

**INTERREG IPA CBC Programme
Greece–Republic of North Macedonia 2014-2020**

Project Evaluation Procedure

The following Project Evaluation procedure is proposed for the calls for proposals that will be published in the framework of the INTERREG IPA CBC Programme "Greece–Republic of North Macedonia 2014-2020".

This document describes the project evaluation procedure, based on traceable, transparent, and binding criteria. The aim is to increase transparency and facilitate the decision making process.

Project beneficiaries prepare a proposal in cooperation with the Lead beneficiary, who submits it to the Joint Secretariat (JS). After submission, each project proposal will be subjected to a two-phase evaluation procedure (1st phase "Administrative and technical requirements" and 2nd phase "Quality assessment") carried out by the Joint Secretariat and based on the selection criteria described below. In order to carry out the evaluation procedure, the JS may be assisted by external experts. The procedure, as well as the criteria for the selection of these experts, will be mutually agreed by the participating countries and will be approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee. The cost for the engagement of those experts will be paid by the Technical Assistance Budget of the Programme.

The MA is responsible to ensure the accountability and credibility of the selection procedures and refers to the JMC/JSC and the NAs accordingly.

The authority for the selection of the operation lies exclusively, according the article 39 par. 1 of the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 447/2015, upon the Monitoring Committee.

The complaint procedure, as described in the Programme Manual, will be available after the conclusion of each phase of evaluation.

1st phase: Administrative and technical requirements

Projects will be checked for their **administrative compliance** and **eligibility criteria**, in order to ensure that they fulfill the administrative and eligibility requirements of the Programme. This is an on-off procedure. Projects, which fail to fulfill the above requirements of the Programme, will be excluded from the 2nd phase check.

- **Administrative compliance:** It confirms that the Application Form is complete and meets all the requirements set in the respective Call; all the required documents to be submitted along with the Application Form are properly filled in, signed, stamped;

Project proposals that are not compliant with the set administrative criteria, are excluded from any further evaluation.

- **Eligibility criteria:** These criteria examine whether the proposal fulfils the requirements for being eligible for funding by the Programme. These requirements are, for instance, the structure of the cross-border partnership, the general compatibility with the Programme objectives and principles, the co-financing requested, the duration of the project etc. Proposals that do not fulfill the eligibility criteria will be rejected.

In case of permitted errors – to be agreed between the two countries and approved by the Monitoring Committee - additional information may be requested from applicants.

2nd phase: Quality assessment of the projects

Only projects that demonstrate administrative compliance and satisfy the eligibility criteria will be subjected to **quality assessment**. The quality assessment is based on a scoring system and concludes with a ranking list of all the project proposals that have passed successfully the 1st phase. During this phase, proposals are evaluated using **core selection criteria**. These entail evaluating the nature of the proposed project, its relevance with and contribution to the achievement of the specific objectives of the Programme, its viability, sustainability and results in the eligible territory, the cross border cooperation and capitalization, the quality of the cross-border partnership, as well as the monitoring and management methodology proposed, information and publicity actions and planning of the budget.

The Core selection criteria are divided into:

- **Project Quality (Content related criteria)** (relevance of the proposal, quality of the results, impact and sustainability, innovation, cross border cooperation and capitalization) and
- **Implementation related criteria** (quality of the partnership, quality of the methodological approach, budget and finance).

The different sets of criteria are presented below:

Evaluation Criteria

CRITERIA FOR ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNICAL COMPLIANCE

1. Administrative compliance (YES/NO)		Comments
a) The Application Form is properly filled in, in English, stamped and signed by the Overall Beneficiary	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
b) The requested documents are properly filled in, in English, signed and stamped and are attached to the Application Form: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the Partnership Declaration signed and stamped by all beneficiaries b. the Co-financing Statements (including the declarations of non-double financing) signed and stamped by every beneficiary c. the declaration of not generating revenues (in case of revenue generating projects there is a cost-benefit analysis attached) signed and stamped by the Lead Beneficiary d. the justification of budget costs, officially signed and stamped by the Legal representative of the Lead Beneficiary (standard excel form provided) e. Decision of the designated body of each beneficiary (e.g. Municipal Council, Board of Directors, etc.) stating its agreement for submitting the particular project proposal, according to the internal rules / statute of each beneficiary or the national legislation f. the Documentation required for bodies governed by public law (if applicable) g. the Documentation required for private organizations (if applicable) h. Documentation for Infrastructure Projects 	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> <i>N/A= Not Applicable</i>	
c) The additional documents requested from the IPA Beneficiaries are properly filled in; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Legal Entity Form, signed and stamped by the Beneficiary (if applicable) b) Financial Identification Form dully signed and stamped (if applicable) 	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	

