

# Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration ROMANIA

## INTERREG VI-A NEXT ROMANIA-UKRAINE PROGRAMME

### GUIDELINES FOR GRANT APPLICANTS

#### SMALL SCALE PROJECTS

Reference: 2<sup>nd</sup> Call for proposal for small scale projects

Open Call for proposals: April 28, 10.00 AM, 2025

Deadline for submission: July 28, 14.00, PM, 2025

#### How to use these Guidelines

2025

Guidelines for grant Applicants: 2nd call for small scale projects

This document is a guide for the call of proposals no. 2 for small scale projects within the Interreg VI - A Next Romania Ukraine Programme. It is addressed to the potential Applicants while preparing their proposals, and contains information about the selection, contracting and the implementation process for small scale **projects**.

**TAKE NOTE THAT**

These Guidelines only address the **SMALL SCALE PROJECTS**

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## ACRONYMS

CBC	Cross-Border Cooperation
COI	Common Output Indicator
EC	European Commission
e.g.	Exempli gratia (for example)
EU	European Union
ISO	Interreg Specific Objective
JEMS	Joint Electronic Monitoring System
JS	Joint Secretariat
MA	Managing Authority
MC	Monitoring Committee
NA	National Authorities
NDICI	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NUTS	Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics
OI	Output Indicator
PO	Policy Objective
PSC	Project Selection Committee
RI	Result Indicator
SC	Selection Committee
Programme	INTERREG VI-A NEXT Romania-Ukraine
SO	Specific Objective
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time Bounded
VAT	Value Added Tax

# CHAPTER 1 INTERREG VI-A NEXT ROMANIA-UKRAINE PROGRAMME

## 1.1 Background information

European territorial cooperation goal (Interreg) aims to fostering cooperation between Member States and their regions inside the Union and between Member States, their regions and third countries, partner countries, other territories or overseas countries and territories (OCTs), or regional integration and cooperation organisations.

The Interreg VI - A NEXT Romania Ukraine Programme 2021 – 2027, hereinafter the **Programme**, contributes to the achievement of the specific objectives and of the overall Interreg objective.

This Guidelines for applicants provide information on the call's priorities, eligible project types, and financial allocations. It outlines the requirements for partners, activities, costs, and the application procedure. It also describes the proposal evaluation process and the steps for project implementation, including contract signing and payments. The guide is accompanied by annexes (listed in chapter 6) that provide both instructions for completing the application and templates for the supporting documents that must be submitted with the application, or, in contracting stage if the project will be selected. Additionally, it includes informative materials to help a better understanding of the requirements of the call (such as the grids).

For a better understanding of these Guidelines and its annexes as well as of the Programme, it is recommended to read also the Programme document available on <http://ro-ua.net> and the relevant national and EU legislation (see section 1 – Legal and strategic framework - Part 1 of these Guidelines).

Moreover, it is strongly recommended to frequently visit the Programme website ([www.ro-ua.net](http://www.ro-ua.net)) and/or [programme social media](#) (Facebook) to check on any possible revision of these Guidelines, the publication of the answers to the questions submitted or on information of general interest.

### 1.1.1 Programme area

The **Programme area** consists of:

- the **Romanian** counties of Suceava, Botosani, Satu-Mare, Maramures, Tulcea and
- the **Ukrainian** oblasts of Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Odesa, Chernivtsi



### TAKE NOTE THAT

Only projects that benefit the Programme area will be eligible. To this end, projects should be implemented in the Programme area. However, in duly justified cases, a share of the project may be implemented outside the Programme area, irrespective of the place of registration of the beneficiaries, (in the limited conditions to be foreseen in the Section 2.2.1.1 of these Guidelines,) provided that this is necessary for achieving the project's results, is for the benefit of the programme area and is described and justified in the application form and they will require the explicit approval of the Monitoring Committee

### 1.1.2 Other Interreg programmes

The Programme runs in parallel with **other Interreg NEXT programmes**, also relevant for the programme area (e.g. Interreg VI-A NEXT Romania-Republic of Moldova Programme, Interreg VI-B NEXT Black Sea

Basin Programme, Interreg VI-A NEXT Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine Programme), as well as other national or cooperation programmes from Romania and Ukraine funded by the European Union, relevant for this area.



## TAKE NOTE THAT

The Programme shall **not finance projects** whose activities have already been financed (totally or partially) by other programmes/ financial instruments.

In order to avoid double financing and overlapping between projects, the Applicants and partners are strongly requested not to submit projects already awarded with a grant in another financial framework, or projects that include activities that have already been financed in another financial framework.

In this regard, all project partners shall confirm, in their statements, that no expenditure related to the project has been, is or will be funded, in part or in whole, by any other national/international/EU-funded programme

This should not have the effect of discrimination against their proposals during evaluation, but it will be taken into account for the final selection of projects, when appropriate consultation with other management structures (the National Authorities, the Managing Authorities or other Interreg programmes and the European Commission) will be performed in order to detect potential cases of double financing. Moreover, during the contracting phase, an updated statement of the Applicant and partners on this topic will be requested.

## 1.2 Legal Framework<sup>1</sup>

- Commission Decision No. 8931 on 30.11.2022 approving the Interreg VI-A NEXT Romania-Ukraine Programme for 2021 - 2027 period;
- Commission Decision No. 8858 on 11.12.2023 amending the implementation Decision C(2022) 8931 approving the "(Interreg VI-A) NEXT Romania-Ukraine" cooperation program
- 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;
- Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on specific provisions for the European territorial cooperation goal (Interreg) supported by the European Regional Development Fund and external financing instruments;
- Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund;
- Regulation (EU) 2021/947 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 June 2021 establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe, amending and repealing Decision No 466/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU) 2017/1601 and Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 480/2009
- Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024, on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union
- Financing Agreement for the Interreg programme (Interreg VI-A) NEXT Romania-Ukraine

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ro-md.net/ro/program/legislatie>



- Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine 2024/1268, on the introduction of a management system and control over the implementation of the Interreg and Interreg NEXT cross-border and transnational cooperation programs
- LAW no. 231 of July 19, 2022 regarding the management and use of Interreg funds and the national public contribution, for the "European Territorial Cooperation" objective, in the period 2021-2027



## 1.3 Focus of the Call for proposals

### 1.3.1 Priorities and specific objectives addressed by the call

Out of the 3 priorities of the Programme, only Priority 2 and 3 will be open under this call for the submission of small scale projects, as follows:

	<p><b>Priority 2 Social Development across Borders</b></p> <p><b>Specific objective</b></p> <p><b>2.1 Improving equal access to inclusive and quality services in education, training and lifelong learning through developing accessible infrastructure, including by fostering resilience for distance and on-line education and training</b></p>
	<p><b>Priority 3. Border Cooperation</b></p> <p><b>Interreg Specific Objective 1</b></p> <p><b>A better cooperation governance</b></p> <p><b>Specific objective:</b></p> <p><b>3.1 Enhance efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens, civil society actors and institutions, in particular, with a view to resolving legal, capacity and other obstacles in the border region.</b></p> <p><b>Investments in equipment, policies and strategies for effective border mobility are also envisaged.</b></p>

### 1.3.2 Focus of the Call

The Programme is looking for proposals that **envisage clear cross border impact** and support achievement of the Programme's expected results and outputs indicators, fulfil clear quality criteria and demonstrate technical and financial viability.

The quality criteria that the programme pursues during the evaluation and selection process ensure that a project is relevant to the programme, it has strong and consistent internal logic, and the main pre-requisites for its successful implementation are already in place.

The coherence of the project intervention logic with the targeted specific objective of the programme is a key factor for a quality project.



## TAKE NOTE THAT

*Contribution to programme priorities, specific objectives and intervention fields as well as to the needs of the communities in the programme area are essential for project selection.*

### 1.3.3 Type of projects

The present Call for proposal only addresses small scale projects.

In the meaning of the present call, *small scale projects* are projects with **no infrastructure (works) component**

### 1.3.4 Cross border character of the projects

The Programme is looking to select projects which envisage clear cross border impact and benefits on each side of the border.

The following cross border criteria should be pursued by the partners bellow, and be duly justified within the Application Form:



## TAKE NOTE THAT

*The following four cross border cooperation criteria are to be taken into consideration:*

#### **Mandatory:**

- (1) **Joint development** is ensured when the project is designed by the Applicant (as coordinator of the process) together with its partners, and addresses the needs and priorities of all the relevant stakeholders.
- (2) **Joint implementation** is provided when project's activities are carried out and coordinated among all Partners. It is not enough that activities run in parallel. There must be clear content-based links between what is happening on one side of the border, and the work done by Partners on the other side. The Applicant is responsible for ensuring that activities are properly coordinated.
- (3) **Joint financing** must ensure a reasonable distribution of the project budget between Partners, according to their share of activities and grant received. All project Partners who receive financial support from the Programme will contribute to the co-financing of the project.

#### **Optional:**

- (4) **Joint staffing**, whether is paid from the project budget or not, the project staff will be responsible for the activities carried out on the respective side of the border.

Projects shall involve partners from both countries. However, a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGCT) may be the sole partner of a project, provided that the members thereof involve partners from both Romania and Ukraine. **The sole partner (EGCT) shall be registered in a Member State.**

It has to be considered that the cooperation criteria need to be effectively demonstrated throughout the project proposal e.g. distribution of responsibilities among the project Partners, methodology of activities, distribution of the project budget.

### 1.3.5 Horizontal principles

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The following horizontal principles may be addressed by the projects funded under the Interreg VI-A NEXT Romania-Ukraine Programme, and at least one has to be positively influenced:

#### Sustainable development and environmental protection

The programme has a strong commitment towards environmental protection and all operations supported by the programme have to respect the EU policies and rules regarding environmental protection and sustainable development taking into account the Paris Agreement, the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the “do no significant harm” (DNSH) principle.

Project applicants have to describe the contribution to sustainable development, explaining how the sustainable development principles are anchored within the project design and planned activities. The project will specify which possible effects (positive, neutral or negative) will likely have on the environment, by considering among others the following aspects: water, soil, air and climate, population and human health, fauna, flora and biodiversity, cultural heritage and landscape.

