

Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

Italy – Croatia

INTERREG ITALY-CROATIA PROGRAMME 2021 – 2027

Project selection procedure

1st Call for Proposals

(Version 1.0 – 17th November 2022)

1. Introduction

Within the INTERREG VI A 2021-2027 Italy-Croatia CBC Programme (hereinafter: Programme) the selection of INTERREG operations is carried out in compliance with art. 22 of Interreg Regulation (EU) 2021/1059, by the Monitoring Committee (henceforth “MC”), with the support of the Joint Secretariat (henceforth “JS”), on the basis of the methodology and criteria approved by the MC.

This document is an integral part of the “1st Call for Proposals for Standard and Small-scale projects application package”, available on the [Programme’s website](#). For the purposes of transparency as requested by art. 22(2) Reg 2021/1059, the document illustrates the project selection procedures related to the 1st Call for proposals for Standard and small-scale projects.

These procedures are made available to the public in order to allow applicants to be aware of the criteria which are used to assess the proposals and thus develop high quality projects to support the Programme in reaching its objectives.

Reference documents:

- Interreg Regulation (EU) 2021/1059
- INTERREG VI A 2021-2027 Italy-Croatia CBC Programme
- INTERACT document “Briefing note on project selection - Interreg 2021-2027”
- SEA - Strategic Environmental Assessment (in particular, Annex IV)
- ECA - Special Report 14/2021 Interreg cooperation: The potential of the European Union’s cross-border regions has not yet been fully unlocked
- Application Package

2. Overview

Project applications shall be submitted in English language via the JEMS platform within the deadline set in the Call announcement. It is the Lead applicant’s responsibility to verify the compliance of the submitted proposal with all Programme and Call requirements including the respect of administrative compliance criteria.

After the submission of project proposals, the selection procedural steps to be carried out shall include:



Italy – Croatia

1. Administrative compliance and eligibility checks;
2. Quality assessment (only for project that pass the administrative compliance and Eligibility check)
3. State Aid assessment (only for projects recommended for funding)

The MC is in charge of the final decision on selecting the operations. Projects to be implemented outside the Programme area require explicit approval by the Managing Authority in the MC.

The JS may ask for support from Croatian and Italian National Authorities for any evidence supporting the respect of these elements:

- ‘competence’ requirement of the assimilated applicants and
- whether the proposal is directly affected by a reasoned opinion by the Commission in respect of an infringement within the scope of Article 258 TFEU.

The following paragraphs illustrate each step of the assessment procedure.

As Annex to this document the table of selection criteria is also made available to applicants.

3. Administrative Compliance and Eligibility check

The first step of the assessment procedure is aimed at verifying the administrative and eligibility compliance with the requirements set in the Call for Proposals for Standard and Small-scale projects.

In particular, project proposals submitted within the Call shall fulfil certain formal and administrative criteria, here listed:

A	Submission and completeness of the AF
B	General Call requirements
C	Eligibility of Lead Partner
D	Eligibility of Project Partners
E	Annexes
F	Cooperation criteria
G	Horizontal principles



Italy – Croatia

The detailed list of criteria to be met is provided in Annex I to this document.

The JS carries out this phase of the assessment.

Administrative compliance and eligibility check criteria are of a “knock-out nature” thus shall be clearly answered by YES or NO, if only one of the mentioned eligibility criteria is answered with NO, the project has to be rejected as ineligible, unless the failure of the criterion leads to the rejection of a single project partner and the general partnership requirements are still met by the proposal.

Only information provided in the Application Form and related annexes included in the JEMS platform shall be subject to the assessment. No clarification/additional information will be asked to the LP at this stage. The only exception at this stage of application is foreseen in case the JS is unable to collect relevant information on the financial statements for Standard private lead applicants.

In case the content of the application form does not coincide with the content of the Annexes included in JEMS, the information in JEMS system shall prevail.