2. Eligibility criteria (YES/ NO)		Comments
a) The project objectives and the proposed activities are clear and in-line with the Programme's priorities and has impact on the Programme area	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
b) Is the project consistent with two or more horizontal principles of the Programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • equality between men and women? • equal opportunities and non discrimination • provision of accessibility of disabled persons • sustainable development, • 	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
c) The project partners cooperate in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the operation (mandatory) • Implementation of the operation (mandatory) • Staffing of the operation or/and • Financing of the operation 	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
d) All project partners fall under the eligible categories of beneficiaries according to the Call for proposals	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
e) The partnership consists of at least one (1) partner per country and four (4) partners in total at the most	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
f) The Lead Beneficiaries are established, registered or accredited in the respective countries i.e. the organisations are established by or accredited under an instrument governed by the internal law of the respective country for at least 12 months before the launching of the call for proposals	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
g) The project budget and costs are in line with the limits set in the Call for proposals	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
h) The duration of the project is in line with the time frame set out in the Call for Proposals	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
Assessor 1	Name	
	Signature	
Assessor 2	Name	
	Signature	

2ND PHASE – QUALITY ASSESSMENT

PROJECT ACRONYM	
PROJECT REFERENCE NUMBER	

Content-related criteria

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Sub-criteria</i>	<i>Analysis</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Reference to the AF</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<i>Relevance of the proposal</i>	a) <i>Does the project contribute to the achievement of Programme's specific objectives? What evidence is there that the project addresses specific problems, issues and opportunities of the Programme area?</i>	<i>Very Good reference, Analytical and precise analysis based on a strategic analysis (5 points)</i> <i>Adequate reference (2 points)</i> <i>Minimum reference (1 point)</i> <i>No reference (0 points)</i>		B.1.2	

	<p><i>How clear and justified is the coherence between the objectives of the proposal with the Specific Objective and how well is this supported with the proposed actions?</i></p>	<p><i>Very Good Reference (4points) Adequate reference (2 points)</i></p>			
<p><i>Quality of results / Sustainability</i></p>	<p><i>a) Are the results specific, measurable, achievable - realistic, time based?</i></p>	<p><i>All four characteristics (5 points) 3 out of four characteristics (3 points) 2 out of four characteristics (2 points) 1 out of four characteristics (1 point) None of four characteristics (0 point)</i></p>		B.1.4	
	<p><i>b) To what extent do the project results provide added value for the Programme area? Demonstration of the ways that the project contributes to the development of the local communities (e.g. through the creation of new job positions)_Planned use of the results beyond the duration of the action</i></p>	<p><i>1-7 points (degree of continuation-improvement of existing outputs, structures, products, transfer of outputs, know-how, experience, usability of results in other sectors, by other stakeholders etc)</i></p>		B.1.1B.7.1	

	<p>c) Does the project have the concrete and realistic possibility to have a follow up and/ or to be sustainable after the end of the Programme contribution? (- Is the financial sustainability of the project clearly demonstrated? How will the activities be financed after the end of the programme funding? - Is the Institutional sustainability of the project clearly demonstrated? Will the activities continue and be in place after the end of the project? Will there be local and joint "ownership" of the results of the project?)</p>	<p>Secure funding and commitment of stakeholders (5 points) Commitment of stakeholders (3 points) Basic planning (1 point) No guarantees for the project's sustainability (0 points)</p>		<p>B.6.1</p>	
	<p>d) To what extent does the project contribute to the achievement of the Programme indicators?</p>	<p>Clear explanation for the contribution/ link (7 points) Adequately explanation for the contribution/ link (5 points) Basic explanation for the contribution/ link (2 point) None explanation for the contribution/ link (0 points)</p>		<p>B.1.3 B.1.4 F</p>	
	<p>e) Is the project's strategy for communication and dissemination of results well structured and efficient?</p>	<p>Full Communication strategy existing (4 points) Developed communication activities (2 points) Poor communication activities indicated (1 point)</p>		<p>B.4.1</p>	
	<p>Are the target groups adequately identified? Are they addressed with specific and appropriate actions?</p>	<p>Clear and precise identification and actions properly selected (3 points) Unclear identification and or actions not adequately selected (1point)</p>			