DNSH (the Do No Significant Harm Principle)

Project activities should contribute to one of the 6 environmental objectives and they should be compliant with the “do no significant harm” principle.

Article 17 of the Taxonomy Regulation<sup>2</sup>, defines the significant harm for the six environmental objectives. Thus, an activity is considered to do significant harm:

- ✓ to **climate change mitigation** if it leads to significant greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions;
- ✓ to **climate change adaptation** if it leads to an increased adverse impact of the current climate and the expected future climate, on the activity itself or on people, nature or assets;
- ✓ to the **sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources** if it is detrimental to the good status or the good ecological potential of bodies of water, including surface water and groundwater, or to the good environmental status of marine waters;
- ✓ to the **circular economy, including waste prevention and recycling**, if it leads to significant inefficiencies in the use of materials or in the direct or indirect use of natural resources, or if it significantly increases the generation, incineration or disposal of waste, or if the long-term disposal of waste may cause significant and long-term environmental harm;
- ✓ to **pollution prevention** and control if it leads to a significant increase in emissions of pollutants into air, water or land;
- ✓ to the **protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems** if it is significantly detrimental to the good condition and resilience of ecosystems, or detrimental to the conservation status of habitats and species, including those of Union interest.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32020R0852>

The project will have to promote solutions that are friendly with the environment and observe the Do No Significant Harm Principle.

Projects submitted are strongly encouraged to **green their projects and reduce the environmental and carbon footprint**. The following good environmental practices are recommended for all projects:

- Reduce the electricity and / or heat consumption;
- Reduce fuel, raw materials and hazardous substances consumption;
- Use high energy performance equipment;
- Choose adequate technologies for restoration/ preservation and respect them accurately so that the solutions chosen do not affect species of flora, fauna and aquatic ecosystems in the area;
- Minimize waste production;
- Ensure collection/ sorting/ recycling/recovery of the waste resulted;
- On-line meetings should be preferred whenever possible, electronic communication means should be used instead of paper based
- Including environmental criteria in procurement procedures;
- Giving preference to environmentally-friendly mobility options (in particular for short travel distances);
- Organising conferences and events in a sustainable way (e.g. by combining different meetings in one place, reducing printing and using recyclable materials, using video conference facilities, etc.);
- Considering resource efficiency and the use of renewable energy at all levels;
- Making use of regional supply chains (reducing supply chain length and CO2 emissions).

### **Equal opportunities and non-discrimination**

Projects have to ensure that the activities implemented are in line with the principle of equal opportunities and do not generate discrimination of any kind (gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation).

Applicants have to describe how the equal opportunity and non-discrimination principle is anchored within the project design and planned activities.

### **Equality between men and women**

Promotion of gender equality is important within the Programme design as a horizontal issue to be deployed in projects across any of the priorities selected. Both men and women shall have equal access to the opportunities and benefits of the Programme.

All projects will have to adequately consider gender related issues – such as equality of opportunity rights, distribution of benefits, responsibilities for men and women. This may include the integration of a gender perspective when planning activities, considering the likeliness of increased gender equality beyond the project end.

Projects have to ensure that the activities implemented are in line with the principle of equality between men and women and do not generate discrimination of any kind.

### **New European Bauhaus**

In drafting the projects other principles should also be considered, such as the New European Bauhaus initiative. **The New European Bauhaus<sup>3</sup>** initiative promotes a new lifestyle where sustainability matches style, thus accelerating the green transition in various sectors of the economy such as construction, furniture, fashion and in the society as well as other areas of our daily life. The aim is to provide all citizens with access to goods that are circular and less carbon-intensive, that support the regeneration of nature and protect biodiversity. Three core inseparable values guide the New European Bauhaus: : sustainability, aesthetics and inclusion.

### 1.3.6 Synergies and complementarities with other actions<sup>3</sup>

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Operations should seek to create synergies with any other programmes covering the same regions, like national programmes, or macro-regional strategies, cooperation programmes and other existing financing solutions. The application should include a short description on how the operation aims to contribute to wider strategies.

Examples of wider strategies:

- EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR),
- Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea (CMA) or
- Black Sea Synergy

Other CBC programmes, such as:

- Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine Interreg Next,
- Romania-Republic of Moldova,
- Black Sea Basin,
- Interreg Danube.

### 1.3.7 Capitalisation of previous programmes' results<sup>4</sup>

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Project proposals can also capitalise on the results achieved previously through other projects.

Beneficiaries who want to learn about the projects financed in the previous period, can consult the program page, in the [projects section](#). Some of these projects, can be models or can be further built on their results, further developed or replicated, as feasible. Capitalisation activities should also focus on the widening up of the audience/target groups of existing project results.

The strategies and studies already developed in the framework of the previous Programmes can be used as valuable tools in addressing identified needs.

The database will be continuously enriched with information on the results achieved by projects supported under the Interreg VI-A NEXT Romania-Ukraine Programme. Additional public information

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<sup>4</sup> See Programme document, section 1.2.3 for additional information; data to be included in section C.2.5 of the Application Form

<sup>4</sup> See Programme document, section 1.2.3 for additional information; data to be included in section C.2.5 of the Application Form

regarding Interreg programmes, projects and documents, partners, countries and regions, statistics, representativeness are available at the web address [www.keep.eu](http://www.keep.eu)<sup>5</sup>

## 1.4 Financial allocations per priority

### 1.4.1 Indicative allocation

The overall **indicative** EU contribution available under this Call for proposals is of:

Priority	Specific Objective	EU contribution
2. Social development across borders	2.1 Improving equal access to inclusive and quality services in education, training and lifelong learning through developing accessible infrastructure, including by fostering resilience for distance and on-line education and training	4,679,003 EURO
3. Border Cooperation	3.1: Enhance efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens, civil society actors and institutions, in particular, with a view to resolving legal, capacity and other obstacles in the border region	10,926,080 EURO

Please note that allocations for each Specific Objective of the call are indicative. Their actual value is directly linked with the evolving dynamics of the program, and consequently may be adjusted.

Moreover, the Managing Authority, with the prior agreement of the Monitoring Committee, reserves the right not to award all the funds available for a priority, if the quality of the projects submitted is not satisfactory. The funds made available in this way, may be redirected to other priorities or calls with the prior approval of the Monitoring Committee.

### 1.4.2 Grant and co-financing

The **total project budget** consists of EU contribution (grant) and co-financing provided by project partners.

The EU contribution (grant) for a project shall be of maximum 90% of the total eligible expenditure of the project.

<sup>5</sup> <https://keep.eu/>

**TAKE NOTE THAT**

Projects shall not be selected for support where they have been physically completed or fully implemented before the application for funding under the programme is submitted, irrespective of whether all related payments have been made.

**Grants shall not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit** within the framework of the project during the implementation period<sup>6</sup>.

**1.4.2.1 Size of grant per specific objective**

The **EU contribution (grant)** that may be requested for financing **small scale** projects under the present Call for proposals is shown in the table below. If the project does not fall within limits, it will be considered ineligible

Priority	Specific Objective	Size of grant [Euro]
2.Social development across borders	2.1 Improving equal access to inclusive and quality services in education, training and lifelong learning through developing accessible infrastructure, including by fostering resilience for distance and on-line education and training	250 000-400 000
3.Border Cooperation	3.1: Enhance efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens, civil society actors and institutions, in particular, with a view to resolving legal, capacity and other obstacles in the border region	200 000-800 000

**1.4.2.2 Co-financing**

The **co-financing** shall be of **at least 10%** of the total eligible costs of the project and shall be provided by all partners in the project receiving a financial support from the Programme; Co-financing ensured by each partner should represent at least 10% of their own eligible expenditure.

**TAKE NOTE THAT**

Each project partners will include the eligible expenditure for their share of activities in the individual budgets, comprising **both a share of grant and the share of co-financing**.

**Co-financing for the Romanian beneficiaries**

For the Romanian beneficiaries, LAW no. 231 of July 19, 2022 regarding the management and use of Interreg funds and the national public contribution, for the "European Territorial Cooperation" objective, in the period 2021-2027 regarding the allocation of external grants and national public contribution, for the "European Territorial Cooperation" Objective, with subsequent amendments shall be applied.

<sup>6</sup> The profit shall be defined as a surplus of the receipts over the eligible costs incurred by the beneficiaries, when the request is made for payment of the balance

## 1.5 State aid rules

### 1.5.1 General provisions

**No state aid shall be granted under this call.**

According to Article 107 (ex. Article 87) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, state aid is 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, therefore affecting trade between Member States.

During the evaluation process, the issue of possible involvement of state aid relevant activities will be checked based on all information concerning partners and activities foreseen by the project.



**TAKE NOTE THAT**

Provided it contains state aid relevant activities, the **project may be rejected** in its entirety, except for those situations when an adjustment of the activities, without affecting the project objectives, is possible.

### 1.5.2 Self-assessment of the State Aid

In order to find out if the project is likely to be regarded as a state aid or containing state aid elements, before finalising the development of the project and its submission, the self-assessment grid provided in **Annex D** of the present guidelines is to be used and, if possible, the needed adjustments shall be made in order to remove the potentially state aid elements.

**The self-assessment must refer to the project as a whole.** Consequently, only one self assessment will address the entire project and, when performing the state aid self-assessment, the criteria shall be applied to each partner and each project activity. Moreover, the potential "indirect advantage"<sup>7</sup> which may occur as a result of project implementation must be taken into consideration.

The **self-assessment grid (Annex D)** contains five criteria to be duly considered when assessing the potential involvement of state aid elements in a project:

- (1) Are public resources involved?
- (2) Are public resources granted selectively to the partners?
- (3) Is any of the partners of the project an "undertaking"?
- (4) Does any partner ("undertaking") and/or a third party ("undertaking") get an "economic advantage" that it could not normally get from the market?
- (5) Does the aid (financing of project) distort or threatens to distort competition and trade within the European Union or between European Union and Ukraine?