It is the responsibility of the lead applicant to check the uploaded information and the coherency among Application Form and Annexes before finally submitting the proposal. Programme authorities shall not bear any responsibility for missing or misleading information causing the rejection of the project.

Only the applications that successfully pass the administrative compliance and eligibility checks will qualify for the quality assessment.

The result of the administrative compliance and eligibility check shall be communicated to the MC for approval.

In order to respect the Italian law in force on the transparency of the administrative procedure, the list of validly submitted applications is published on the [Programme website](#), containing some essential information.

Lead applicants of ineligible applications shall be informed by the MA.

4. Quality Assessment

The next step of the assessment procedure is aimed at evaluating the quality of admitted and eligible proposals. This phase of the assessment is carried out by the JS on the basis of the specificity of the project contents and the expertise available within the JS. In case of large number of applications received the Programme may involve external experts to support the work of the JS. The assessment is based on two different sets of criteria:



Italy – Croatia

1. Strategic criteria

2. Operational criteria

The goal of the quality check is to provide the MC with an overall picture of all the relevant information on each application in order to allow its approval or rejection.

4.1 Strategic criteria

The main aim of the Strategic criteria is to determine the extent of the project's contribution to the achievement of Programme objectives (including contribution to Programme indicators), by addressing joint or common needs of the Programme area. A special attention is given to the result-oriented approach with clear demand for visible outputs and concrete results.

The following criteria will be used for this stage of Assessment:

1	Cooperation character
2	Project relevance and strategy
3	Contribution to Programme's objectives, expected results and outputs
4	Partnership relevance

4.2 Operational criteria

The Operational criteria assess the viability of implementation of the project proposal, its value for money - in terms of used resources versus delivered results - as well as the communication approach.

The main aspects which will be assessed are:

5	Management
6	Communication
7	Work Plan
8	Budget



5. Scoring Quality Assessment

Each quality assessment criterion is assessed on the basis of sub-criteria, with each being scored from 0 (not present/missing) to 100 (excellent) so to have a final score on the range of 100.

TABLE 1: Description of points used

Points	Description	
0	Not evaluable	The information requested is not present or missing (either not filled in or not provided in the text).
20	Insufficient	The information requested is not relevant.
40	Poor	The information provided is relevant however contains strong weaknesses.
60	Fair	The information provided is not sufficiently detailed, there are areas that could be strengthened.
80	Good	The information provided is clear and detailed although it is possible that some small improvements could be made.
100	Excellent	The information provided addresses well the criterion in its details, clearness and coherence.

TABLE 2 Weight and thresholds

Strategic assessment criteria	POINTS	WEIGHT	WEIGHTED SCORE	Minimum quality thresholds
Cooperation character	(0-20-40-60-80-100)	20%	(points x weight)	-
Project relevance and strategy	(0-20-40-60-80-100)	18%	(points x weight)	-
Contribution to Programme's objectives, expected results	(0-20-40-	16%	(points x	-



Italy – Croatia

and outputs	60-80-100)		weight)	
Partnership relevance	(0-20-40-60-80-100)	16%	(points x weight)	-
Total for strategic criteria		70%		42
Operational assessment criteria	POINTS	WEIGHT	WEIGHTED SCORE	Minimum quality thresholds
Management	(0-20-40-60-80-100)	7%	(points x weight)	-
Communication	(0-20-40-60-80-100)	7%	(points x weight)	-
Work Plan	(0-20-40-60-80-100)	8%	(points x weight)	-
Budget	(0-20-40-60-80-100)	8%	(points x weight)	-
Total for operational criteria		30%		18
TOTAL OVERALL		100%		

The detailed list of quality assessment criteria, sub-criteria, weight and scores is available in Annex I of this document.

Moreover minimum quality thresholds are applied to each set of quality criteria.

The Strategic qualitative aspect will be given priority over the Operational aspect. Therefore, **if the project proposal does not reach a minimum threshold of 42 in the Strategic part of the Quality assessment phase, the JS will not proceed further to the next assessment criteria.**

Only applications that score a minimum of 18 at Operational criteria, will be proposed for financing.

