities (Project analytics)

Project analytics	
Activities	**Data**
Events	Number of events organised by the project, in general and by type: - Information / communication event - Capitalisation event - Capacity building event - Citizen awareness raising event - Community building event (for Governance projects) - Participation as a speaker to an EU and/or Mediterranean events - Events involving Youth
	Number of participants in each type of events organised by the project[301]
	Level of satisfaction (average of all events*)
Social media	Social media platforms used
	Number of followers for each social media platform per year
	Number of post impressions/views per year (for each social media platform)
	Number of post interactions
	Average engagement rate for each platform per year**

* The satisfaction level should be weighted according to the number of participants at each event.

[301] this data will be collected via the registration forms available on the project website platform.

**The average engagement rate can be obtained by dividing the number of interactions by the number of views/impressions.

iv. Requirements for the specific reporting expected from governance projects: data collection needed to perform the assessment of the Results Amplification strategy (RAS)

Analyse of on-going project results	Number of results (outputs, key deliverables) analysed through the peer-review process
	Among results analysed through peer-review, number of results with High Potential for Replicability and Transfer (HPRT)
	Number of outputs produced by Governance projects to support the re-use of results. Which type?
Implementation of TRANSFER activities	Number of trainings in the Academy
	Number of registered stakeholders in Academy
	Number of participants in Academy
	Number of participants per type of stakeholders in Academy
	Number of visits, etc. in Academy
	Number of formalised networks you have created and/or run.
	Number of actions between potential recipients and donors. Which type?
	Number of advocacy activities. Which type?
Implementation of COORDINATION activities	Number of structured liaising activities developed/performed in collaboration with other programmes/projects. Which of them?
	Number of structured liaising activities developed/performed in collaboration with Mediterranean networks, initiatives and strategies. Which of them?

This list is not exhaustive. Some data will be defined according to the joint activities that will be determined after the coordination meetings between

the JS and the Euro-MED4Governance group. In any case, the projects will be informed in due course of the data to be collected.