**TAKE NOTE THAT**

<sup>7</sup> An "**indirect advantage**" (indirect State aid) occurs when funds received by beneficiaries are channelled, during the project implementation or following the finalisation of the project, to identifiable undertakings/groups of undertakings (e.g. if the funds are used by the beneficiary for training of the employees of certain SMEs, a certain "undertaking" is going to benefit by an infrastructure developed by a beneficiary within a project, etc.). Thus, these third parties-"undertakings"- receive an advantage through the project activities that they would not have received under normal market conditions. This implies that they could be recipients of State aid.



If one of the above questions is answered NO, there is no state aid involved. Details on how to interpret each criterion are presented in **Annex D State Aid Self Assessment**.

## **CHAPTER 2 RULES FOR THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

### **2.1 Number of projects to be submitted**

No limitations are set for an organization to participate in several projects submitted under the present call for proposals. However, please make sure that the respective organization has the necessary operational and financial capacity to implement all the projects submitted, provided that they are all selected for contracting.

### **2.2 Lead Partner and Partners. Eligibility requirements**

#### **2.2.1 Eligibility requirements for the partners including lead partner**

*1. Each entity partner in the project shall meet the following cumulative requirements:*

- a) To be **in any of the situations** regarding its place of registration listed below:
  - i. Are legal entities registered and located in Programme area, namely in the Romanian counties of, Botosani, Maramureş, Satu Mare, Suceava, Tulcea, or the Ukrainian oblasts of Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk, Odesa, Zakarpattia
  - ii. Are legal entities registered outside the Programme area, but only in conditions set at section 2.2.1.1.
  - iii. Are European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) regardless of their place of establishment, provided that the members thereof involve partners from Romania and Ukraine.
- b) Are non-profit making organisations,
- c) Are directly responsible for the preparation, management and implementation of the project with their Partners, not acting as an intermediary,
- d) Be able to submit an annual balance sheet for the previous year, or at least a monthly balance sheet for the current year.
- e) Have stable and sufficient sources of finance to ensure the continuity of the organisations throughout the project duration, to play a part in co-financing it and to ensure the needed cash flow. Moreover, the partners must have the necessary financial resources and mechanisms to cover operation and maintenance cost for operations comprising investment in equipment so as to ensure its financial sustainability.
- f) Have no debts to the consolidated state budget or to the local budget in accordance with the national legislation of concerned country of registration (or to the national public budget -for Ukrainian partners
- g) Have competence in the fields of Specific Objective concerned by the project.
- h) Have provable rights (ownership, long term rent, concession, administration, etc.) over each location [land/ building/space where the equipment is to be installed. The proves of each type of the rights, except for ownership, must be valid until at least five years from the final payment to the beneficiary but not less than 2032. However, also in case of the ownership, the rights over the location where the equipment is to be installed, shall be maintained for the same period of time. In case the respective Partner is not the owner, the written agreement of the owner saying that equipment instalment is allowed, is needed.

- i) Is not subject to a conflict of interests; the conflict of interests represents any circumstances that may affect the evaluation or implementation process, in an objective and impartial manner. Such circumstances may result from economic interests, political or national preferences or family connections;
  - j) (For Ukrainian entities) Are able to open a dedicated bank account in a state-owned bank in case the project is selected for financing. Any organization, be it Lead Partner or Partner in a project, must be legally able to transfer/receive funds to/from foreign countries.
  - k) Have no unpaid debt to the Managing Authority for any project financed under the Romania-Ukraine Joint Operational Programme 2014-2020 at the date of contract signature. If the Managing Authority established debts (in the Debtors Ledger of the entity hosting the Managing Authority) for the Lead Partner and/or the Partners, the grant contract may be signed only if and after the situation of the debt is tackled.
- *II. Each entity partner in the project or person with attributions of representation, decision-making or control over it does not fall into any of the exclusion situations listed in Art. 138 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/ 2509:). The specific exclusion situations will be checked in the “Project Statement and “Project Partner Statements”– Annexes A and B.*



#### TAKE NOTE THAT

**Failing to submit all the information** required as a condition of participation in the Call for proposals will result in rejection of the application.

**The Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat may request, at any time, additional documentary evidence, clarifications and argumentations regarding the eligibility of applicants or partners.**

The compliance with the criteria set at point I (a) to (g) will be cross-checked during the evaluation process, based on the documents submitted together with the Application form.

The criteria set at points I (h) to (i) and II will be checked based on the “Project Statement (for the applicant) and “Project Partner Statements” issued by each partner.

The compliance with the criterion listed at point I (j) and (k), as well as the documentary proof for criteria set at point I(h) shall be checked during contracting process, for equipment with installation providing that the project is selected.



#### TAKE NOTE THAT

Non-eligibility of any of the project partners (Lead partner or partners) leads to non-eligibility of the entire project, irrespective of the fact that the minimum partner requirements are still met.



#### TAKE NOTE THAT

The Lead partner or a partner cannot be changed and replaced with other organisation, and its share of the project cannot be taken over by other project partner during the evaluation, selection process and contracting, as this would mean to change the project proposal after the submission deadline and thus to violate the principle of equal treatment.

### 2.2.1.1 Participation of partners registered outside the Programme area

This call allows for participation of partners registered outside the Programme area only if the following conditions are met cumulatively:

- i. The project addresses Priority 2- **Specific Objective 2.1** or Priority 3- **Specific Objective 3.1**
- ii. The activities to be performed by the partner located outside the programme area are implemented directly or with the support of their offices/ branches in the Programme area or for the benefit of the Programme area.
- iii. The activities to be performed by the partner located outside the programme area are necessary for achieving the project's results

**The contribution of the partner located outside the Programme area shall be described and duly justified in the application form, in order to be explicitly approved by the Monitoring Committee.**

### 2.2.2 Indicative eligible organisations

An indicative list of the eligible entities is presented below:

Nr	Main categories	Examples
1	Local public authority	administrative territorial units at the level of the county/ municipality/ city/ commune/villages
2	Regional public authority	regional council, etc.
3	National public authority	ministry, etc. Offices/ branches of public national/regional authorities and other public bodies active on the themes of the priority
4	Sectoral agency	local or regional development agency, environmental agency, employment agency, etc.
5	Interest groups including NGOs	-trade union, foundation, charity, voluntary association, NGOs, -religious organizations, legally established according to the national legislation in force
6	Higher education and research organisations	University, faculty, college, research institution, RTD facility, research cluster, etc.
7	Education/training centre and school	primary, secondary, public schools and other public educational institutions, public vocational training, etc.
8	Business support organisation	chamber of commerce, chamber of trade and crafts;
9	EGTC	
10	Hospitals and medical centres	
11	Other	

**TAKE NOTE THAT**

**The profit-making entities and SMEs are not eligible under this Call for proposals.**

## 2.3 PARTNERSHIPS. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### 2.3.1 Partnership principles

In order to ensure the successful implementation of the project and to achieve tangible results it is very important that the partners involved in the project have the necessary competencies in the field of the Specific Objective chosen, for the development and implementation of the activities and also for ensuring the sustainability of the project on the long run.

Partners shall appoint one organization to act as Lead Partner who will take full responsibility for the submission of the project proposal and later, provided that the project is awarded a grant, will take the responsibility of implementation of the entire project.

When submitting the project, the Lead Partner shall fill in and sign a Project Statement (**Annex A**) acknowledging their responsibilities within the project. Each partner must issue and sign a Project Partner Statement (**Annex B**)

During the evaluation process, the Lead Partner is responsible to communicate with Programme structures on behalf of the partnership and also to ensure that exchange of information with his Partners is done in an efficiently and timely manner.

During the contracting phase (provided that the project will be selected), the project will submit a Partnership Agreement stipulating the specific obligations and the financial responsibilities to be met during project implementation, signed and stamped according to the relevant legal provisions in force, by the Applicant and all his Partners.

A model of the Partnership Agreement is annexed for information to the present Guidelines (**Annex L**). The Partners may decide to include additional or more restrictive provisions, but they must keep the provisions indicated in the model as a minimum.

Obligations of the partners during the project implementation are stipulated in the standard form of Contract, standard form of Partnership Agreement and in the Project Partner Statement (See the corresponding annexes).

#### *The main obligations of partners*

- a) All partners shall actively cooperate for the implementation of the project, they shall ensure joint development, implementation and joint financing. They may also cooperate in staffing of the project;
- b) Each beneficiary shall be legally and financially responsible for the activities that is implementing and for the share of financing that it receives;

**TAKE NOTE THAT**

**Partners will also be required to provide the PIC (Participant Identification Code) code in section B.1.1 Partner identity, Legal and financial information from the Application Form, which can be obtained by registering the organisation on EC Participant Register(if not obtained already) [accessible here](#).**

### *Lead partner's main obligations*

- a) lay down the arrangements with the other partners in the partnership agreement comprising provisions that, inter alia, guarantee the sound financial management of the respective Union funds allocated to the Interreg operation, including the arrangements for recovering amounts unduly paid;
- b) assume responsibility for ensuring implementation of the entire Interreg operation;
- c) ensure that expenditure presented by all partners has been paid in implementing the Interreg operation and corresponds to the activities agreed between all the partners, and is in accordance with the document provided by the managing authority pursuant to Article 22(6) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059.
- d) if not otherwise specified in the arrangements laid down pursuant to point (a), the lead partner shall ensure that the other partners receive the total amount of the contribution from the respective Union fund in full and within a timeframe agreed by all partners and following the same procedure applied in respect of the lead partner. No amount shall be deducted or withheld and no specific charge or other charge with equivalent effect shall be levied that would reduce that amount for the other partners. However, the grant contract will include specific provisions for exceptional cases when the transfers cannot be done without jeopardizing the EU funds.
- e) additionally, the Lead Partner bears the responsibility for monitoring and reporting on the level of achievement of the project's output and result indicators.

## 2.3.2 Eligibility requirements for the project partnership

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### *Number of partners*

A maximum of 4 partners (including the Lead Partner) may participate in the project.

### *Location of partners*

At least one partner in the project is registered in Romania, in the programme area, and at least one partner is registered in Ukraine, in the programme area. However, an EGCT may be the sole partner of a project, provided that the members thereof involve partners from both Romania and Ukraine. **The sole partner shall be registered Member State.**

### *Associated organisations*

Other entities may play a supporting role in the project as **associated organisations, without receiving funding from the project**. The **associated organisations are not partners** in the project and they do not have to meet the eligibility criteria and sign the Project Partner Statement and Partnership Agreement.