Innovation	a) To what extent does the project clearly demonstrate innovative character? (new ideas, more effective devices or processes: new solutions, new technologies, new products)	Application of innovative results of the project (4 points) Development of new innovative methods, products, tools (3 points) Use of new methods, products, tools for the implementation of the project (2 points) Basic innovation references (1 point)		B.1	
Cross-border Character	a) To what extent does the project capitalize previous cross-border cooperation experiences, especially in the Programme area? * Capitalization of partners' know-how * Capitalization of partners' experience in Cross border Cooperation activities * Capitalization of previous cooperation among current beneficiaries * Capitalization of previous relevant projects	All 4 ways (4 points) 3 out of 4 ways (3 points) 2 out of 4 ways (2 points) 1 out of 4 ways (1 point) None (0 points)		B.7.3	
	a) To which extent are there synergies or complementarities with other implemented interventions and /or policies at the European, national, regional or local level within this particular thematic area?	Concrete and straightforward connection (e.g. implementation of an action plan, utilization of previous product etc.) with policy instruments and or programmes (5) Concrete and straightforward connection with policy instrument and or programmes (3) Loose connection with policy instrument and or programmes (0) No synergy		B.8.2 B9.	

Implementation-related criteria					
Criteria	Sub-criteria	Analysis	Score	Reference to the AF	Comments
<i>Quality of the partnership (appropriate synthesis and organizational arrangements)</i>	<i>a) To what extent does the Lead Beneficiary demonstrate the capacity to coordinate, manage, control and monitor the overall implementation of the project? (previous experience of the institution, completed projects, financial, human resources)</i>	<i>Very good (2 points) Low (1 point)</i>		B.3	
	<i>b) Is the professional capacity (structure and experience) of the other beneficiaries sufficient to implement the project activities undertaken successfully? (previous experience of the institution, completed projects, financial, human resources)</i>	<i>Very good (2 points) Low (1 point)</i>		B.3	
	<i>c) Is the institutional and financial status of the partnership relevant to the activities to be implemented?</i>	<i>Fully competent partnership (2 points) Partly competent partnership (1point)</i>		B.3 Beneficiaries' supporting documents	
	<i>d) Do the project partners possess sufficient knowledge of the eligible Programme Area and its distinct features?</i>	<i>(1 – 4 points from excellent to poor knowledge) Excellent (4 points) Good (3 points) Basic (2 points) Poor (1 point)</i>		B.2.3	

Quality of management	a) To what extent is an appropriate project management methodology clearly demonstrated?	<p><i>Very well developed methodology connected to outputs and results (5 points)</i></p> <p><i>Well developed methodology (3 points)</i></p> <p><i>Basic Management procedures described (2 points)</i></p> <p><i>Minimum references (1 point)</i></p>		B.3.2 B.2.1	
	b) To what extent are the specific roles (actions and responsibilities) clearly and appropriately distributed among the Lead Beneficiary and the other Beneficiaries?	<p><i>Clear and specific roles, distributed to the partners in relation to their capacity (4 points)</i></p> <p><i>General distribution of tasks without specific references (2 points)</i></p> <p><i>Not clear enough distribution of responsibilities and tasks (1 point)</i></p>		B.2.1	
Quality of the methodological approach concerning the content of the project	a) Is the overall design of the project coherent? In particular, does it take into account external factors and the analysis of the problems involved? Is the relation between the activities-outputs-results-objectives well structured?	<p><i>How clear, realistic and appropriate is the work plan of activities in order to achieve the expected results and the objectives of the project within the specific Axis?(Minimum to maximum, 1-5 points)</i></p>		B.1, B.2	
	b) Does the proposal contain objectively realistic and relevant indicators for measuring the results of the project?	<p><i>The project proposes objectively realistic and relevant indicators for each level of the logframe (5)</i></p> <p><i>The realization of project indicators is adequately supported for each level of the logframe (2)</i></p> <p><i>The proposed indicators are not supported for each level of the logframe (0)</i></p>		B.1.4, F	