6. State Aid Assessment

The JS, who might be supported by external experts, shall verify State Aid compliance of the submitted applications through a dedicated assessment that will be performed after the quality assessment. For detailed information on the approach followed by the Programme with regards to state aid, please refer to the specific chapter in the Programme Implementation Manual - PIM.



Italy – Croatia

This assessment is performed on the basis of information included in the Application Form and may lead to conditions to be cleared during the clearing condition phase.

7. Results of the selection

After the closure of the quality assessment and State aid assessment, each application shall get a final score. The applications will be ranked separately per specific objective by the JS. The ranking lists will be subdivided in:

- applications approved and financed
- applications approved and not financed
- applications not approved

The ranking lists are delivered to the MC of the Programme (together with all Application Forms) which is responsible for the final decision.

The MC reserves the right not to commit all available resources depending on the quality of submitted applications or to allocate additional ERDF resources to finance more proposals from any of the ranking lists.

8. Condition Clearing

The MC can approve project proposals under conditions: the proposal is considered approved provided that the LP and/or PP satisfy specific conditions within a given deadline set by the JS. These conditions may be: technical (concerning the work plan proposed for the project and possible adjustments etc.), legal (concerning special contractual clauses or conditions required for the project etc.), financial (concerning the budget and the Programme contribution, timing of reporting etc.) or related to compliance with the State Aid regulations. Moreover in this phase will take place the assessment provided for in art. 22.4(i) of Interreg Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 (related to infringement decisions) and the assessment of the respect of DNSH principle.

The Condition clearing phase is aimed at fulfilling the conditions and/or the requested clarifications approved by the MC. In this phase the JS and the LP have frequent exchanges and agree on the changes to be made and to be included in the final version of the AF. If an agreement is not reached, the proposal cannot be funded. The MA informs the MC about the fulfillment of the conditions by the LPs.



9. Complaints procedure

Following the MA/JS notification on the MC funding decision, the lead applicant (complaints received by project partners individually shall not be taken into consideration) on behalf of the entire partnership can submit a formal complaint via certified email or via email to the MA within 14 calendar days. The MA will send a confirmation of receipt of the complaint within 3 working days and inform the MC.

It is strongly recommended before launching a formal complaint to submit via e-mail to the MA/JS requests for technical or legal information. The submission of information request interrupts the deadline for submitting formal complaints until the day the MA/JS replies to the lead applicant.

The complaint shall be submitted in English, and in writing to the Managing Authority.

The complaint must include the following information:

- name and address and contact details of the lead partner;
- reference number assigned by the Programme to the project application and the project acronym;
- the specific matter and reason for the complaint, with a clear reference to the relevant Programme documents;
- date, signature and stamp of the legal representative of the lead applicant;
- any supporting documents.

A complaint will be rejected without further examination if submitted after the deadline or if the formal requirements described above are not observed. If the complaint contains incomplete information the MA may request for further information. Information has to be provided by the LA within 5 working days. If such information is not provided within the given period the case will be closed without any further investigation.

1) Complaints on formal and administrative aspects

The MA, with the support of the JS, will examine the complaint related to formal and administrative aspects of the project proposal and will decide if the complaint is justified or not.

Such a decision will be final, binding to all parties and not subject to any further complaint proceedings within the Programme if the complaint is based on the same grounds.

2) Complaints on quality and State aid assessment

The complaint could lead to a revision of the quality or State aid assessment only if the LP can demonstrate that the JS disregarded relevant information already provided in the Application Form and its Annexes.



**Italy – Croatia**

If the complaints are considered justified, the MC will take a new decision on the basis of the reviewed project assessment.

Litigation

At any time, but preferably only after the failure of the above procedures, each party may submit the dispute to the courts. In case of litigation, the legal proceedings will be held in Italy and the venue is the Civil County Court in Venice.