A **cooperation agreement** may be signed and submitted together with the application form in order to include these organizations in the target for indicator RCO 87.

## 2.4 Projects and Activities. Eligibility requirements

### 2.4.1 Eligible projects

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In order to be considered eligible and selected, a project must address the Priorities and specific objectives described in section 1.3.1, as well as the related intervention fields and indicative activities addressed by the Programme.

A project should demonstrate a clear and feasible contribution to the achievement of programme Result indicators and Output indicators set for the Specific Objective chosen as outlined in the guidelines for indicators.

**For reference, please see Annex F Guidelines for Indicators for Small Scale Projects..**

The **Programme** document and its annex [PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK METHODOLOGY](#) provide a clear list of the Programme output and result indicators per priority and specific objective, with baseline and target values, and also methods for their measurement. As such, in order to receive good scores during evaluation, project contribution to the Programme indicators must be clear, effective, quantifiable and verifiable.

Technical and financial viability gives assurance to the Programme that the selected project has the capacity to be successfully implemented and to continue after the end of EU financing.



**TAKE NOTE THAT**

Project contribution to the Programme indicators should be clear, but also feasible, since they are to be measured and checked by management structures according to the grant contract provisions and, provided that the project will not achieve the stated indicators, the managing authority reserves the right to reduce the grant among of underperforming projects. Therefore, is in the best interest of the project to commit to feasible and realistic target values for the indicators showing their contribution to the Programme, and not oversize them.



**TAKE NOTE THAT**

During the selection process the programme have to ensure that selected operations are not directly affected by a reasoned opinion by the Commission in respect of an infringement within the scope of Article 258 TFEU that puts at risk the legality and regularity of expenditure or the performance of operations.

## 2.4.2 Project's contribution to the Programme

The quality criteria that the programme pursuits during the evaluation and selection process ensure that a project is relevant to the programme, it has strong and consistent internal logic, and the main pre-requisites for its successful implementation are already in place.

The coherence of the project intervention logic with the targeted specific objective of the programme is a key factor for a quality project.

When designing a project, the following aspects have to be considered:

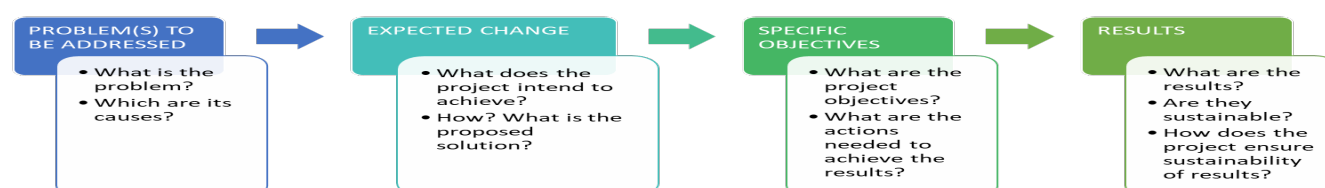
- Project specific objective targets one single programme specific objective addressed by the call;
- Project corresponds to relevant intervention field(s) of the selected specific objective<sup>8</sup>,
- Projects activities and outputs are logically linked to the targeted programme specific objective;
- Project clearly contributes to the programme output and result indicator(s).

The project intervention logic has to show how a desired change will be achieved. It should reflect the current situation (e.g. a problem, a need), its causes and the change/improvement which the project seeks to achieve by implementing the planned activities.

An example on how a project intervention logic should be designed is presented below:

<sup>8</sup> See also 2.4.6 Indicative eligible activities and intervention fields

Figure – How to develop the project intervention logic



### ▶▶▶ TAKE NOTE THAT

*Contribution to programme priorities and specific objectives and to the needs of the communities in the programme area are essential criteria for the project selection.*

In drafting the proposal, the meaning of the main terms used for the intervention logic and to describe these in section C in the application form should be understood as follows:

**Project specific objective** - defines an immediate goal that the project can realistically achieve within the project lifetime through its planned activities and related outputs.

The **project output** is the product that results from the implementation of one or more project activities. All project activities and outputs need to be consistent with and contribute to the project specific objectives. All project outputs need to contribute to the programme output indicators.

The **project result(s)** is the immediate effect and change compared to the initial situation in the regions subject to cooperation, which the project intends to achieve through its outputs. All project results are to contribute to the programme result indicators.

A project should have only project specific objective, and there should be only one single work package including the activities needed to achieve the set objective. The specific objective is considered achieved when all activities of the work package have been implemented and outputs have been delivered.

### ▶▶▶ TAKE NOTE THAT

*When defining the outputs, Annex I Guide for Indicators should be carefully considered! The document provides explanations that can help partners understand the programme indicators and how to quantify the outputs so that correct data is collected and reported.*

*In order to ensure a sound definition and implementation of the project, the project specific objective should be SMART!*

**S – SPECIFIC** – what? who needs project outputs delivered in this work package, and where

**M – MEASURABLE** – can be measured?

**A – ACHIEVABLE** – can it be reached?

**R – REALISTIC** – can it be achieved with the given resources?



***T – TIME-BOUNDED – can it be achieved within the envisaged project duration?***

### 2.4.3 Project duration

The project duration must be planned as the total number of months needed to fully implement the project, without any specific dates.

The initially planned project duration depends on the complexity of activities envisaged and should be kept within the limits allowed by the Call for proposals, as follows:

**Minimum duration = 12 months**

**Maximum duration = 18 months**

**▶▶▶ TAKE NOTE THAT**

The extension of the project duration may be possible during the implementation of the project, under certain conditions provided for by the grant contract.

### 2.4.4 Project location

**Projects** will be implemented in the Programme area, as follows:

In Romania – counties of Suceava, Botosani, Satu Mare, Maramures and Tulcea

In Ukraine – oblasts of Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Odesa and Chernivtsi

By means of exception, in duly justified cases, a share of the project may be implemented outside the Programme area, irrespective of the place of registration of the beneficiaries, (in the limited conditions foreseen in the Section 2.2.1.1 of this Guidelines) provided that this is necessary for achieving the project's results, is for the benefit of the programme area, and is described and justified in the application form and explicitly approved by the Monitoring Committee.

### 2.4.5 Project activities

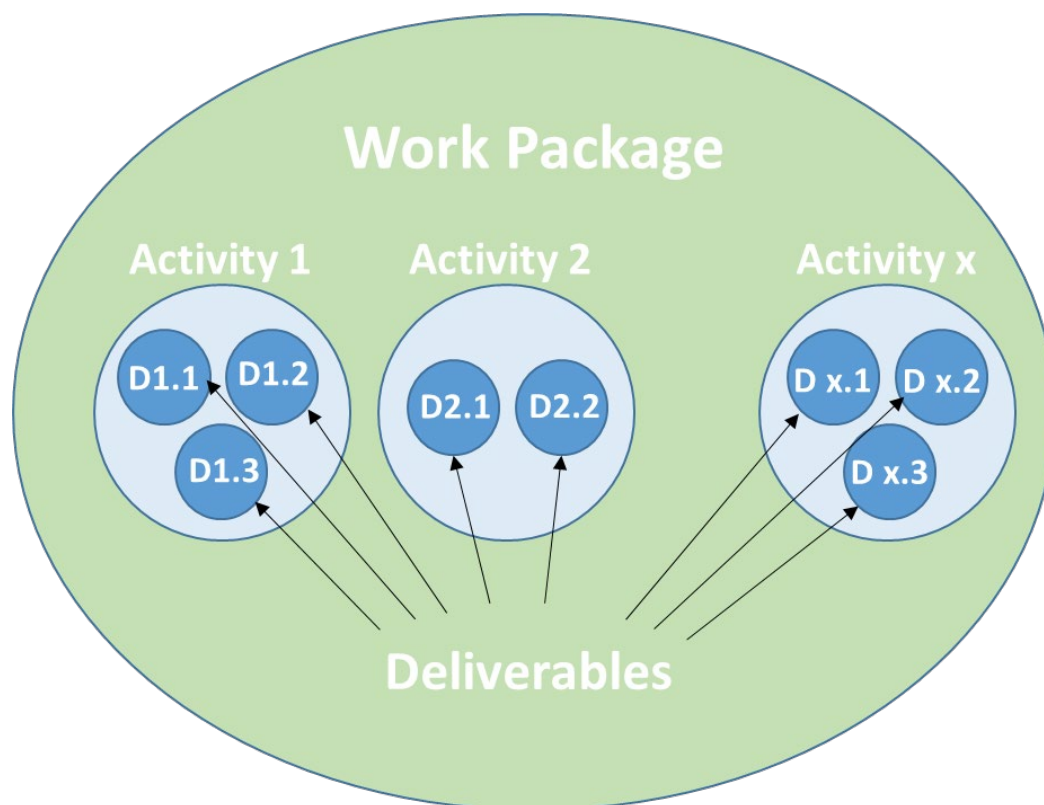
The project will define one project specific objective.

The project consists of activities grouped into a **single work package** with the aim of achieving project outputs.

**An activity** should be understood as a group of actions leading to the achievement of the deliverables, project outputs and project results. In describing the activities, it is important to describe also the role of the partners involved in that specific activity. Each activity can lead to none, one or several deliverables.

**A deliverable** is the physical evidence of what has been produced through an activity or as the physical evidence/support of the output that was produced through an activity.

Outputs are defined based on activities to be carried out and must be reflected in a Programme Output Indicator. Based on the intervention logic of projects and programme, project outputs and activities should contribute to Programme Output and Result Indicators.



The **single work package** will include the communication activities which will be embedded and detailed in the corresponding section of the work package, as needed.

Please note that the description of the project management does not represent a separate work package and this information will be provided in section C7 of the Application form.