	<p>c) How mature is the project (in which stage of completion are the administrative procedures etc. that allow the realization of the project?) (existence of licences, designs, permits, land acquisition etc)</p>	<p>All necessary required procedures completed- all approvals obtained (5 points) Advanced stage of realization of required procedures (4 points) Medium realization of realization of required procedures (3 points) Low realization of required procedures (1 point) No realization of any necessary procedures(0 points)</p>		Logframe	
Assumptions and risks	<p>Does the proposal contain realistic assumptions linking each level of the logframe and considers possible risks concerning achieving the indicator targets?</p>	<p>The proposal contains realistic assumptions and risks linking each level of the logframe (3) The proposal takes into consideration possible risks that might hinder the achievement of the indicator target (1) The proposal proposes specific measures to address the identified risks (1)</p>		B.10.1 Logframe	
Budget and finance	<p>Is the budget consistent with the activities? Are the estimated expenditures of the proposed activities necessary for the implementation of the project? Is the budget balanced among partners? Appropriateness of the budget categories, in particular, of the amounts allocated to staff and external expertise with respect to the type of activities.</p>	<p>(Minimum to maximum, 1-5 points) (The budget lines correspond to the planned activities. Distribution of the budget secures the active participation of each partner and secures the successful implementation of the activities)</p>		B.1.4, B.2.1, D, JoB	
	<p>b) How reasonable and realistic and justified is the overall budget of the proposal submitted?</p>	<p>High value for money (5 points) Good value for money (3 points) Justified costs (2 points) Overestimated costs (1 point)</p>		B.2.1 B.2.2, D, JoB	
Grand Total Score (max.100)					

Evaluation Summary

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Assessor 1	Name
	Signature
Assessor 2	Name
	Signature
JS Coordinator	Name
	Signature

Scoring

The above mentioned criteria will be taken into account by the evaluators to assess the projects. The purpose of the **Core selection criteria** is to assess the quality of the eligible project proposals. The maximum total score a project may obtain is **100 points**. Quality criteria are closely linked to the nature and objectives of the INTERREG IPA CBC Programme Greece –Republic of North Macedonia 2014-2020 and are common to all Priority Axes.

The Joint Secretariat carries out the evaluation of proposals, based on these selection criteria, approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee.

The submitted project proposals will be evaluated by two assessors. The final score of the proposals will be defined in the following way:

- for evaluations with a difference equal or up to 9 points in the score of the 2 assessors, the average score will be calculated and will define the final score obtained.
- for evaluations with a difference higher than 10 points, a third evaluation will take place. This will be executed by the JS Coordinator and the average score will be calculated and will define the final score obtained.

The Managing Authority ensures that the evaluation procedure is carried out in accordance to the requirements of the Call for project projects and the approved selection criteria. Then the JS, with the consent of the Managing Authority, submits to the Joint Steering Committee:

- 1) The fiches of the submitted project proposals, summarizing the most important information about the project proposals
- 2) The ranking list of all evaluated project proposals
- 3) All the evaluation forms of the 1st and 2nd phase checks

The project proposals are ranked according to the results obtained in the evaluation procedure. They are divided into three categories (based on the budget available and the results of evaluation):

- Project proposals to be accepted;
- Project proposals to be rejected and
- Project proposals to be further discussed at the Joint Steering Committee (acceptable under conditions, such as budget surplus, provision of further necessary documents, licences, permits, etc).

In case of equal scoring of two or more project proposals, while the available budget is not enough to fund all of them, the JS will present the advantages and disadvantages of each proposal to the members of the JSC, who will decide on the proposal(s) to be funded.

To be proposed for financing by the Programme, a project must meet all the below mentioned requirements:

- i. obtain a total rating score equal or higher than the minimum score allowing a project to be financed (65 points),
- ii. be evaluated with a score higher than 0 at any sub criterion of the Project quality section (Content related criteria)
- iii. be in line with all the requirements of the budget available for each thematic priority as stated in the Call for proposals,
- iv. be placed into a ranking list that takes into account the score and the budget available for each thematic priority as stated in the Call for proposals

The JSC selects the projects to be funded. All the Lead beneficiaries of the submitted project proposals will be informed in writing on the results obtained on the performance of the 1st and 2nd phase checks after the completion of the decision procedure of the Steering Committee.

If a proposal is accepted under conditions, the Managing Authority will have to check that these conditions are taken into account before Subsidy Contracts are signed (a new decision by the SC is not required).

Confidentiality and independence

Project proposals and Application Forms submitted by project applicants will be kept confidential. The content of project proposals and application forms should not be published or forwarded to persons or institutions which are not directly engaged in the applications assessment procedure or decision making. The project idea itself, as well as the description and concept of the project and the structures of the applications remain the property of the project applicants. All actors included (SC members, MC members, JS assessors and external experts) participating in the assessment procedure have to guarantee that the privacy and confidentiality of all applications submitted in the framework of the call for proposals will be kept and that all national privacy laws and EU Directive related to the protection of personal data (95/46/EC) will be respected. It is not allowed to forward applications and assessment documents to actors outside the regular assessment procedure, particularly not to project applicants or the wider public.

Furthermore, the Steering Committee members, MC members, JS assessors and external assessors (if applicable) will declare that they do not have a conflict of interest and/or political influence. All actors involved in assessment, evaluation and selection must sign a declaration of Confidentiality.