Detailed information on how to fill in the Work package is provided in **Annex E Guidelines for filling in the Application Form**

#### 2.4.6 Indicative eligible activities and intervention fields

**Specific objective: 2.1 Improving equal access to inclusive and quality services in education, training and lifelong learning through developing accessible infrastructure, including by fostering resilience for distance and on-line education and training**

- Equipment procurement for the educational infrastructure, including space/land setup services where equipment has to be installed, to provide the necessary material preconditions of a quality educational process and increase the participation in the educational processes, with a strong focus on accessibility for disabled people;
- Investments in hardware and software necessary for the development of digital skills.;
- Development of joint educational and learning plans and strategies, training and mentorship programmes;
- Development of partnerships between training and education institutions and specialized civil society organisations in order to support joint learning and good practice exchange between teachers'/education professionals from both side of the border;
- Development of joint initiatives that support adult education and training, including mobility programs;

### **Intervention fields**

145 Support for the development of digital skills

149 Support for primary to secondary education (excluding infrastructure)

150 Support for tertiary education (excluding infrastructure)

151 Support for adult education (excluding infrastructure)

**Interreg Specific objective: 3.1 Enhance efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens, civil society actors and institutions, in particular, with a view to resolving legal, capacity and other obstacles in the border region**

- Development and implementation of measures for strengthening of institutional capacities of public authorities , including space/land setup services where the equipment will be installed, if the case may be;
- Sharing experiences, joint preparing of guidelines and procedures for improving assessment, prevention, preparedness and response in case of pandemics, emerging infectious diseases or other unforeseen crisis;
- Developing common policies and strategies for ensuring an effective border mobility, including migration and coordination of cross-border transport development plans
- Investments in equipment for effective border mobility for goods and persons, including space/land setup services where the equipment will be installed;
- Joint actions to enhance efficient public administration, cooperation between citizens, civil society and institutions, by investing in state-of-the-art methods, technologies, procedures etc., including space/land setup services where the equipment will be installed, if the case may be

### **Intervention fields**

171 Enhancing cooperation with partners both within and outside the Member State

174 Interreg: border crossing management and mobility and migration management

### **2.4.7 Non-eligible projects. Non-eligible activities.**

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The following projects / activities are not eligible under the present Call for proposals:

- a) projects having an infrastructure (works) component (this does not include the space setup services where the equipment will be installed if the case may be);
- b) project not addressing at least one intervention field and the eligible activities of the Specific Objective chosen;
- c) projects that have already been approved for financing from other sources, including other EC programmes;
- d) projects that have already been completed;
- e) projects/ activities related to the tobacco industry, production of alcoholic distilled beverages (excluding local and traditional products), arms and munitions;
- f) projects concerned only, or mainly, with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, congresses;
- g) projects concerned only, or mainly, with individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
- h) projects concentrated only or mainly on charitable events;
- i) projects in which the Applicant or Partner(s) re-grant the funding;
- j) projects that have the purpose or effect of producing a profit for the Applicant or Partners;

- k) projects awarding sub-grants to third parties in any manner whatsoever;
- l) projects/activities which fall under the state aid rules;
- m) activities linked to, or financing political parties.

## 2.5 Costs. Eligibility requirements

Irrespective of the sources of funding, either grant (EU contribution) or co-financing, the budget is both a cost estimate and a ceiling for "eligible costs". During the implementation eligible costs must be based on real costs based on supporting documents (except for those costs where flat-rate funding will apply).

Grant award decisions are always subject to the condition that the checking process which precedes the signature of the contracts does not reveal problems requiring changes to the budget (for instance arithmetical errors, inaccuracies or unrealistic costs and other ineligible costs, etc.).

The checks may give rise to requests for clarification by the Managing Authority and, moreover, may lead to modifications or reductions of the budget, meant to correct errors or inaccuracies.



**TAKE NOTE THAT**

**The ratio (%) of the EU contribution as a result of the arithmetical corrections made during the contracting process cannot be increased over 90% of the project budget.**

As a general principle, expenditure is eligible for funding when fulfilling the applicable national legislation, as well as respecting the specific rules described in the Common Provisions Regulation (EU Regulation 2021/1060) and the Interreg Regulation (EU Regulation 2021/1059).

Eligible costs are actual costs incurred and paid by the project Partners, irrespective they are from EU contribution or own co-financing, which meet all the following criteria:

- a) They are incurred during the implementation period of the project, except for the costs related to the final report, which may be incurred after the implementation period of the project. In particular:
  - i. Costs of services shall relate to project activities performed during the implementation period. Costs of supplies shall relate to delivery and installation of items during the implementation period. Signature of a contract, placing an order or entering into any commitment for expenditure within the implementation period for future delivery of services or supplies after expiry of the implementation period do not meet this requirement. Cash transfers between the Partners may not be considered as costs incurred;
  - ii. Costs incurred should be paid before the submission of the final reports, except for the costs related to the final report, which may be incurred after the implementation period of the project. They may be paid afterwards, provided they are listed in the final report together with the estimated date of payment;
  - iii. If it is not foreseen otherwise in the national legislation of the project Partners, procedures to award contracts, may have been initiated and contracts may be concluded by the project partners before the start of the implementation period of the project, provided that the provisions of chapter 4.2.1 Procurement have been fully respected.;
- b) They are included in the indicative overall budget for the project,
- c) They are necessary for the implementation of the project and are related to the activities implemented in accordance with the rules of this call for proposals;

- d) They are identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the project partners and determined according to the accounting standards and the usual cost accounting practices applicable to the respective Partners;
- e) They comply with the requirements of applicable national legislation;
- f) They are reasonable, justified and comply with the requirements of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency;
- g) They are supported by invoices or documents of equivalent probative value, as well as any other relevant document;
- h) They observe the relevant public procurement rules, as per chapter 4.2.1 Procurement.
- i) The compliance with the Programme visual identity requirements is ensured;

### 2.5.1. Form of grants

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Under the present call the grant provided shall take the form of the combination of the following two forms:

- a) reimbursement of eligible costs actually incurred by a beneficiary and paid in implementing the project (real costs)
- b) flat rate (simplified costs).

Each form covers different categories of costs, as detailed bellow:

#### **Real costs (direct costs) be used for the following budgetary lines:**

Budget line 1: Staff costs

Budget line 3: Travel and accommodation costs

Budget line 4: External expertise and services

Budget line 5: Equipment

#### **The simplified cost (flat rate) will be used for the following budgetary lines:**

Budget line 2: Office and administrative costs. They shall be calculated as up to 7% of the direct costs of the project (budget lines 1- Staff costs, 3- Travel and accommodation costs, 4- External expertise and services, 5- Equipment).

Indirect costs are eligible provided that they do not include costs assigned to another budget heading. The Managing Authority may ask to justify the requested percentage before contracting.



**TAKE NOTE THAT**

The flat rates are automatically calculated in the Joint electronic monitoring system (JEMS) per each project partner.

#### **2.5.1.1 Simplified costs (flat rates)**

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##### **Office and administrative costs (budget line 2)**

Office and administrative costs are indirect costs. They shall be calculated as up to 7% of eligible direct costs

Indirect costs are eligible provided that they do not include costs assigned to another budget heading. The Managing Authority may ask to justify the requested percentage before contracting.

Office and administrative costs shall be limited to the following elements:

- office rent;
- 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);
- utilities (such as electricity, heating, water);
- office supplies;
- accounting;
- archives;
- maintenance, cleaning and repairs;
- security;
- IT systems;
- communication (such as telephone, fax, internet, postal services, business cards);
- bank charges for opening and administering the account or accounts where the implementation of an operation requires a separate account to be opened; and
- charges for transnational financial transactions.

• **TAKE NOTE THAT**

The flat rates are automatically calculated in the Joint electronic monitoring system (JEMS) per each project partner.

#### 2.5.1.2 Real costs

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##### Staff costs (budget line 1)

Staff costs are direct costs. When calculating the necessary allocation in the budget for Staff costs it should be considered that staff costs are gross employment costs of staff employed by the project partners for implementing the project.

Expenditure included under this line is limited to the following:

(a) salary payments related to the activities which the project partner would not carry out if the operation concerned was not undertaken, provided for, in an employment document, either in the form of an employment or work contract or an appointment decision, or by law, and relating to responsibilities specified in the job description of the staff member concerned;

(b) any other costs directly linked to salary payments incurred and paid by the employer, such as employment taxes and social security including pensions as covered by Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council (20), on condition 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 actually working, or both; and
- not recoverable by the employer.

Payments to natural persons working for the project partner under a contract other than an employment or work contract may be assimilated to salary payments and such a contract shall be considered to be an employment document.



**TAKE NOTE THAT**

If the project partners do not have adequate professionals to carry out certain tasks and/or project activities, external experts may be contracted and budgeted under budget line “External expertise and services”, with the compliance of public procurement legislation.

### **Travel and accommodation costs (budget line 3)**

Travel and accommodation costs, regardless whether such costs are incurred and paid inside or outside the programme area shall be limited to the following cost elements:

- a) travel costs (e.g. tickets, travel and car insurance, fuel, car mileage, toll and parking fees);
- b) the costs of meals;
- c) accommodation costs;
- d) visa costs;
- e) daily allowances.

Any cost element listed in points (a) to (d) of the above paragraph, covered by a daily allowance shall not be reimbursed in addition to the daily allowance.

Travel and accommodation costs of external experts and service providers fall under external expertise and services costs (budget line 4)

The provisions of the national legislation in force will be taken into account, in each country

### **External expertise and services (Budget line 4)**

The external expertise and service costs should be based on contracts or written agreements concluded with external experts and service providers, and paid based on invoices or equivalent requests for reimbursement. The external experts and service providers **following a procurement procedure (see section 4.2.1)**, are contracted by the partners to carry out certain tasks or activities which are strictly linked to the project and are essential for its effective implementation.

These costs **shall be limited to the following services and expertise** provided by a public or private law body or a natural person other than the beneficiary and all partners of the operation:

- a) studies, or surveys (e.g. evaluations, strategies, , handbooks, etc);
- b) training;
- c) translations;
- d) development, modifications and updates to IT systems and website related to project;
- e) promotion, communication, publicity, promotional items and activities or information linked to the project;
- f) financial management;
- g) services related to the organisation and implementation of events or meetings (including rent, catering or interpretation);
- h) participation in events (such as registration fees);
- i) legal consultancy and notarial services, technical and financial expertise, other consultancy and accountancy services dedicated to the project;
- j) intellectual property rights;
- k) the provision of guarantees by a bank or other financial institution where required by Union or national law;
- l) travel and accommodation for external experts, speakers, chairpersons of meetings and service providers

m) other specific expertise and services needed for operations

The above cost items cannot be claimed and reimbursed under any other budget line.

### Equipment (Budget line 5)

Costs under this category refer to equipment purchased (only new), rented or leased specifically for the purpose of the project, related supplies specifically for the purpose of the project, provided they correspond to market prices<sup>9</sup>.

All costs should be listed in the project budget

The following **exhaustive list** includes the cost items which could be included under this budget line and these should not be included also in Office and administrative cost budgetary line:

- 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;
- h. Other specific equipment needed for the project.

The above cost items cannot be claimed and reimbursed under any other cost category.



**TAKE NOTE THAT**

With the view to ensure that the project budget is cost-effective, in case of acquisition of vehicles for project management purposes, the programme will consider eligible up to EUR 23,000 per vehicle (this amount does not include insurance, maintenance or minor repairs);



**TAKE NOTE THAT**

For evaluation purposes, the Lead partner and partners are required to mention in the Project statement/Project partner statement if the costs presented in their own budgets include VAT.

### **2.5.3 Ineligible costs**

Costs which do not meet the eligibility conditions of expenses are ineligible costs.

The following costs shall not be considered eligible:

- a) debts and interest on debt;
- b) provisions for losses or liabilities;
- c) costs declared by the beneficiaries and covered by another project or programme from any other sources;

<sup>9</sup> It is to be noted that the purchase of **consumables** that do not fall under the definition of office and administrative costs and that are necessary for the use of laboratory equipment or machines and instruments (points d and e) is eligible and should be included under this cost category.



- d) the purchase of land or buildings
- e) purchase of used equipment or vehicles
- f) costs related to fluctuation of foreign exchange;
- g) loans to third parties;
- h) fines, financial penalties and expenditure on legal disputes and litigation;
- i) gifts;
- j) expenditure verification
- k) contributions in kind.
- k) purchase of used equipment or vehicles;
- l) costs of constructions/rehabilitations/ modernizations of infrastructures (this does not include the **space setup services** where the equipment will be installed if the case may be)

## 2.6 How to apply and procedures to follow

### 2.6.1 Publication

The call for proposals is published on the Programme website: <https://ro-ua.net>

Training sessions for the potential Applicants and Partners will be carried out following the launching of the Call for proposals. The calendar of the events shall be published on the website.

Information and updates concerning the Call for proposals will be provided on the Programme website. It is important to check it regularly.

### 2.6.2 Deadlines for submission of proposals

The project proposal must be submitted in electronic format no later than: 28<sup>th</sup> of July 2025, 14:00 EET.



**TAKE NOTE THAT**

The electronic system JEMS does not allow further recordings of applications after this deadline. In order to avoid any inconvenient, we strongly recommend applicants to upload the application/documents few days in advance.

### 2.6.3 Filling in the Application form

Applications can be submitted exclusively via the Joint electronic monitoring system (JEMS), unless otherwise instructed by the Managing Authority. JEMS can be accessed through the programme website.

The offline template of the application form is not an official application form and shall not be submitted to the programme.

When filling in the online Application Form, the Applicants are required:

- **To use the English language**, to fill in each field, and to follow the given sequence. Please note that some information is taken over from one field to another, thus making the process easier and error-proof.
- To formulate **only one specific objective per project**.
- To notice that the project budget is an integral part of the Application Form. **Each Partner has his own individual budget**, where all the necessary details must be provided.

- To indicate in the Application Form the locations where the purchased equipment will be installed and/or the mobile equipment will be stationed, regardless of the value of the equipment per location.
- To use and fully filled in the templates provided as annexes to the present Guidelines for applicants.
- All supporting documents required in **section 2.6.4 Supporting documents accompanying the Application Form I** must be uploaded in JEMS.

## ▶▶▶ TAKE NOTE THAT

The Applicants must ensure that, **before the deadline (1)** set in section 2.6.2 *Deadlines for submission of proposals*, the final version of the Application Form, its annexes and the supporting documents have been checked for correctness and completeness, and then uploaded into the JEMS.

The programme recommends the Applicants to perform these actions with **at least one week before** the actual deadline of the call.

### 2.6.4 Supporting documents accompanying the Application Form

The following documents shall be uploaded in JEMS and shall be provided **by all the Partners** participating to the project, in joint or in separate documents, as required bellow, in English language.

In case translation of documents is needed, it is recommended to take advantage of the Commission automatic translation service, eTranslation covering all EU official languages and part of the languages of the programme eligible area (e.g Ukrainian). The tool is available at <https://language-tools.ec.europa.eu/>

- a) *Project Statement*<sup>10</sup> from the Lead Partner and *Project Partner Statement*<sup>11</sup> from each project partners (**in English**, templates in **Annex A and Annex B respectively**), electronically or handwritten signed by the legal representative of the entity concerned. When document uploaded bears a handwritten signature, it will also be stamped, if that is required by the relevant legal provisions in force,
- a) *Official mandate* for the person signing Annex A Project Statement, Annex C **Financial Capacity Self-assessment**, Annex D **State Aid self-assessment**, in case she/he is not the legal representative of the Lead partner/Partner , **in English/English translation**.
- b) *Statutes* or other relevant documents for the Applicant and each project Partner, stamped (if required by the relevant legal provisions in force) and signed/electronically signed by the legal representatives, in national language and English translation<sup>12</sup>. The document may be fully or partially translated. In the latter case, the translation must contain at least the following information: headquarters of the organisation, legal representative, empowered body for the approval of the budget of the entity, articles demonstrating that the organization has competences/attribution in the field addressed by the project.
- c) *Financial Capacity Self-assessment (in English, template in Annex C) –electronically or handwritten signed by the legal representatives, and Excel file – to be provided by lead partner and each project partner*.

<sup>10</sup> Signed by the legal representative of the Applicant

<sup>11</sup> Signed by the legal representative of each partner except for the Lead partner

<sup>12</sup> Exception is made for EGTC.

d) *Annual accounts for the latest financial year* for which the accounts have been closed at the moment of submission of the Application must be submitted by the Lead Partner and all project partners, in English. Only documents (the balance sheet and profit and loss account) providing data about revenues, expenditures, profit and losses will be accepted<sup>13</sup>. Annual Accounts containing only the Balance Sheet without the Profit and Loss Account or a document providing data about revenues, expenditures, profit and losses for the latest financial year for which the accounts have been closed, will be considered noncompliant. Organisations (any lead partner or project partner) established in 2024 not having the latest annual accounts must submit the Balance sheet for the last closed month.

This obligation does not apply to public authorities ( e.g county councils, regional administrations, local council, district council, village council, etc).

e) *Certificates of fiscal registration or equivalent* (for Romanian partners) and excerpt from the Unified State Register or Certificate of registration as a taxpayer (for Ukrainian partners) – for the Applicant and each project Partner, in national language and English translation;

f) *State Aid self-assessment* (one per project) jointly filled in by the Applicant and each project Partner (in English. template in **Annex D**), electronically or handwritten signed by the legal representatives of each partner. When document uploaded bears handwritten signatures, it will also be stamped, if that is required by the relevant legal provisions in force.

In case of supporting documents uploaded as scans, the text must be legible and the signatures, dates and stamps, must be visible. The originals must be available at any time during the evaluation, contracting, implementation and durability period of the projects.

For the projects selected for financing, other documents will be required during the contracting phase.

Where documents are in the national language, an English translation of the entire document or of the relevant parts reflecting the main content and proving the eligibility of the Applicant and his partners will be provided, as required. Translation must bear “According to the original”, be signed and stamped (if required by the relevant legal provisions in force) by the legal representatives/electronically signed and will prevail for the purpose of the eligibility check.



#### TAKE NOTE THAT

Submission of both documents in national languages and their English translations, when requested, is compulsory for the purpose of evaluation. Projects that lack one of these versions of the supporting documentation may be rejected.



#### TAKE NOTE THAT

Information as included in the Application Form shall be cross-checked with the information given by the supporting documents accompanying the Application Form.

### 2.6.5 Further information for the Applicants

Questions may be sent in writing by e-mail **no later than 21 calendar days** before the deadline of closure of the Call for proposals to the Joint Secretariat.

The following e-mail address is available:

<sup>13</sup> The extracts from bank accounts are not equivalent to latest annual account.

Joint Secretariat Suceava e-mail [info.ro-ua@brctsuceava.ro](mailto:info.ro-ua@brctsuceava.ro)

Replies will be given **no later than 11 calendar days** before the deadline of closure of the Call for proposals. The Managing Authority and the Technical Secretariat, will not provide further clarifications after this date.

Questions that may be relevant to other Applicants, together with the answers, will be published on the programme website: [www.ro-ua.net](http://www.ro-ua.net) .

It is therefore highly recommended to regularly consult the Programme website in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.



**TAKE NOTE THAT**

In the interest of equal treatment of all the Applicants, the Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat cannot give prior opinions on the eligibility of the Applicant or its Partners, of the project or of the specific activities.

## **CHAPTER 3 EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF PROPOSALS**

The selection of the projects submitted following the Call for proposals will be realised through a process consisting of several steps and involving the programme structures, national authorities and independent assessors/ external experts, as follows:

### **Step I. ADMISSIBILITY**

This step will consist of administrative and eligibility checks, performed by the Joint Secretariat of the Programme, its [Branch Offices from Ukraine/Contact Point from Ukraine], national authorities from both countries, State aid external experts.

### **Step II. QUALITY ASSESSMENT**

This step of evaluation will consist of strategic and operational assessment of the applications that have passed the Step I.

In this stage are involved external assessors.

Following the Step II, **and after the verification of double-funding** the recommendations for approval or rejection of a project shall be submitted to the Monitoring Committee (MC), for the final decision.

**Applicants will be notified on the outcomes of evaluation after the MC issues the final decision on projects.**

The selection of high value-added projects strongly contributing the programme objectives and indicators is the key objective of the evaluation process.

#### **▶▶▶ TAKE NOTE THAT**

All persons involved in the evaluation process have to strictly adhere to the principles of confidentiality, objectivity, transparency and fair competition, as well as lack of conflict of interest

In this respect, during the selection process, all contacts between the Lead partners/ partners and the Programme structures must be transparent and ensure the equal treatment.

The evaluation process has a confidential character. The structures and persons involved with an active role or as observers in the evaluation process, are not allowed to disclose any information about the examination, clarification, or evaluation of any project, during and after the evaluation process.

Any attempt by a lead partner or a partner to influence the process in any way, whether by making contact with the staff of the Managing Authority, the Joint Secretariat or with the National Authorities, members of the Monitoring Committee, observers, external assessors, or with other persons who might participate in any capacity in the selection process, or in any other way, will result in the immediate exclusion of its project from further consideration.

#### **▶▶▶ TAKE NOTE THAT**

During the entire assessment process, the Coordinator of Selection Committee, on behalf of the structures involved in assessment process, may request clarifications to which the Lead partner must answer within the indicated deadline. **The Lead partner bears full responsibility for ensuring the technical**

conditions necessary for receipt of requests for clarifications. In order to timely receive these requests, contact details given at the time of registration in JEMS must be correct and fully operational.

### 3.1. Step 1 Admissibility

#### 3.1.1 Administrative checks

In order to be administrative compliant, projects have to fulfil the administrative requirements as per AnnexH– **Admissibility** - Administrative grid, which will be used by the assessors of each project.

The required annexes and supporting documents listed in Section 2.6.4 - Supporting documents accompanying the application form have to be submitted within the deadline in Jems. , Clarifications may be requested during the administrative checks to the Lead partner, but not more than once per issue. Lead partners shall provide the required clarifications (including those related to their partners) within the given deadline (maximum 5 working days -depending on the complexity of the clarification needed) from the date of written request by the Coordinator of the assessment process).

#### 3.1.2 Eligibility

The eligibility check will be carried out in order to check the compliance with the criteria set out in **Annex I Admissibility-Eligibility Grid**, based on the information provided in the Application Form and within the annexes listed in Section 2.6.4 **Supporting documents accompanying the Application Form**, which will be submitted within the deadline in Jems.

The **state aid assessment** shall be made at this stage, according to the same criteria described in **Annex D State Aid Self Assessment**.

The State Aid assessment is aimed at checking the State Aid relevance of a project proposal. This analysis will be performed by external experts, on the basis of information included in the application form, independently by of the self assessment provided by partners.

During the assessment of eligibility, clarifications may be requested, but no more than once per issue. Lead partners shall provide the required clarifications within the given deadline (maximum 5 working days -depending on the complexity of the clarification needed) from the date of written request by the Coordinator of the assessment process).

### 3.2 Step II Quality assessment

Project proposals are to be evaluated against the priorities of the call, specific objectives, intervention fields, indicative activities, result indicators and output indicators of the Programme, and grants are to be awarded to projects which maximise the overall effectiveness of the Call for proposals, enabling selection of those which clearly contribute to the achievement of the Programme indicators. The assessment will also consider the relevance and coherence of the project, its contribution to the programme's objectives, outputs and results, the cooperation character of the proposal, the relevance of the partnership, quality of the work package and budget effectiveness.

Each proposal will be assessed by two external assessors, under the supervision of the selection committee and the final decision on the scores awarded will be approved by the Monitoring Committee

During the Step II Quality assessment two categories of criteria are analysed and scored, as follows:

**A. Strategic assessment consists of analysis of:**

- A1. Project relevance
- A2 Cooperation character
- A3 Project intervention logic
- A4 Partnership relevance

**B. Operational assessment** – consists of analysis of:

- B 1 Project work plan
- B 2 Budget
- B 3 Communication activities

Each criterion will be evaluated and scored according to the **Annex J** Quality assessment grid. In rating the applications the assessors will use a scale of 0 to 4. The scores given by the assessors are then weighted according the importance of each criteria, as indicated in Annex J. The granted scores will be whole numbers.

The eliminatory conditions are set against the marks given by the assessors and not against the weighted marks.



**TAKE NOTE THAT**

The **Strategic assessment criteria** is eliminatory meaning that the project proposal must obtain an overall score of at least 40 points out of 55 points available at this section.

Also, a range of sub-criteria are also eliminatory (please see the Annex J Quality assessment grid):

In case of missing documents or missing/unclear information relevant for this assessment stage, clarifications may be requested, but no more than once per issue. Lead partners shall provide the required documents and/or information within the given deadline (maximum 5 working days -depending on the complexity of the clarification needed) from the date of written request by the Coordinator of the assessment process).



**TAKE NOTE THAT**

In case the Lead partner fails to provide the information requested as clarification, the project will be assessed in the absence of the concerned information, and will be scored accordingly (by scoring "0" the section/subsection of the grid concerning the unclear or missing information). The "0" score given to the eliminatory criteria, will automatically lead to the rejection of the project.

Following Step II of evaluation, a list of applications ranked according to their score will be created.

### Ranking

The maximum weighted score that a project can get is 100 points.

If several proposals will be awarded the same Final score (weighted) at the end of Step 2, in order to determine the final ranking on the list of provisionally selected projects and on the reserve list, the following supplementary criteria are to be taken into account, in the following sequence:

- a) the score awarded at section A 2 Cooperation character
- b) the score awarded at section A 3 Project intervention logic
- c) the score awarded at section B 2 Budget

The list of **provisionally selected projects** shall be done within each financial envelope available under the call per specific objective.

The projects having a **final score** (weighted) of **at least 70 points** will be included on a **reserve list**.

The Monitoring Committee will issue a decision concerning the list of the **provisionally selected projects** and **the reserve list**.

Please note that including a project on the reserve list does not guarantee that a contract will be signed in a later stage. Contracting the projects on the reserve list will be subject to a subsequent decision of the Monitoring Committee and availability of funds.

### **Avoiding double financing**

In order to avoid double funding, the Programme will perform verifications of the projects recommended for funding.

Provided that double funding is identified, the project will not be selected for financing, or, in case of late identification of double financing the Monitoring Committee will cancel the award decision of the respective project(s) and revise the list of selected projects, accordingly. The MC shall decide whether the respective proposal may be revised by the Lead partner during contracting without calling into question the award decision or the ranking of projects, when only certain activities of the project have been identified as potentially double funded.

Following the decision issued by the Monitoring Committee, all Lead partners will be notified regarding their selection or rejection, respectively.

### **▶▶▶ TAKE NOTE THAT**

Following the appeal procedure (see section 3.3 below) the ranking may be subject to changes. Consequently, there is a possibility that, at the end of this procedure, one or more Lead partners, on the lower positions to be informed that their project proposal went down on the reserve list.

## **3.3 The appeal procedure (complaints to the outcomes of the evaluation process)**

Lead partners believing that they have been harmed by an error or irregularity during any step of the selection process may file an appeal.

An appeal is considered legitimate if **the Lead partner** can substantiate that the decision of the Monitoring Committee clearly infringes the provisions of the Guidelines for the present Call for proposals.

**In order to be considered, an appeal must:**

- a) Be submitted by letter electronically signed or handwritten signed **by the legal representative of the Lead partner**. In the latter case, it should also be stamped if required by the relevant legal provisions in force. Appeals submitted by partners or by third parties will be rejected.
- b) Be written in English language;
- c) Indicate the registration number of the project which is the subject of the appeal;
- d) Clearly describe the infringement considered as being made by the Monitoring Committee, and make clear references to the corresponding provisions of the Guidelines for the present Call for proposals and to the information provided through the notification announcing the result of the concerned evaluation step;



- e) Be submitted via e-mail, to the Joint Secretariat, within **10 calendar days** from the date when the written notification announcing the result of the evaluation has been sent following the decision of the Monitoring Committee, to the address:

[call2small@brctsuceava.ro](mailto:call2small@brctsuceava.ro),

▶▶▶ TAKE NOTE THAT

Appeals that do not observe these requirements **will be rejected** without further consideration.

The answer to the Lead partner will be communicated in writing in maximum 60 calendar days from the receipt of the appeal. However, the final decision on the list of selected projects and of the reserve list is taken by the Monitoring Committee of the programme. Consequently, the final decision concerning the appeal may be communicated in the set deadline, subject to the availability of the Monitoring Committee to meet in this period.

The decision of the Monitoring Committee on the appeals received is final, and no other supplementary complaint submitted will be considered.

### 3.4 Indicative time table

ACTIONS	DATE	TIME*
1) Launch of the Call for proposals	April 28, 2025	10.00 AM
2) Information and training sessions in the programme area	According to the schedule published on the Programme web-site	
3) Deadline for assistance delivery to the potential Applicants	July 15, 2025	
4) Deadline for closing the Call for proposals	July 28, 2025	14.00
5) MC decision	to be announced	
6) Notifications of award/rejection	to be announced	
7) Contract signature	to be announced	

\***Provisional date.** All times are in the time zone of Romania (the country of the Managing Authority).

This timetable may be updated by the Managing Authority during the procedure. In such case, the updated timetable shall be published on internet on the programme website:

## CHAPTER 4 CONTRACTING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECTS

### 4.1 Preparing the grant contract signature

Before signing the grant contract, all the selected projects shall undergo a contracting procedure.



#### TAKE NOTE THAT

The **grant contract** included as an annex K to these guidelines for applicants is a **draft** and is only for information purposes. The content of the grant contract may be subject of modification following revisions approved by the Monitoring Committee and/or due to changes of the legal framework in any of the participant countries. Will be provided during the pre-contracting process.

After being notified about the Monitoring Committee's decision, the Applicant has to submit to the JS/MA mainly the following documents:

- a) **Partnership Agreement (Annex L)**. All partners in a project, including the Lead Partner, must sign a partnership agreement that stipulates the rights and duties of the partners before the signing of the grant contract with the MA. A model of partnership agreement is annexed to the present Guidelines. The partners may decide to stipulate *additional* provisions provided that the respective provisions do not contradict and are fully in line with those mentioned in the model partnership agreement. The partnership agreement will be electronically signed or handwritten signed **by all partners**. In the latter case, it must be stamped, if required by the relevant provisions in force - in English language
- b) **Financial Identification Forms (Annex M)** for the accounts specially opened for the project in EUR and in the national currency, for the Lead Partner and for all the Partners who are responsible for managing a share of the project budget in English language
- c) **Decision of the empowered bodies** of the Lead Partner and of all the project Partners, stating the availability of the amount and percentage of co-financing (**from their budget share**) to be provided and spent during the implementation period of the project, as well as any ineligible expenditure or any other costs necessary for the project implementation, the temporary availability of funds for their activities until reimbursement, as well as stating the fact that the Applicant/Partner has the necessary financial resources and mechanisms to cover operation and maintenance costs, so as to ensure their financial durability – in national language and English translation .
- d) **Legal entity sheets** for the Lead Partner and all the project Partners, using the template provided in **Annex N**, signed and stamped (if required by the relevant legal provisions in force)/electronically signed by the legal representatives -in English language
- e) **Evidence of ownership** by the Lead Partner and/or Partners or access to the land/space/building where equipment<sup>14</sup> to be installed, as follows:
  - legal acts<sup>15</sup> stating the rights of the respective Partner over each location (building) where the equipment is to be installed, valid at least five years from the final payment to the beneficiary but not less than 2032<sup>16</sup> (ownership, long term rent, concession, administration, etc.) – in national language and English translation, **AND**

<sup>14</sup> This does not includes the office equipment necessary for project management

<sup>15</sup> E.g. government decision, law, government ordinance, decision of local authorities, property act, etc.

<sup>16</sup> Exception is made only when the respective Partner is the owner of the land/ building

- documents showing registration in the relevant public registers of the rights of the respective Partner over each location (building) where the equipment is to be installed – in national language, and English translation, **AND**
  - statements<sup>17</sup> by the legal representative of the owner, that each location (building) where the equipment is to be installed is free of any encumbrances, is not the object of a pending litigation, is not the object of a claim according to the relevant national legislation – in national language and English translation In case the respective Partner(s) is not the owner, the agreement of the owner of the land/building/space, stating that the equipment may be installed – in national language and English translation,
- f) **Valid certificates** issued by the competent state authority in each participating country proving that the Lead Partner and its Partners have fulfilled their obligations related to the **payment of debt to the consolidated state budget<sup>18</sup>/ national public budget<sup>19</sup>** in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established, in national language and English translation;
- g) **(for Romanian entities) Valid certificates** issued by the competent local authority in each participating country proving that the Lead Partner and its Partners have fulfilled obligations relating to the **payment of debts to the local budget**, in accordance with the legal provisions, in the national language and English translation;
- h) **Beneficiary's Statement (template** to be provided by the Joint Secretariat), electronically signed or handwritten signed. In the latter case, it must be stamped, if required by the relevant provisions in force.- in English language
- i) **Declarations on behalf of the Lead Partner and Partners regarding the absence of double funding**, electronically signed or handwritten signed by the legal representatives. In the latter case, it must be stamped, if required by the relevant provisions in force.-in English language
- j) **Official mandate for the person signing the declaration** above (mentioned at letter i) in case she/he is not the legal representative of the respective entity.



### TAKE NOTE THAT

In order to satisfy itself of the sound management of the contracting process, at any stage the MA/JS may request additional documents from the applicants and on-the-spot/virtual visits shall also take place.

In order to verify the information and documents provided by the project partners during the evaluation process in what concerns the location(s) where the project will be implemented, in order to prevent possible fraud or contracting errors, the JS will perform pre-contracting on-site / virtual visits at the selected partners. The purpose of the on-site visits will be, inter alia, to check the documents necessary for the signature of the contract as originals, to check the location where the project is to be implemented, to identify any potential problems which may hinder sound implementation of the selected project, and give feedback to the partners etc. During the on-site/virtual visits, the JS may recommend corrective measures.

If the on-site/virtual visits cannot be performed due to reasons imputable to the selected Lead Partners and/or their Partners, the project shall be rejected.

<sup>17</sup> The statement should be given by the owner of the land/ building

<sup>18</sup> Romanian entities

<sup>19</sup> Ukrainian entities

In the case of online pre-contracting site visits, the correctness and conformity of the information and documents presented by the Applicant and the Partner(s) during the virtual pre-contracting visits shall be verified during the first monitoring on-site visit performed by the JS.

During the preparation of the grant contract the JS will carry out checks to ensure the correctness of the project budget (e.g. inaccuracies and technical inconsistencies, removal of all ineligible costs and removal/reduction of costs according to the conclusions and recommendations approved by the Monitoring Committee, and also any necessary adjustments in order to raise the level of coherence between the outputs, results and activities, while respecting the conditions established in the Guidelines for applicants and the definitions from the Performance Framework Methodology, and to increase the possibility of reporting realistic achievements). Also, any clarifications or minor corrections may be made to the description of the project or to the budget in so far they do not call into question the grant award decision, do not conflict with the equal treatment of all the applicants, relate to matters clearly identified by the Selection Committee and/or provided by the present Guidelines, or are absolutely necessary for the sound implementation of the project, under the conditions and in the framework established by the programme documents.

The checks may give rise to the requests for clarifications and may lead the JS/MA to impose modifications or corrections to address such mistakes, inaccuracies or recommendations approved by the Monitoring Committee. If the selected Lead Partners and/or their Partners do not agree/ agree only partially with the above mentioned modifications necessary for the implementation of the project in the framework established by the programme documents, the project shall be rejected.

Also, the MA will check the Debtors Ledger of the entity hosting the Managing Authority to check if the Lead Partner or Partners have no unpaid debt to the Managing Authority for any project financed under the Romania-Ukraine Joint Operational Programme 2014-2020 and at the date of contract signature. If the Managing Authority established debts (in the Debtors Ledger of the entity hosting the Managing Authority) for the Lead Partner and/or the Partners, the grant contract may be signed only if and after the situation of the debt is tackled.

Depending on the nature and complexity of the corrections necessary to be performed, the application and the summary of modifications/ corrections may be submitted to the MC for approval.

All partners have the obligation to provide all the necessary documents and be available for the on-the-spot/virtual visits in order for the contracts to be signed. Please take into consideration that failure to provide the requested documents within the set deadlines during the pre-contracting period will lead to the rejection of the project.

Depending on the admissibility of the provided documents and the verifications performed by the JS during the on-site visits, the Managing Authority may decide at any moment during the contracting process, in consultation with the Monitoring Committee, to reject a project. In this case, the MC shall decide the destination of the disbursed funds based on the proposal of the MA (e. g. inter alia, may decide to select and, consequently, the MA may initiate the contracting procedures with the next project from the reserve list).

Following the MC decision to award a grant, a grant contract will be offered (see **Annex K**). The contract annexed to these Guidelines is indicative. The final version of the grant contract shall be available during the contracting phase. By signing the grant contract, the Lead Applicant becomes the project Lead Partner and declares accepting the contractual conditions.

## 4.2 Project implementation

### 4.2.1 Public procurement

If the Lead Partner and the Partners have to conclude procurement contracts with contractors in order to carry out certain project activities, they shall respect the procurement rules set out in Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 (Interreg).

Contracting authorities or contracting entities within the meaning of the Union legislation applicable to procurement procedures located in the Member States, shall apply national laws, regulations and administrative provisions adopted in connection with Union legislation, as laid down in Article 58.1(a) of the Regulation (EU) no 2021/1059 (Interreg).

In all other cases, the public or private Partners shall apply the provisions set out in Articles 58.2 of the Regulation no 2021/1059, the provisions of **Regulation (EU) 2024/2509** and in *Annex II on Public Procurement of the Financing Agreement* signed between Ukraine, Romania and the European Commission (annexed for information -Annex O ).

If it is not foreseen otherwise in the national legislation of the Lead Partner and/or of the Partners, procedures to award contracts may be initiated and contracts may be concluded by the Lead Partner and/or the Partners before the start of the implementation period of the project, provided the above conditions have been respected.

### 4.2.2 Taxes and VAT

In accordance with Article 64 (1)(c)(i) of the EU Regulation 2021/1060, VAT is considered eligible for projects with a total value below 5,000,000 Euro.

Nevertheless, when project partners are entitled, according to their national legislation, to recover VAT, should not include in the project budget and request the amounts representing the VAT corresponding to the reported/requested eligible expenditure.

For evaluation purposes, the lead beneficiaries and partners are required to mention in the Project statement/Project partner statement if the costs presented in their own budgets include VAT.

### 4.2.3 Payments to the project

An advance payment shall be granted, representing 30% of the value of the grant contract, following an advance payment request submitted to the MA by the Lead partner.

Further payment requests may be submitted by the Lead partner provided that the amount claimed for reimbursement is not lower than 5,000 euro, but not later than every 4 months of the implementation period. The payment request shall be accompanied by a narrative and financial report and a control report for expenditures declared.

## CHAPTER 5 ANNEXES

### 5.1 Templates for documents required together with application form

Annex A	Project Statement (template) (to be signed by the Lead Partner)
Annex B	Project Partner Statement (template) (to be signed by each partner except for the Lead Partner)
Annex C	Financial Capacity Self-Assessment (template)
Annex D	State Aid self-assessment

### 5.2 Annexes to the Guidelines supporting preparation of proposals

Annex E	Guidelines for filling in the Application Form
Annex F	Guidelines for indicators
Annex G	Mandatory visibility requirements of project
Annex H	Admissibility administrative grid (for information purpose)
Annex I	Admissibility eligibility grid (for information purpose)
Annex J	Quality assessment grid (for information purpose)

### 5.3 Other

Annex K	Grant contract (draft) (for information purpose)
Annex L	Partnership Agreement (model)
Annex M	Financial Identification (template)
Annex N	Legal Entity sheet (template)
Annex O	Annex II Public Procurement of Financing Agreement between Ukraine, Romania and European Commission (for information)